

Data-Efficient Reinforcement Learning with Probabilistic Models

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 @mpd37

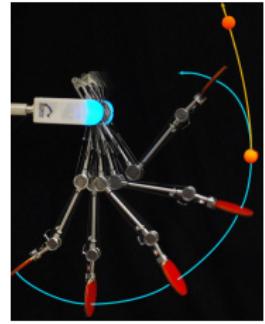
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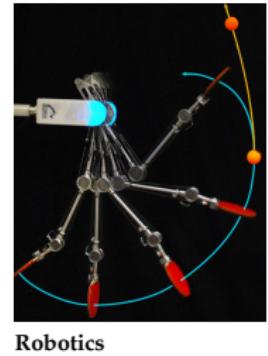
February 13, 2020

- Three key challenges in autonomous robots:
Modeling. Predicting. Decision making.

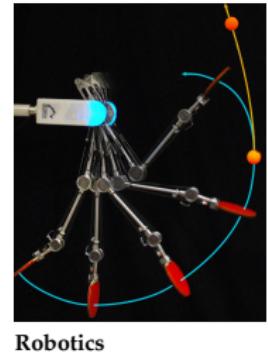


Robotics

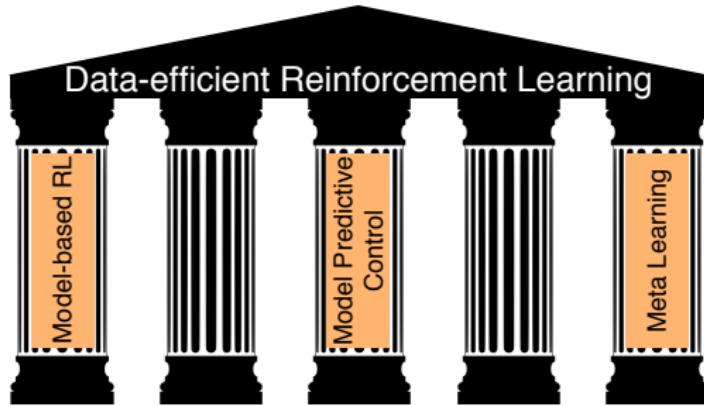
- Three key challenges in **autonomous robots**:
Modeling. Predicting. Decision making.
- No human in the loop ➡ “Learn” from data
- **Automatically** extract information
- **Data-efficient** (fast) learning
- Uncertainty: sensor noise, unknown processes,
limited knowledge, ...



- Three key challenges in **autonomous robots**:
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➔ **Reinforcement learning**
subject to data efficiency



1 Model-based RL

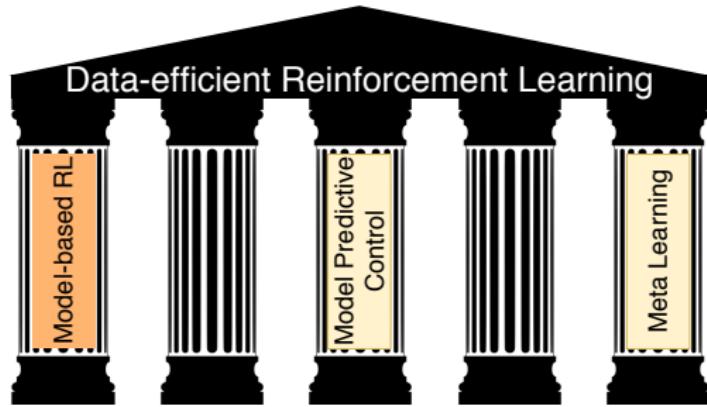
- ▶ Data-efficient decision making

2 Model predictive RL

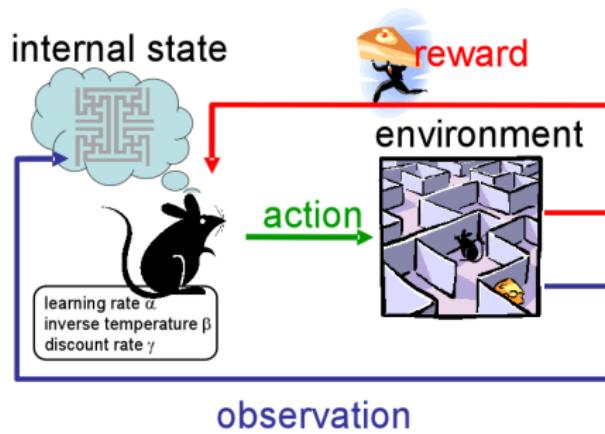
- ▶ Speed up learning further by online planning

3 Meta learning using latent variables

- ▶ Generalize knowledge to new situations



Reinforcement Learning



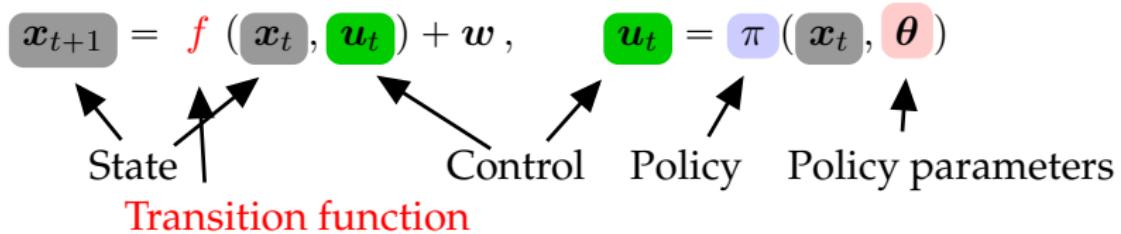
- Learn to solve a task
- Trial-and-error interaction with the environment
- Feedback via reward/cost function

$$x_{t+1} = f(x_t, u_t) + w, \quad u_t = \pi(x_t, \theta)$$

Diagram illustrating the Reinforcement Learning update rule:

- State**: Represented by x_t (grey box). An arrow labeled "State" points to it.
- Control**: Represented by u_t (green box). An arrow labeled "Control" points to it.
- Policy**: Represented by π (purple box). An arrow labeled "Policy" points to it.
- Policy parameters**: Represented by θ (pink box). An arrow labeled "Policy parameters" points to it.

The equation shows the next state x_{t+1} is determined by the transition function f applied to the current state x_t and control u_t , plus a noise term w . The control u_t is generated by the policy π based on the current state x_t and policy parameters θ .



Objective (Controller Learning)

Find policy parameters $\boldsymbol{\theta}^*$ that minimize the expected long-term cost

$$J(\boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t) | \boldsymbol{\theta}], \quad p(\mathbf{x}_0) = \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}_0, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_0).$$

Instantaneous cost $c(\mathbf{x}_t)$, e.g., $\|\mathbf{x}_t - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}}\|^2$

- Typical objective in **optimal control** and **reinforcement learning** (Bertsekas, 2005; Sutton & Barto, 1998)

Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(x_t)|\theta]$

PILCO Framework: High-Level Steps

- 1 Probabilistic model for transition function f
 - ▶ System identification

Objective

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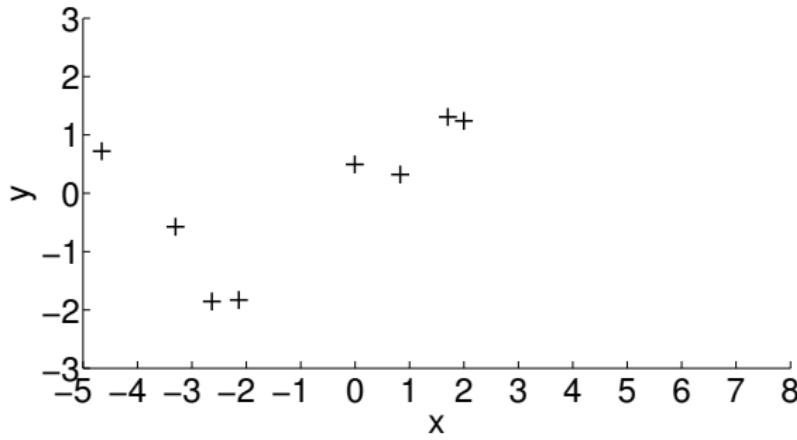
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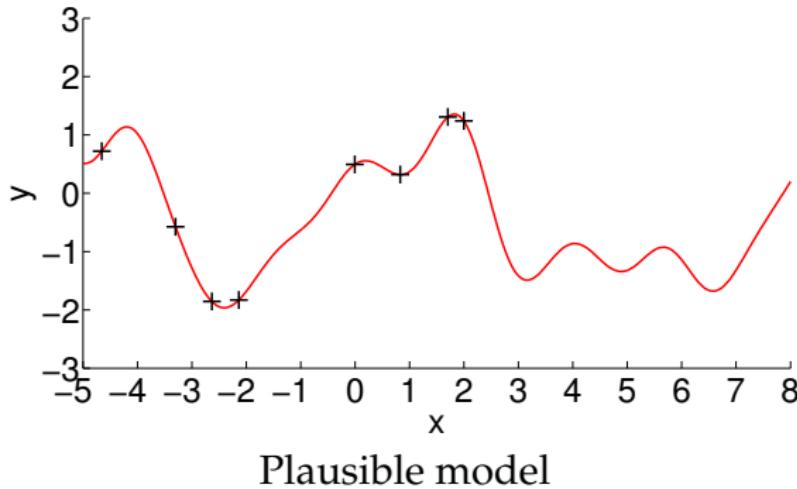
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Model learning problem: Find a function $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$

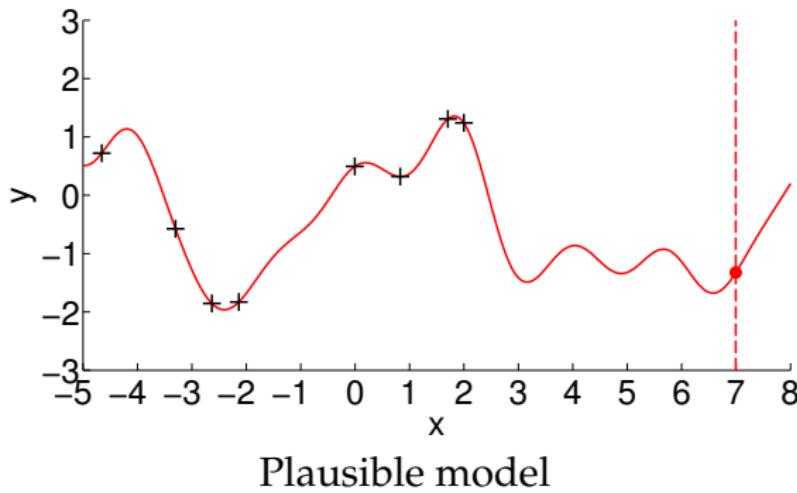


Observed function values

Model learning problem: Find a function $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$

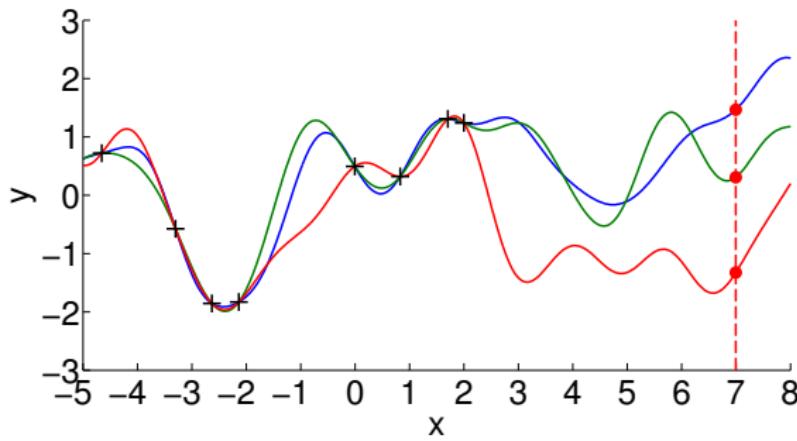


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Predictions? Decision Making?

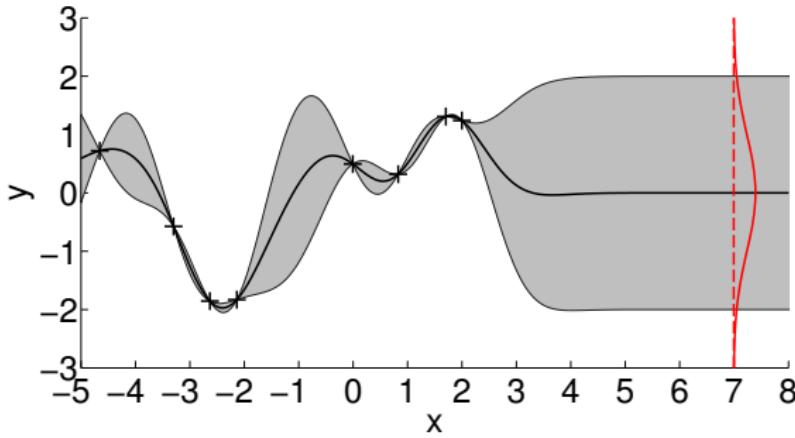
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More plausible models

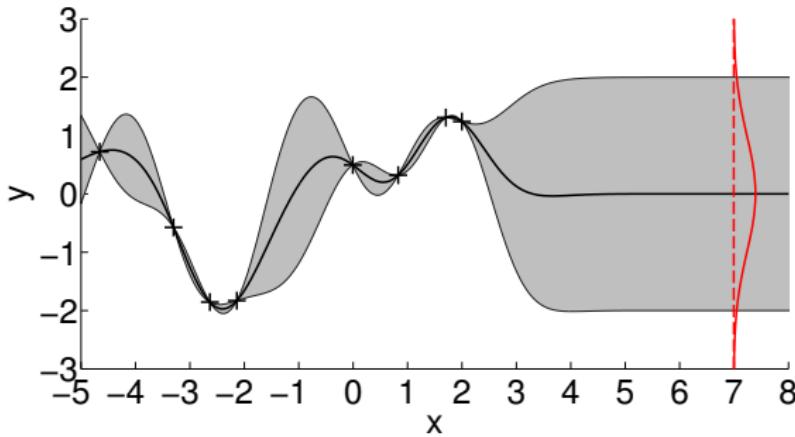
Predictions? Decision Making? Model Errors!

Model learning problem: Find a function $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$



Distribution over plausible functions

Model learning problem: Find a function $f : x \mapsto f(x) = y$



Distribution over plausible functions

- ▶ Express **uncertainty** about the underlying function to be **robust to model errors**
- ▶ **Gaussian process** for model learning
(Rasmussen & Williams, 2006)

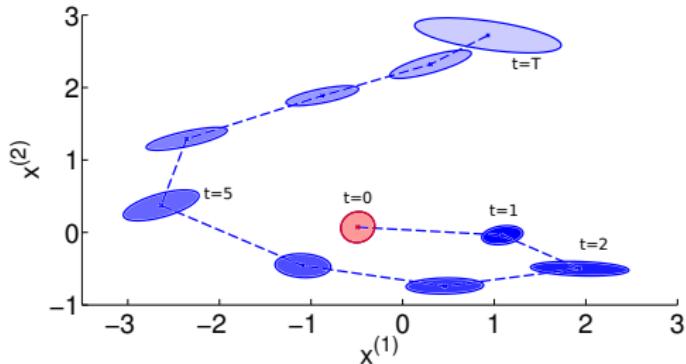
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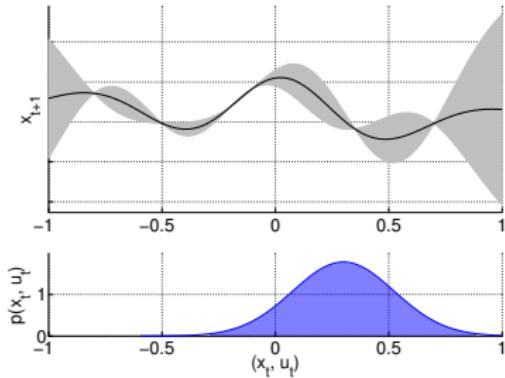
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Long-Term Predictions



- Iteratively compute $p(x_1|\theta), \dots, p(x_T|\theta)$

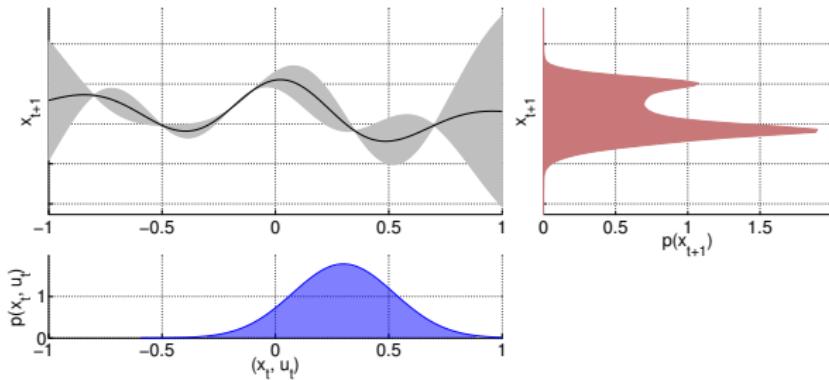
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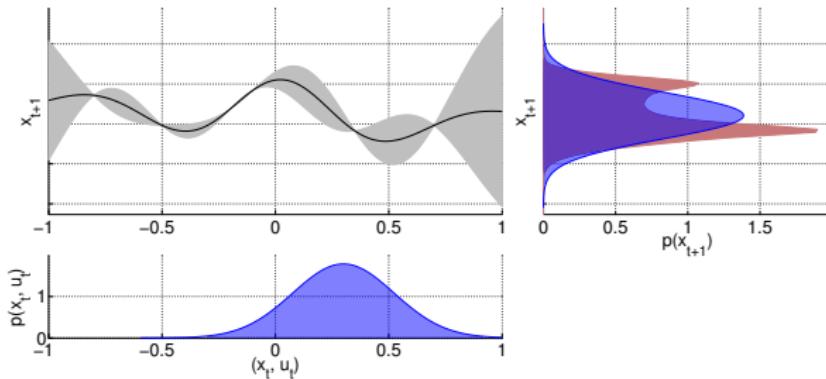
$$\underbrace{p(\mathbf{x}_{t+1}|\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t)}_{\text{GP prediction}} \quad \underbrace{p(\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t|\boldsymbol{\theta})}_{\mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})}$$

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► GP moment matching

(Girard et al., 2002; Quiñonero-Candela et al., 2003)

Deisenroth et al. (IEEE-TPAMI, 2015): *Gaussian Processes for Data-Efficient Learning in Robotics and Control*

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 - Compute expected long-term cost $J(\theta)$
 - Find parameters θ that minimize $J(\theta)$
- 4 Apply controller

Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost $J(\theta) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(x_t)|\theta]$

- Know how to predict $p(x_1|\theta), \dots, p(x_T|\theta)$

Objective

Minimize expected long-term cost $J(\boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_t \mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t) | \boldsymbol{\theta}]$

- Know how to predict $p(\mathbf{x}_1 | \boldsymbol{\theta}), \dots, p(\mathbf{x}_T | \boldsymbol{\theta})$
- Compute

$$\mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t) | \boldsymbol{\theta}] = \int c(\mathbf{x}_t) \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{x}_t | \boldsymbol{\mu}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_t) d\mathbf{x}_t, \quad t = 1, \dots, T,$$

and sum them up to obtain $J(\boldsymbol{\theta})$

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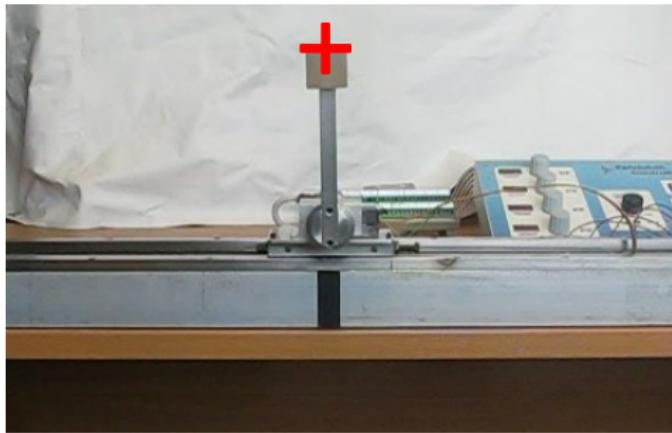
- Analytically compute gradient $dJ(\boldsymbol{\theta})/d\boldsymbol{\theta}$
- Standard gradient-based optimizer (e.g., BFGS) to find $\boldsymbol{\theta}^*$

Objective

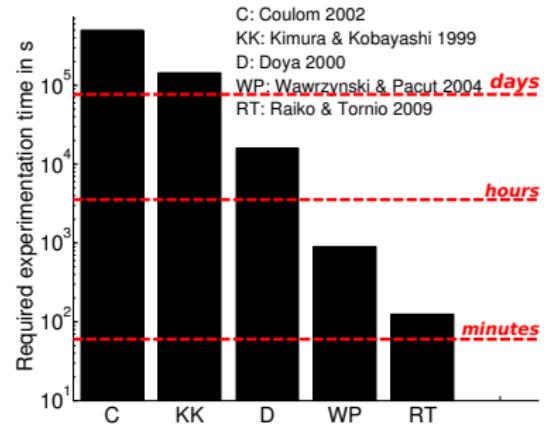
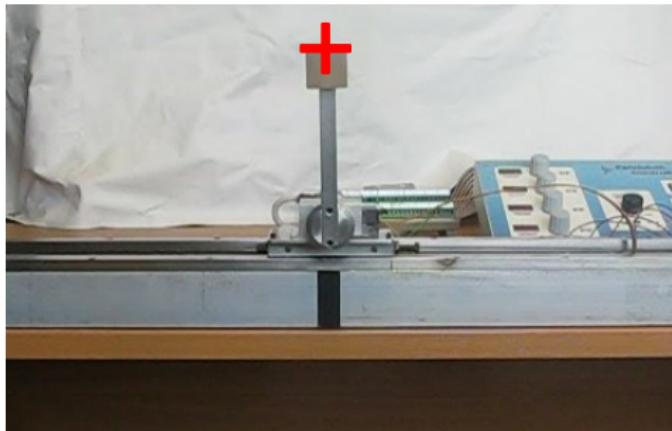
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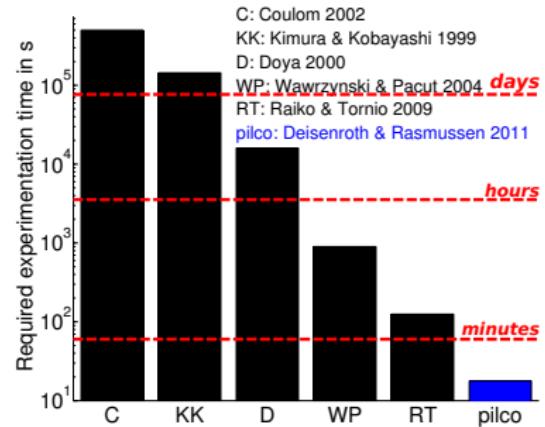
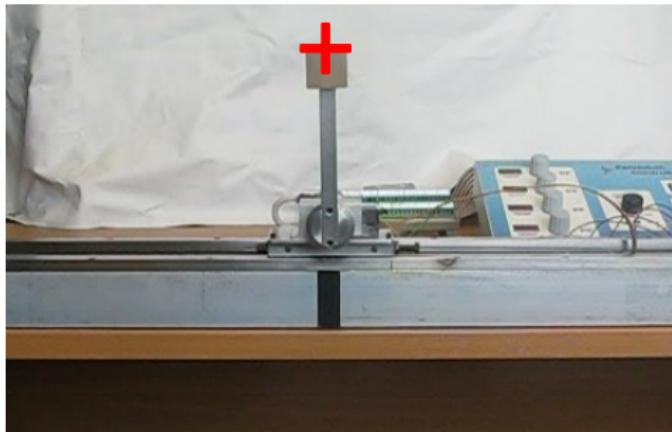


- Swing up and balance a freely swinging pendulum on a cart
- No knowledge about nonlinear dynamics ➤ Learn from scratch
- Cost function $c(\mathbf{x}) = 1 - \exp(-\|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}}\|^2)$
- Code: <https://github.com/ICL-SML/pilco-matlab>



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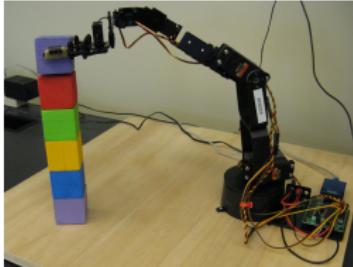
Standard Benchmark: Cart-Pole Swing-up



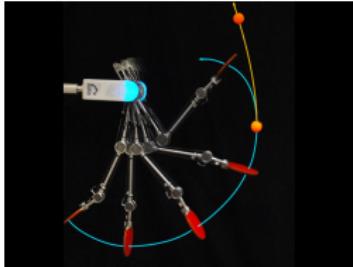
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- **Unprecedented learning speed** compared to state-of-the-art
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Deisenroth & Rasmussen (ICML, 2011): PILCO: A Model-based and Data-efficient Approach to Policy Search

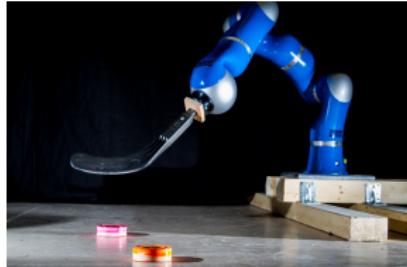
Wide Applicability



with D Fox



with P Englert, A Paraschos, J Peters



with A Kupcsik, J Peters, G Neumann



B Bischoff (Bosch), ESANN 2013



A McHutchon (U Cambridge)



B Bischoff (Bosch), ECML 2013

► Application to a wide range of robotic systems

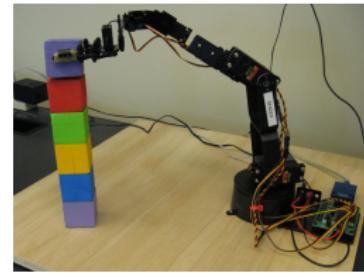
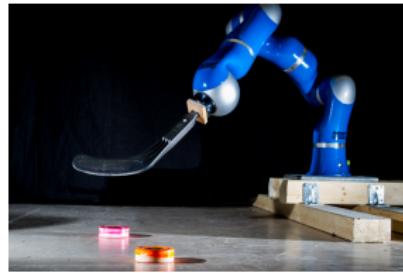
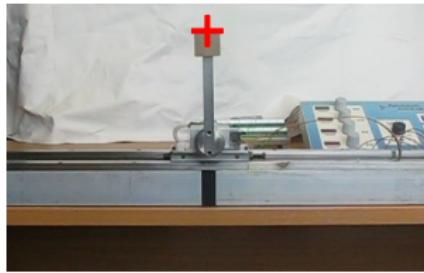
Deisenroth et al. (RSS, 2011): *Learning to Control a Low-Cost Manipulator using Data-efficient Reinforcement Learning*

Englert et al. (ICRA, 2013): *Model-based Imitation Learning by Probabilistic Trajectory Matching*

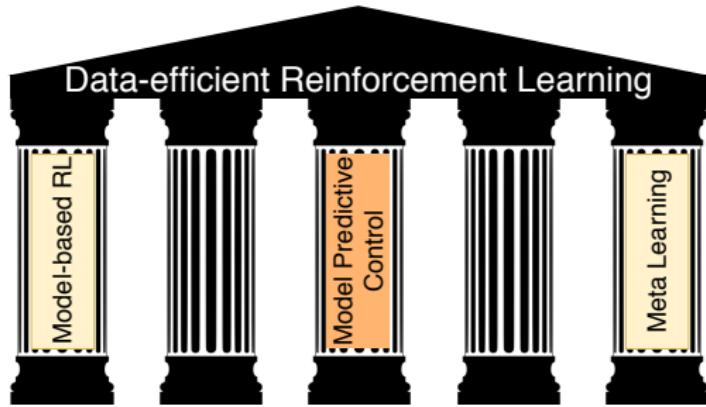
Deisenroth et al. (ICRA, 2014): *Multi-Task Policy Search for Robotics*

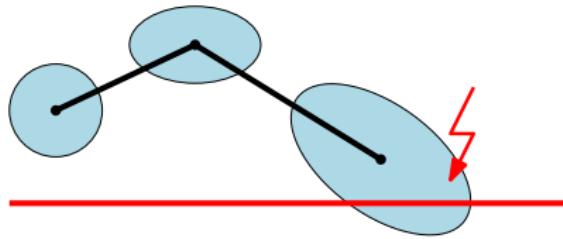
Kupcsik et al. (AIJ, 2017): *Model-based Contextual Policy Search for Data-Efficient Generalization of Robot Skills*

Summary (1)

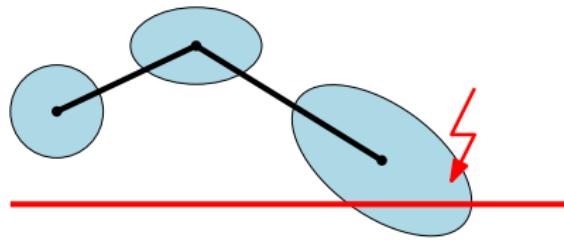


- In robotics, **data-efficient** learning is critical
- Probabilistic, model-based RL approach
 - Reduce model bias
 - Unprecedented learning speed
 - Wide applicability





- Deal with real-world **safety constraints** (states/controls)
- Use probabilistic model to predict whether state constraints are violated (e.g., Sui et al., 2015; Berkenkamp et al., 2017)
- Adjust policy if necessary (during policy learning)



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- Adjust policy if necessary (during policy learning)
- ▶ Safe exploration within an MPC-based RL setting
- ▶ Optimize control signals u_t directly (no policy parameters)

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- Few parameters to optimize ➤ Low-dimensional search space
- Open-loop control
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- Few parameters to optimize ➤ Low-dimensional search space
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- Model predictive control (MPC) turns this into a closed-loop control approach
- Use this within a trial-and-error RL setting

- Learned GP model for transition dynamics
- Repeat (while executing the policy):
 - 1 In current state x_t , determine optimal control sequence u_0^*, \dots, u_{H-1}^*
 - 2 Apply first control u_0^* in state x_t
 - 3 Transition to next state x_{t+1}
 - 4 Update GP transition model

- Uncertainty propagation is deterministic (GP moment matching)
 - Re-formulate system dynamics:

$$\mathbf{z}_{t+1} = f_{MM}(\mathbf{z}_t, \mathbf{u}_t)$$

$$\mathbf{z}_t = \{\boldsymbol{\mu}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_t\}$$
 ► Collects moments

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- Deterministic system function that propagates moments
- Lipschitz continuity (under mild assumptions) implies that we can apply Pontryagin's Minimum Principle
 - Principled treatment of constraints on controls

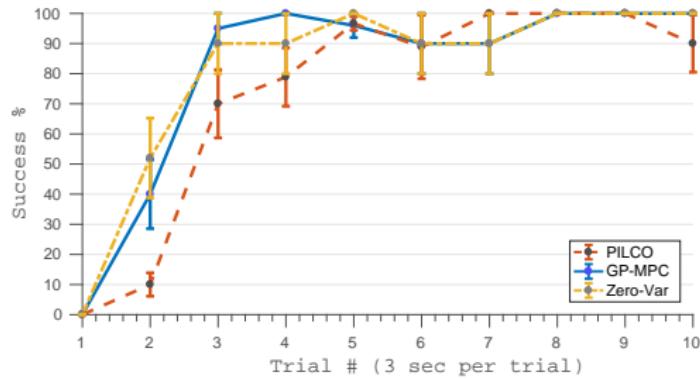
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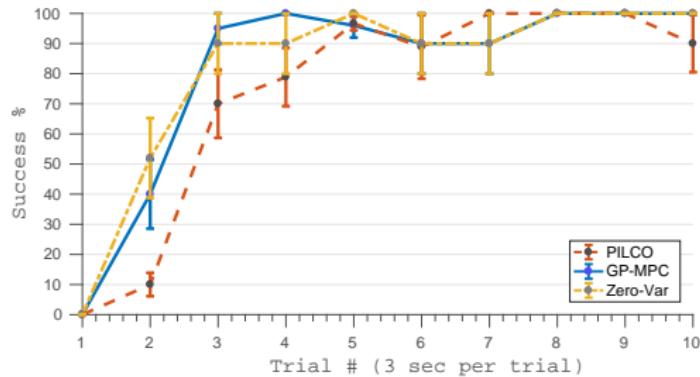
- Deterministic system function that propagates moments
- Lipschitz continuity (under mild assumptions) implies that we can apply Pontryagin's Minimum Principle
 - ▶ Principled treatment of constraints on controls
- Use predictive uncertainty to check violation of state constraints

Learning Speed (Cart Pole)



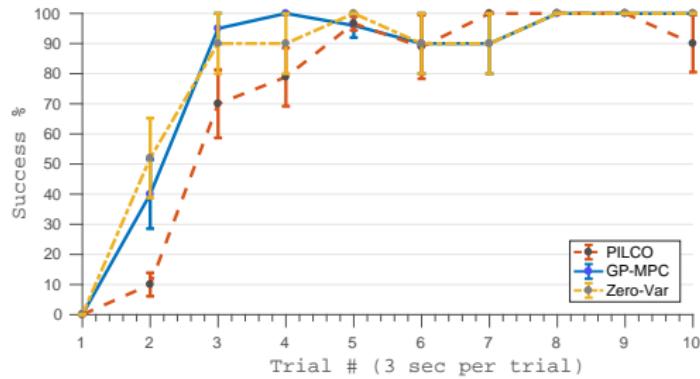
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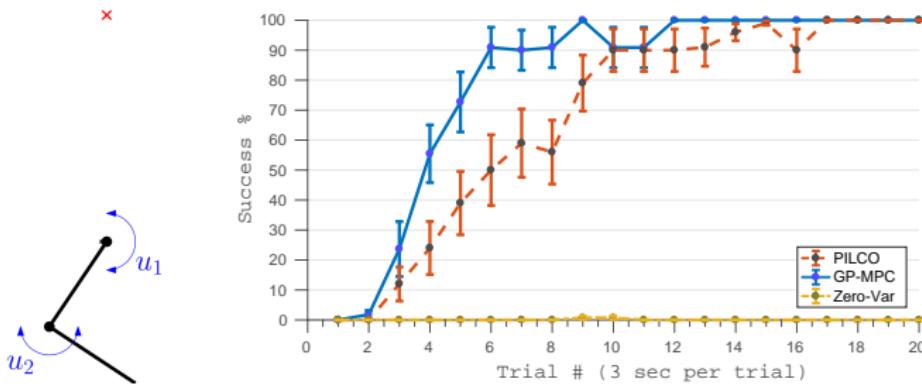
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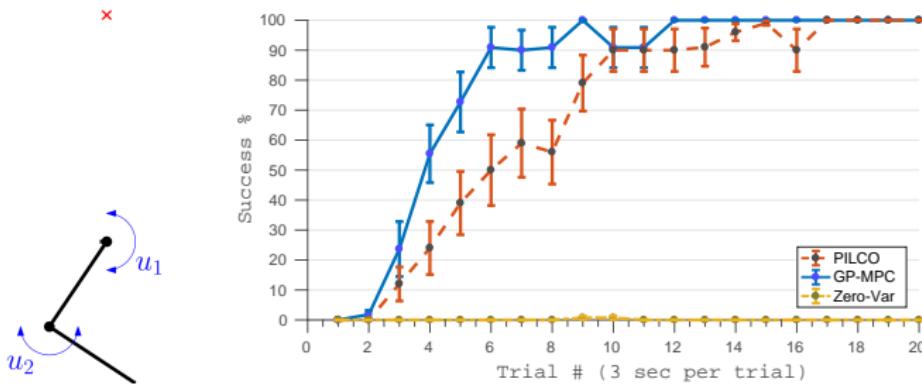
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- MPC more robust to model inaccuracies than a parametrized feedback controller

Learning Speed (Double Pendulum)



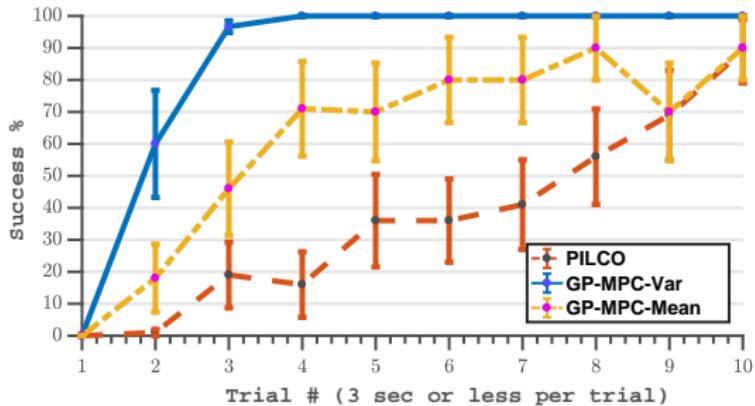
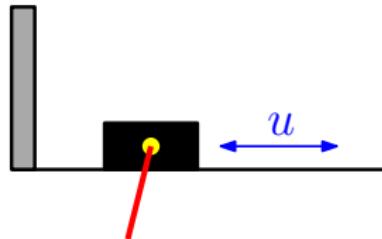
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 - Gets stuck in local optimum near start state
 - Insufficient exploration due to lack of uncertainty propagation

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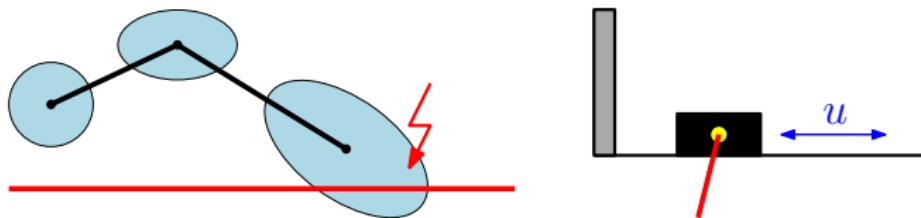
- GP-MPC maintains the same improvement in data efficiency
- Zero-Var fails:
 - Gets stuck in local optimum near start state
 - Insufficient exploration due to lack of uncertainty propagation
- Although MPC is fairly robust to model inaccuracies we cannot get away without uncertainty propagation

Safety Constraints (Cart Pole)

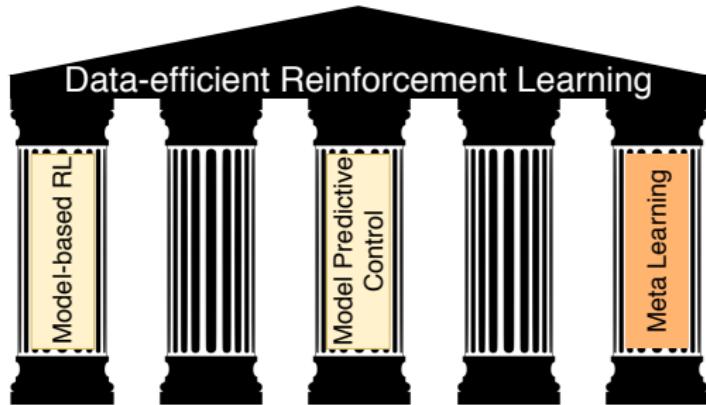


PILCO	16/100	constraint violations
GP-MPC-Mean	21/100	constraint violations
GP-MPC-Var	3/100	constraint violations

► Propagating model uncertainty important for safety



- Probabilistic prediction models for safe exploration
- Uncertainty propagation can be used to reduce violation of safety constraints
- MPC framework increases robustness to model errors
 - ▶ Increased data efficiency





Meta Learning

Generalize knowledge from known tasks to new (related) tasks



Meta Learning

Generalize knowledge from known tasks to new (related) tasks

- Different robot configurations (link lengths, weights, ...)
- Re-use experience gathered so far generalize learning to new dynamics that are similar
 - ▶ Accelerated learning

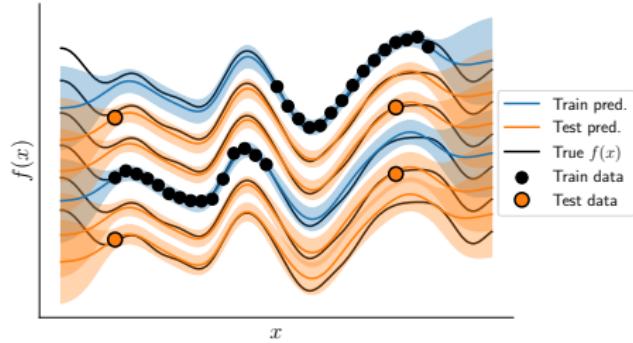
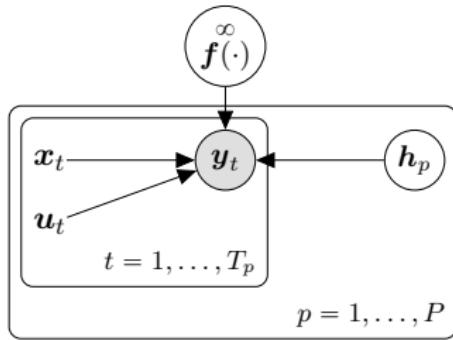


- Separate global and task-specific properties
- Shared global parameters describe general dynamics
- Describe task-specific (local) configurations with latent variable



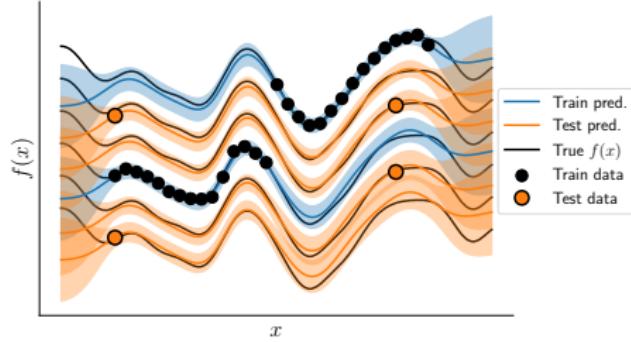
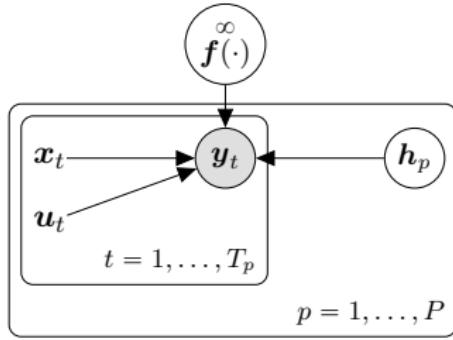
- Separate global and task-specific properties
- Shared global parameters describe general dynamics
- Describe task-specific (local) configurations with latent variable
- Online variational inference of (unseen) configurations

Meta Model Learning with Latent Variables



$$\mathbf{y}_t = f(\mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p)$$

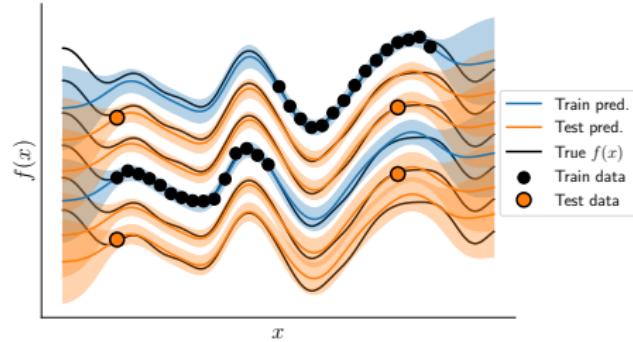
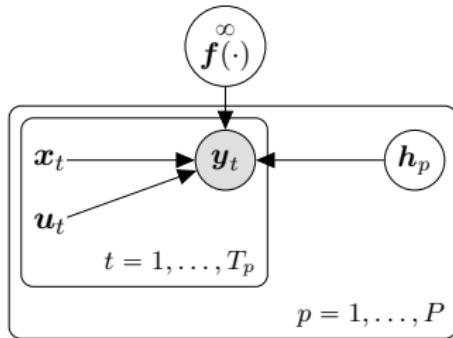
Meta Model Learning with Latent Variables



$$y_t = f(x_t, u_t, h_p)$$

- GP captures global properties of the dynamics

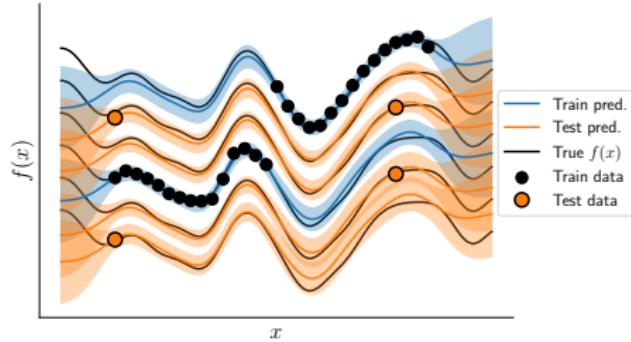
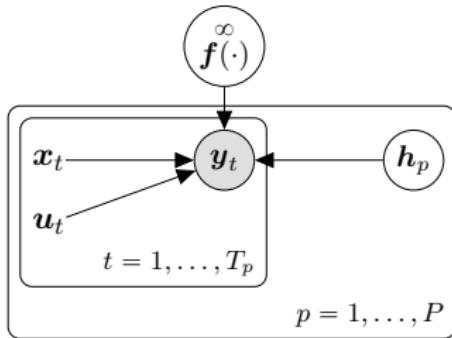
Meta Model Learning with Latent Variables



$$y_t = f(x_t, u_t, h_p)$$

- GP captures global properties of the dynamics
- Latent variable h_p describes local configuration
 - ▶ Variational inference to find a posterior on latent configuration

Meta Model Learning with Latent Variables

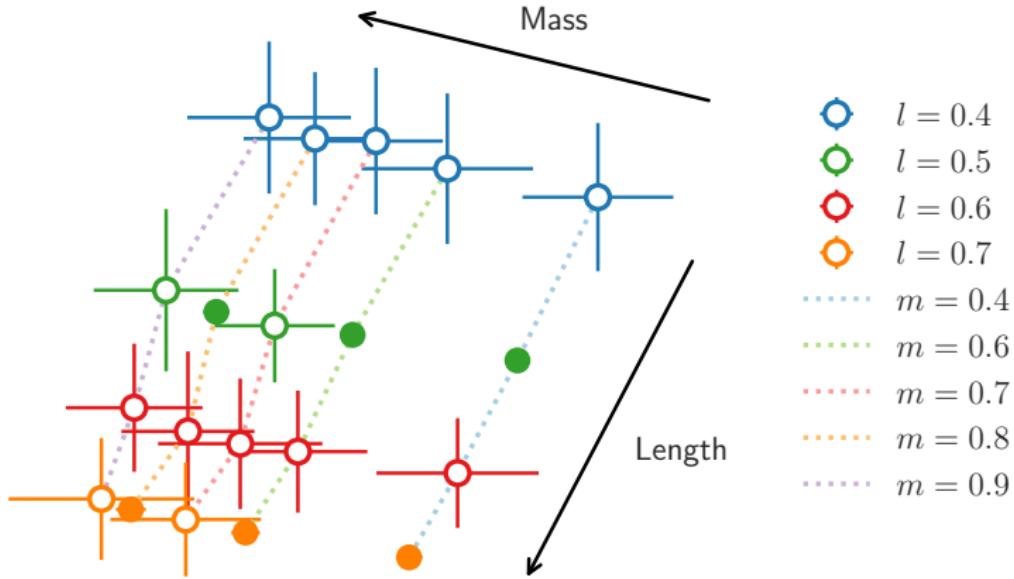


$$y_t = f(x_t, u_t, h_p)$$

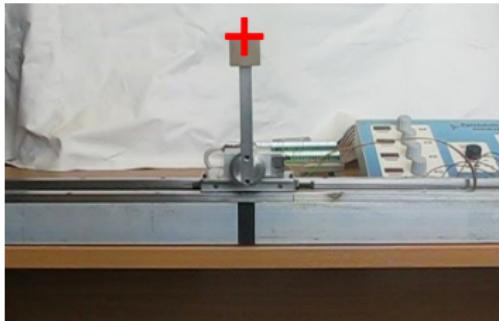
- GP captures global properties of the dynamics
- Latent variable h_p describes local configuration
 - ▶ Variational inference to find a posterior on latent configuration
- Fast online inference of new configurations (no model re-training required)

Sæmundsson et al. (UAI, 2018): *Meta Reinforcement Learning with Latent Variable Gaussian Processes*

Latent Embeddings



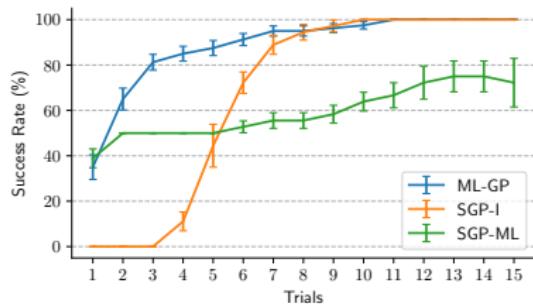
- Latent variable h encodes length l and mass m of the cart pole
- 6 training tasks, 14 held-out test tasks



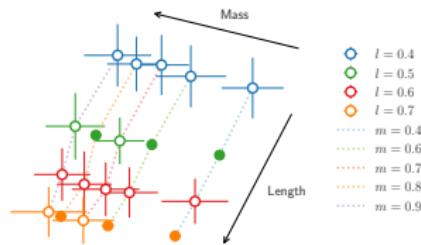
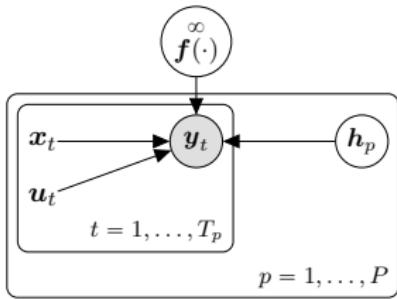
- Pre-trained on 6 training configurations until solved

Model	Training (s)	Description
Independent	16.1 ± 0.4	Independent GP-MPC
Aggregated	23.7 ± 1.4	Aggregated experience (no latents)
Meta learning	15.1 ± 0.5	Aggregated experience (with latents)

► Meta learning can help speeding up RL

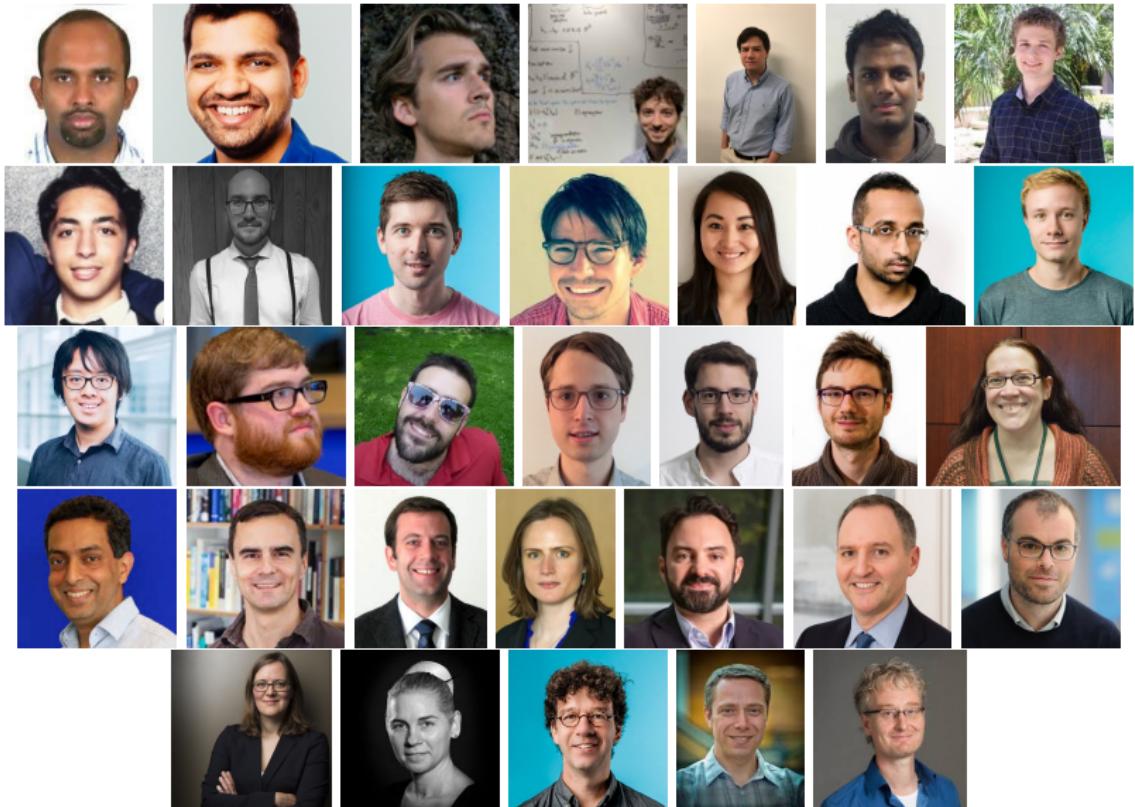


- Few-shot generalization on 4 unseen configurations
 - Success: solve all 10 (6 training + 4 test) tasks
 - Meta learning: blue
 - Independent (GP-MPC): orange
 - Aggregated experience model (no latents): green
- **Meta RL generalizes well to unseen tasks**

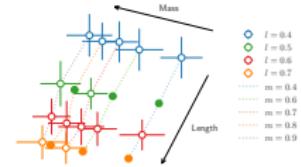
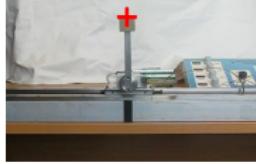


- Generalize knowledge from known situations to unseen ones
 - ▶ **Few-shot learning**
- Latent variable can be used to **infer task similarities**
- Significant speed-up in model learning and model-based RL

Team and Collaborators

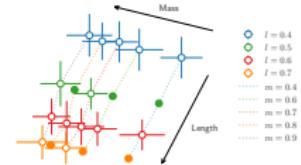
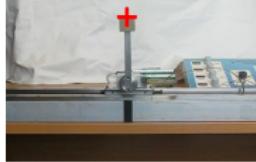


Wrap-Up



- **Data efficiency** is a practical challenge for autonomous robots
- Three pillars of data-efficient reinforcement learning for autonomous robots
 - 1 **Model-based reinforcement learning** with learned probabilistic models for fast learning from scratch
 - 2 **Model predictive control** with learned dynamics models accelerate learning and allow for safe exploration
 - 3 **Meta learning** using latent variables to generalize knowledge to new situations
- **Key to success:** Probabilistic modeling and Bayesian inference

Wrap-Up



- **Data efficiency** is a practical challenge for autonomous robots
- Three pillars of data-efficient reinforcement learning for autonomous robots
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- **Key to success:** Probabilistic modeling and Bayesian inference

Thank you for your attention

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- [19] M. K. Titsias. Variational Learning of Inducing Variables in Sparse Gaussian Processes. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics*, 2009.

■ Controller:

$$\tilde{\pi}(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \sum_{k=1}^K w_k \exp \left(-\frac{1}{2} (\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_k)^\top \boldsymbol{\Lambda} (\boldsymbol{x} - \boldsymbol{\mu}_k) \right)$$
$$u = \pi(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = u_{\max} \sigma(\tilde{\pi}(\boldsymbol{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})) \in [-u_{\max}, u_{\max}] ,$$

where σ is a squashing function.

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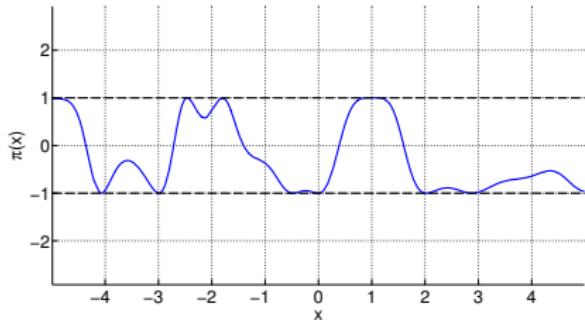
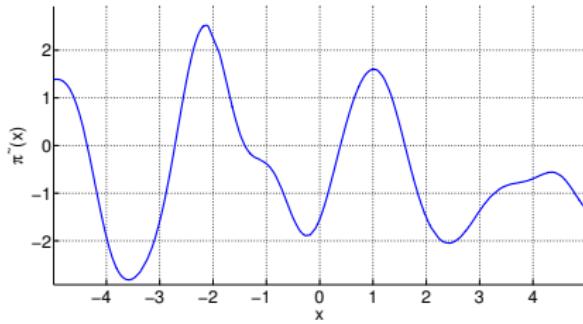
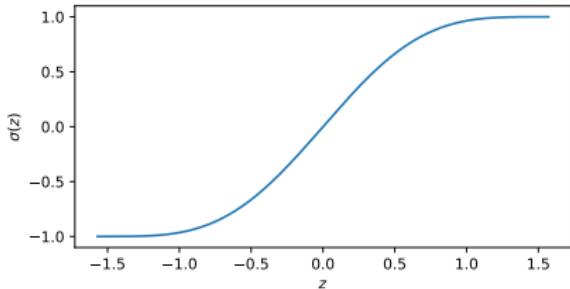
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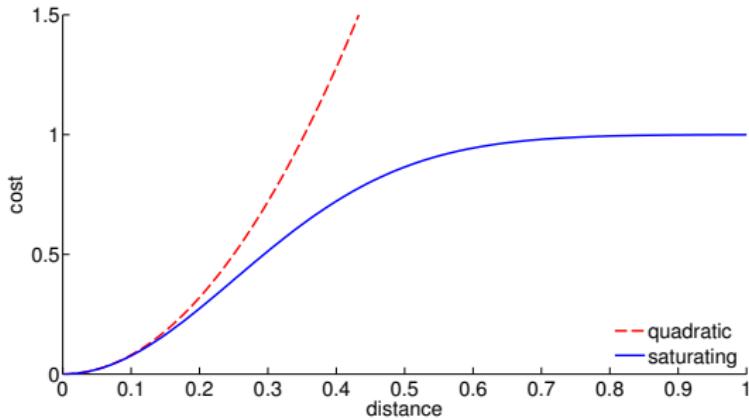
- Squashing function:

$$\sigma(z) = \frac{9}{8} \sin(z) + \frac{1}{8} \sin(3z)$$

Squashing Function

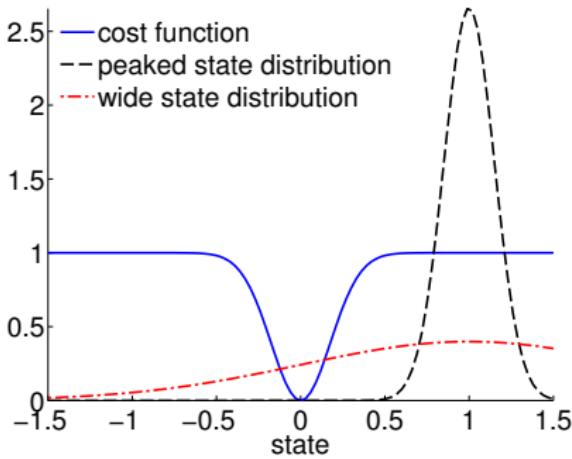


- **Quadratic cost** $c(\mathbf{x}) = (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}})^{\top} \mathbf{W} (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}})$
- **Saturating cost** $c(\mathbf{x}) = 1 - \exp \left(- (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}})^{\top} \mathbf{W} (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{\text{target}}) \right)$



- Quadratic cost pays a lot of attention to states “far away”
 - ▶ Bad idea for exploration

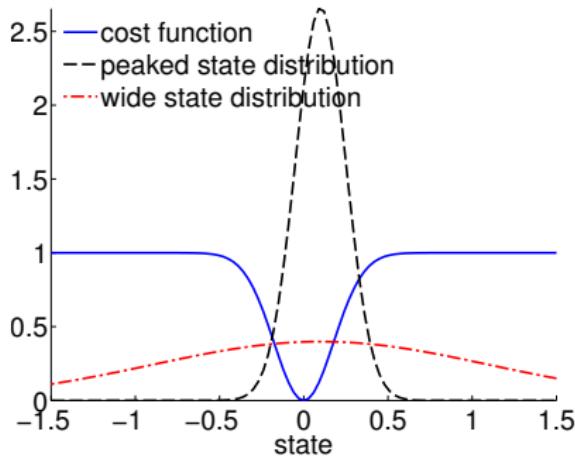
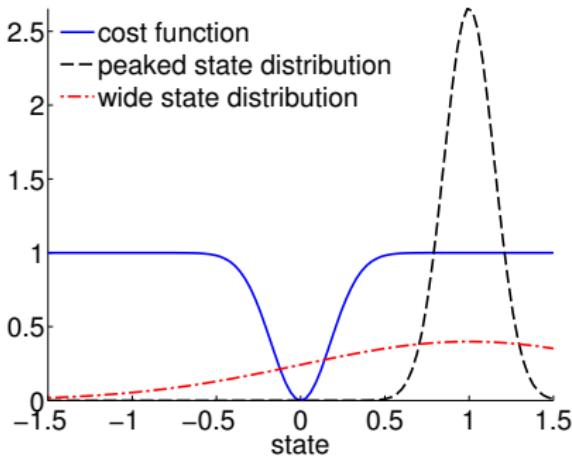
Task: Minimize $\mathbb{E}[c(\mathbf{x}_t)]$



- In the **early stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be far away from the target

Natural Exploration with the Saturating Cost

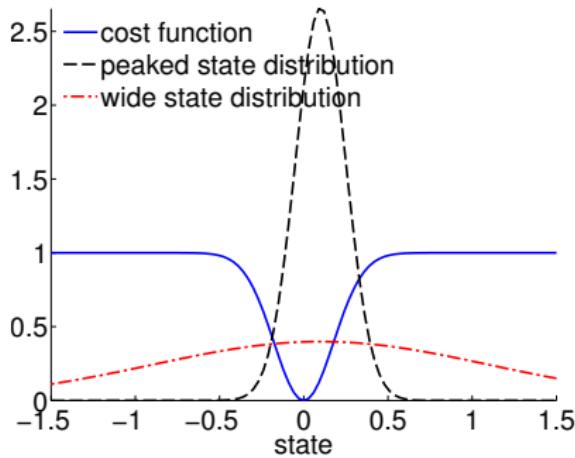
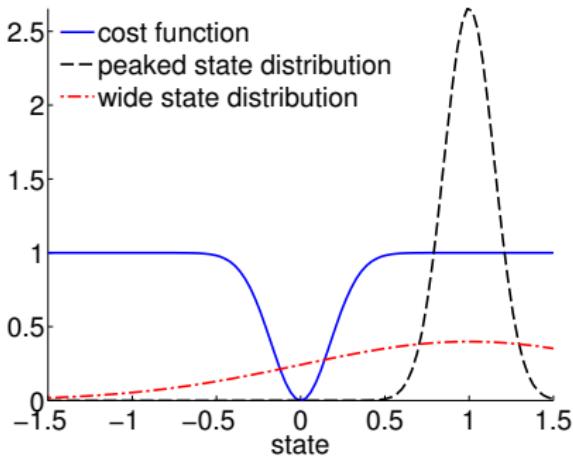
Task: Minimize $\mathbb{E}[c(x_t)]$



- In the **early stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be far away from the target ➤ **Exploration** favored

Natural Exploration with the Saturating Cost

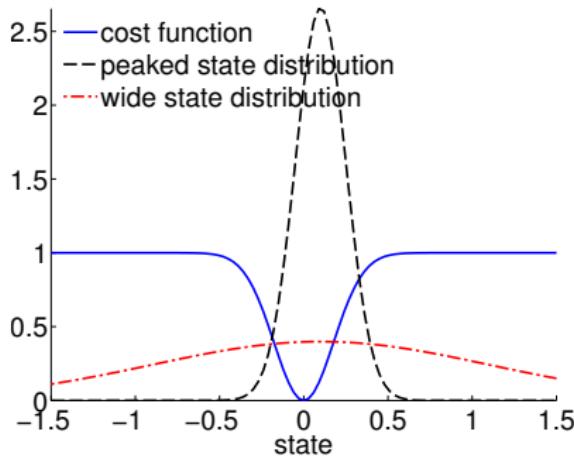
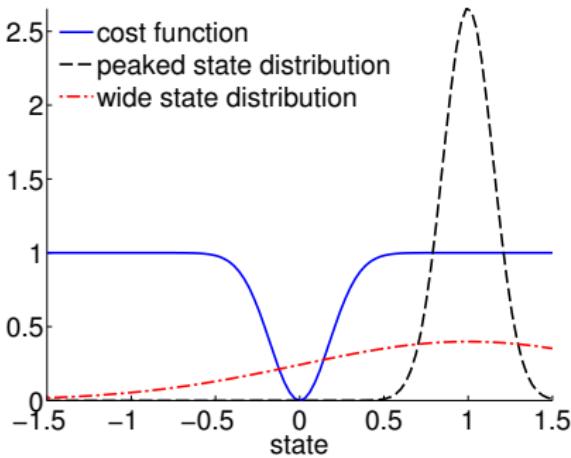
Task: Minimize $\mathbb{E}[c(x_t)]$



- In the **early stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be far away from the target ► **Exploration** favored
- In the **final stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be close to the target

Natural Exploration with the Saturating Cost

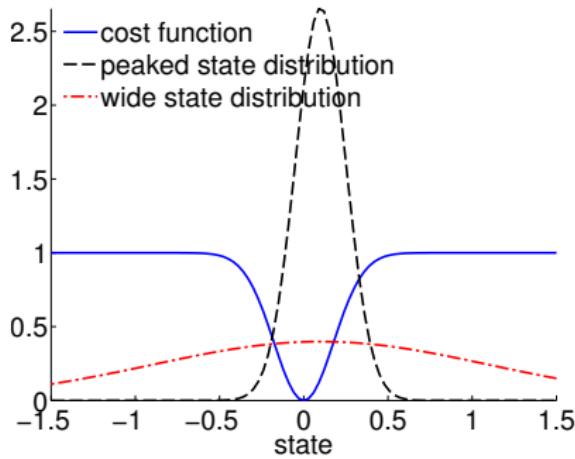
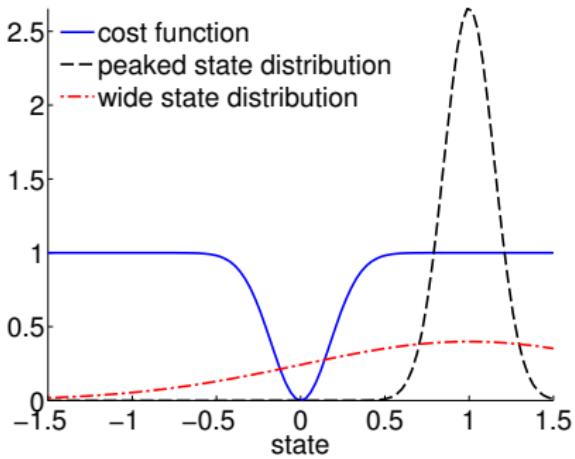
Task: Minimize $\mathbb{E}[c(x_t)]$



- In the **early stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be far away from the target ► **Exploration** favored
- In the **final stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be close to the target ► **Exploitation** favored

Natural Exploration with the Saturating Cost

Task: Minimize $\mathbb{E}[c(x_t)]$



- In the **early stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be far away from the target ► **Exploration** favored
 - In the **final stages of learning**, state predictions are expected to be close to the target ► **Exploitation** favored
- Bayesian treatment: **Natural exploration/exploitation trade-off**

$$f \sim GP(0, k), \quad \text{Training data: } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}$$
$$\mathbf{x}_* \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

- Compute $\mathbb{E}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)]$

$$f \sim GP(0, k), \quad \text{Training data: } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}$$
$$\mathbf{x}_* \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

- Compute $\mathbb{E}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)]$

$$\mathbb{E}_{f, \mathbf{x}_*}[f(\mathbf{x}_*)] = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} \left[\mathbb{E}_f[f(\mathbf{x}_*) | \mathbf{x}_*] \right] = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}_*} [m_f(\mathbf{x}_*)]$$

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$$f \sim GP(0, k), \quad \text{Training data: } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}$$

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$$f \sim GP(0, k), \quad \text{Training data: } \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{y}$$

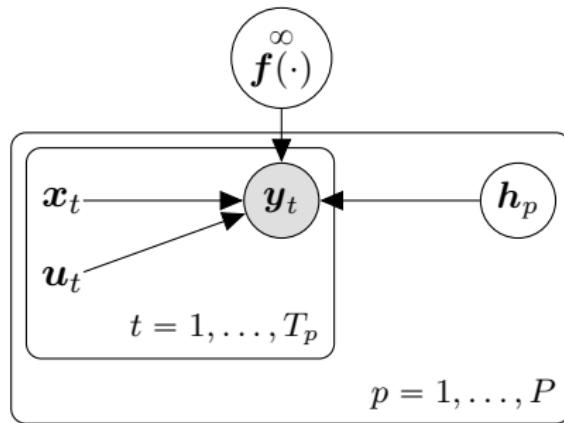
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- If k is a Gaussian (squared exponential) kernel, this integral can be solved analytically
- Variance of $f(\mathbf{x}_*)$ can be computed similarly

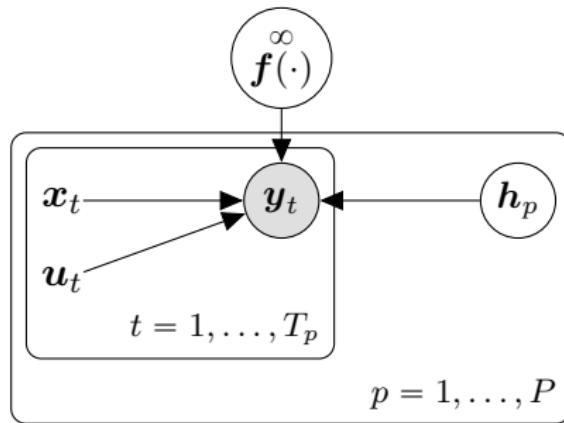
Meta Learning Model



$$\mathbf{f}(\cdot) \sim GP$$

$$p(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_p p(\mathbf{h}_p), \quad p(\mathbf{h}_p) = \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

Meta Learning Model

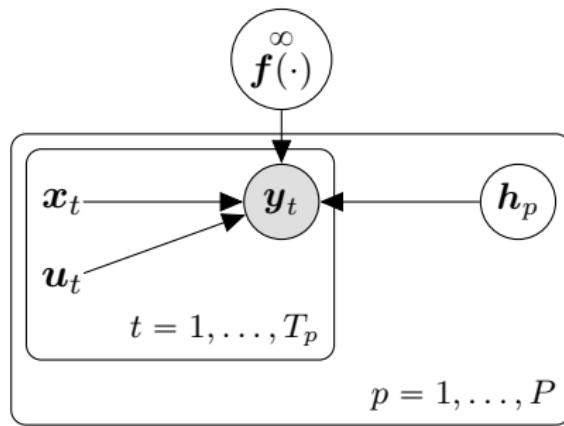


$$f(\cdot) \sim GP$$

$$p(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_p p(\mathbf{h}_p), \quad p(\mathbf{h}_p) = \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{I})$$

$$p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, f(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U}) = \prod_{p=1}^P p(\mathbf{h}_p) \prod_{t=1}^{T_p} p(y_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p, f(\cdot)) p(f(\cdot))$$

$$\mathbf{y}_t = \mathbf{x}_{t+1} - \mathbf{x}_t$$



Mean-field variational family:

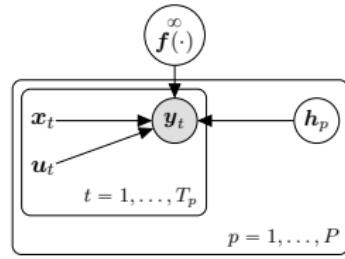
$$q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H}) = q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot))q(\mathbf{H})$$

$$q(\mathbf{H}) = \prod_{p=1}^P \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{h}_p | \mathbf{n}_p, \mathbf{T}_p),$$

$$q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)) = \int p(\mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{f}_Z) q(\mathbf{f}_Z) d\mathbf{f}_Z \quad \blacktriangleright \text{SV-GP (Titsias, 2009)}$$

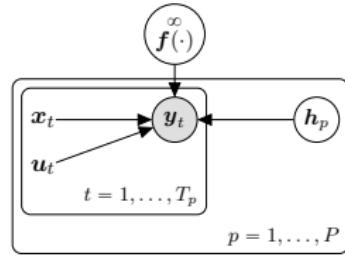
Evidence Lower Bound

$$ELBO = \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \left[\log \frac{p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, \mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U})}{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \right]$$



Evidence Lower Bound

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Evidence Lower Bound

$$\begin{aligned}
 ELBO &= \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \left[\log \frac{p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{H}, \mathbf{f}(\cdot) | \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{U})}{q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot), \mathbf{H})} \right] \\
 &= \sum_{p=1}^P \sum_{t=1}^{T_p} \mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p) q(\mathbf{h}_p)} \left[\log p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{f}_t) \right] \\
 &\quad - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{H}) || p(\mathbf{H})) - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{f}(\cdot)) || p(\mathbf{f}(\cdot))) \\
 &\quad \underbrace{\qquad\qquad\qquad}_{\text{Monte Carlo estimate}} \\
 &= \sum_{p=1}^P \sum_{t=1}^{T_p} \overbrace{\mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{f}_t | \mathbf{x}_t, \mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{h}_p) q(\mathbf{h}_p)} \left[\log p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{f}_t) \right]}^{\text{closed-form solution}} \\
 &\quad - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{H}) || p(\mathbf{H})) - \text{KL}(q(\mathbf{F}_Z) || p(\mathbf{F}_Z))
 \end{aligned}$$

