Adapting TCP for Reconfigurable Datacenter Networks

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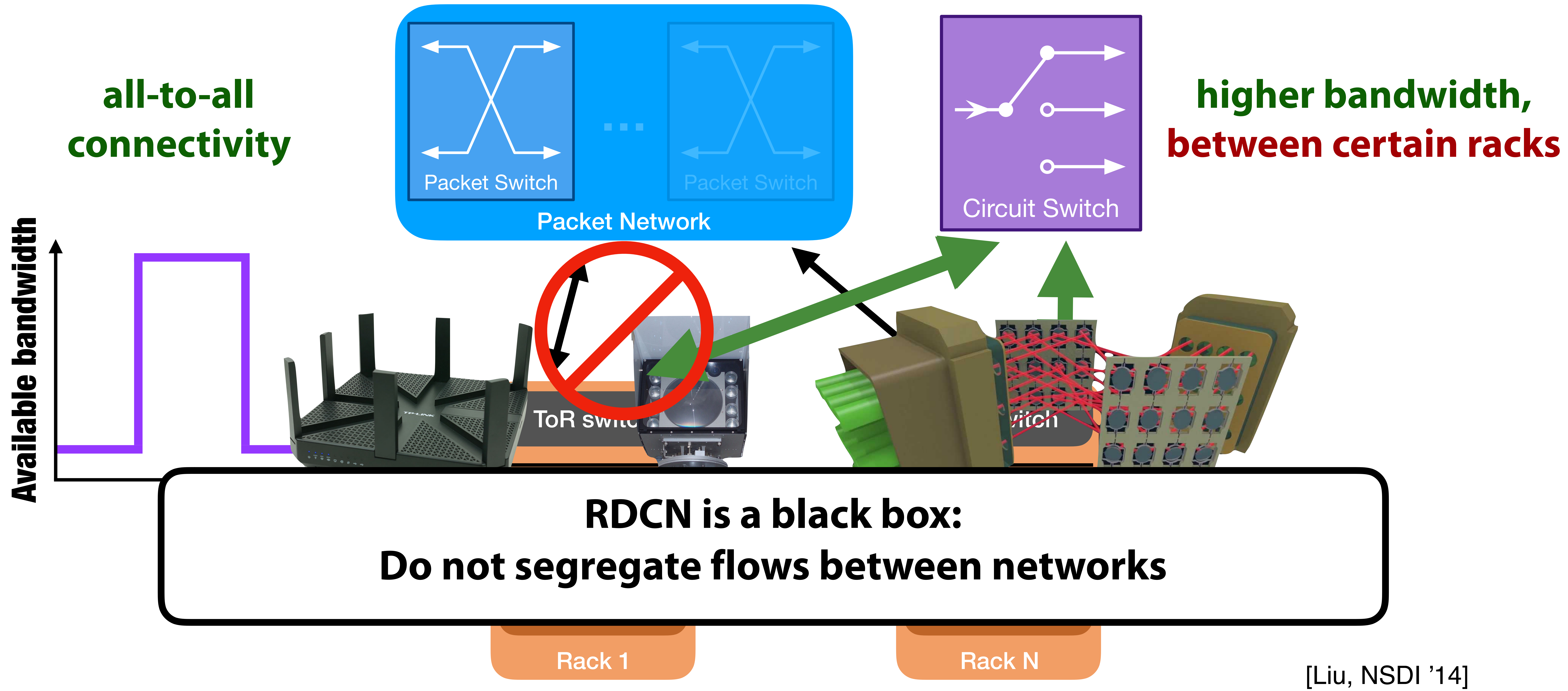
Reconfigurable Datacenter Network (RDCN)



RDCN is a black box:
Do not segregate flows between networks

[Liu, NSDI '14]

2010: RDCNs speed up DC workloads

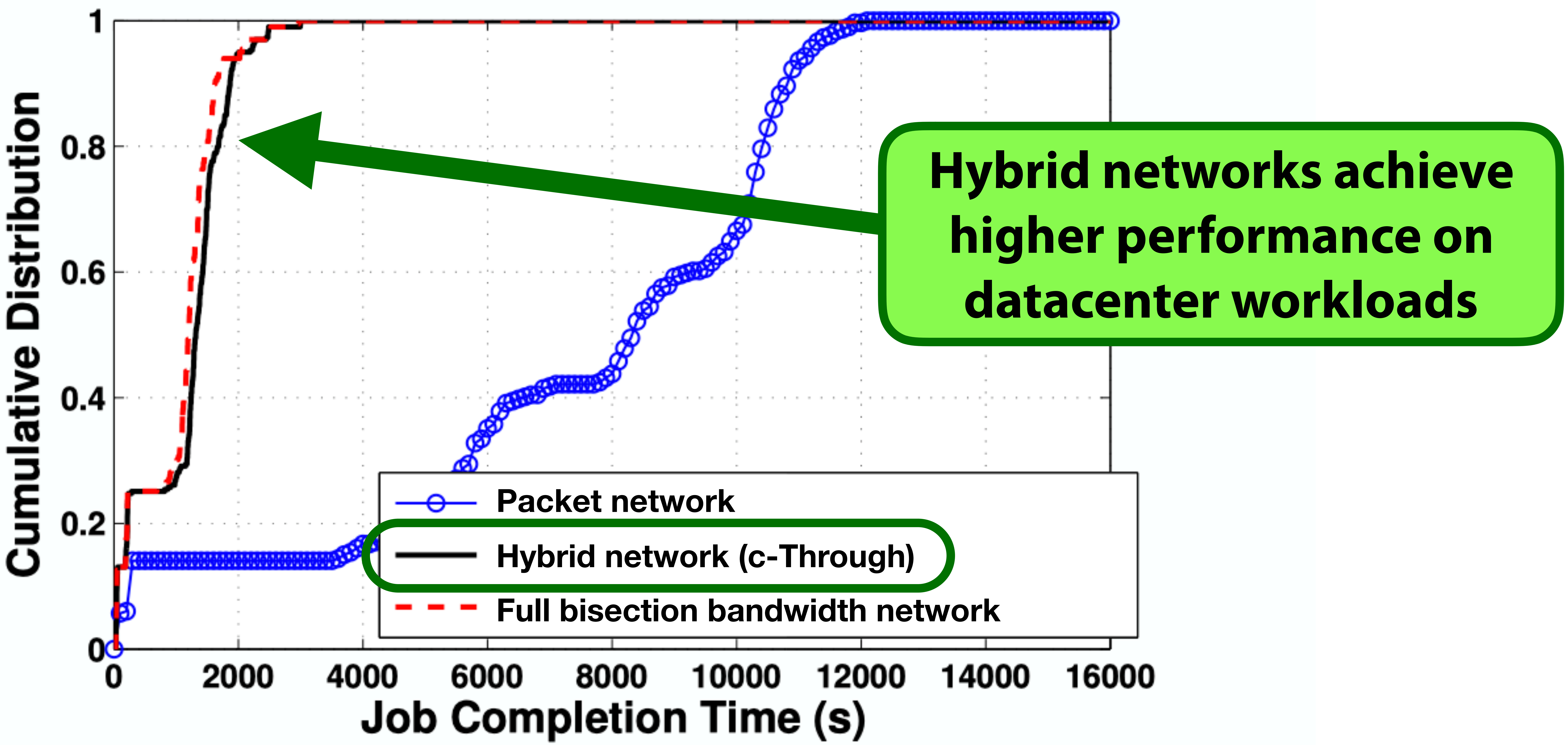
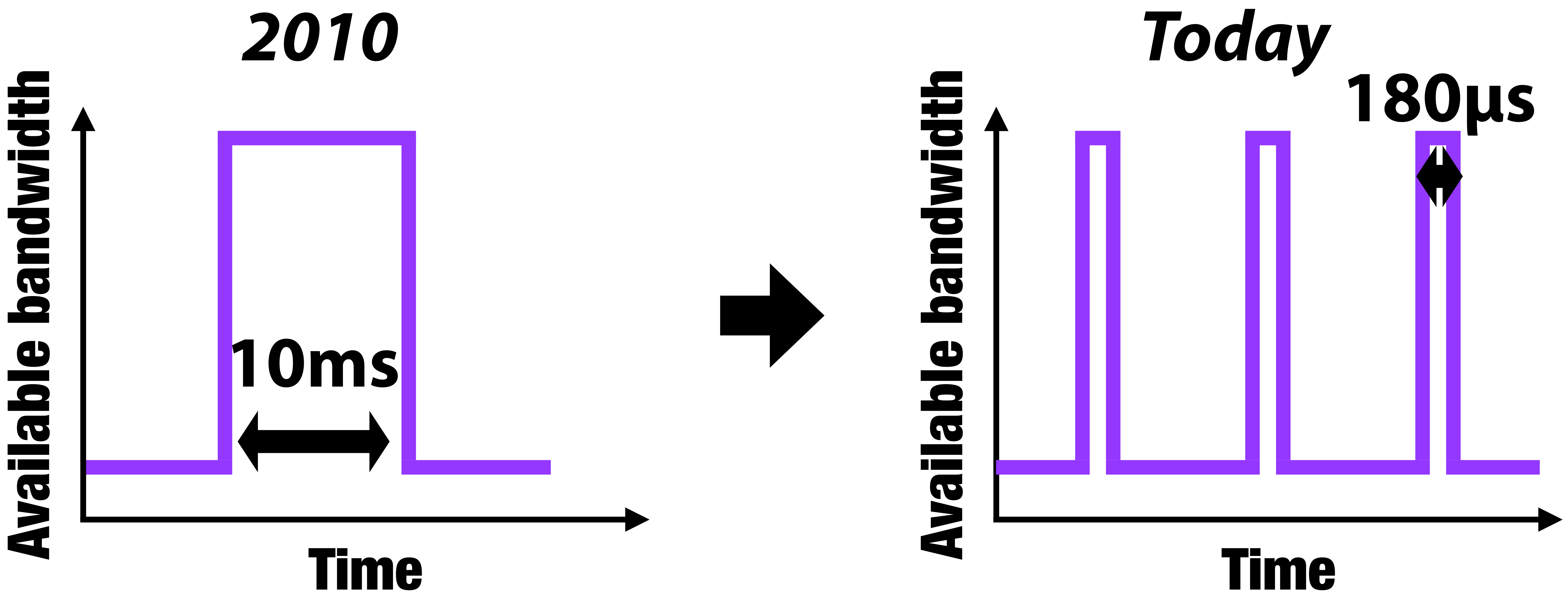


Figure 9: The completion of Hadoop Gridmix tasks

[Wang, SIGCOMM '10]

Today's RDCNs reconfigure 10x as often

Advances in circuit switch technology have led to a 10x reduction in reconfiguration delay ⇒ today, circuits can reconfigure much more frequently



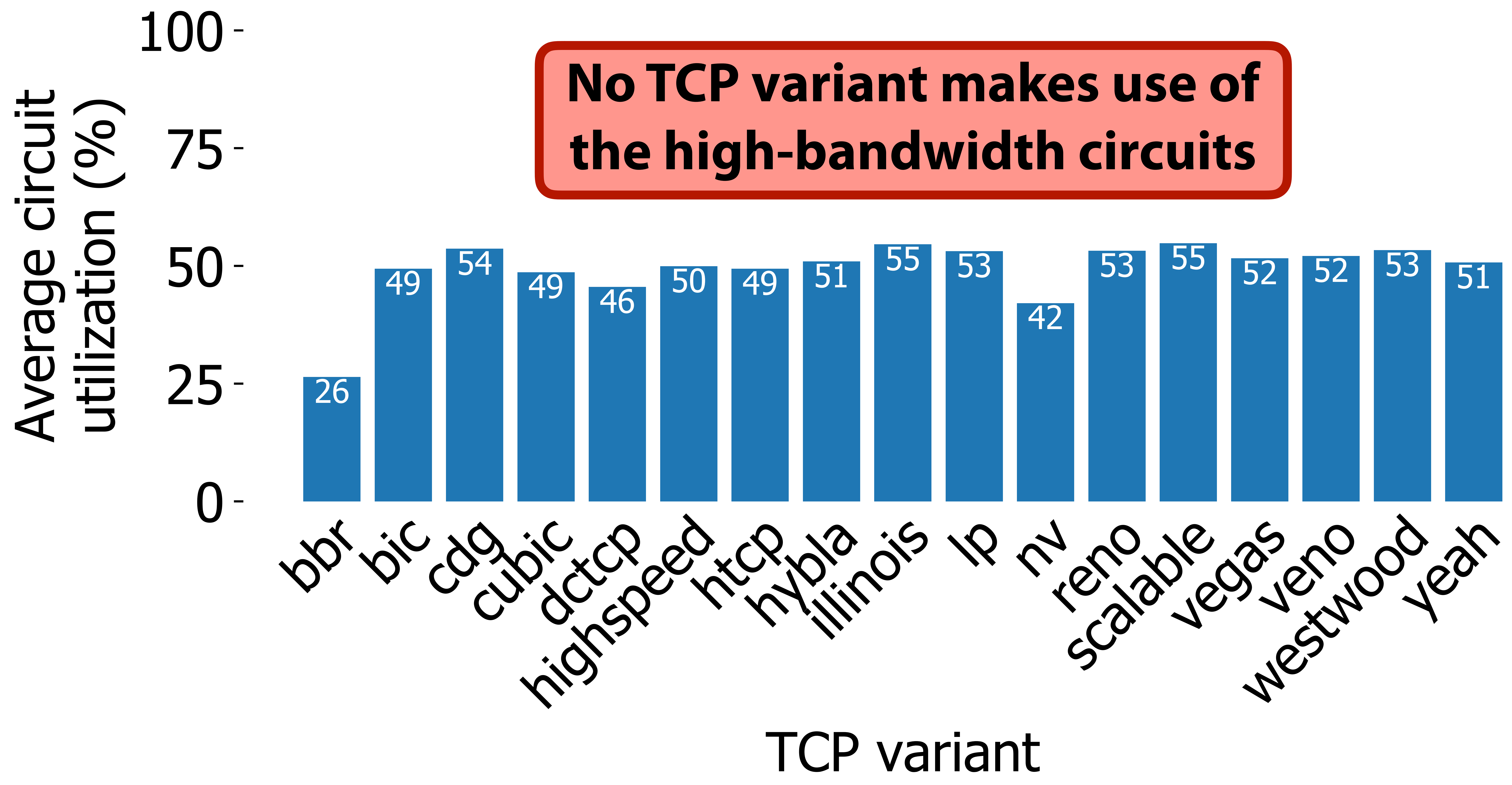
Better for datacenters: More flexibility to support dynamic workloads

Better for hosts: Less data must be available to saturate higher bandwidth NW

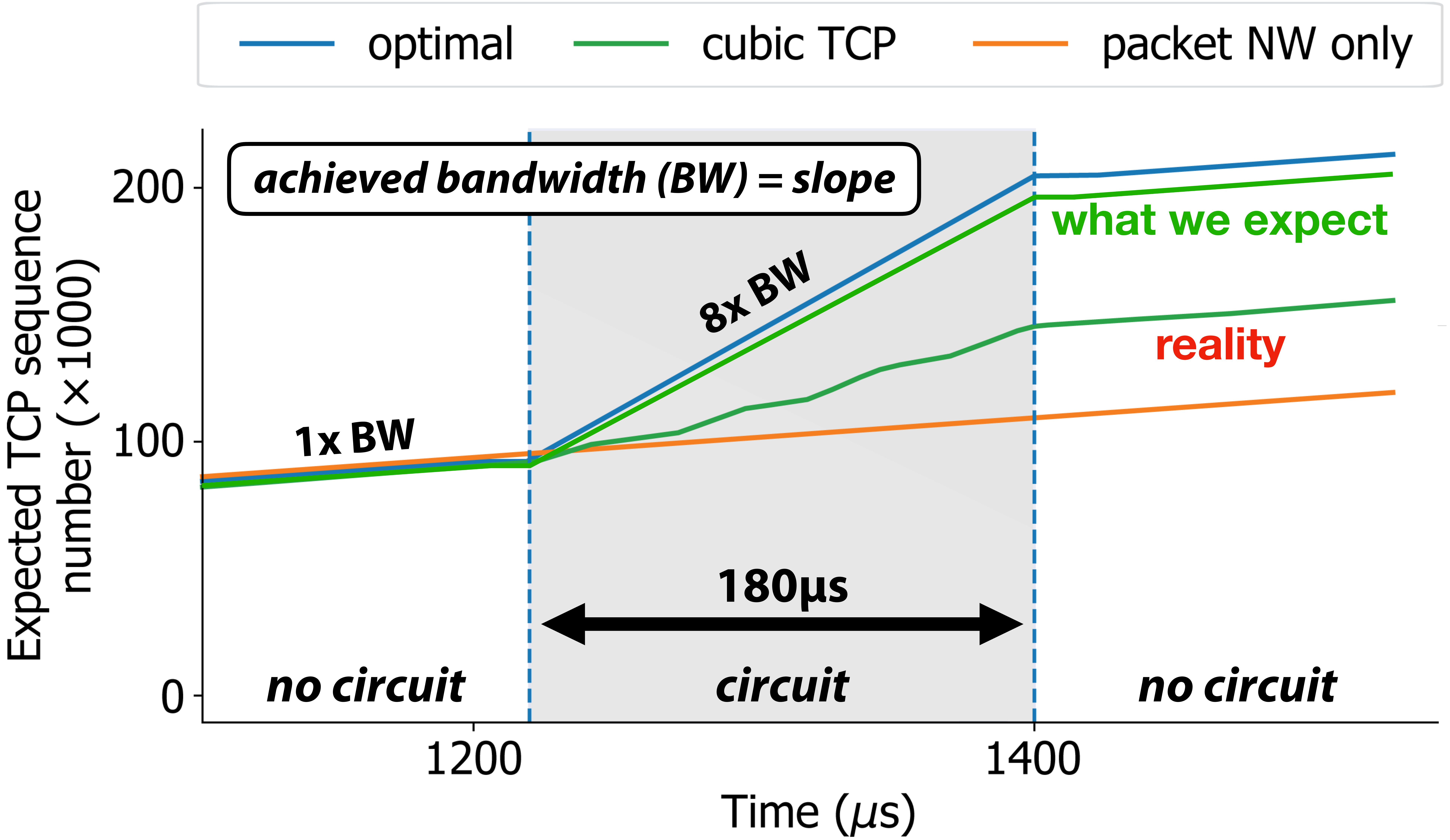
[Porter, SIGCOMM '13]

Short-lived circuits pose a problem for TCP

16 flows from rack 1 to rack 2; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s



TCP cannot ramp up during short circuits



What is the problem?

All TCP variants are designed to adapt to changing network conditions

- E.g., congestion, bottleneck links, RTT

But ***bandwidth fluctuations*** in modern RDCN are an order of magnitude ***more frequent*** (10x shorter circuit duration) and ***more substantial*** (10x higher bandwidth) than TCP is designed to handle

- RDCNs break the implicit assumption of relatively-stable network conditions

This requires an ***order-of-magnitude shift in how fast TCP reacts***

This talk: Our 2-part solution

In-network: Use information about upcoming circuits to transparently "trick" TCP into ramping up more aggressively

- High utilization, at the cost of tail latency

At endhosts: New TCP variant, ***reTCP***, that explicitly reacts to circuit state changes

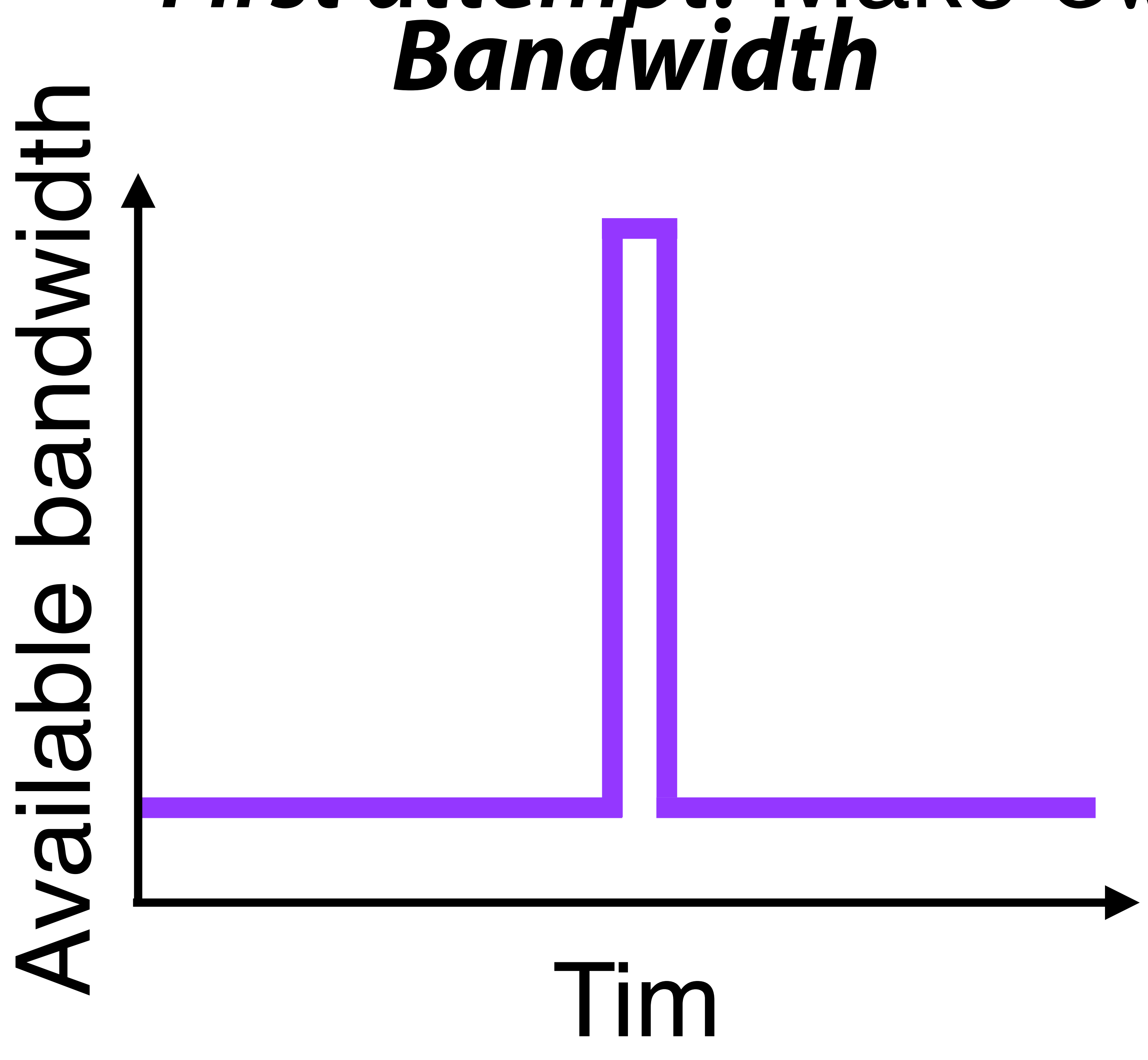
- Mitigates tail latency penalty

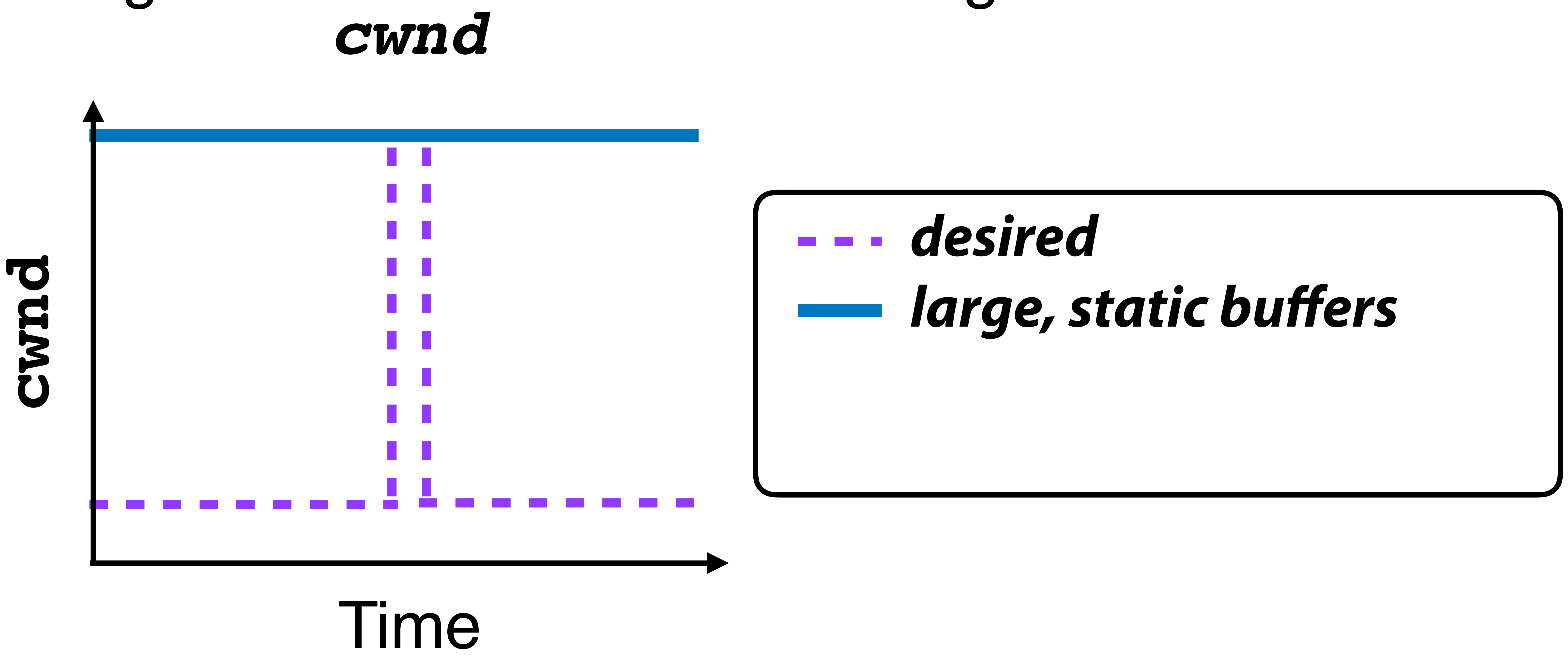
The two techniques can be deployed separately, but work best together

Naïve idea: Enlarge switch buffers

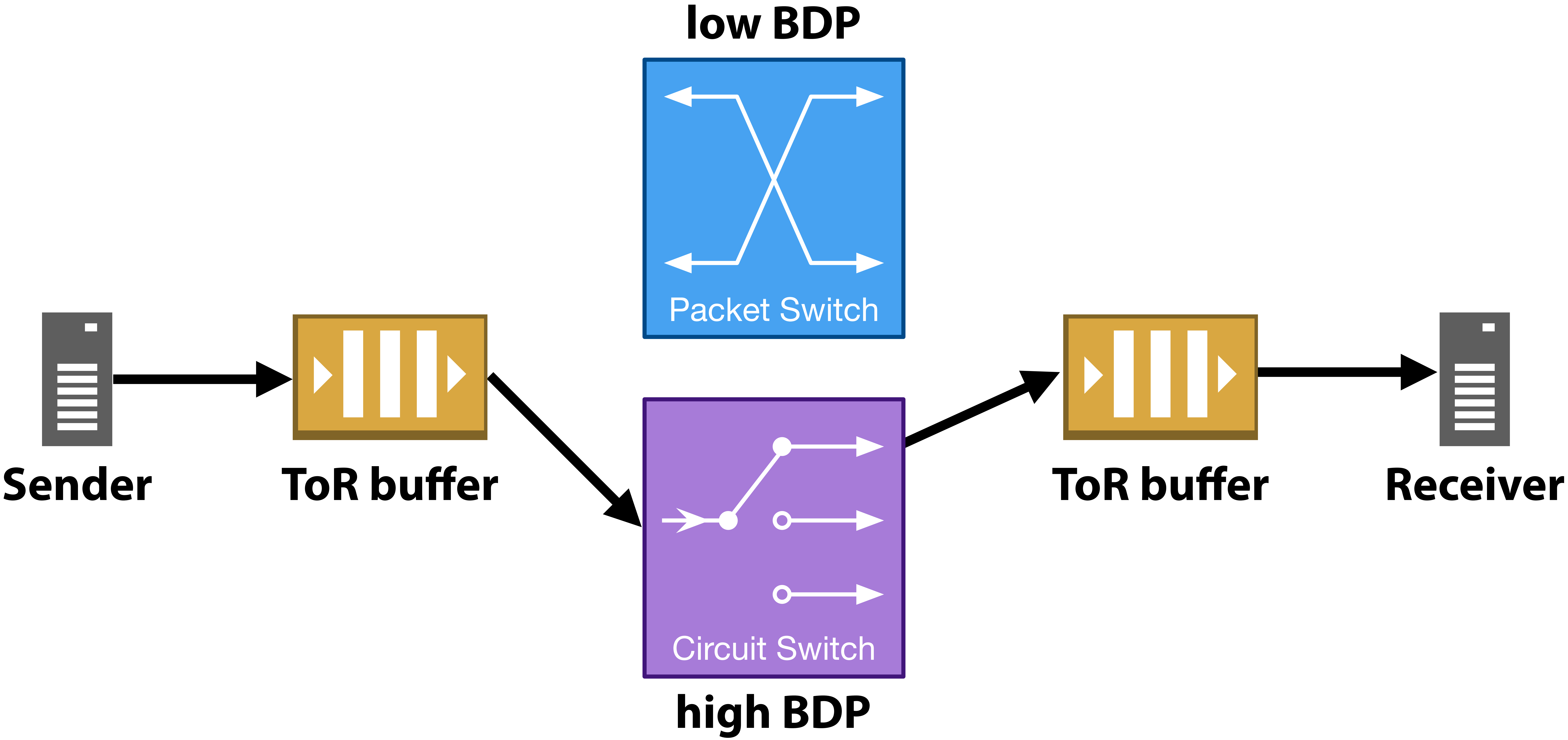
Want we want: TCP's congestion window (`cwnd`) to parallel the BW fluctuations

First attempt: Make `cwnd` large all the time ***How?*** Use large ToR buffers



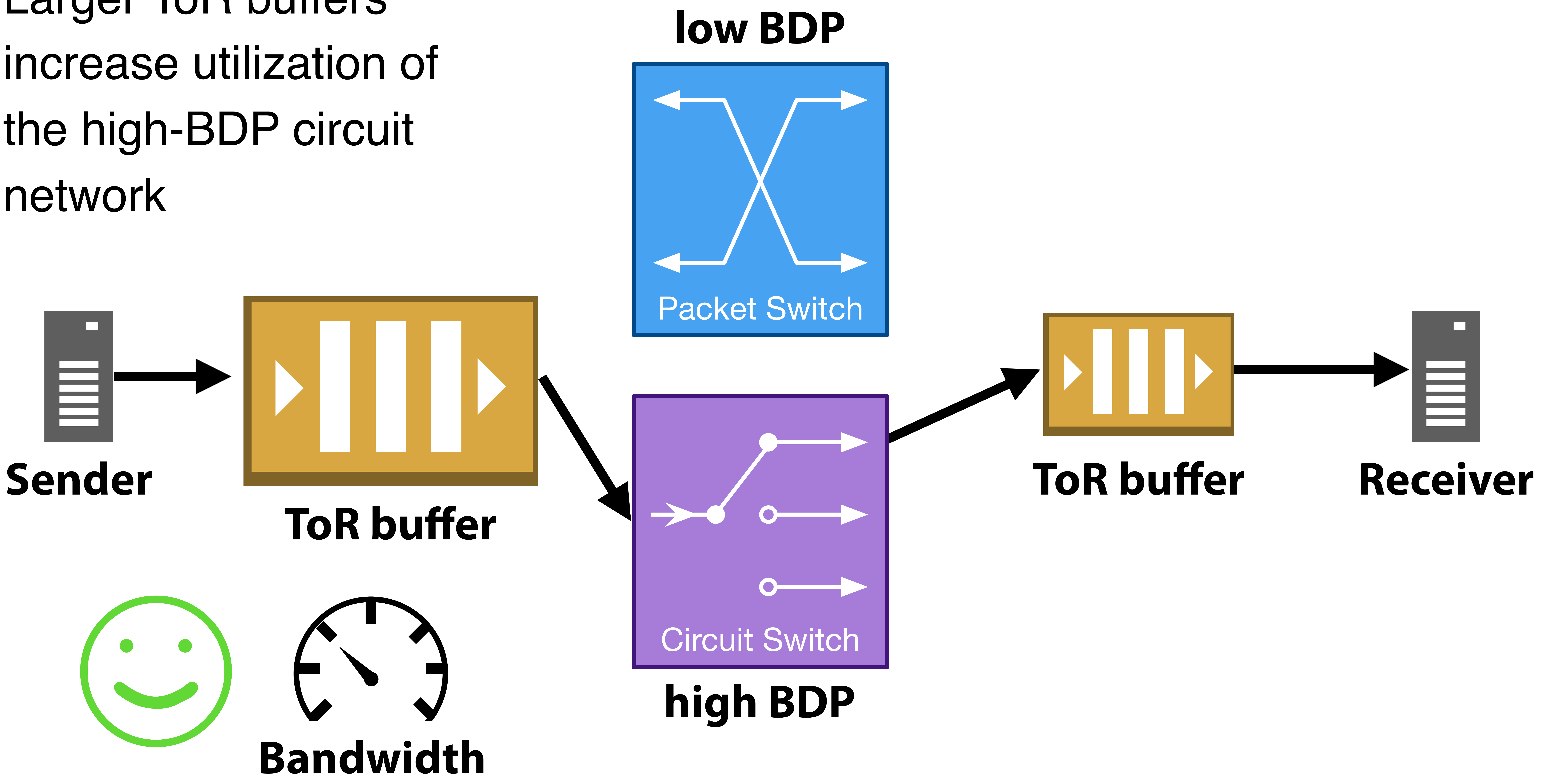


Naïve idea: Enlarge switch buffers



Naïve idea: Enlarge switch buffers

Larger ToR buffers increase utilization of the high-BDP circuit network



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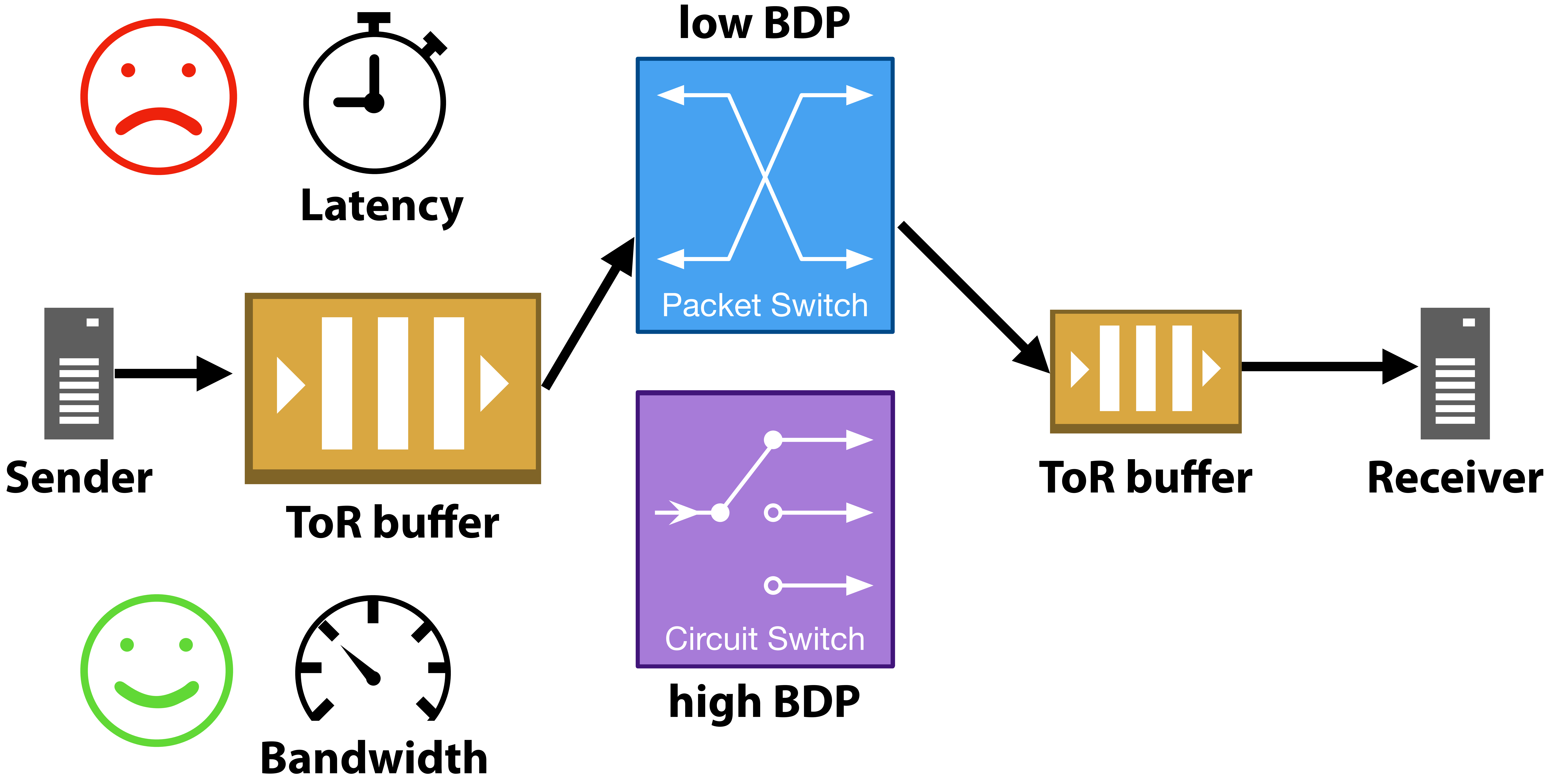
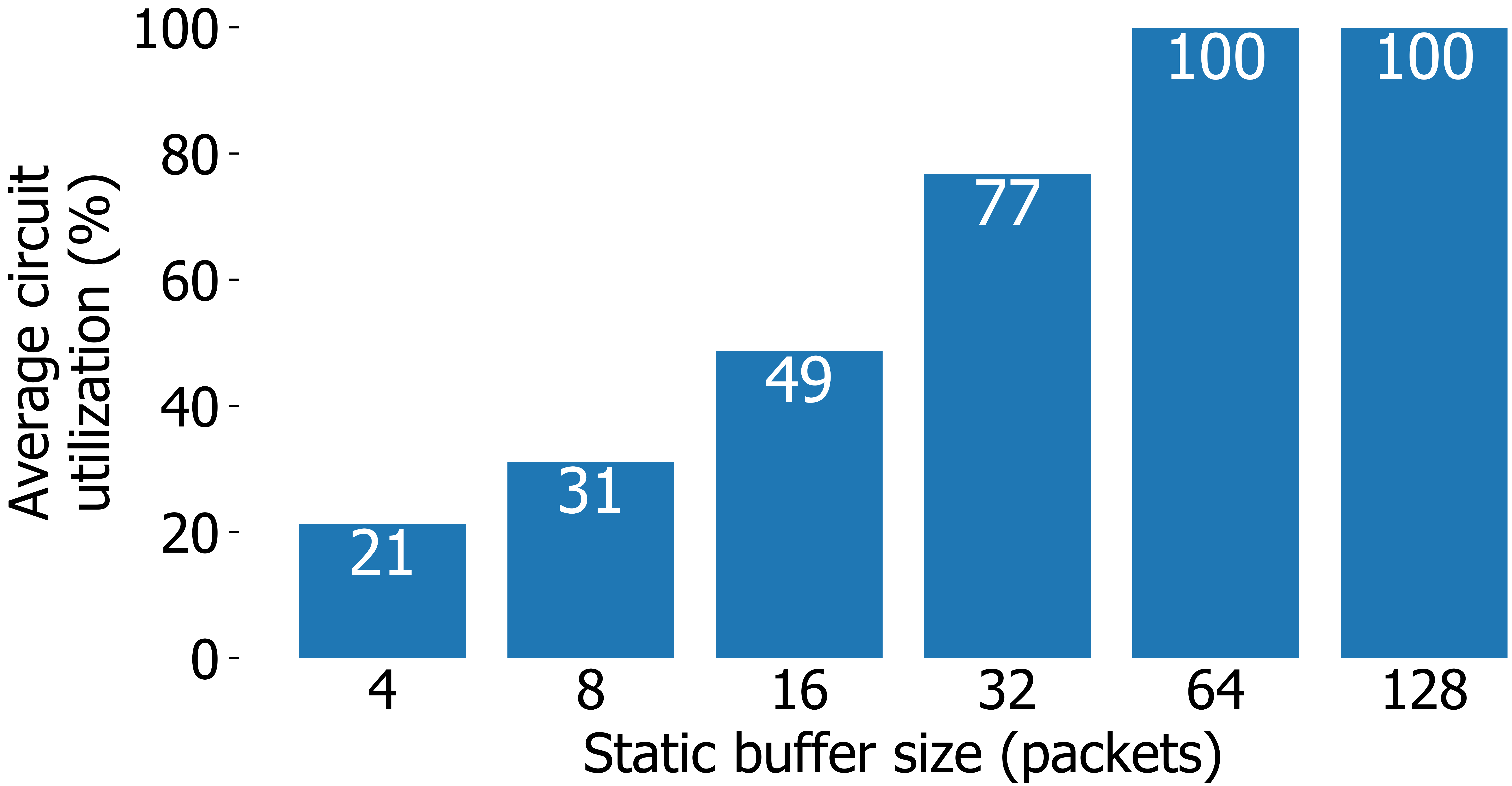
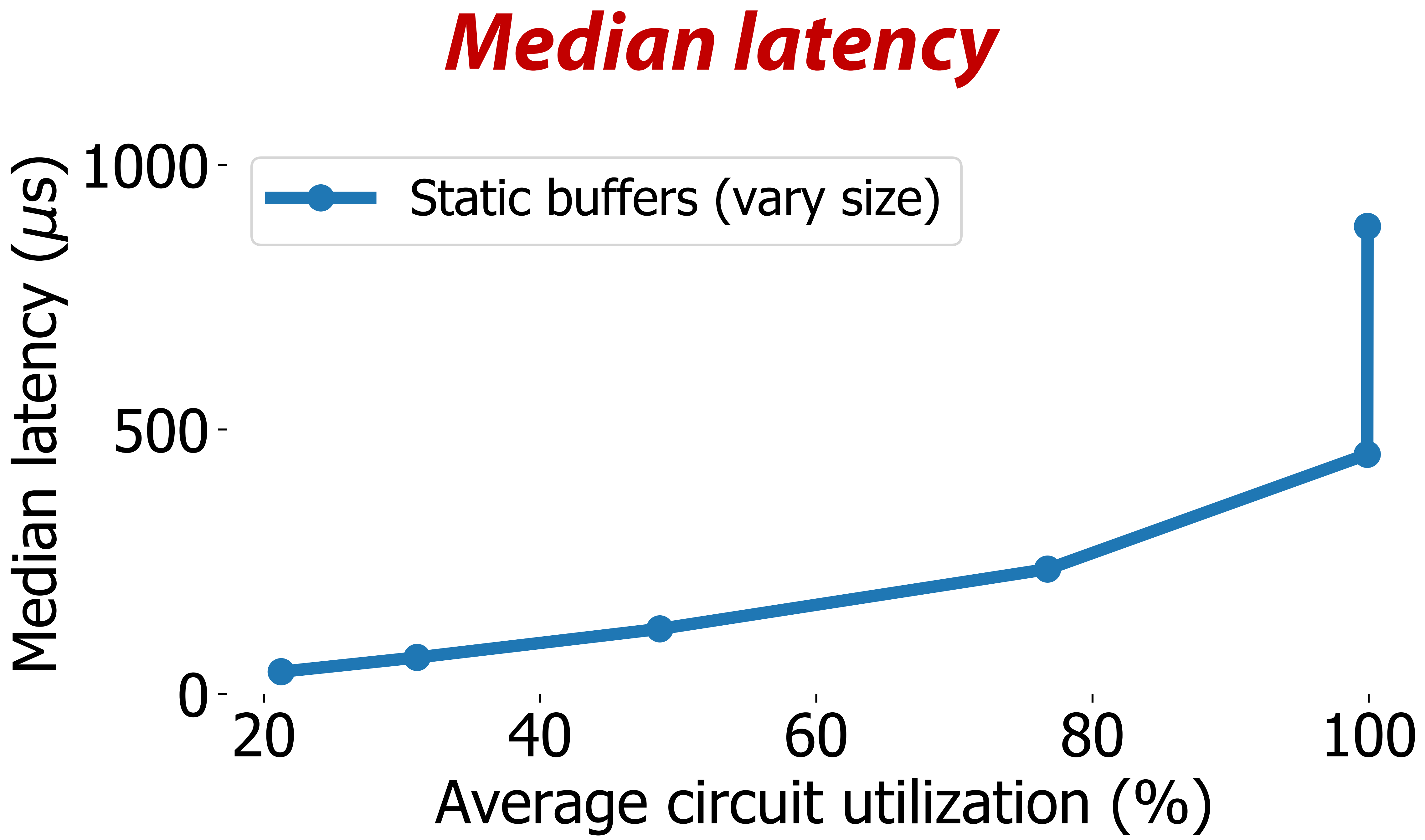


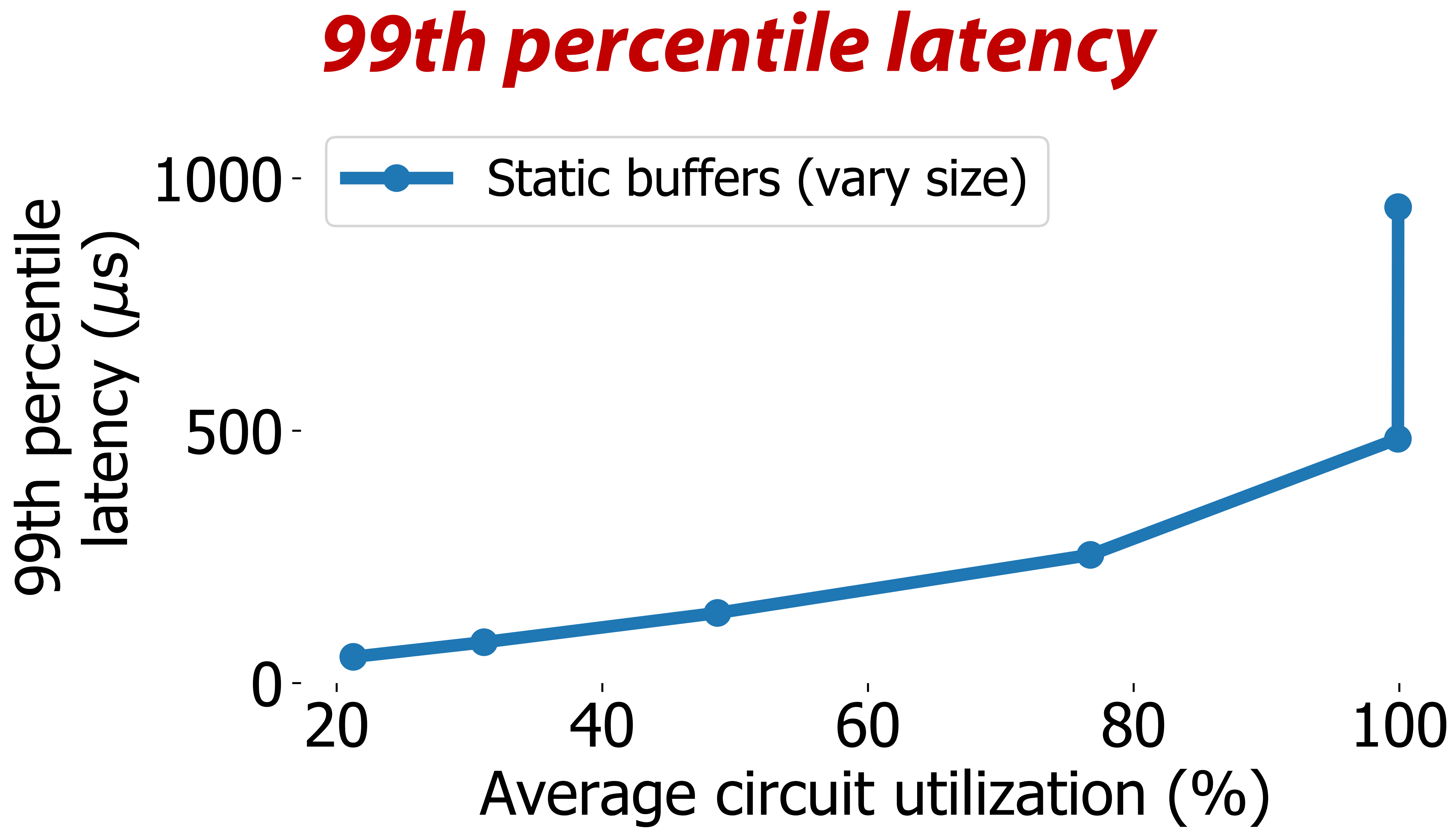
Large queues increase utilization…



16 flows from rack 1 to rack 2; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s

…but result in high latency





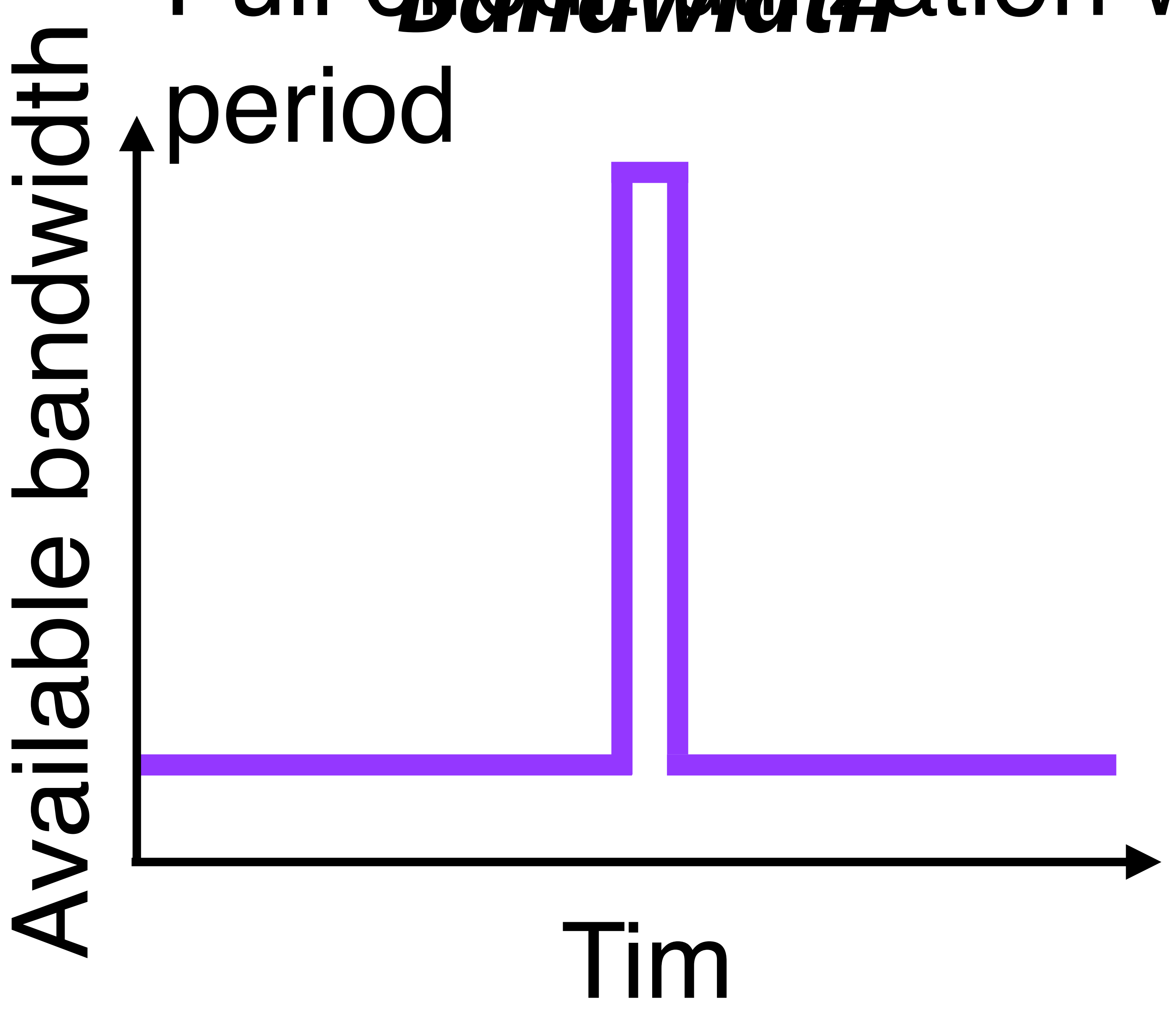
How can we improve this latency?

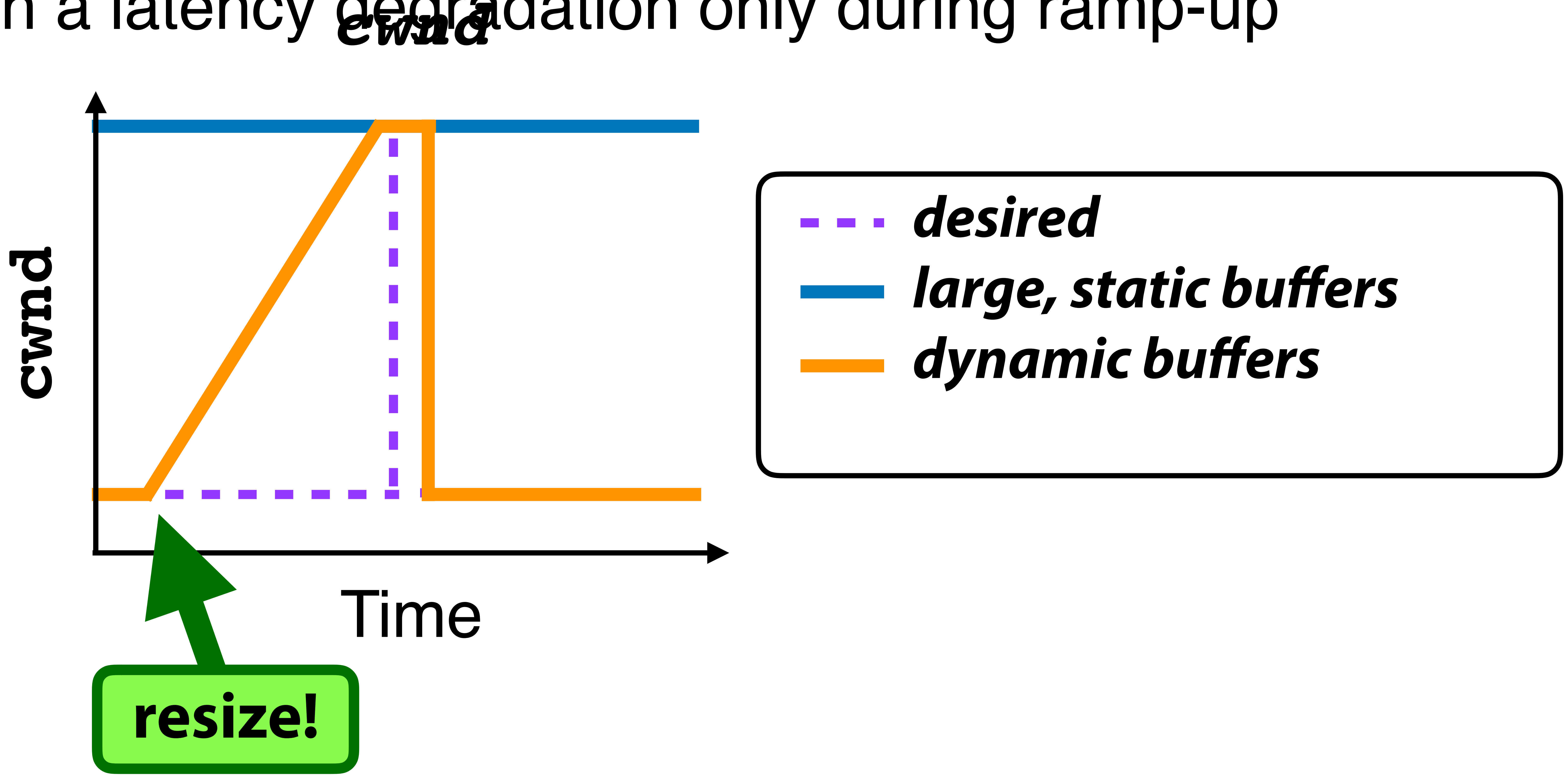
16 flows from rack 1 to rack 2; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s

Use large buffers only when circuit is up

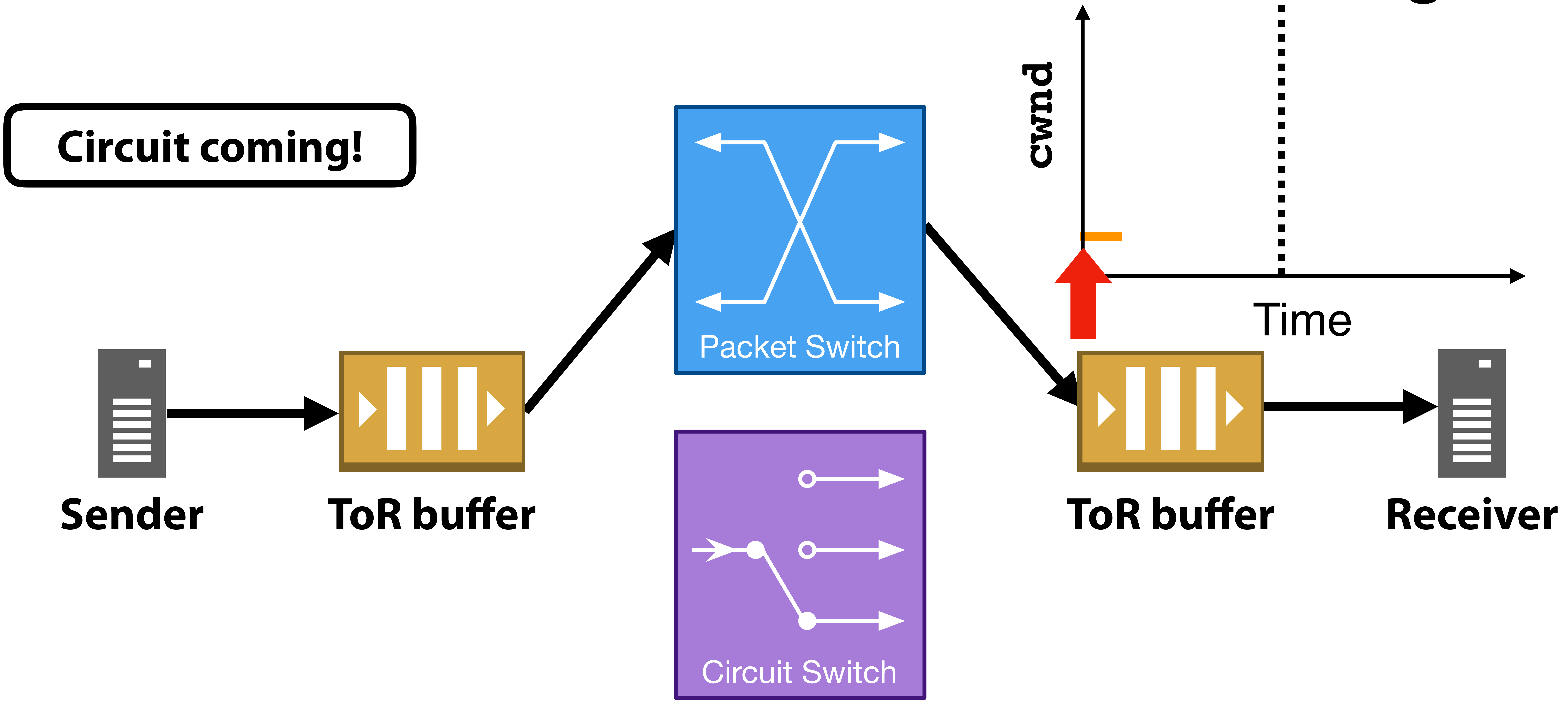
Dynamic buffer resizing: Before a circuit begins, transparently enlarge ToR buffers

Full circuit utilization with a latency degradation only during ramp-up period





Resize ToR buffers before circuit begins



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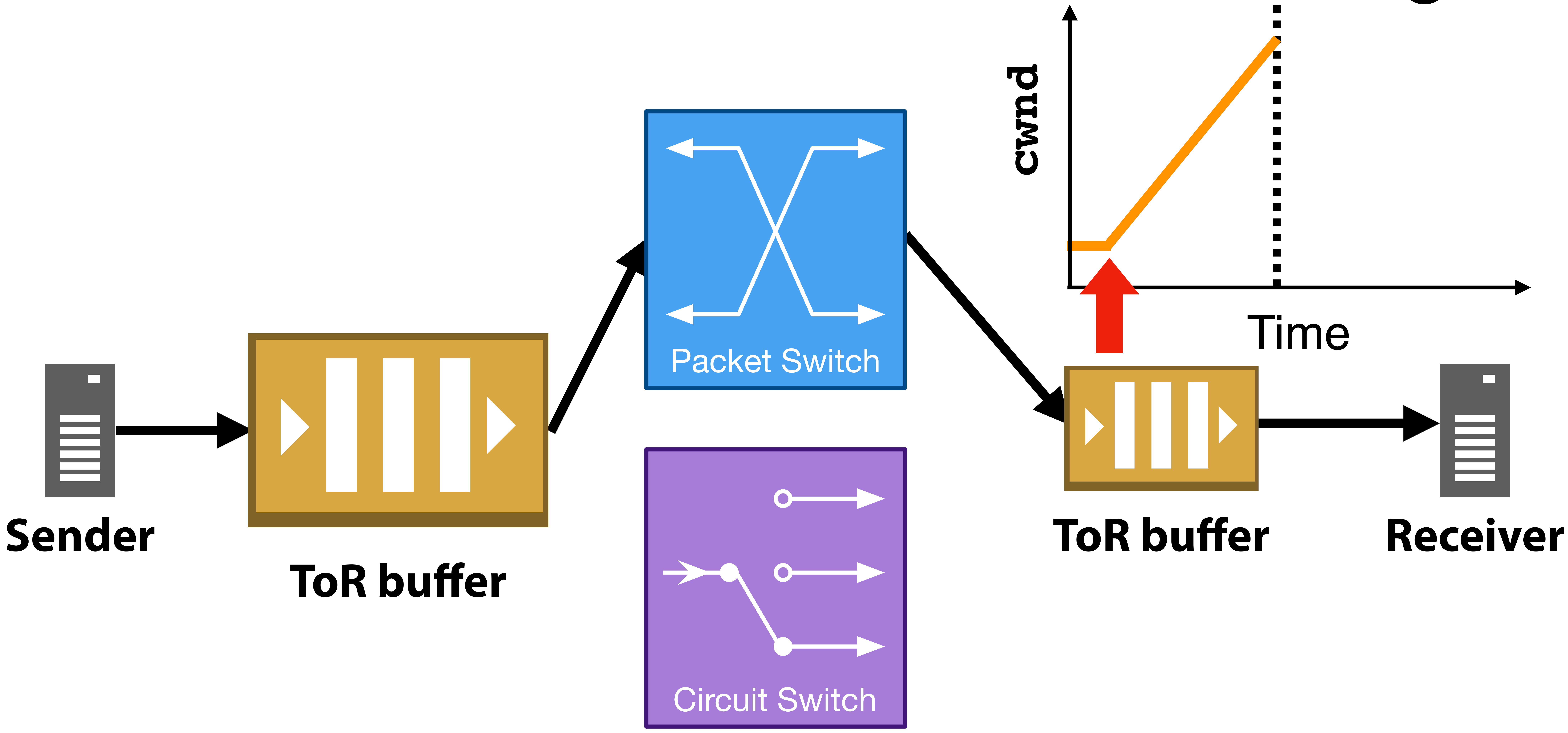

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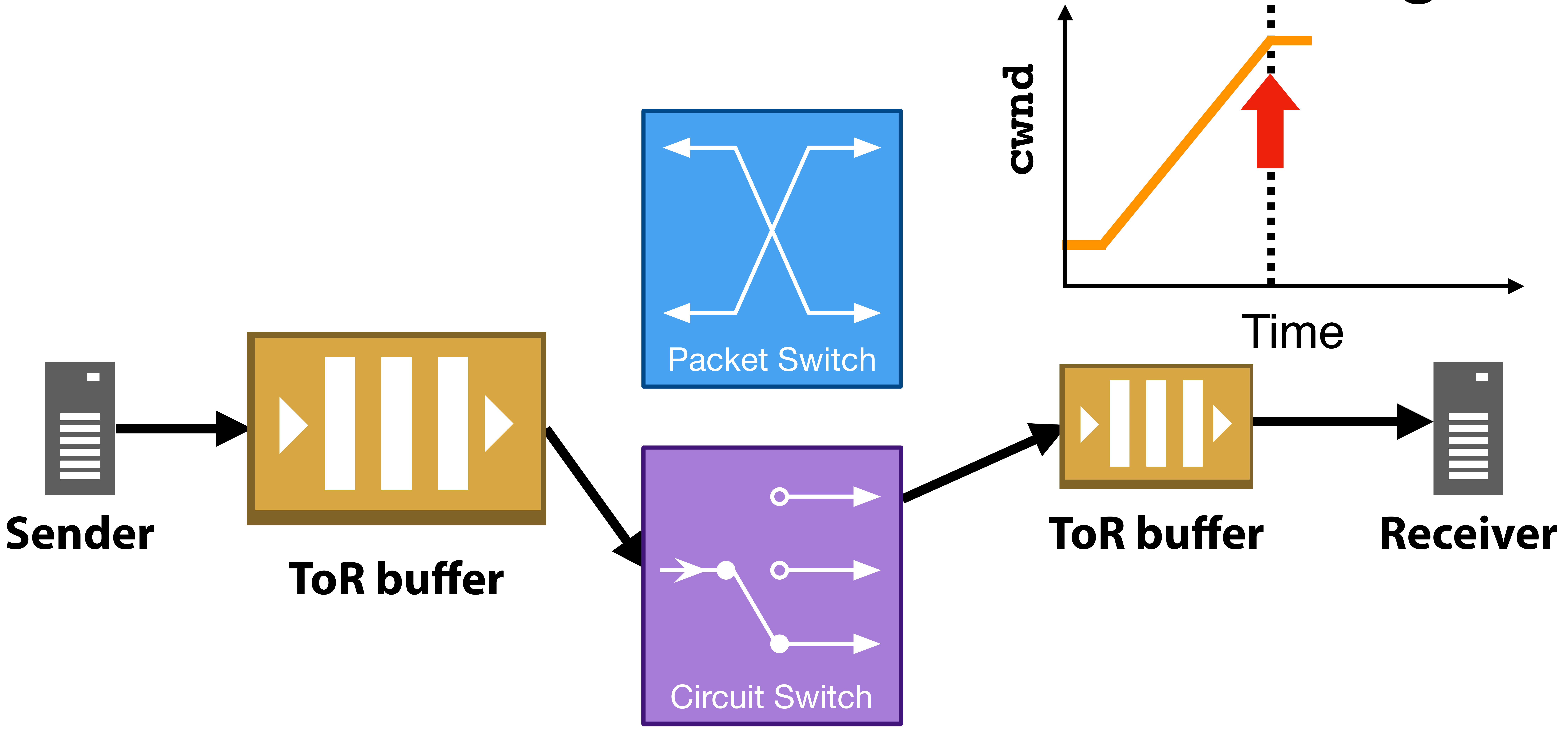
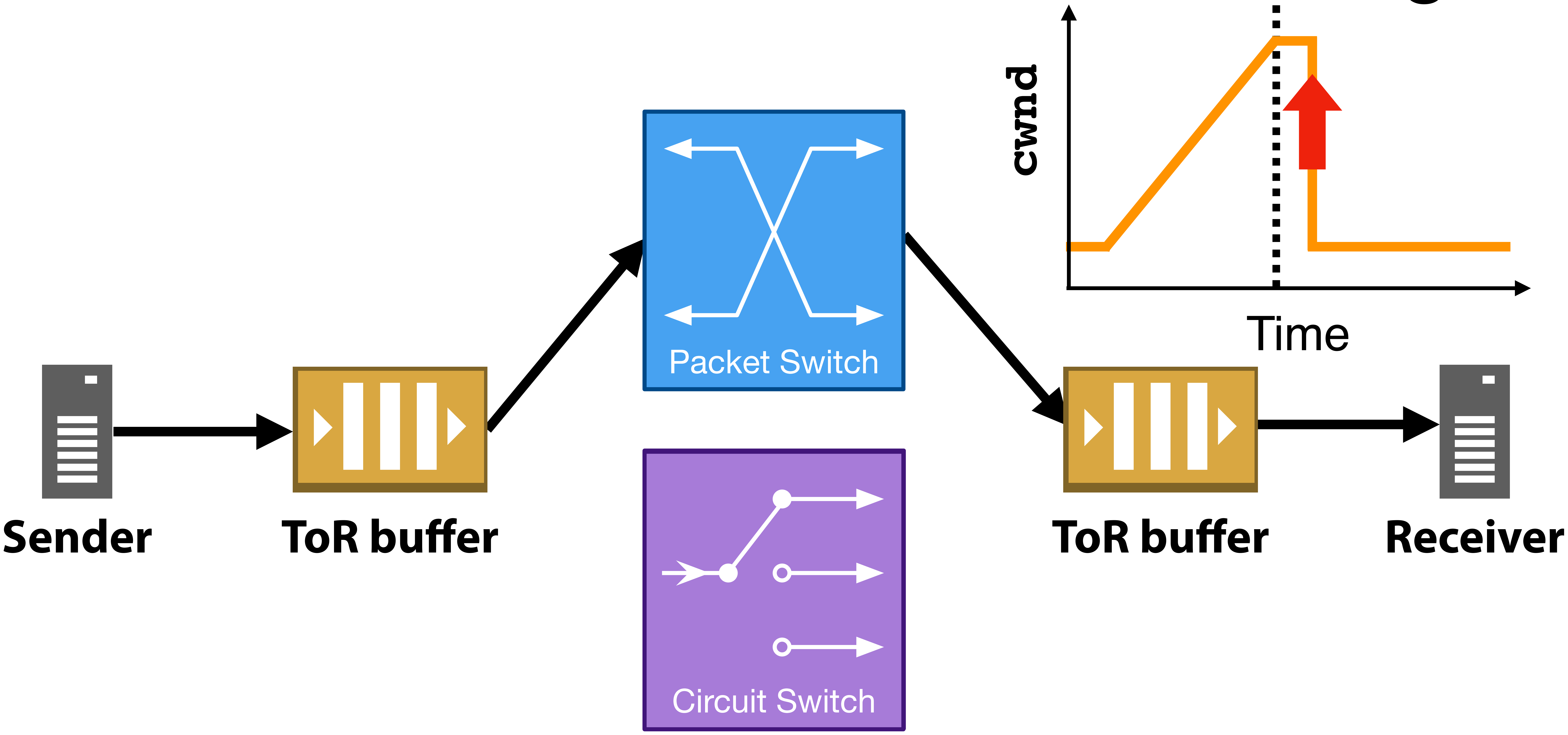


Resize ToR buffers before circuit begins



Configuring dynamic buffer resizing

How long in advance should ToR buffers resize (τ)?

- Long enough for TCP to grow `cwnd` to the circuit BDP

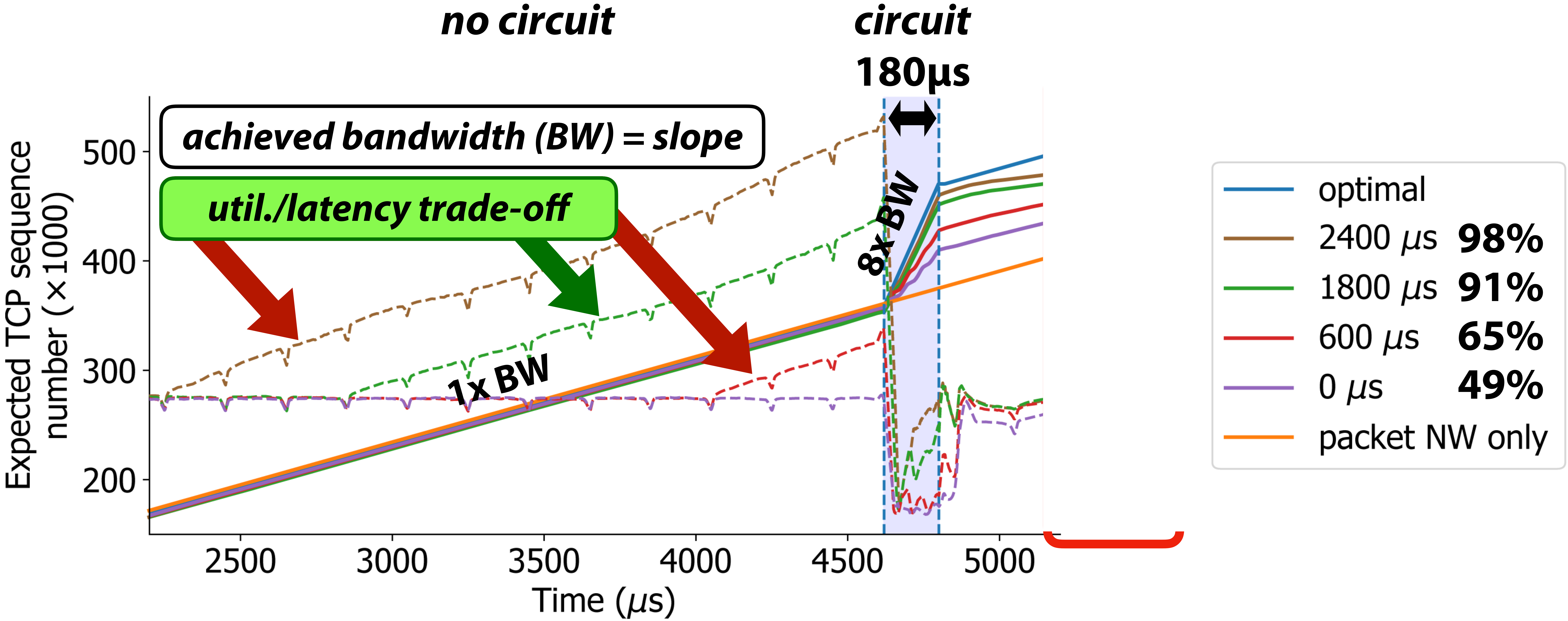
How large should ToR buffers grow to?

- circuit BDP = 80 Gb/s $\times$ 40 μs = 45 9000-byte packets

For our configuration, the ToR buffers must hold ~40 packets to achieve 90% utilization, which requires 1800 μs of prebuffering

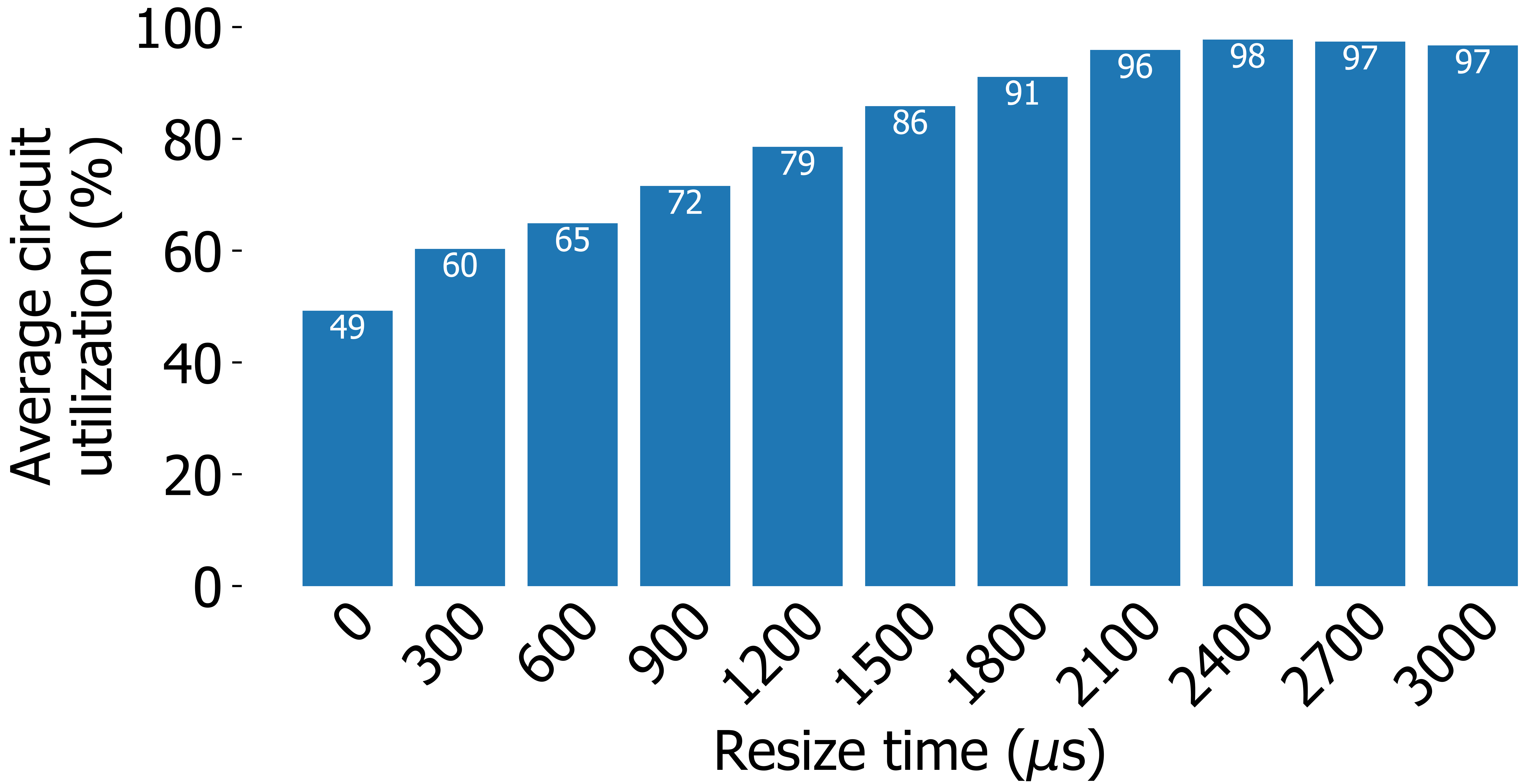
We resize ToR buffers between sizes of 16 and 50 packets

How long in advance to resize, τ?



16 flows from rack 1 to rack 2; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s; small buffers: 16 packets; large buffers: 50 packets

1800μs of prebuffering yields 91% util.



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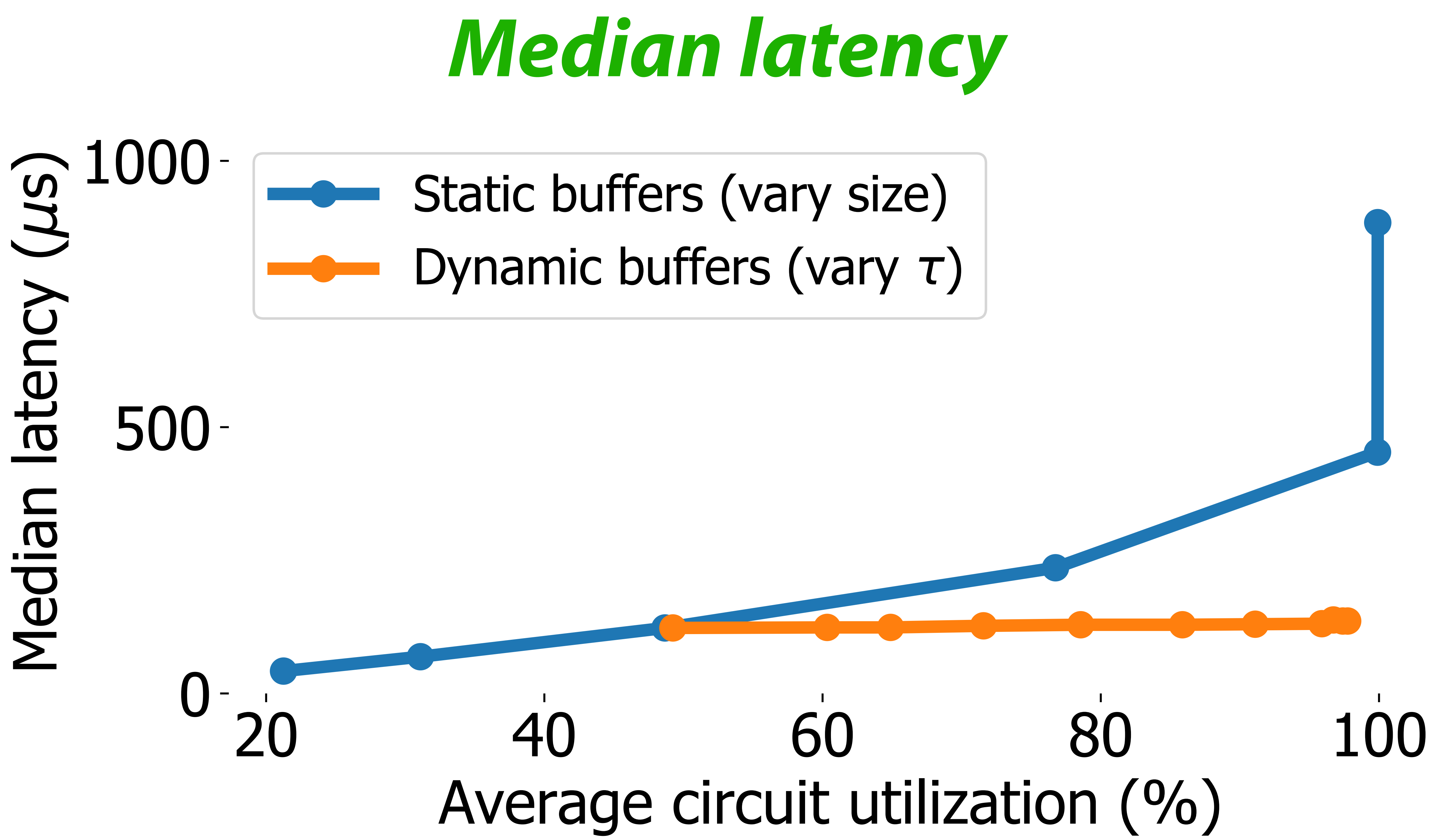
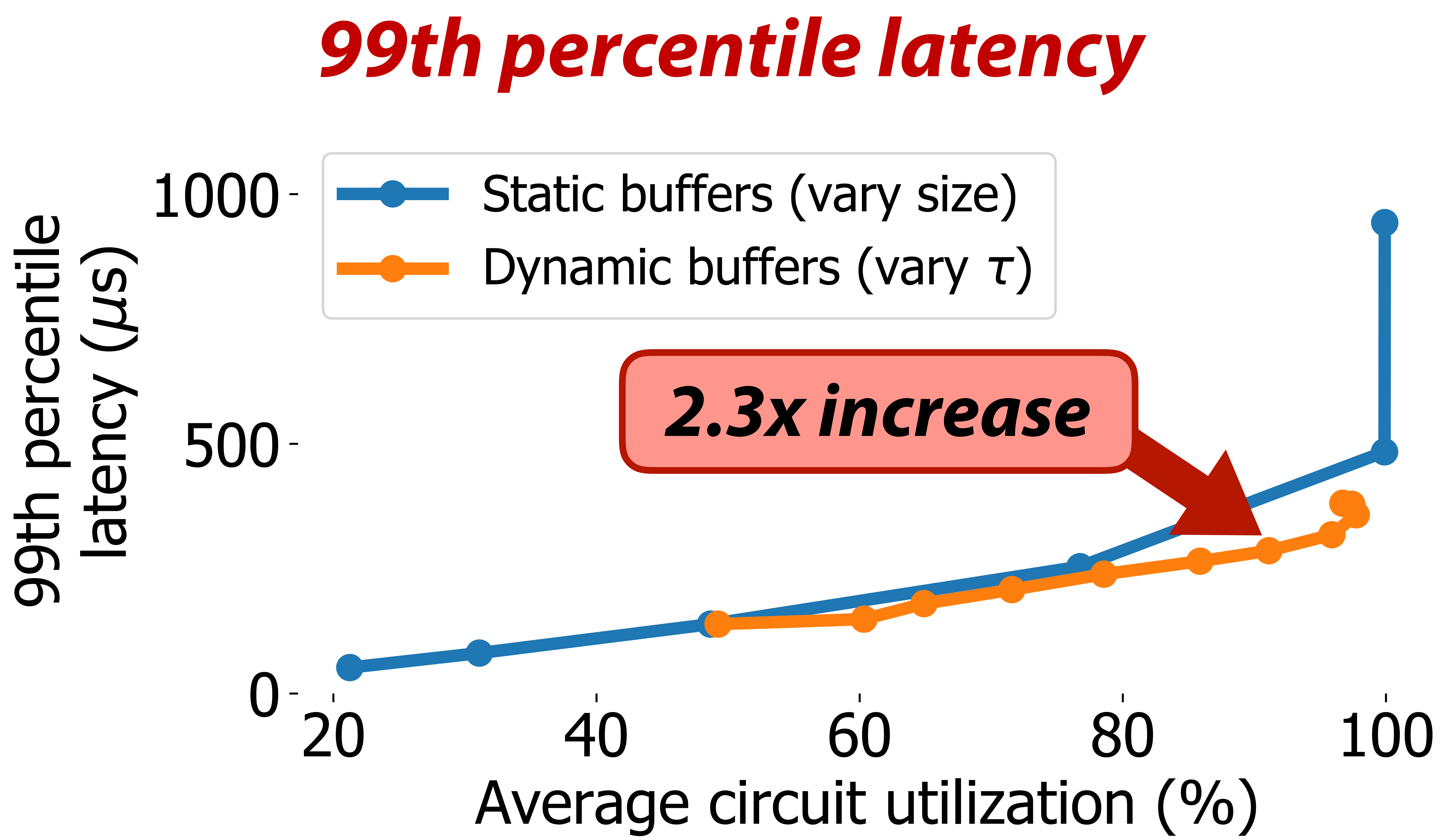
Latency degradation during ramp-up





We cannot use large queues for so long.
Can we get the same high utilization with shorter prebuffering?

16 flows from rack 1 to rack 2; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s;
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This talk: Our 2-part solution

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The two techniques can be deployed separately, but work best together

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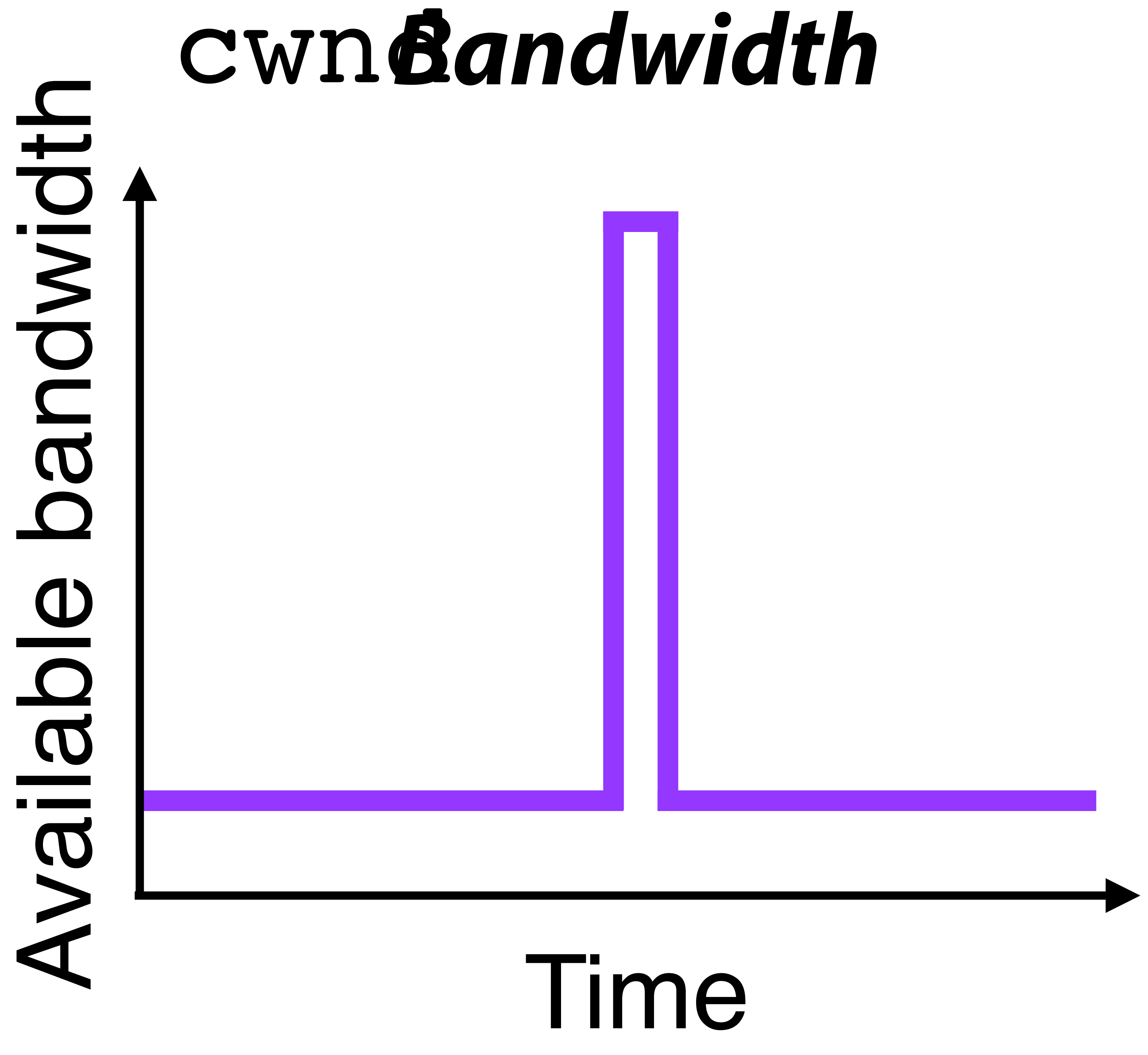
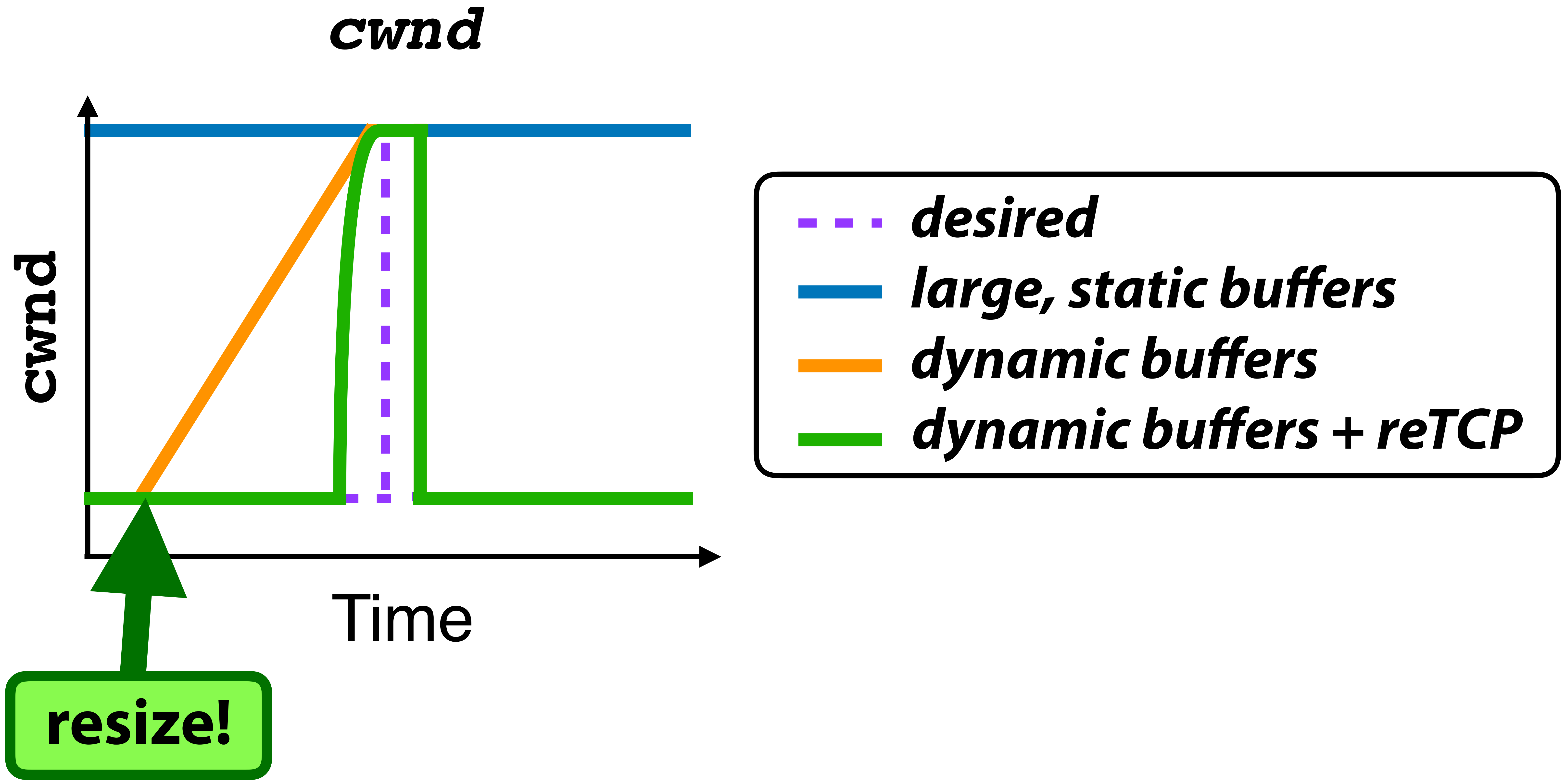
reTCP: Rapidly grow `cwnd` before a circuit

1) Communicate circuit state to sender TCP

2) Sender TCP reacts by multiplicatively increasing/decreasing `cwnd`





reTCP: Explicit circuit state feedback

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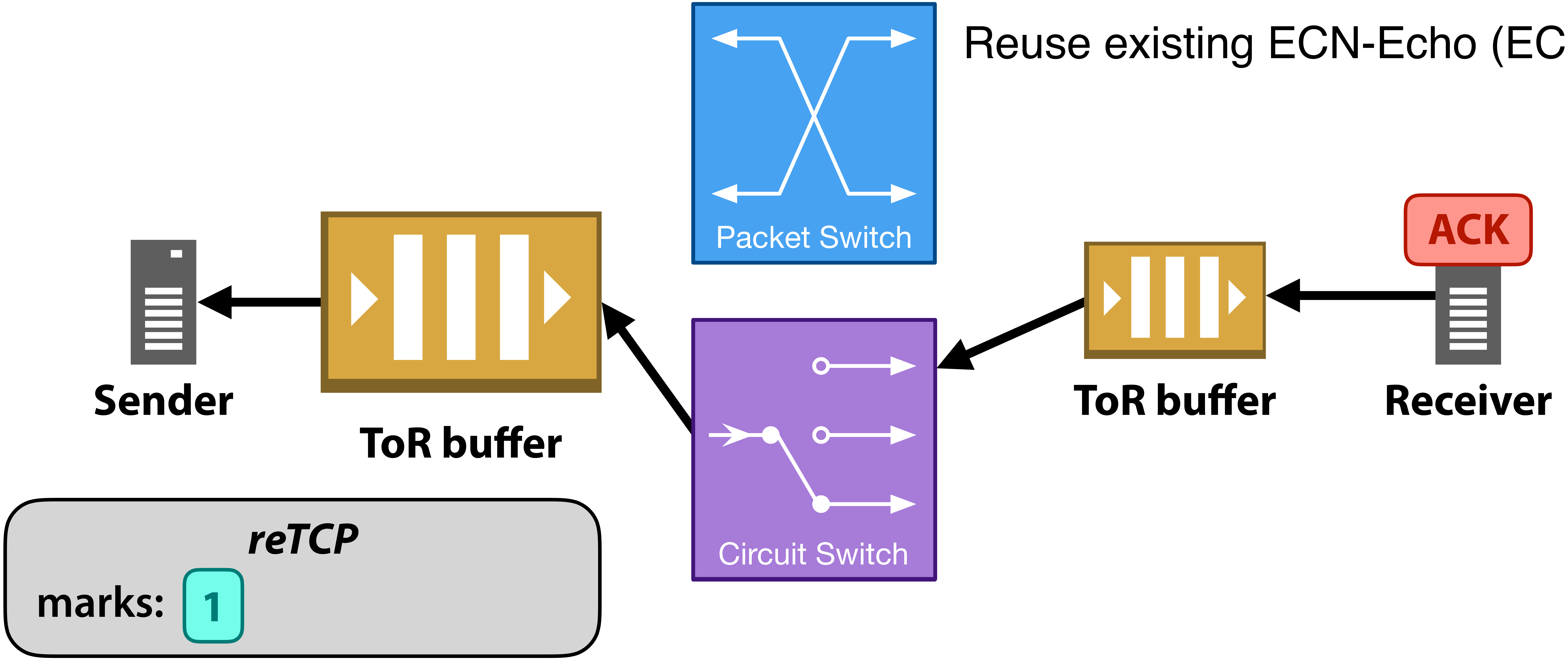
Reuse existing ECN-Echo (ECE) bit



reTCP: Explicit circuit state feedback

Single multiplicative increase/decrease

On 0 → 1 transitions:

`cwnd = cwnd` $\times$ α

On 1 → 0 transitions:

`cwnd = cwnd /` α

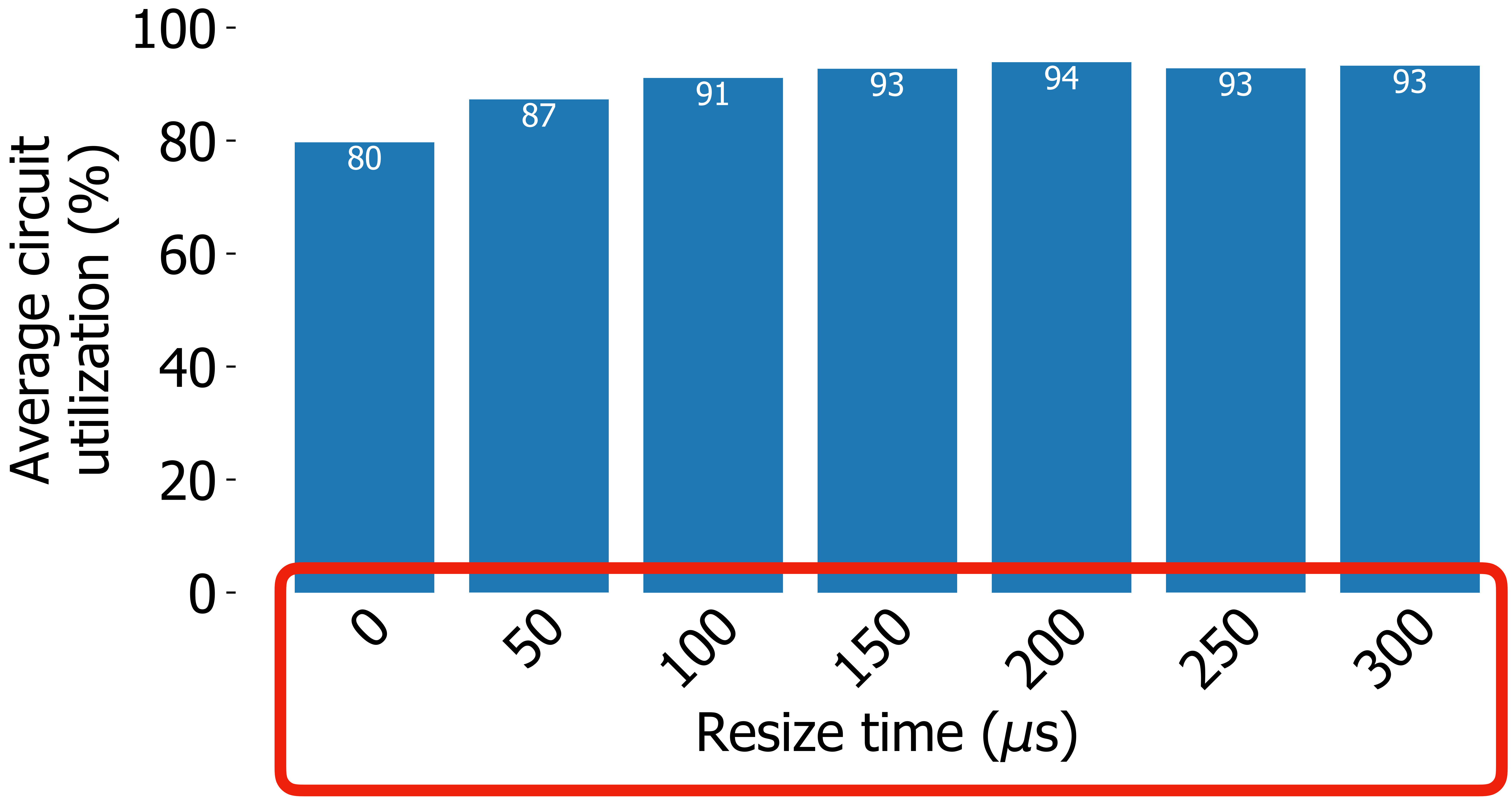
α depends on ratio of circuit BDP to ToR queue capacity:

- Circuit network BDP: 45 packets
- Small ToR queue capacity: 16 packets

We use $\alpha = 2$

More advanced forms of feedback are possible

Dynamic buffers + reTCP achieve high utilization



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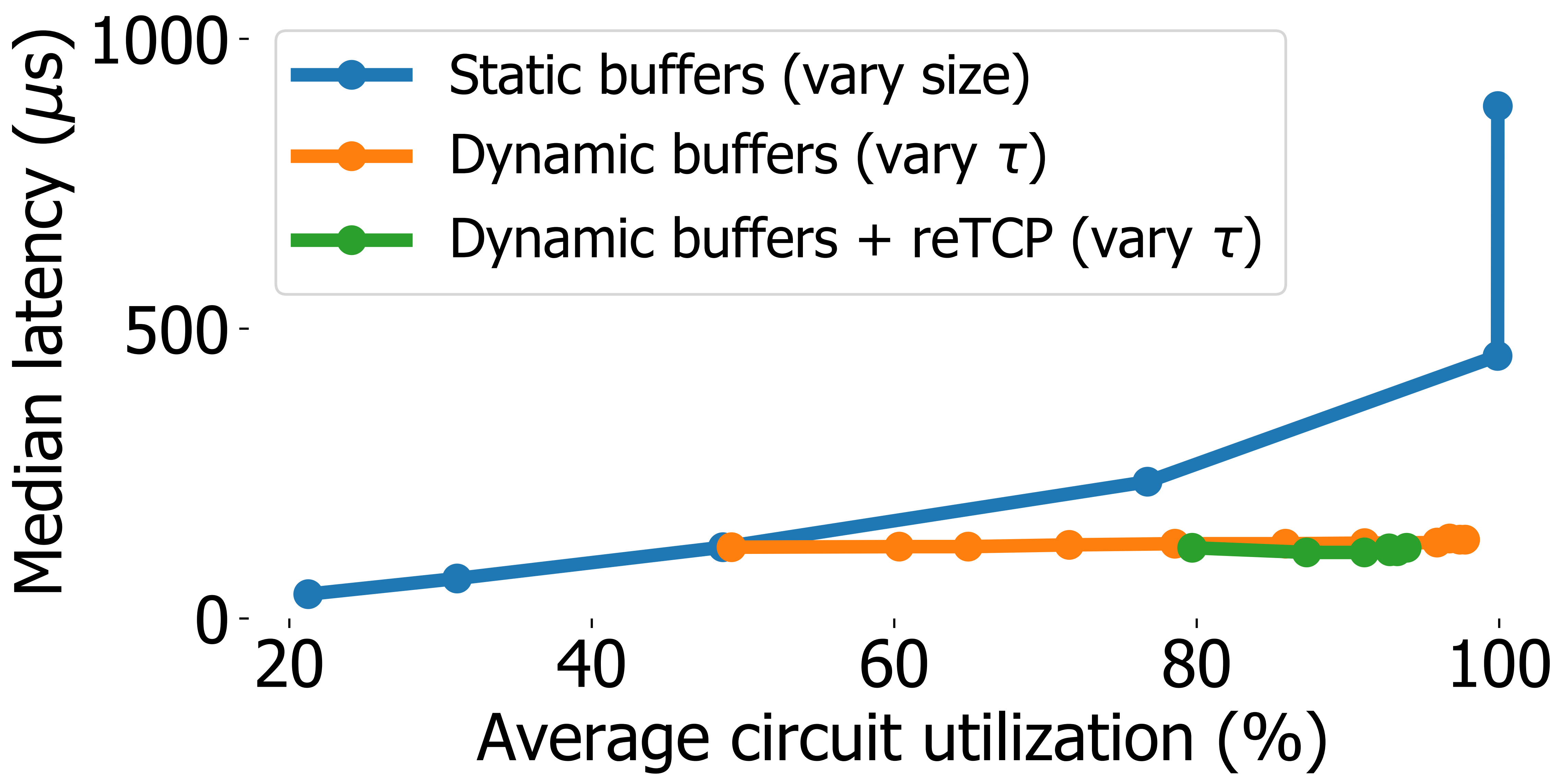
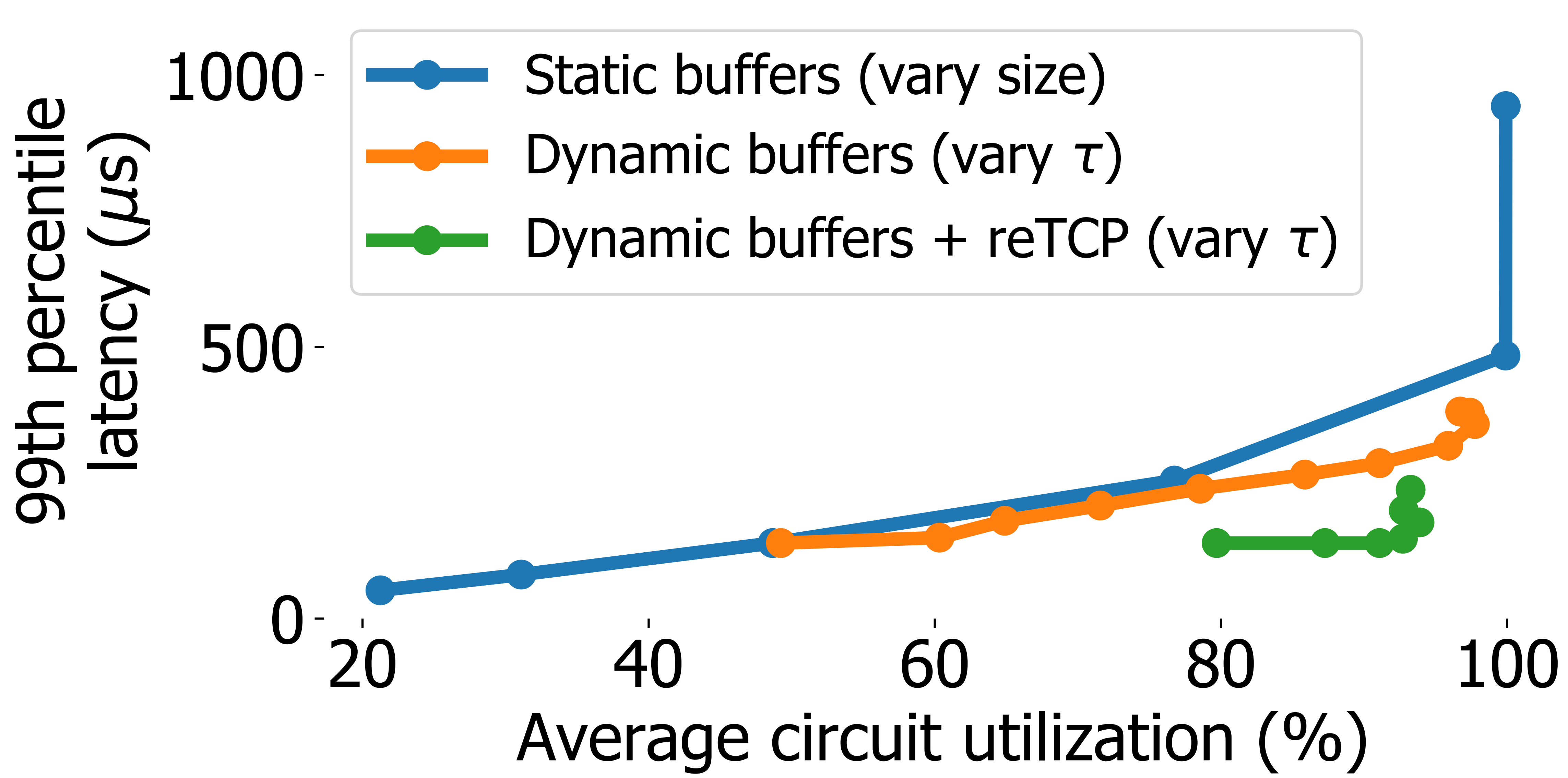
Short prebuffer time means low latency

Median latency



99th percentile latency



With 150µs of prebuffering, dynamic buffers + reTCP achieve 93% circuit utilization with an only 1.20x increase in tail latency

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Limitations and future work

Dynamic buffer resizing and reTCP are designed to be minimally invasive

- Higher performance may be possible by involving the end-host further

Our evaluation used a simple traffic pattern to isolate TCP’s behavior

- Important to consider complex workloads as well

Is TCP the right protocol for hybrid networks?

Summary: Adapting TCP for RDCNs

Bandwidth fluctuations in reconfigurable datacenter networks break TCP's implicit assumption of relative network stability

Two techniques to ramp up TCP during short-lived circuits

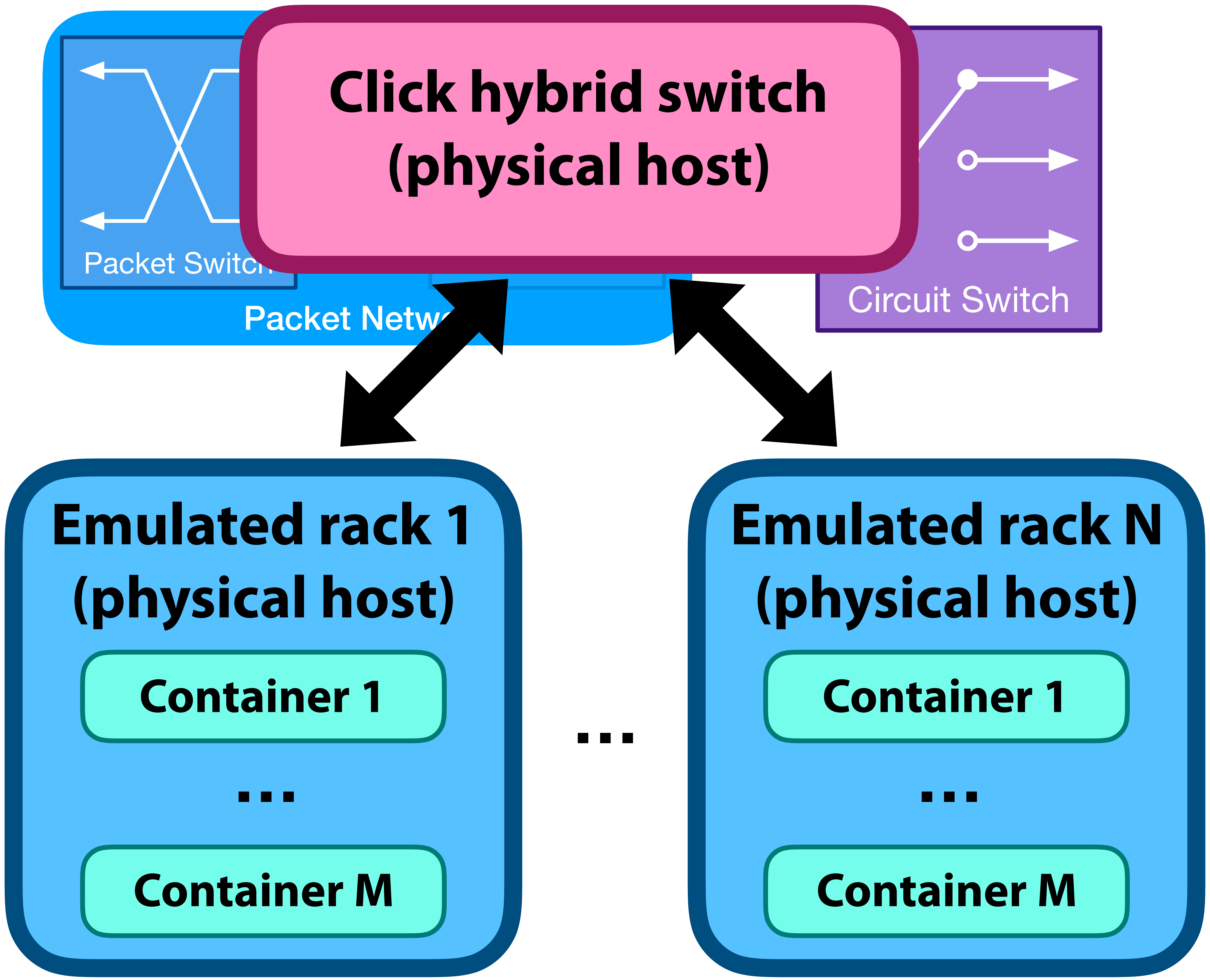
- ***Dynamic buffer resizing:*** Adapt ToR queues to packet or circuit network
- ***reTCP:*** Ramp up aggressively to fill new queue capacity

Etalon emulator open source at: ***github.com/mukerjee/etalon***

Christopher Canel ~ ccanel@cmu.edu

Thank you!

One more thing: Etalon emulator



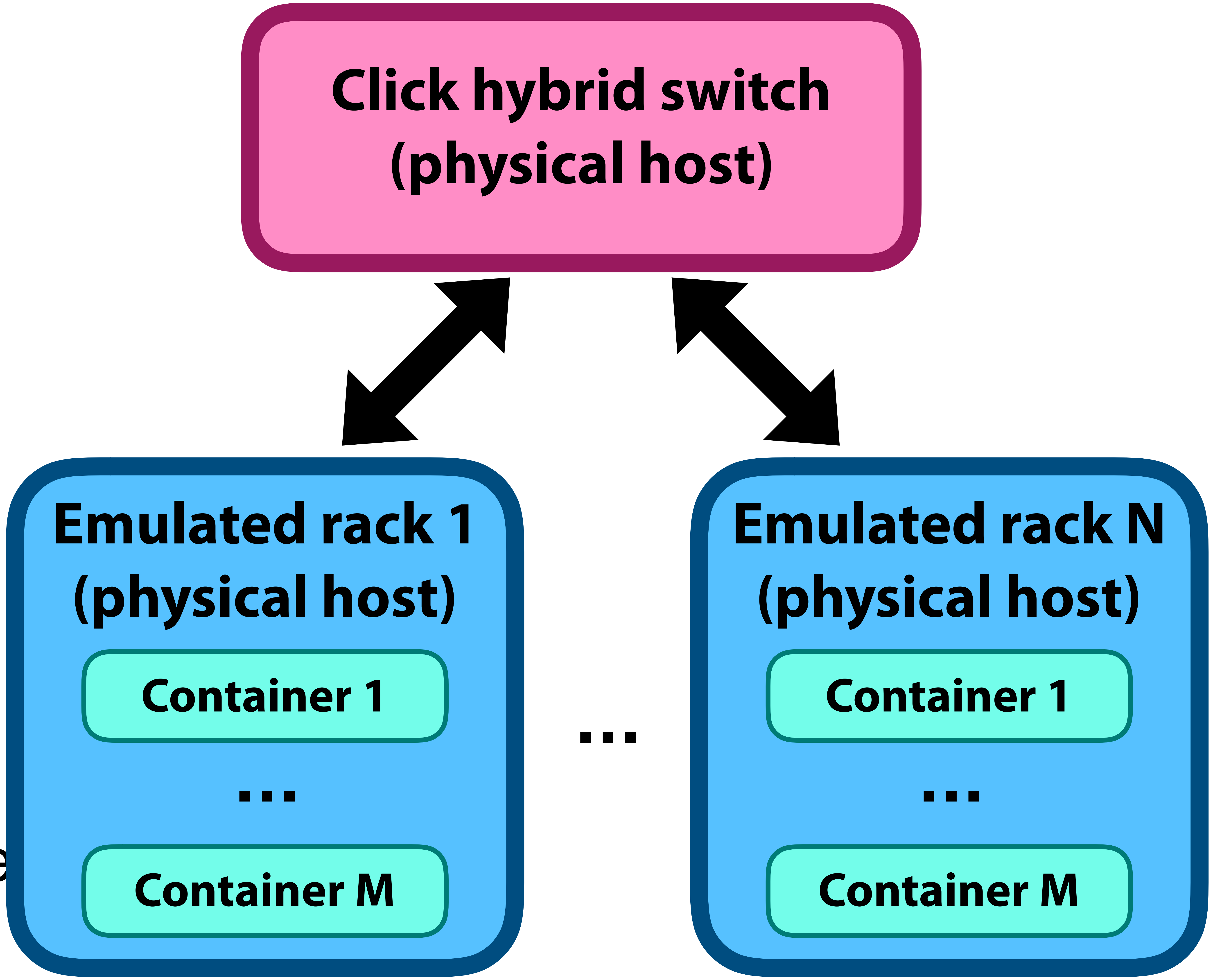
One more thing: Etalon emulator

Use *time dilation* to emulate high-bandwidth links

- "slows down" rest of the machine
- *libVT:* Catches common syscalls

Flowgrind to generate traffic

Strobe schedule: Each rack pair gets a circuit for an equal share



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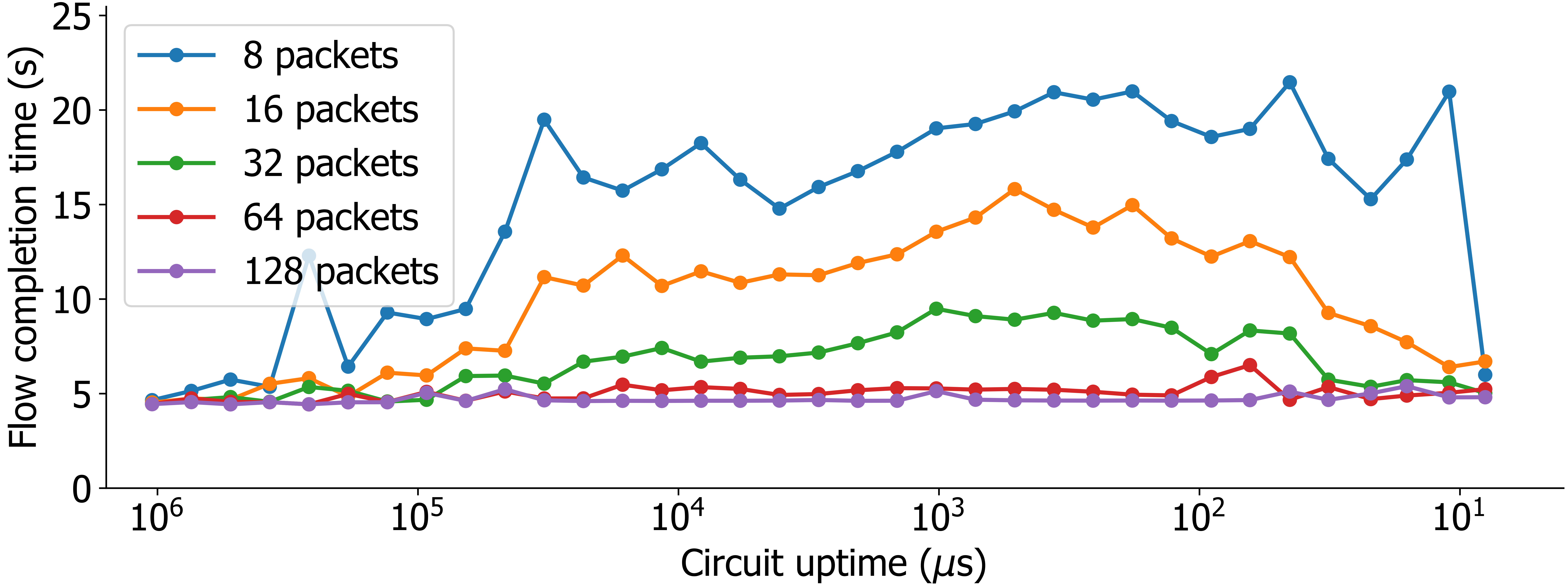
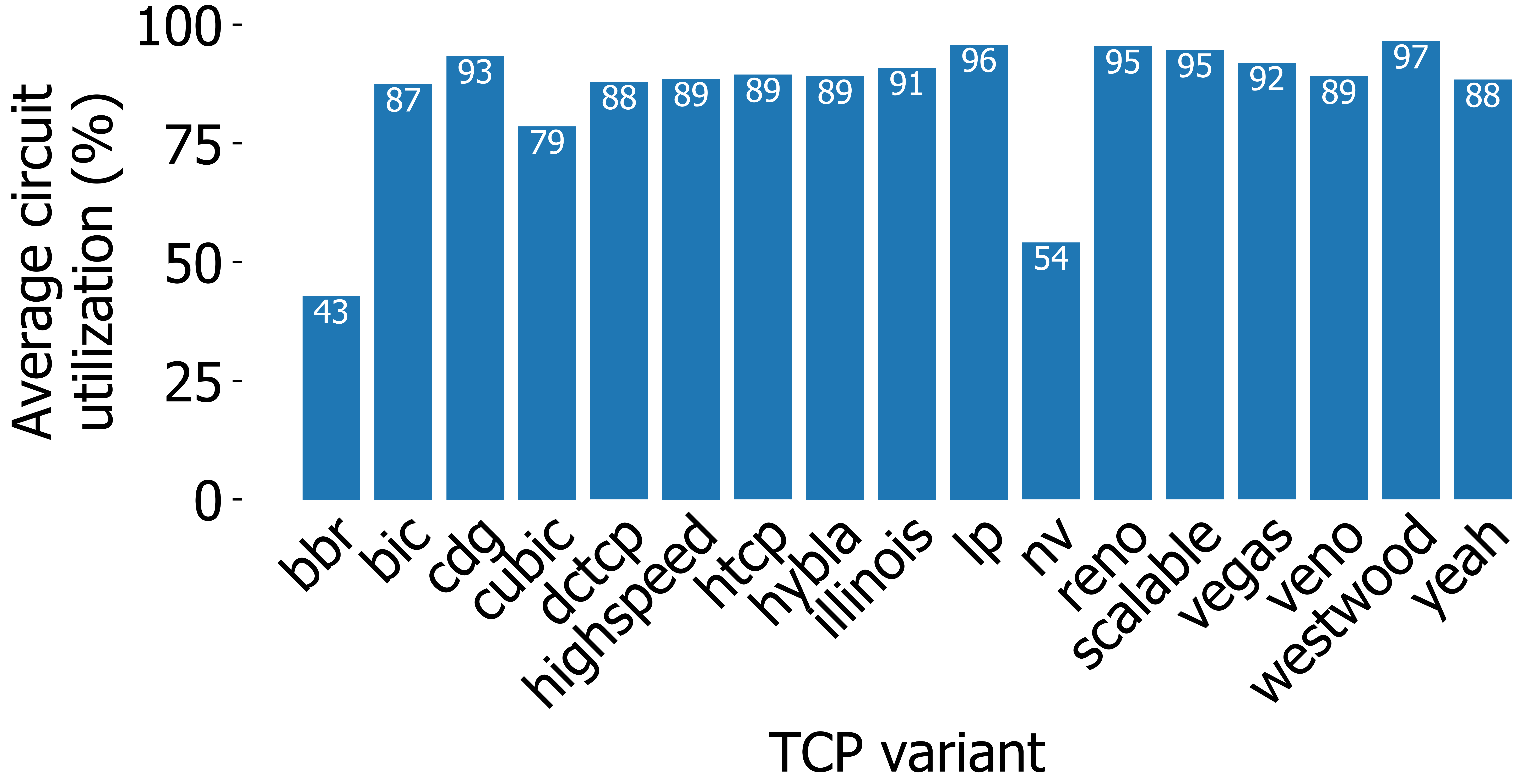
Backup Slides

Circuit uptime impacts FCT

Simulation; packet network: 10 Gb/s; circuit network: 80 Gb/s



Buffer resizing benefits many TCP variants



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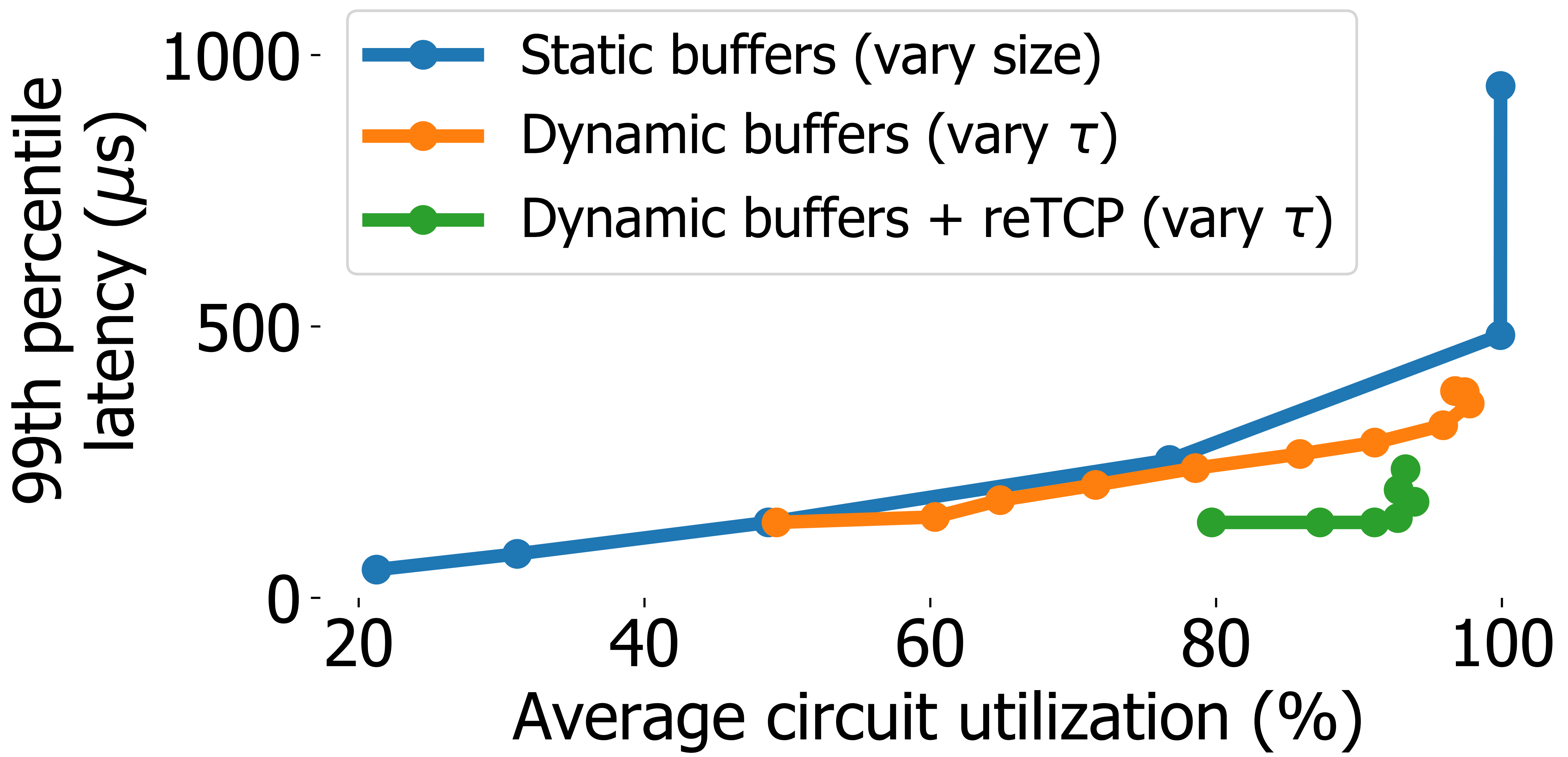
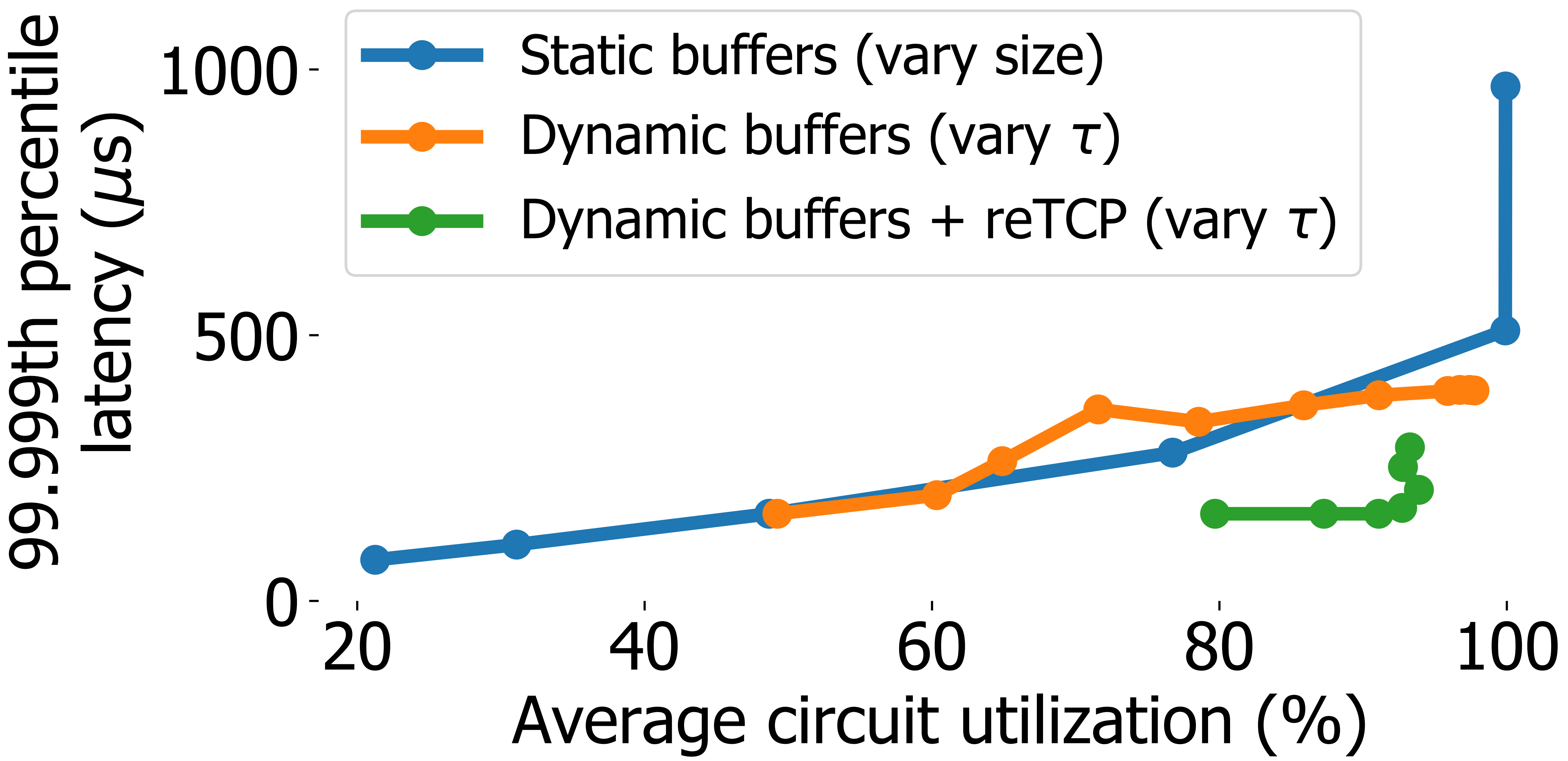
Higher latency percentiles perform similarly

99th percentile



99.999th percentile latency



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