

# Comparative connectomics: methods and applications

Benjamin D. Pedigo

(he/him)

NSF Graduate Research Fellow

[NeuroData lab](#)

Department of Biomedical Engineering

Johns Hopkins University

 [bpedigo@jhu.edu](mailto:bpedigo@jhu.edu)

 [@bdpedigo](#) (Github)

 [@bpedigod](#) (Twitter)

 [bdpedigo.github.io](http://bdpedigo.github.io)

These slides at:

[bdpedigo.github.io/talks/aibs.html](http://bdpedigo.github.io/talks/aibs.html)

# Background

- From Lake Forest Park, WA
- University of Washington for Undergrad  
(Bioengineering, Minor in Applied Math)
- Research on spinal cord injury  
(Chet Moritz's lab)
- Interned here w/ Nuno in summer of 2017
- Organized Bird Club @ UW

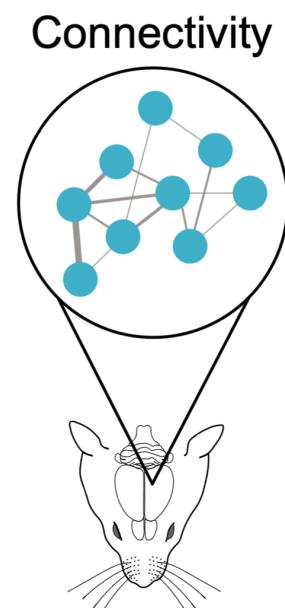


# Background

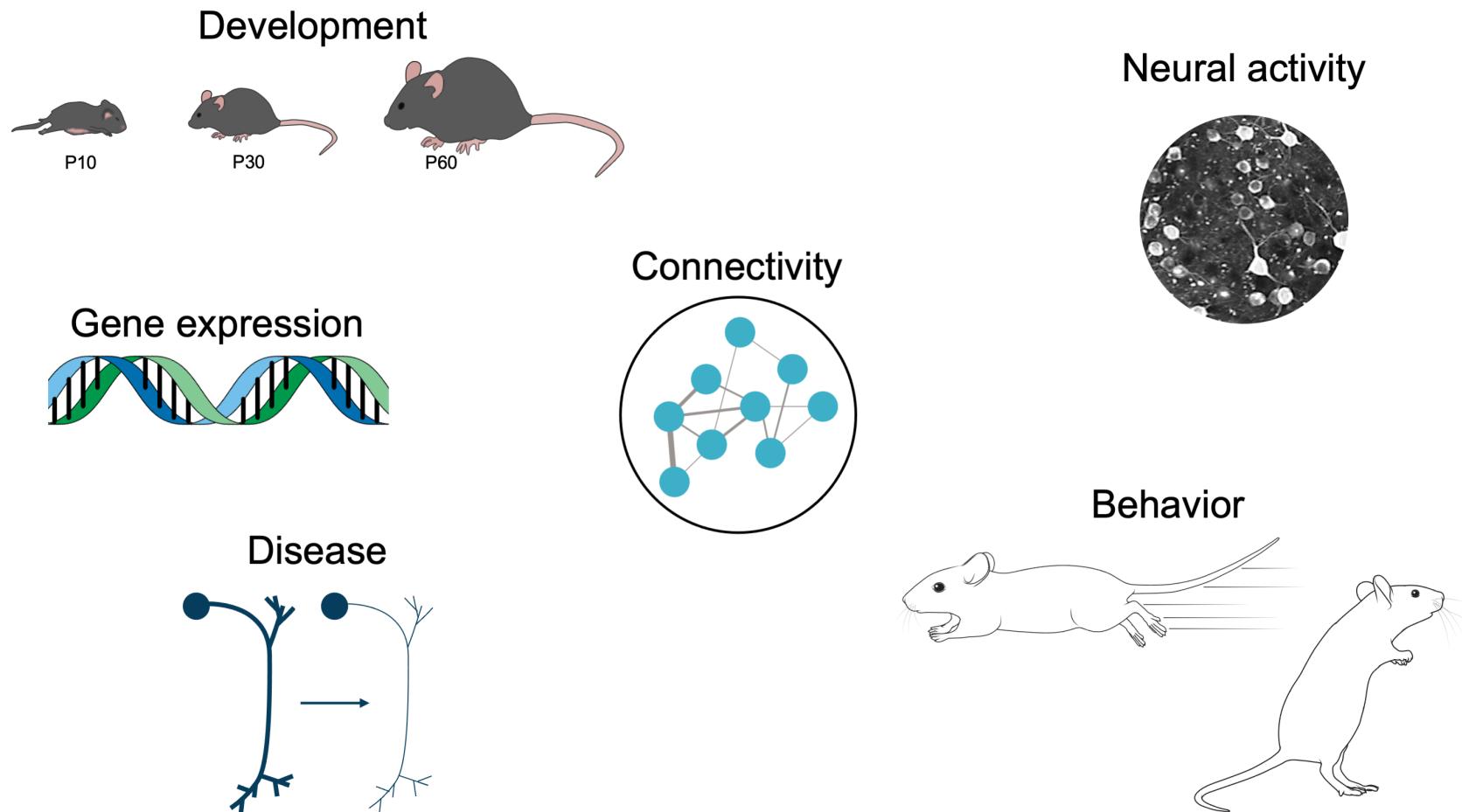
- PhD in Biomedical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University
  - Joshua Vogelstein + Carey Priebe
  - Analysis of connectome networks
- Interned at Microsoft Research twice
  - Analysis of organizational communication networks, code for network methods
- Bikes, Olympic marmots



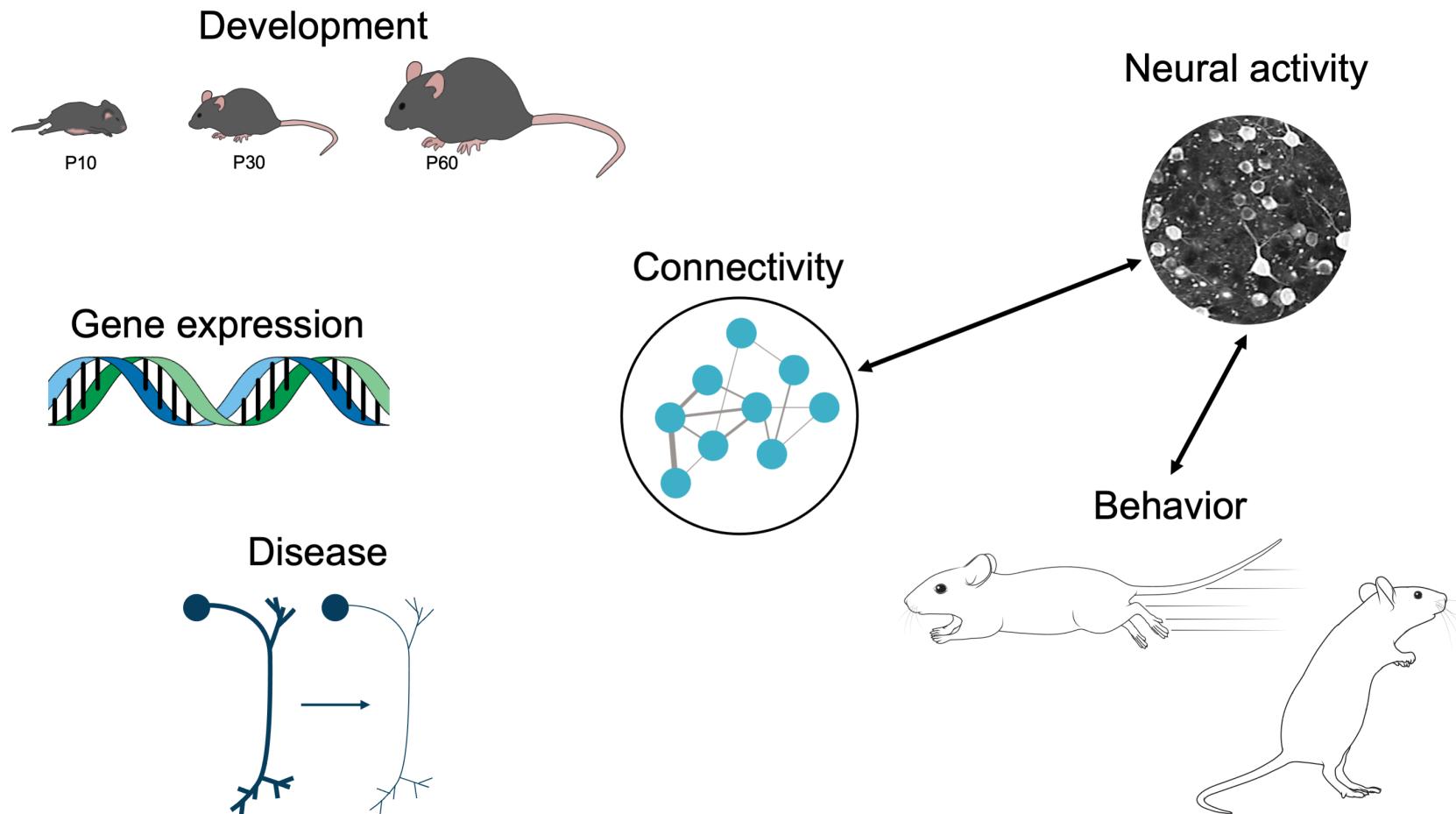
# Connectomes: maps of neural wiring



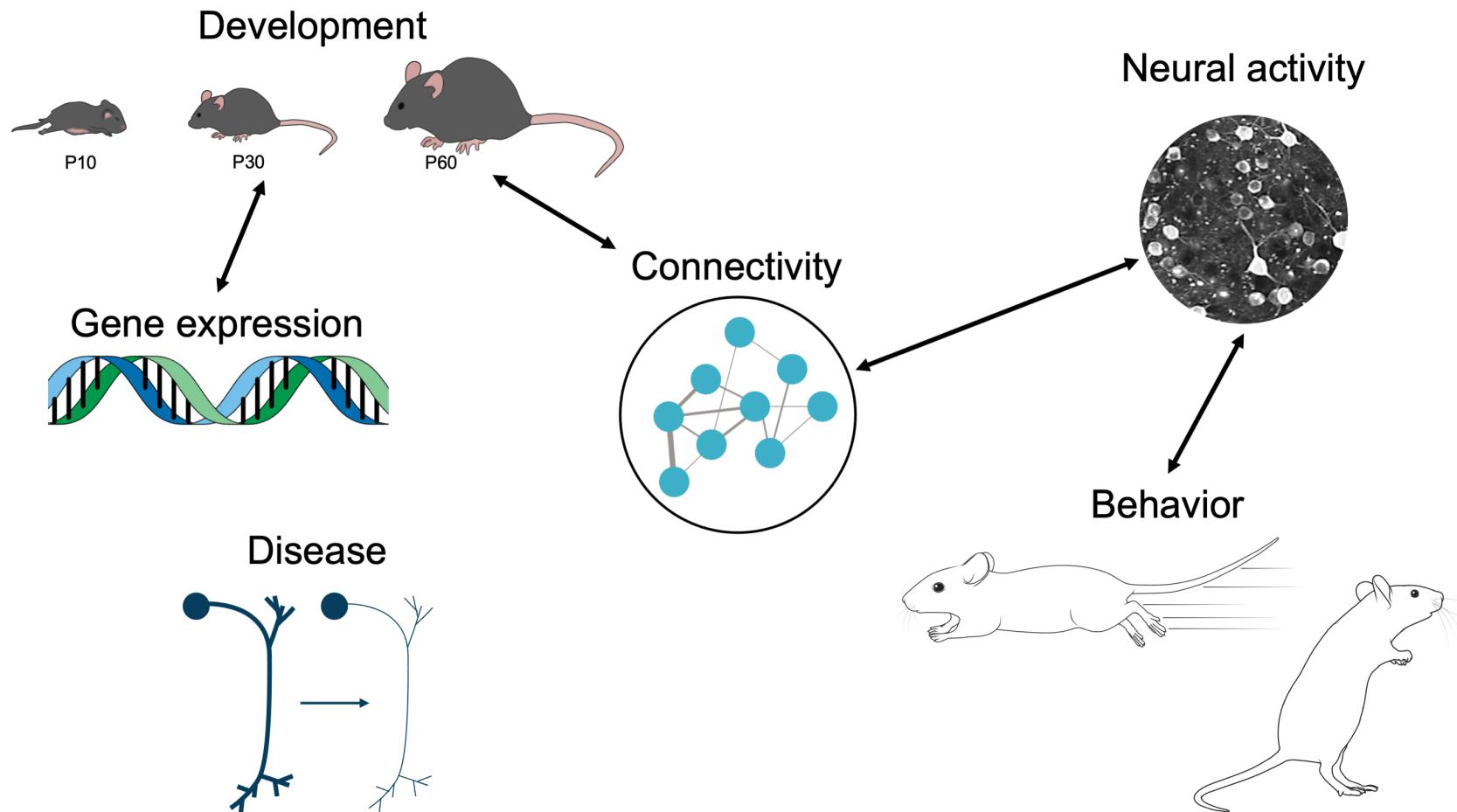
# Goal: linking connectivity to other phenotypes



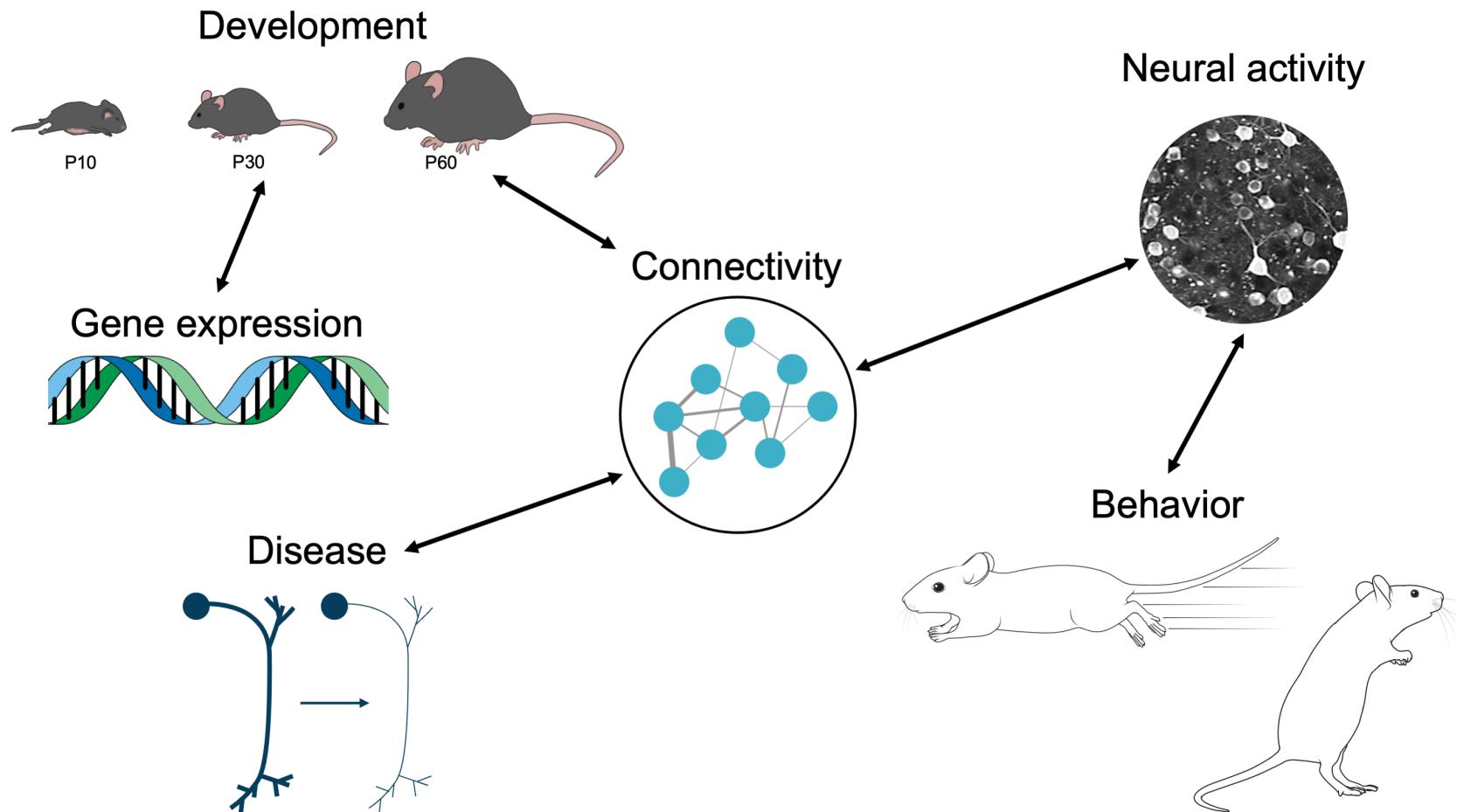
# Goal: linking connectivity to other phenotypes



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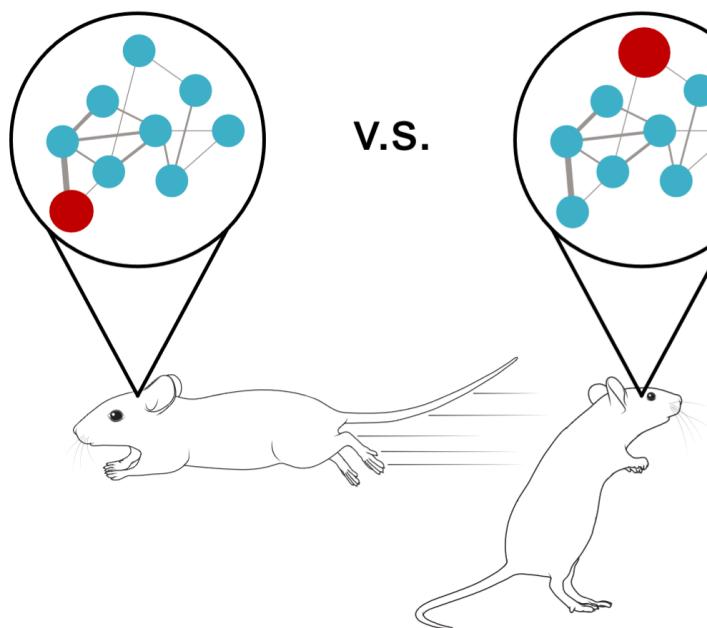


# Goal: linking connectivity to other phenotypes

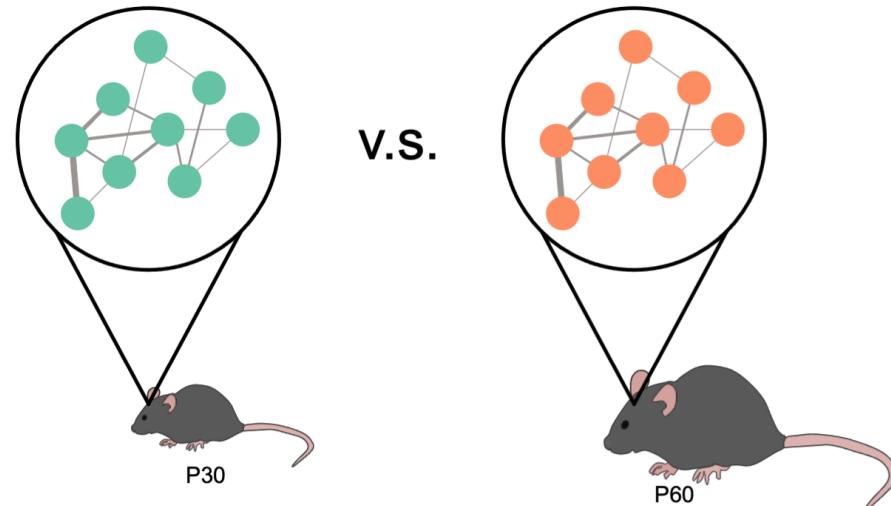


# Comparative connectomics

How does a neuron's connectivity affect elicited behaviors?



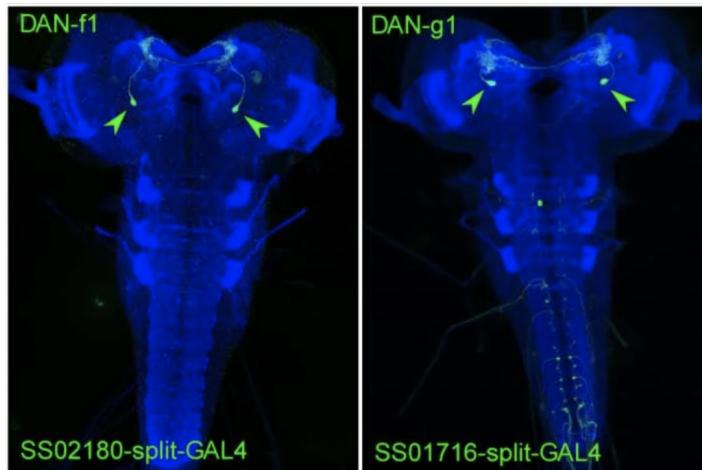
How does connectivity change during development?



Requires methods of comparing connectivity within and between connectomes

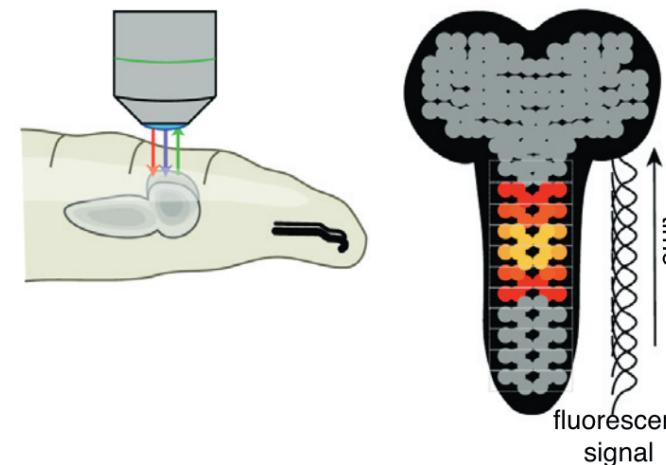
# Larval *Drosophila* as a model system

## Genetics



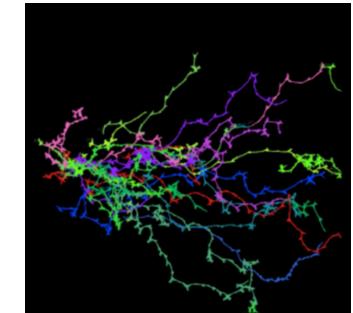
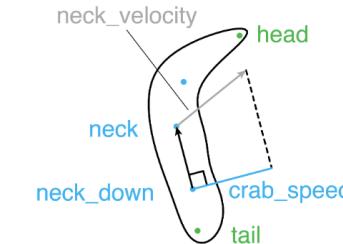
Eschbach et al. Nat. Neuro (2020)

## Activity



Eschbach & Zlatic Curr. Op. Neurobio.  
(2020)

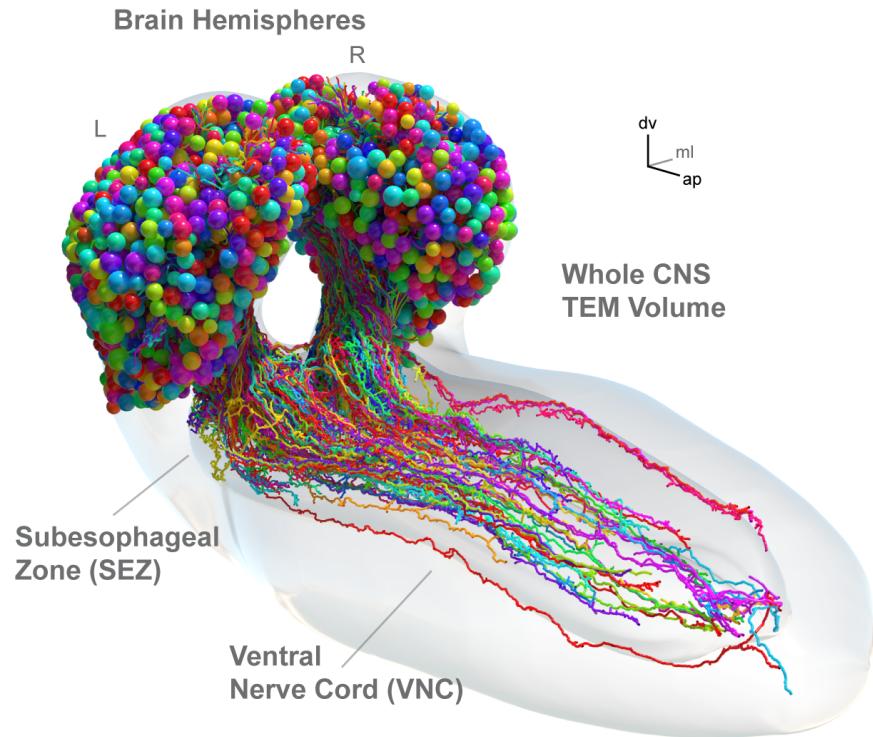
## Behavior



Klein et al. bioRxiv (2021)

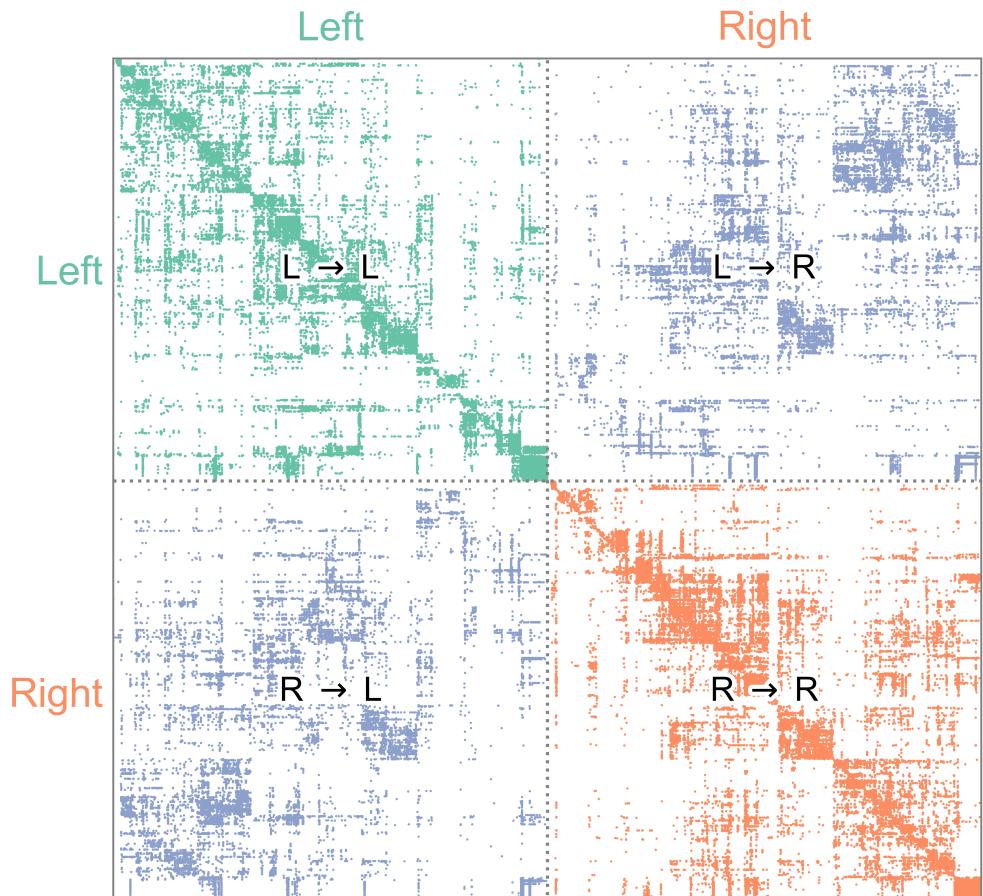
Almeida-Carvalho et al. J. Experimental  
Bio. (2017)

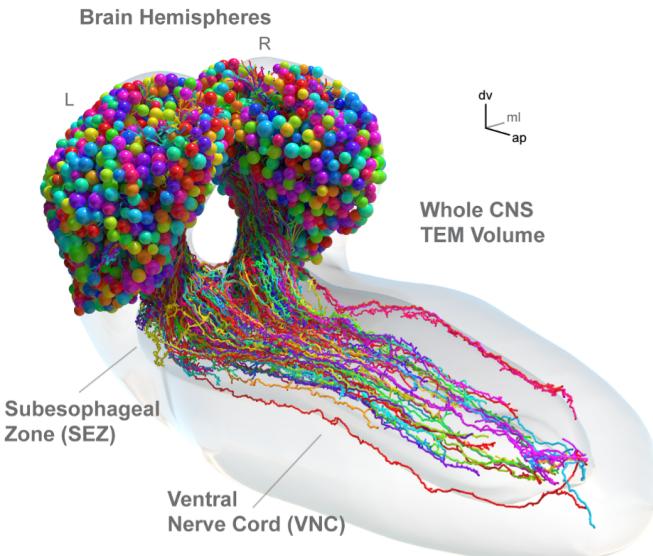
# Larval *Drosophila* brain connectome



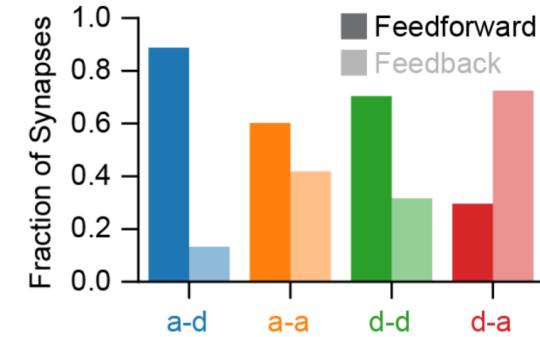
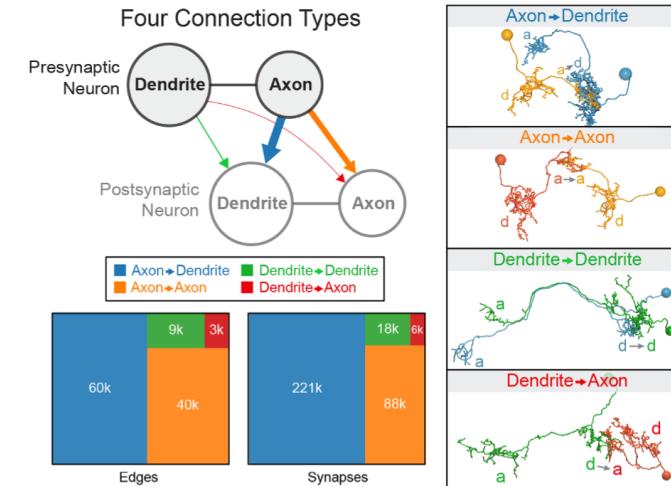
~3k neurons

Both hemispheres reconstructed

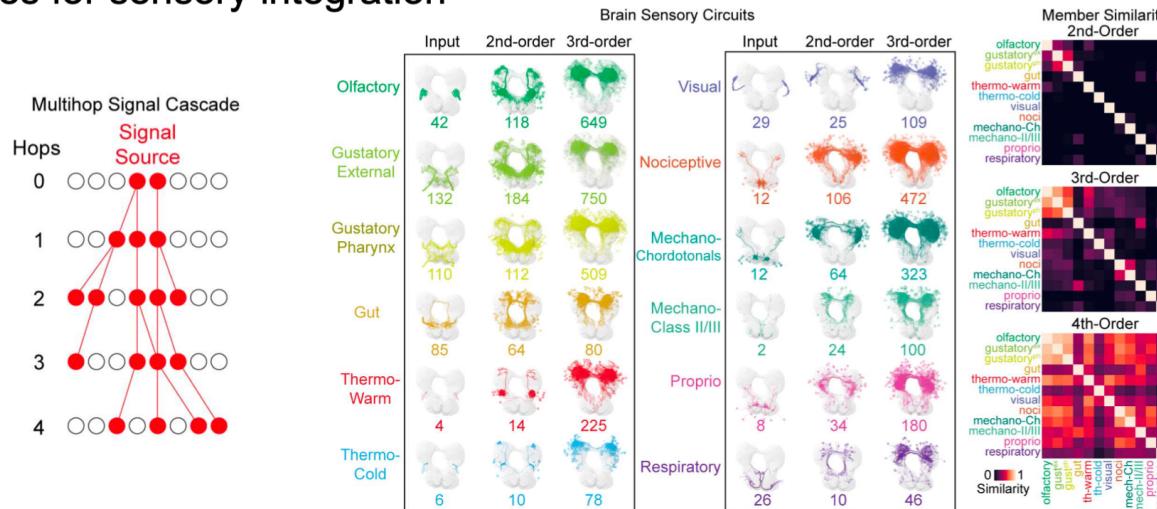




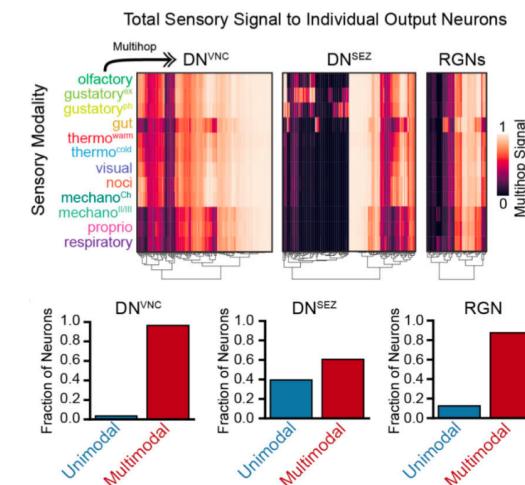
## Role of connection types in feedforward/feedback flow



## Routes for sensory integration



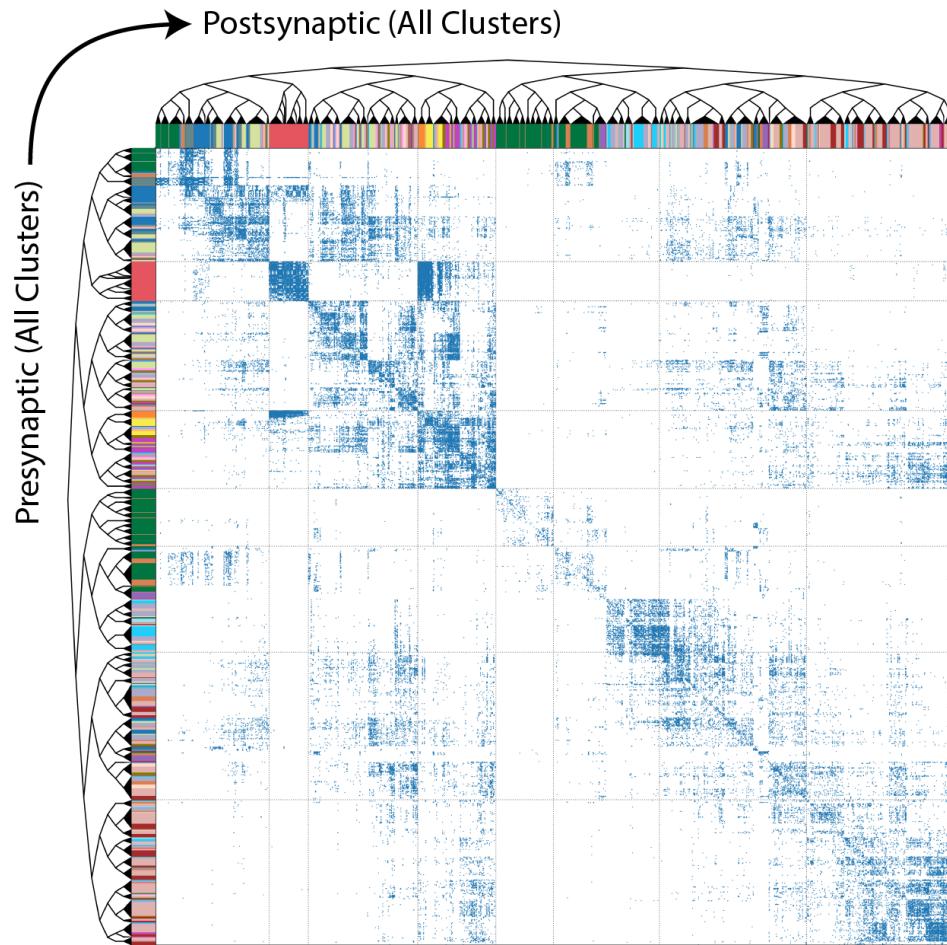
## Routes to brain outputs



# Outline

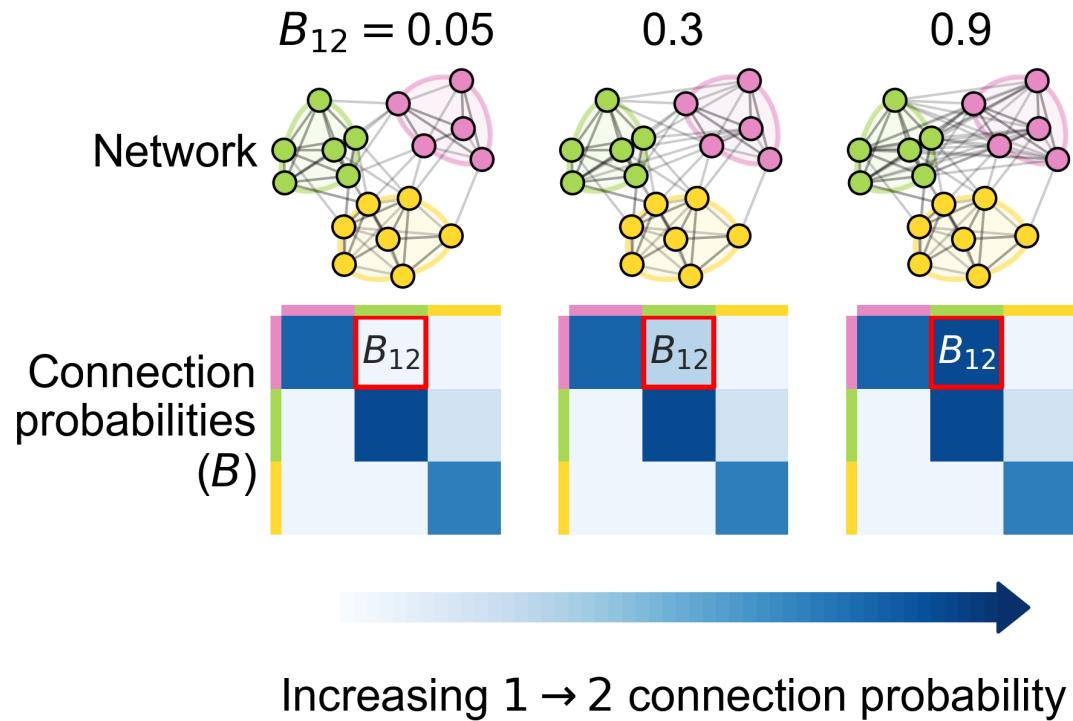
- Clustering the larval brain by connectivity
- Connectome comparison via network hypothesis testing
- Pairing neurons across connectomes via graph matching
- Future work

# Neurons clustered by connectivity



- Used a variation on spectral clustering
- How many clusters to include?

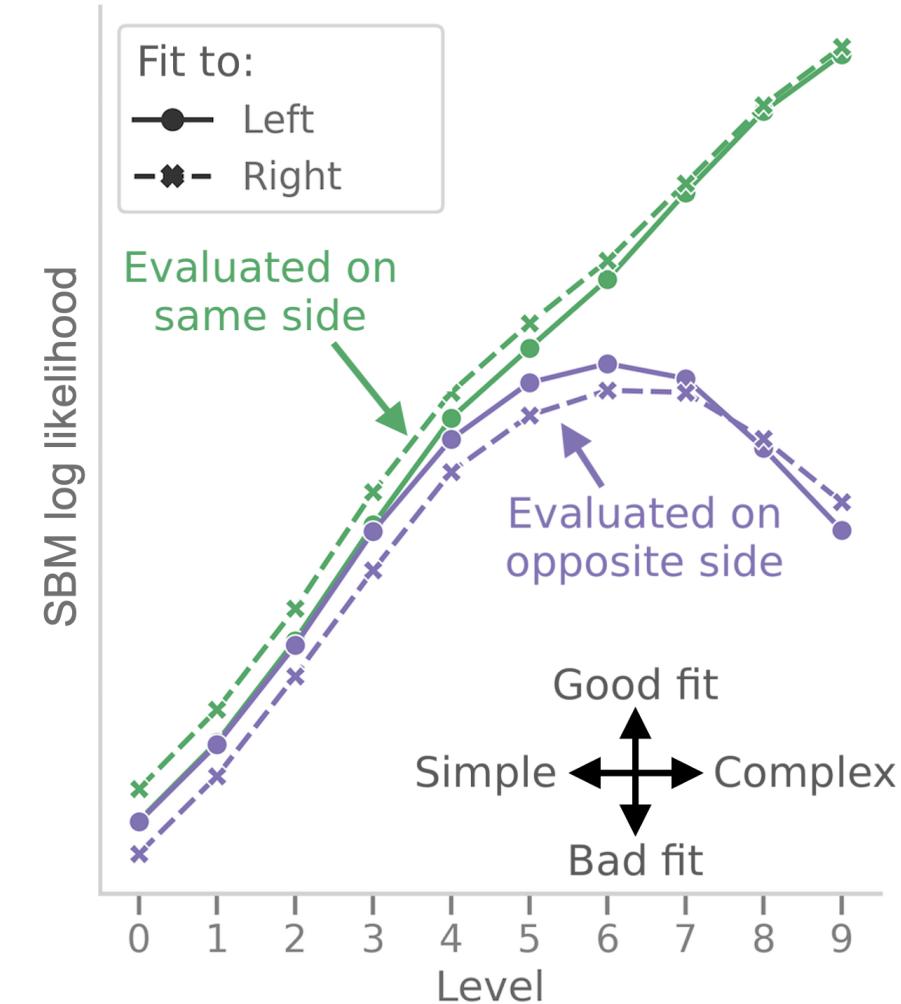
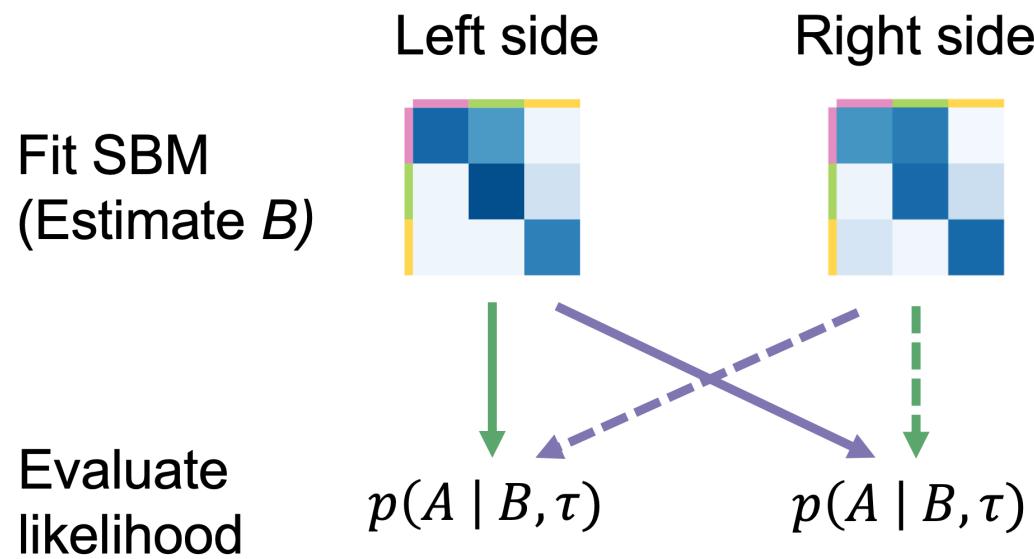
# Stochastic block model



- Each node  $i$  is assigned to a group,  $\tau_i$
- $B$  is a matrix of connection probabilities between groups
- Edges generated independently according to these probabilities:
  - $A_{ij} \sim Bernoulli(B_{\tau_i \tau_j})$

# Using models to evaluate candidate groupings

- How well do these models generalize to the other side of the brain (let alone the next maggot)?



# Bilateral symmetry

"This brain is bilaterally symmetric."

"What does that even mean? And how would we know if it wasn't?"

**Are the **left** and **right** sides of this connectome  
*different?***

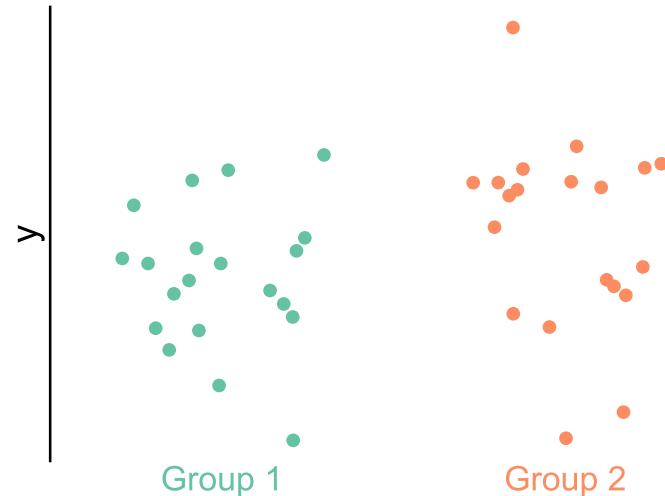
- Hints at how stereotyped wiring might be
- Testbed for connectome comparison methods

# Outline

- Clustering the larval brain by connectivity
- Connectome comparison via network hypothesis testing
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# Testing for differences

Are these two populations different?



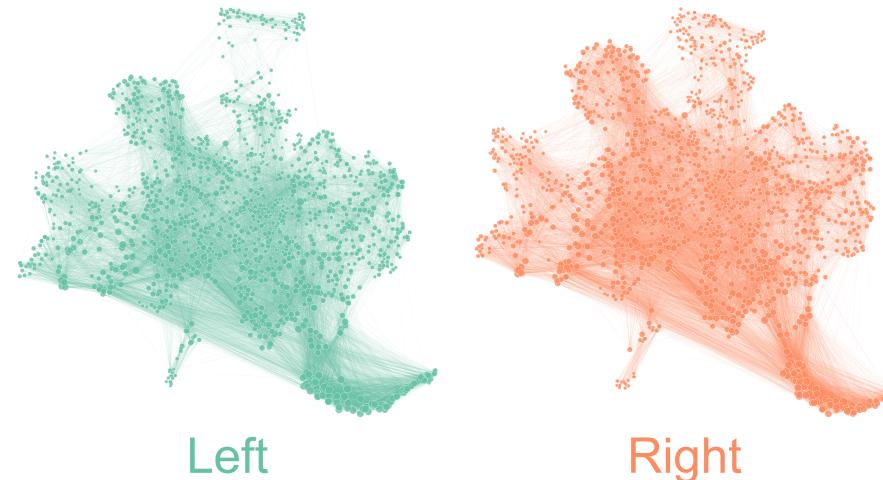
$$Y^{(1)} \sim F^{(1)} \quad Y^{(2)} \sim F^{(2)}$$

$$H_0 : F^{(1)} = F^{(2)}$$

vs.

$$H_A : F^{(1)} \neq F^{(2)}$$

Are these two *networks* different?



$$A^{(L)} \sim F^{(L)} \quad A^{(R)} \sim F^{(R)}$$

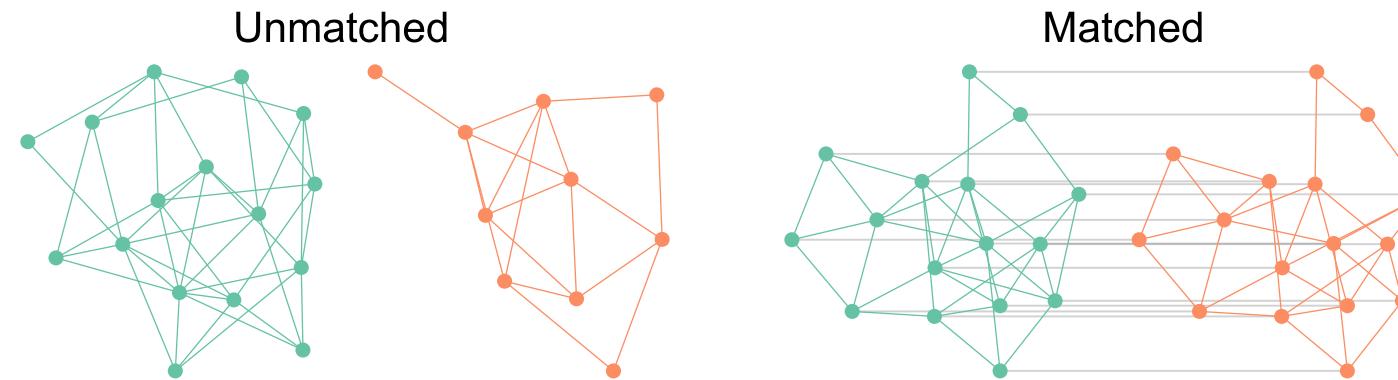
$$H_0 : F^{(L)} = F^{(R)}$$

vs.

$$H_A : F^{(L)} \neq F^{(R)}$$

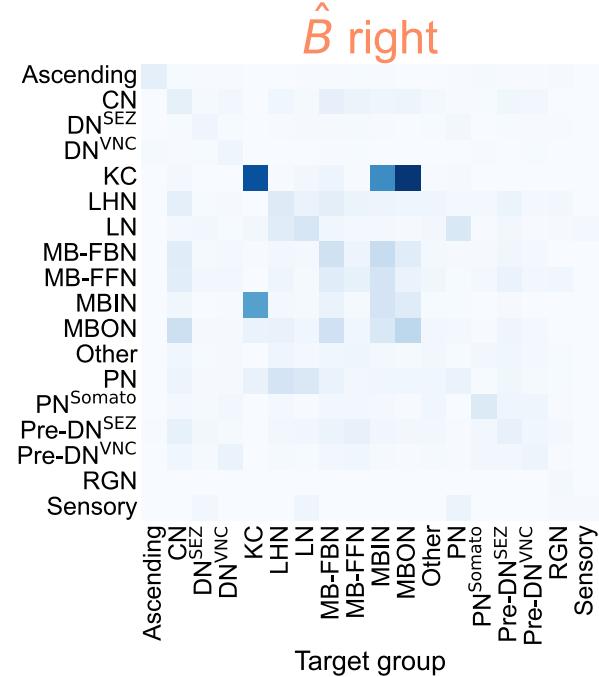
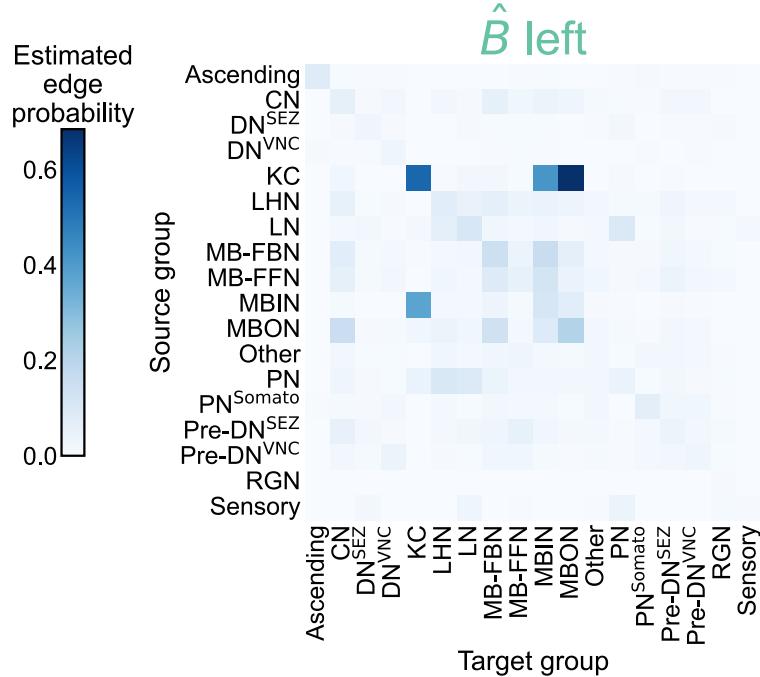
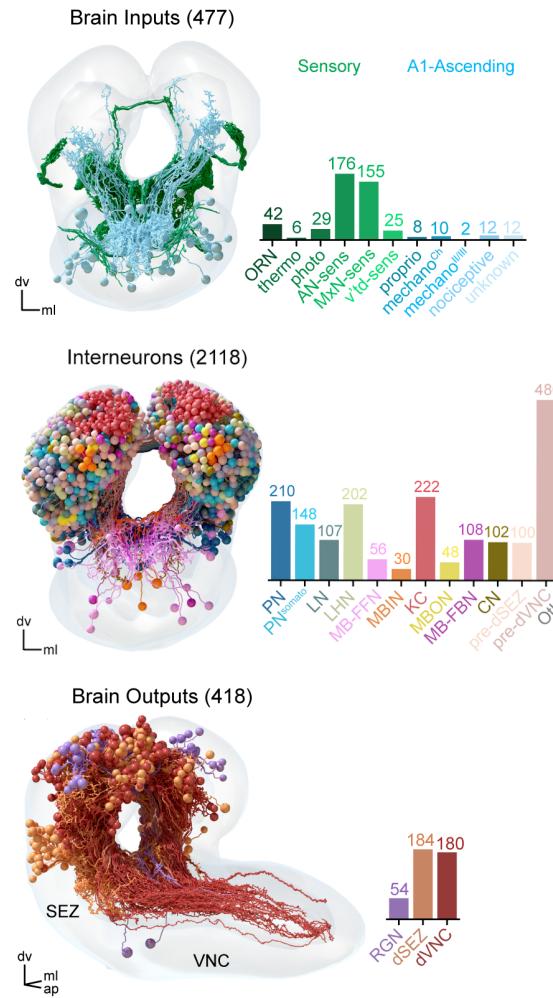
# Assumptions

- Know the direction of synapses, so network is *directed*
- Consider networks to be *unweighted*
- Not assuming any nodes are matched:



- If  $F$  is again a stochastic block model, then...

# Connection probabilities between groups



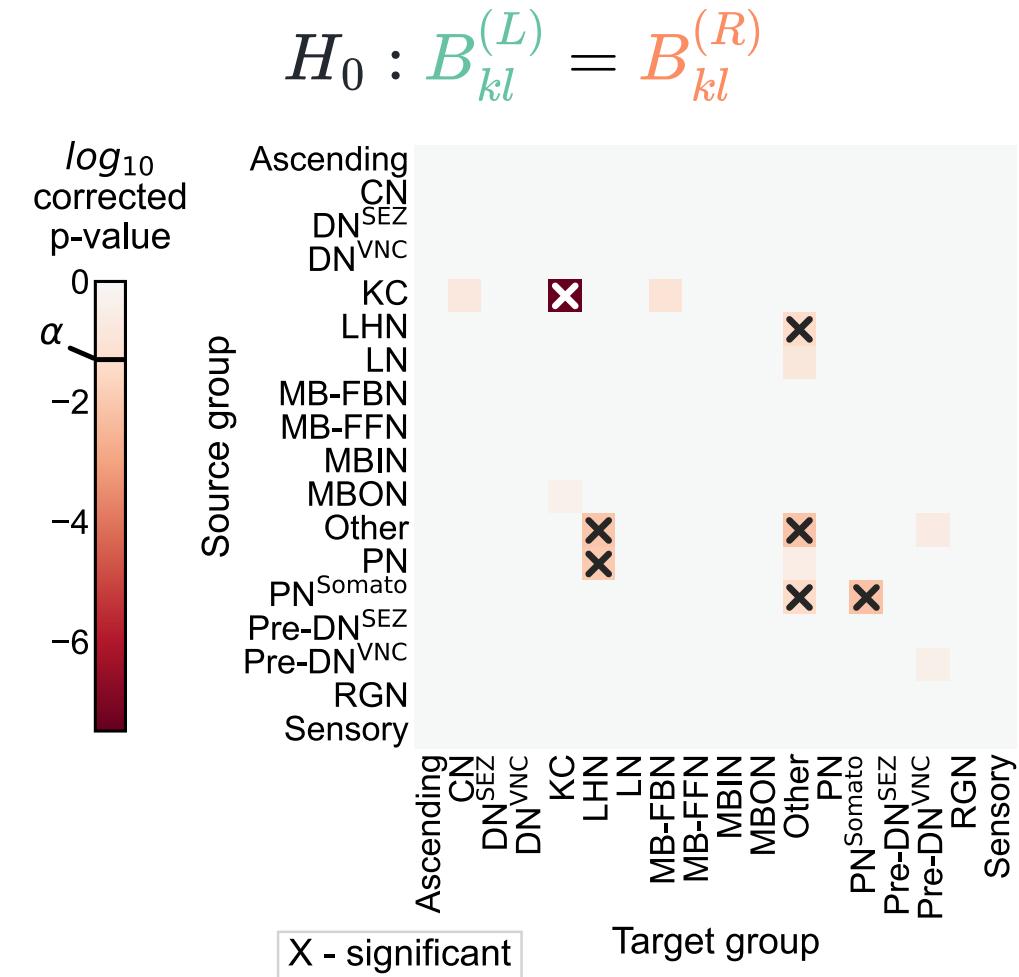
# Detect differences in group connection probabilities

- Overall test (comparing all blocks):

$$H_0 : B^{(L)} = B^{(R)}$$

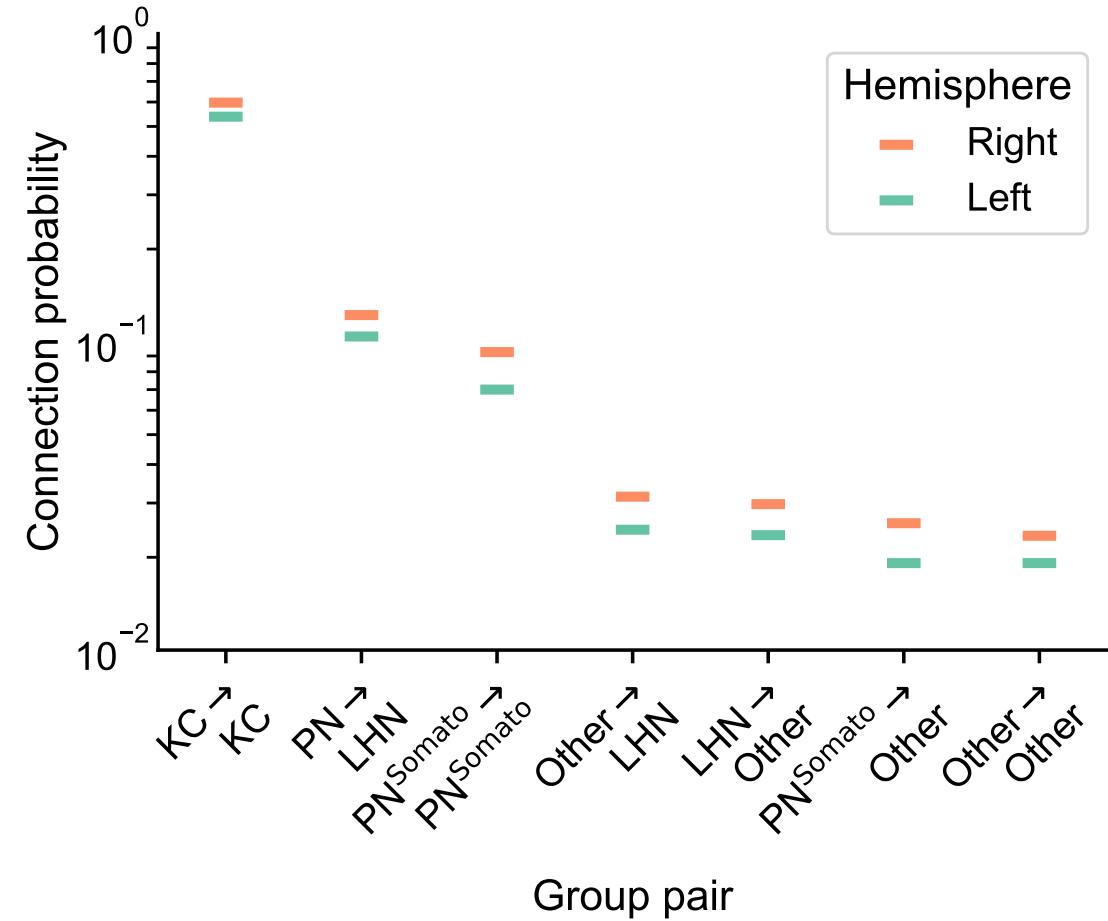
p-value <  $10^{-7}$

- 7 group-to-group connections are significantly different (after multiple comparisons correction)



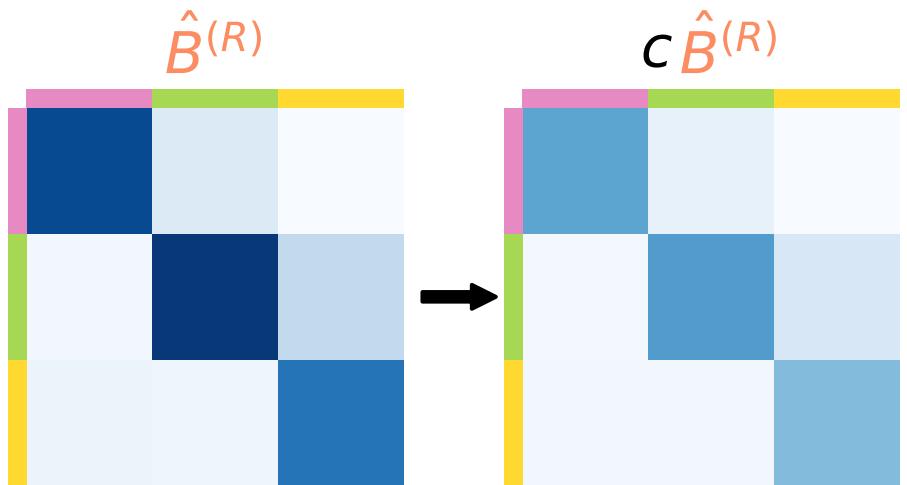
# An overall difference in density

- For significant comparisons, probabilities on right side are higher
- Even network densities are different (1-block/Erdos-Renyi model)
- Maybe the right is just a "scaled up" version of the left?
  - $H_0 : B^{(L)} = cB^{(R)}$   
 $c$  is a density-adjusting constant

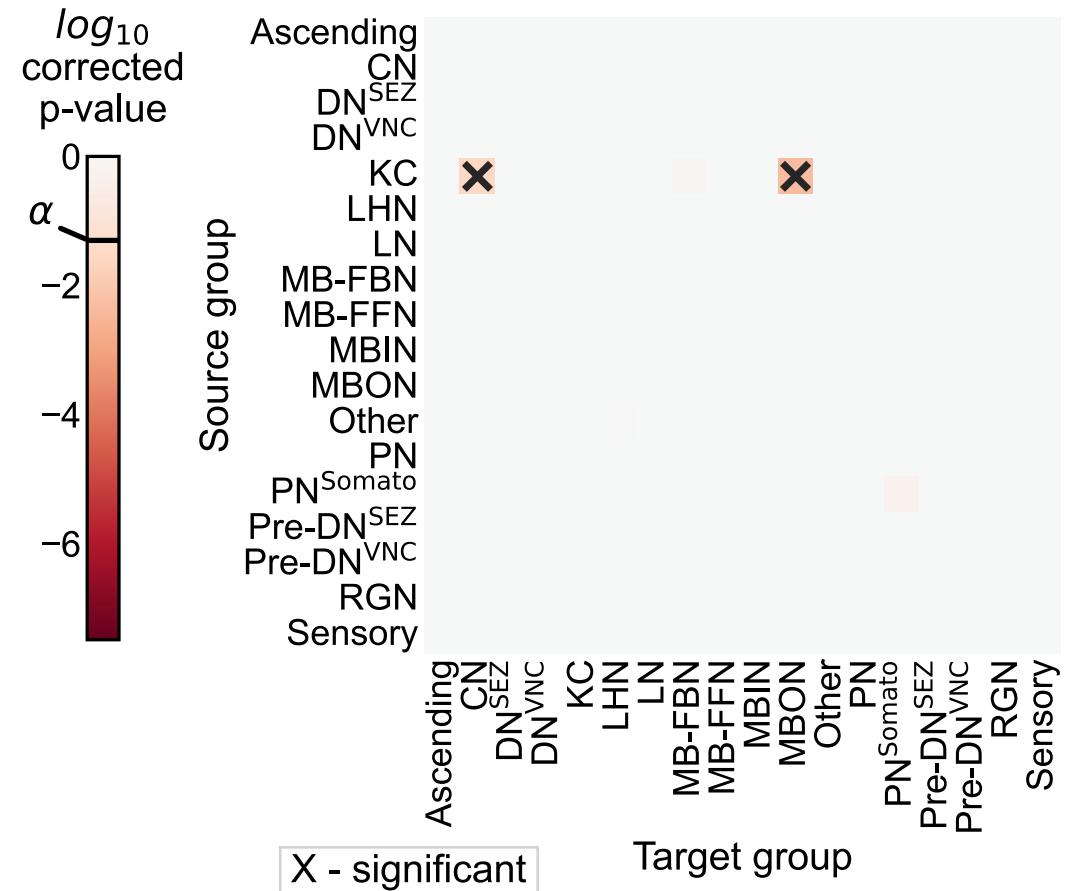


# After adjusting for density, differences are in KCs

Scale connection probabilities  
to match densities



$$\begin{aligned} H_0: B^{(L)} &= cB^{(R)} \\ H_A: B^{(L)} &\neq cB^{(R)} \end{aligned}$$



Overall p-value:  $< 10^{-2}$

# To sum up...

"This brain is bilaterally symmetric."

Depends on what you mean...

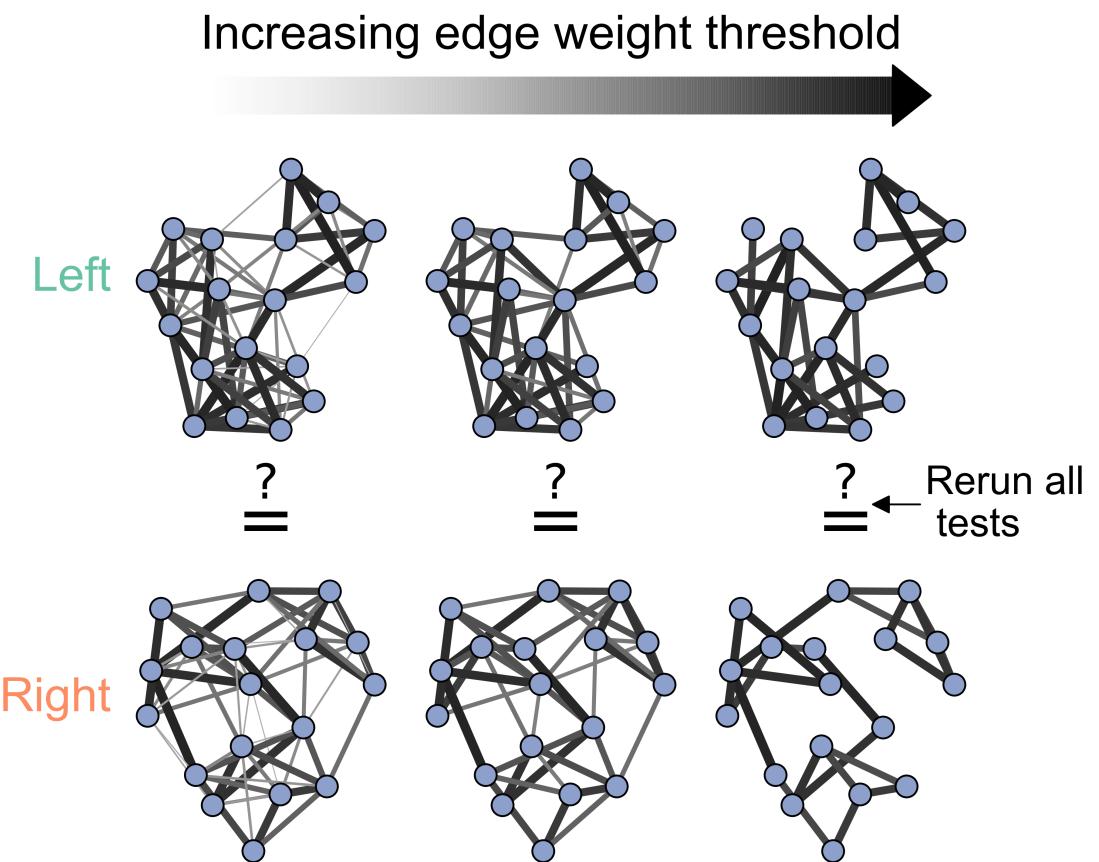
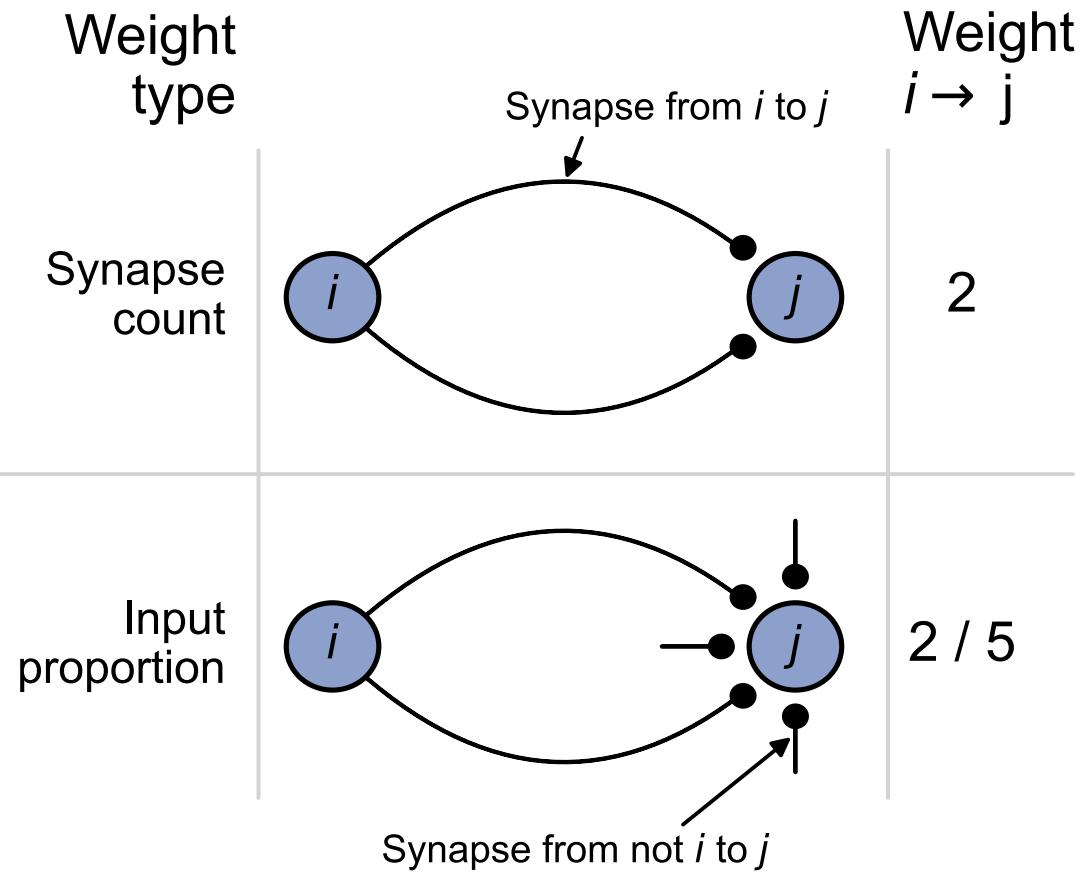
## With Kenyon cells

Model	$H_0$ (vs. $H_A \neq$ )	p-value
ER	$p^{(L)} = p^{(R)}$	$<10^{-23}$
SBM	$B^{(L)} = B^{(R)}$	$<10^{-7}$
daSBM	$B^{(L)} = cB^{(R)}$	$<10^{-2}$

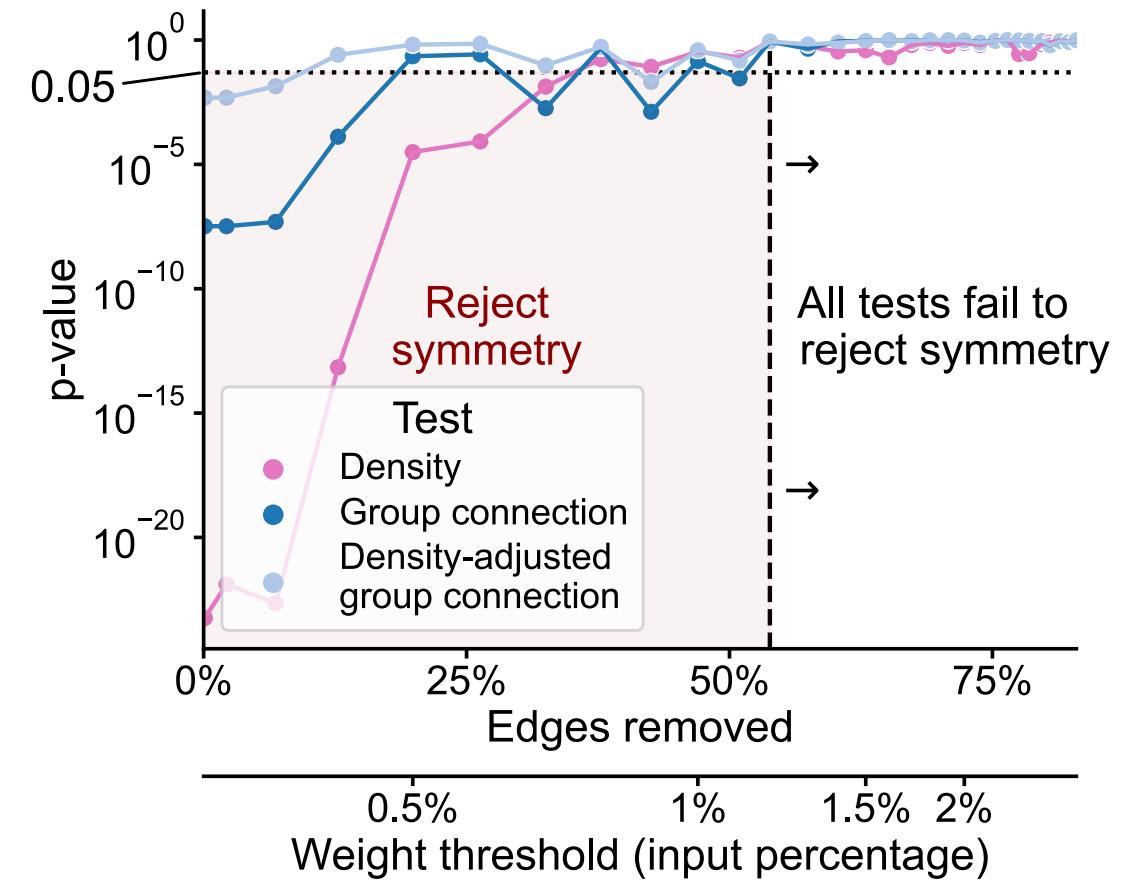
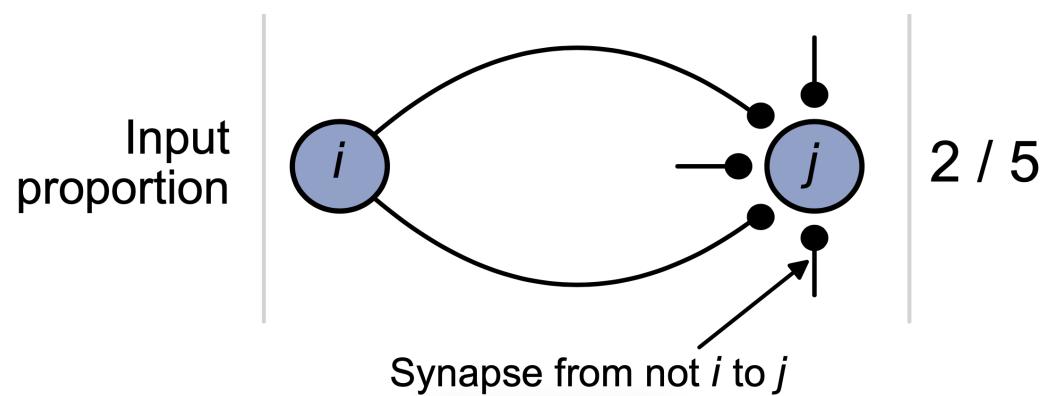
## Without Kenyon cells

Model	$H_0$ (vs. $H_A \neq$ )	p-value
ER	$p^{(L)} = p^{(R)}$	$<10^{-26}$
SBM	$B^{(L)} = B^{(R)}$	$<10^{-2}$
daSBM	$B^{(L)} = cB^{(R)}$	$\approx 0.60$

# Examining the effect of edge weights



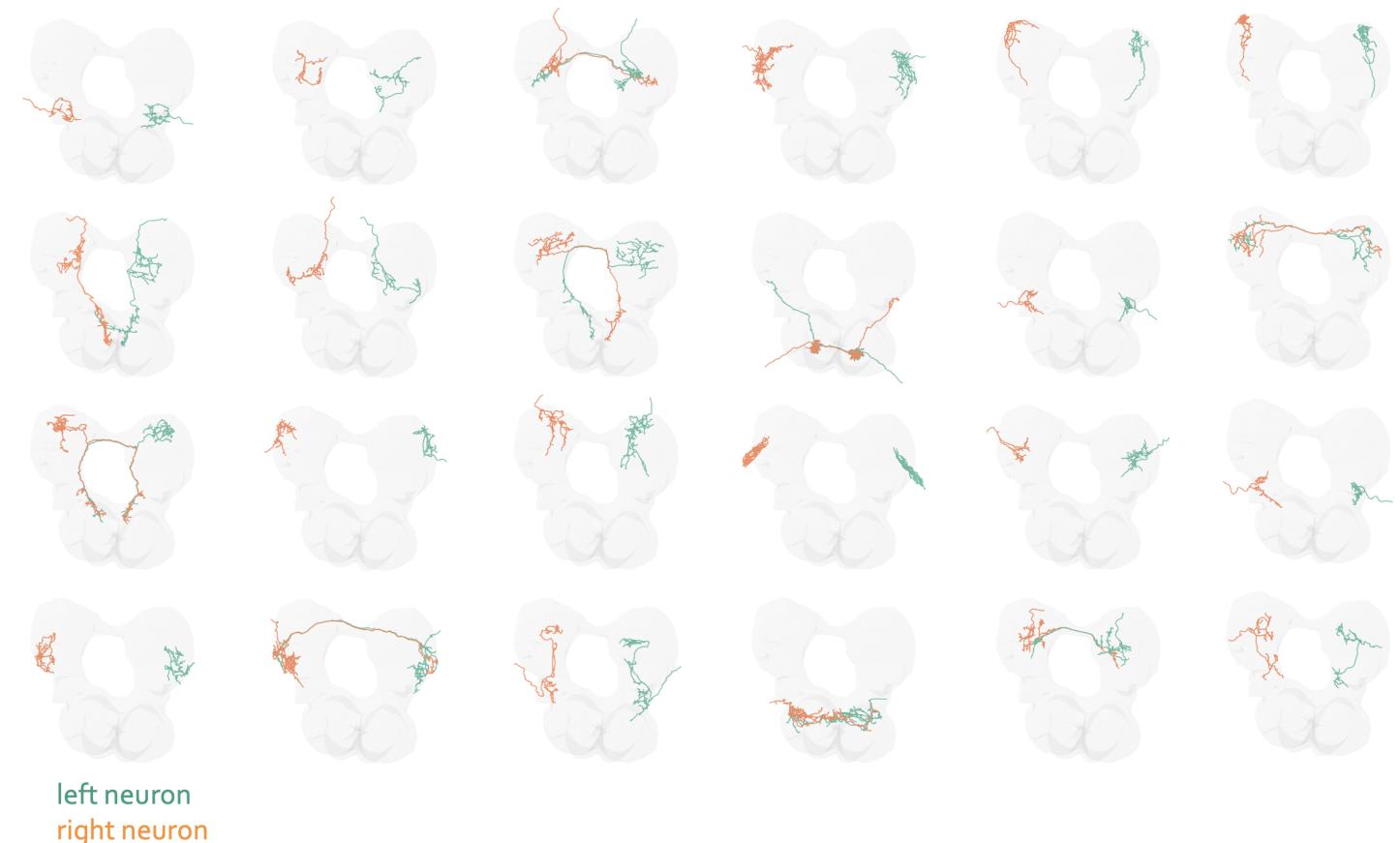
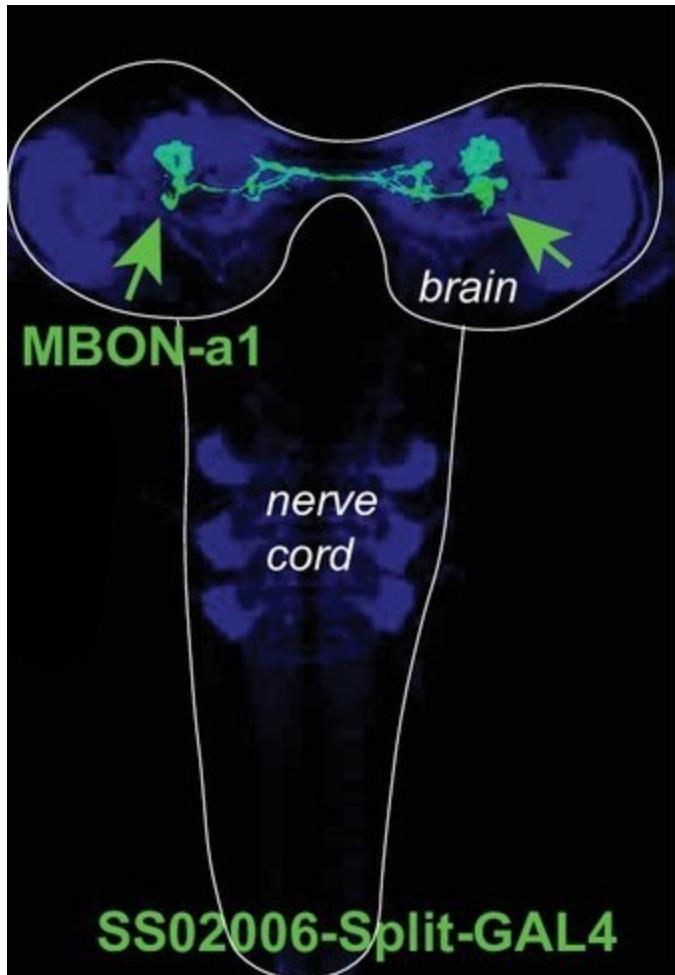
# High input percentage networks show no asymmetry



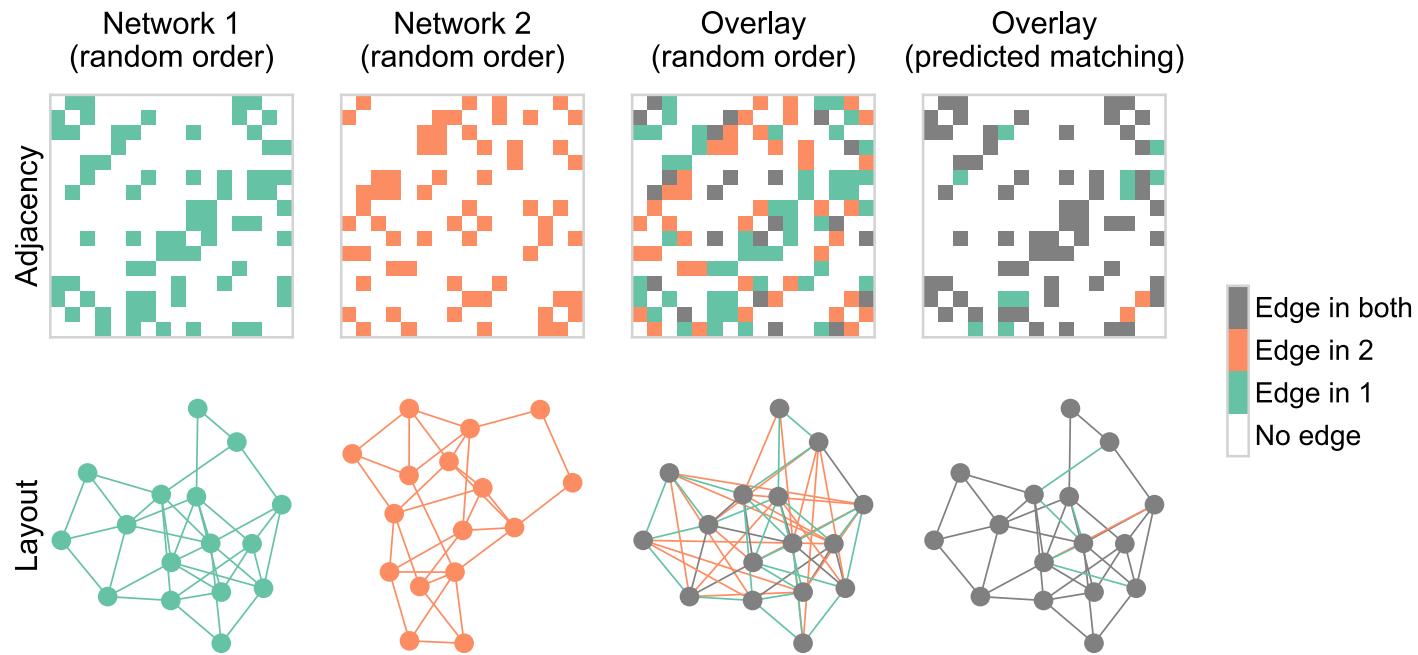
# Outline

- Clustering the larval brain by connectivity
- Connectome comparison via network hypothesis testing
- **Pairing neurons across connectomes via graph matching**
- Future work

# Bilaterally homologous neuron pairs



# How can we pair on connectivity?

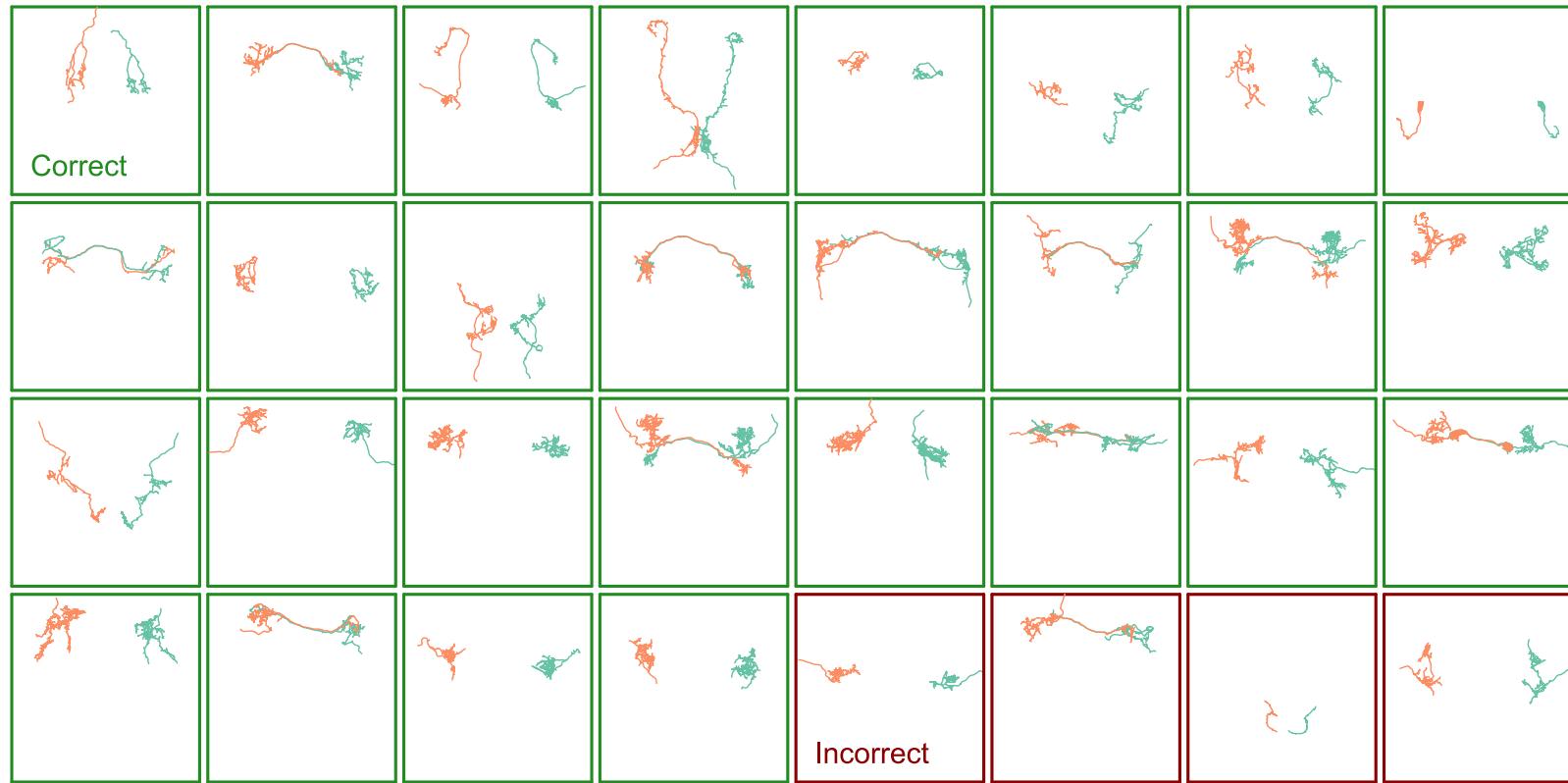


$$\min_{P \in \mathcal{P}} \underbrace{\|A_1 - PA_2P^T\|_F^2}_{\text{distance between adj. mats.}}$$

reordered  $A_2$

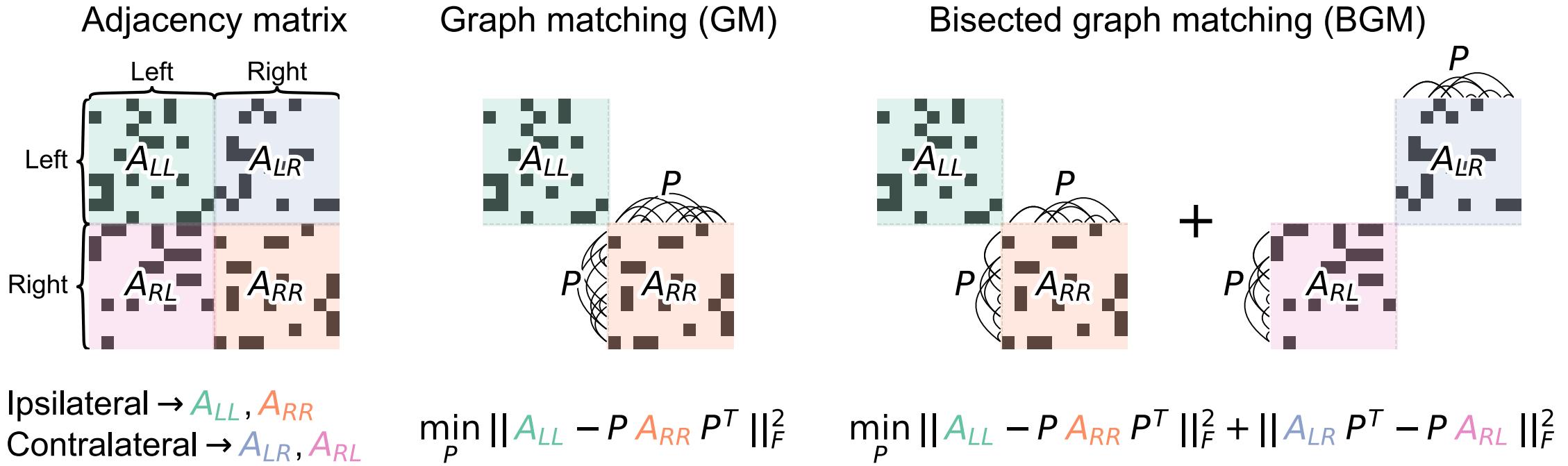
where  $\mathcal{P}$  is the set of  
permutation matrices

# Simple matching performs fairly well



With "vanilla" graph matching: ~80% correct (according to expert annotator)...  
but ignores ~1/3 of synapses!

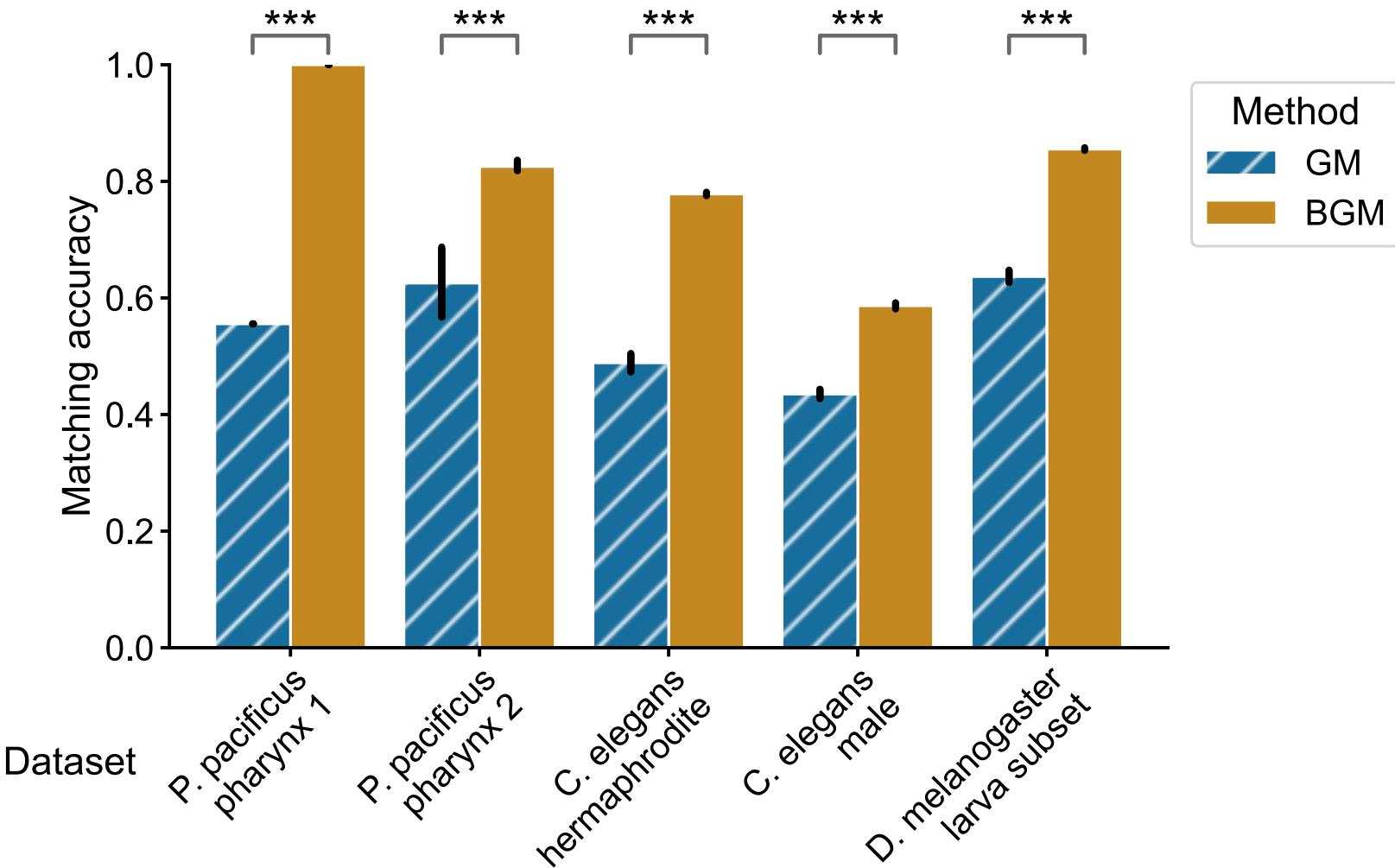
# From graph matching to bisected graph matching



We generalized a state-of-the-art GM algorithm to solve BGM!

In simulations, this helps when contralaterals have sufficient edge correlation

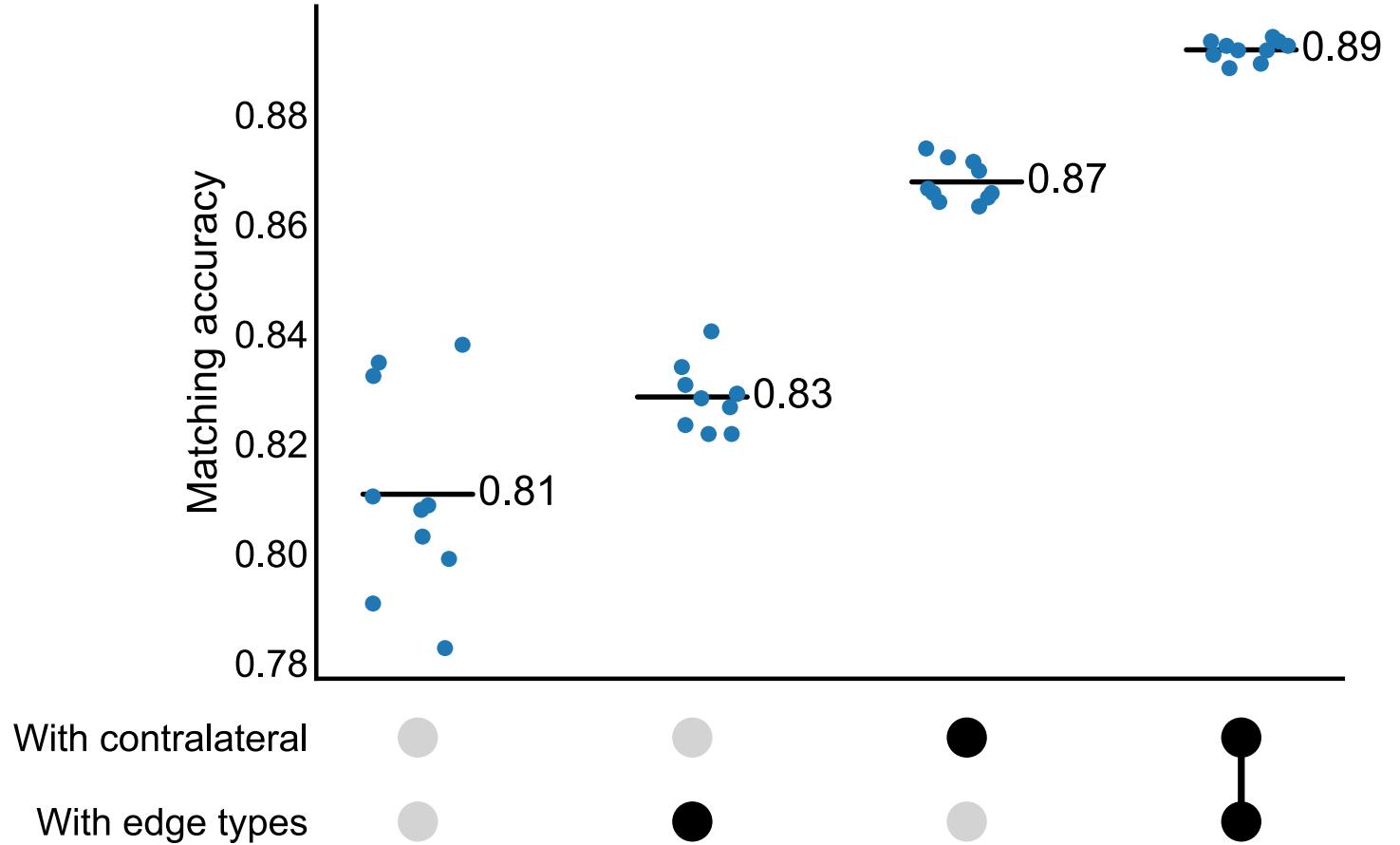
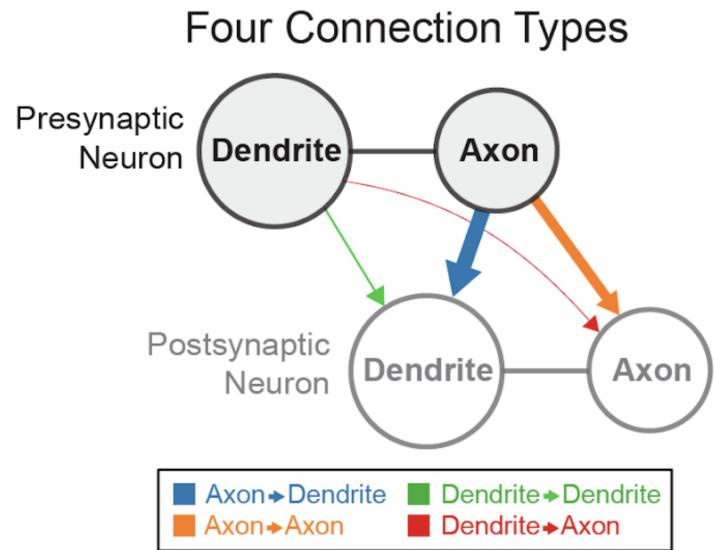
# Contralateral connections aid matching!



# Many other ways to try to improve on matching...

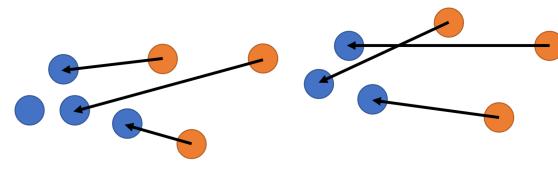
- Partial knowledge of the matching (seeds)
- Incorporate morphology (e.g. NBLAST)
- Edge types allow for "multilayer" graph matching

# Performance improvement from edge types

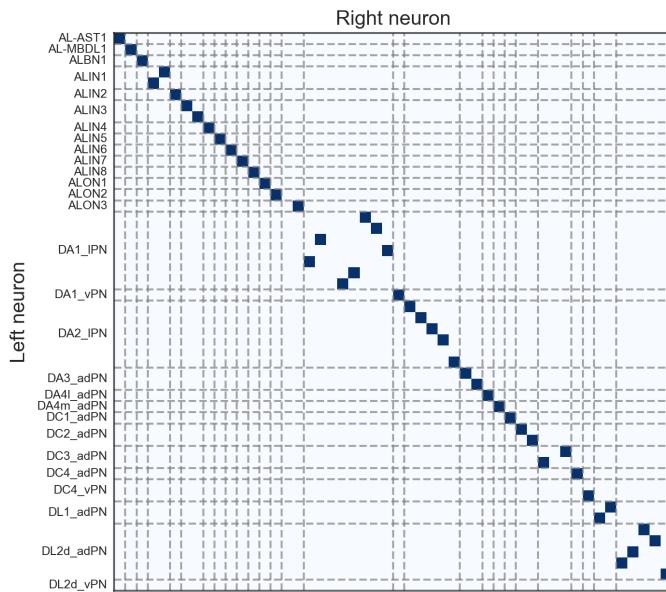


# Beyond 1-to-1 neuron matching

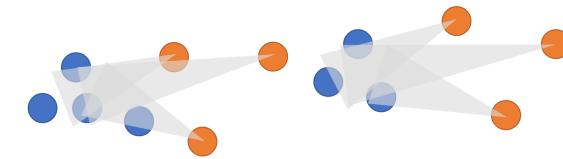
## 1-to-1 matching



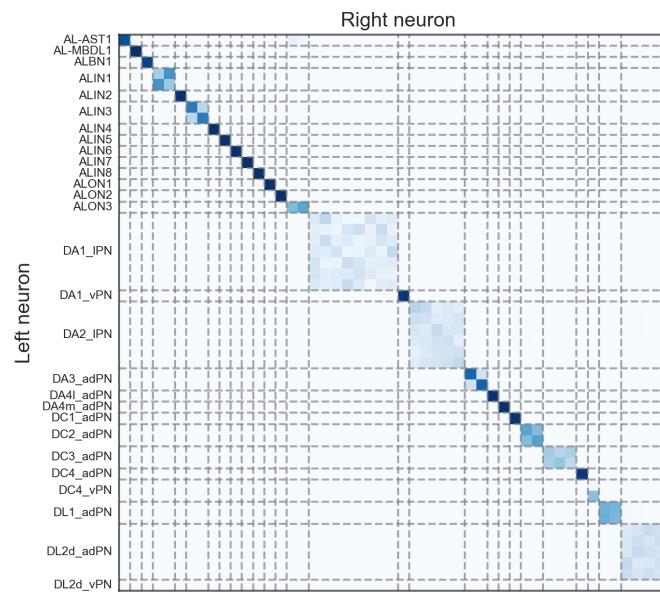
LAP solution



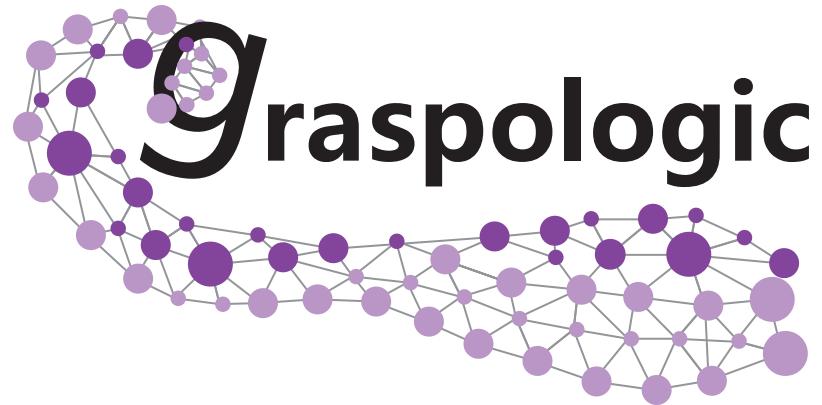
## Soft assignment



Sinkhorn solution ( $\lambda = 0.03$ )



# Open source tools



downloads 202k

Stars

305

[github.com/microsoft/graspologic](https://github.com/microsoft/graspologic)

Application of these tools to larva brain ⇒ [github.com/neurodata/graspologic-demo](https://github.com/neurodata/graspologic-demo)

## Related publications

Chung, Pedigo et al. JMLR (2019)

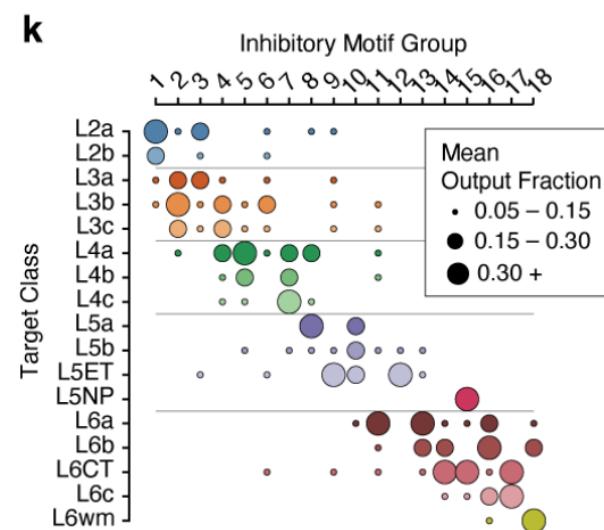
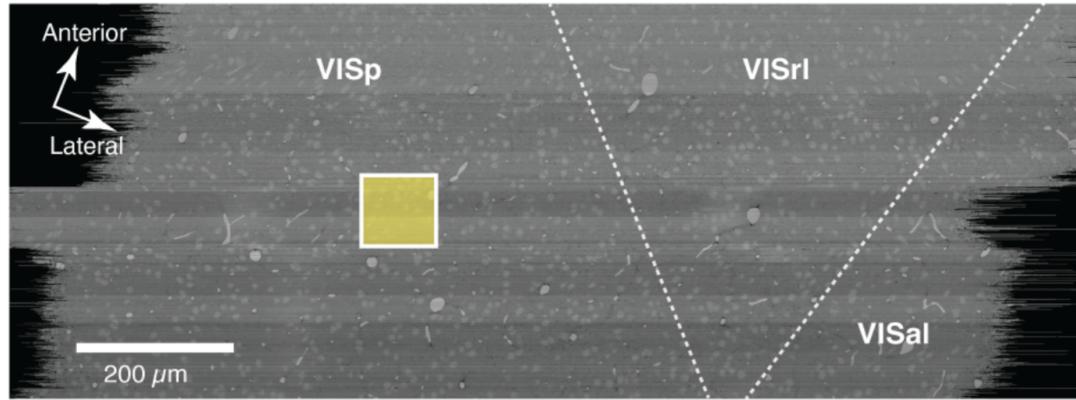
Vogelstein et al. Curr. Opin. Neurobio. (2019)

Chung et al. Annual Review of Stats and Its Application (2021)

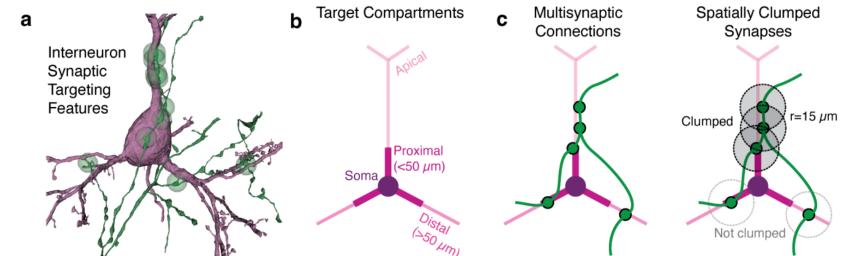
# Outline

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- Future work
  - Understanding stereotypy in cortical wiring diagrams

# Do wiring rules generalize across region? Dataset?

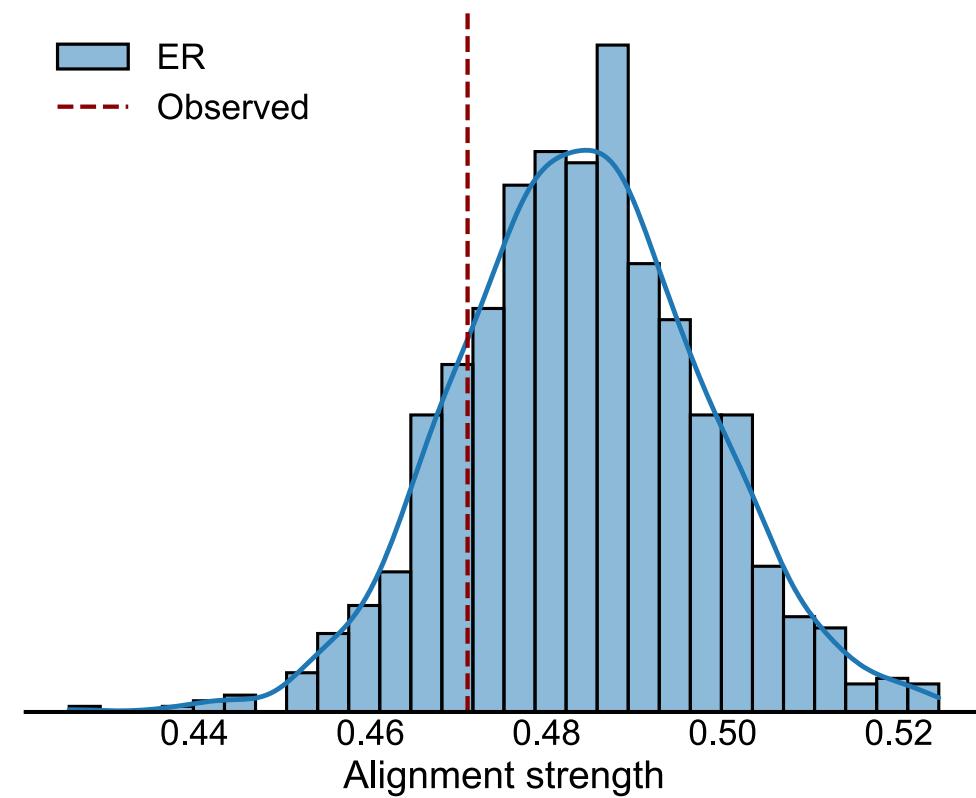
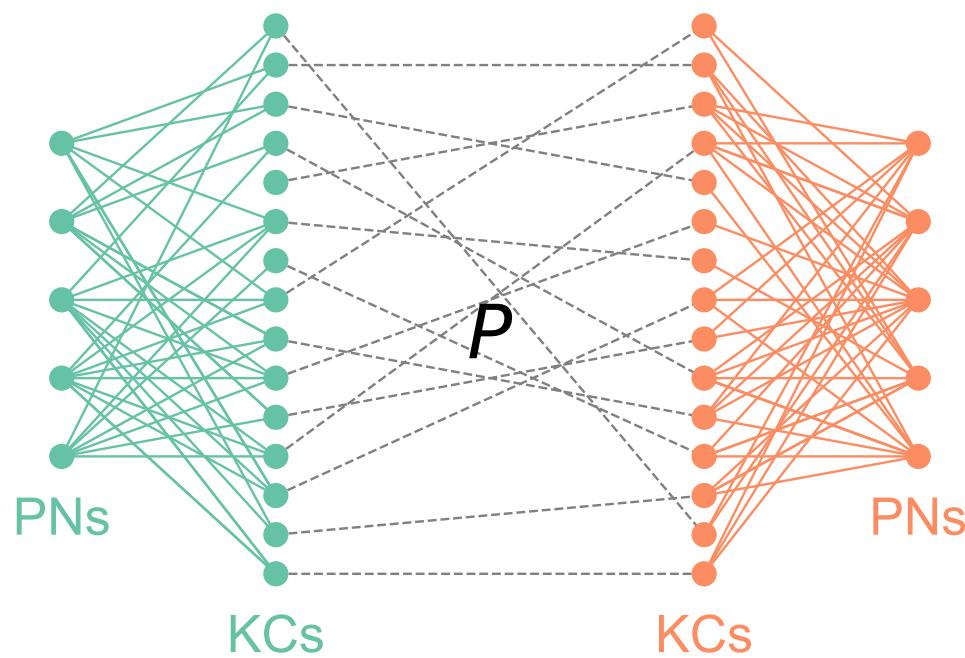


- Application of model-based network comparison tools
- Would likely require extensions:
  - Parameters to deal with subcellular wiring specificity
  - Modeling known errors (e.g. amount of orphan synapses)



# Stereotypy beyond connection probabilities

Matching and null models can be combined to test for significant subgraph correlation in edge structure



# My interest in Allen/EM Connectomics team

- Interested in translating neuroscience/connectomics questions into something we can test with data science techniques
- Scaling to larger problems, team science approach
- Open data and tools

## References

- Winding, M. & Pedigo, B.D. et al. The connectome of an insect brain. *Science* (2023).
- Pedigo, B. D. et al. Generative network modeling reveals quantitative definitions of bilateral symmetry exhibited by a whole insect brain connectome. *eLife* (2023).
- Pedigo, B. D. et al. Bisected graph matching improves automated pairing of bilaterally homologous neurons from connectomes. *Network Neuroscience* (2022).

## Code

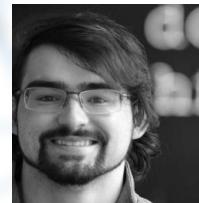
[github.com/neurodata/maggot\\_models](https://github.com/neurodata/maggot_models)

[github.com/neurodata/bilateral-connectome](https://github.com/neurodata/bilateral-connectome)

[github.com/neurodata/bgm](https://github.com/neurodata/bgm)

# Acknowledgements

## Team



Michael  
Winding

Mike  
Powell

Eric  
Bridgeford

Ali  
Saad-Eldin

Marta  
Zlatic

Albert  
Cardona

Carey  
Priebe

Joshua  
Vogelstein

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# Questions?

**Benjamin D. Pedigo**

 [bpedigo@jhu.edu](mailto:bpedigo@jhu.edu)

 [@bdpedigo](https://github.com/bdpedigo)

 [@bpedigod](https://twitter.com/bpedigod)

 [bdpedigo.github.io](https://bdpedigo.github.io)

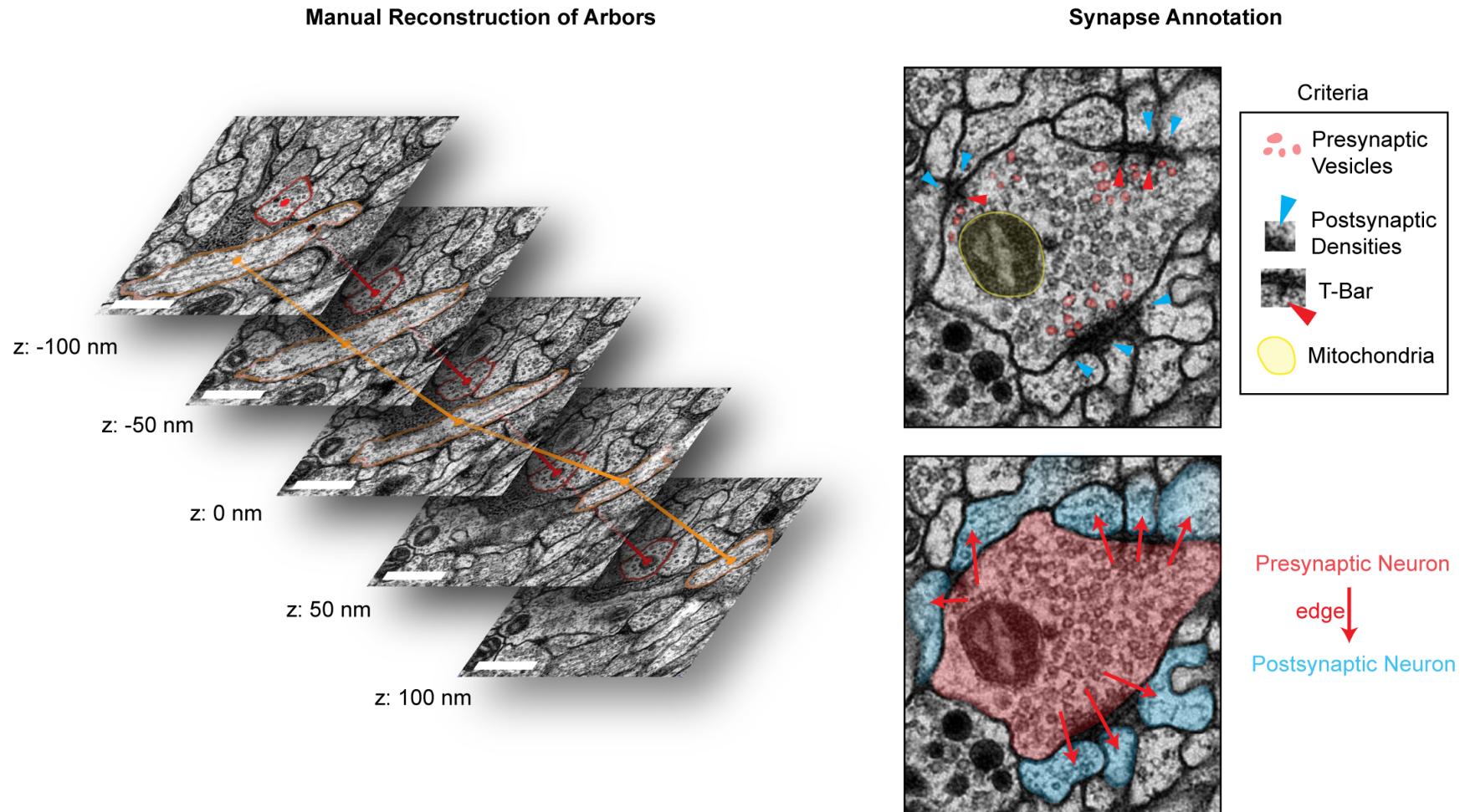
**These slides at:**

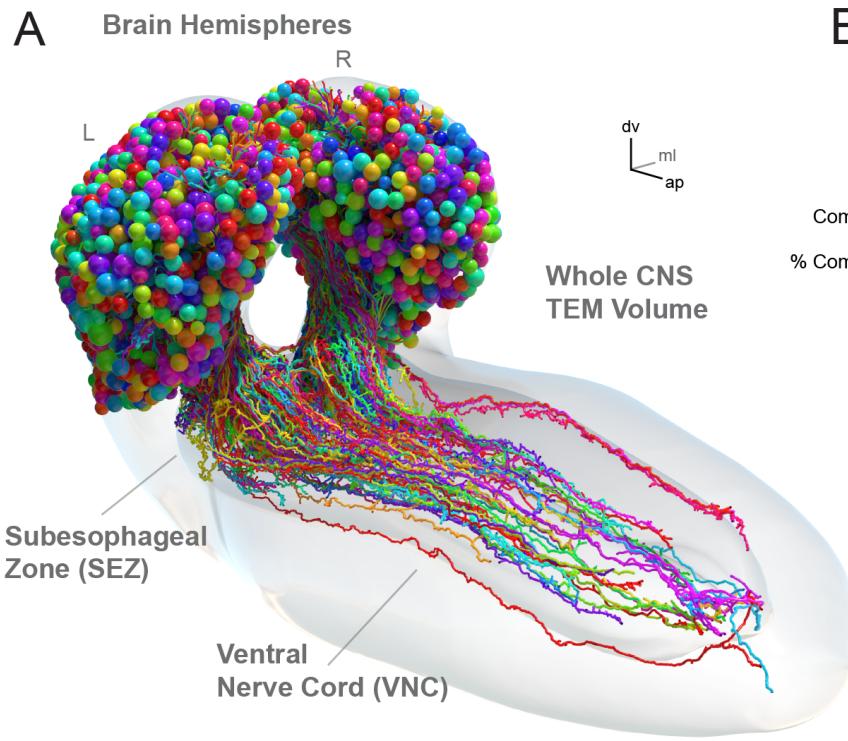
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# Appendix

**Winding, Pedigo et al. Science (2023)**

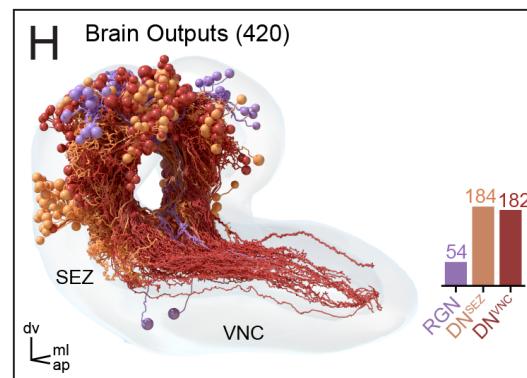
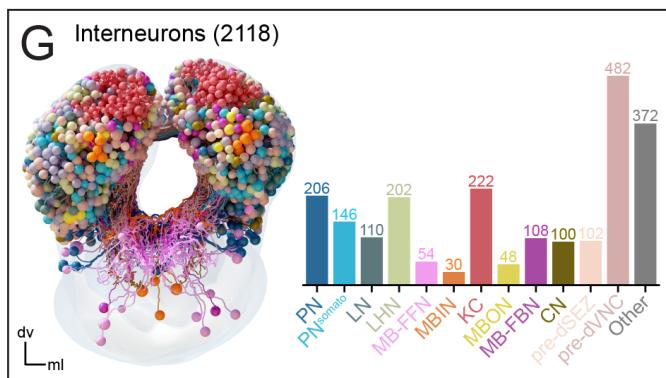
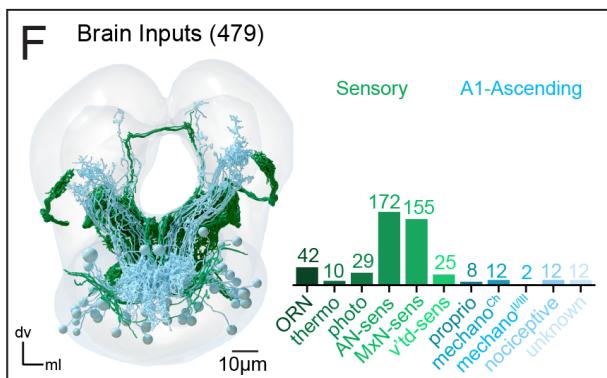
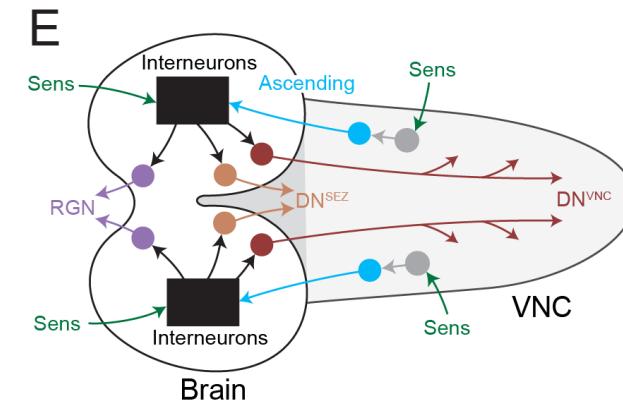
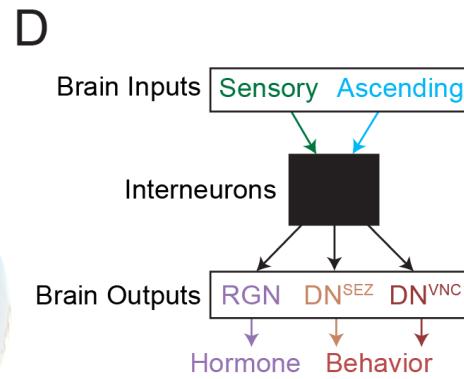
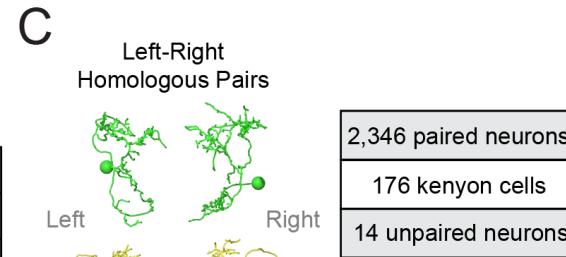
# Mapping a larval *Drosophila* brain connectome

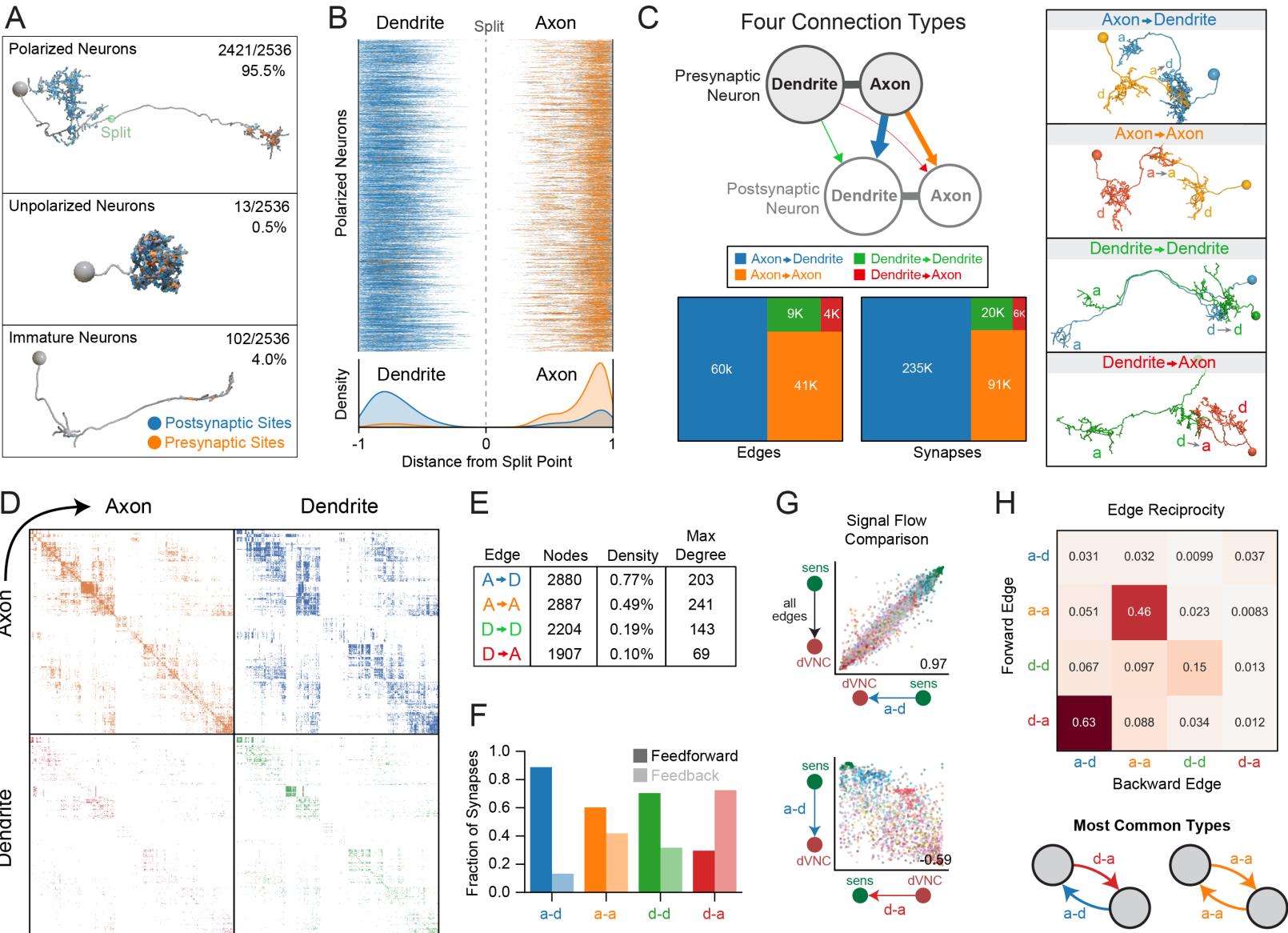


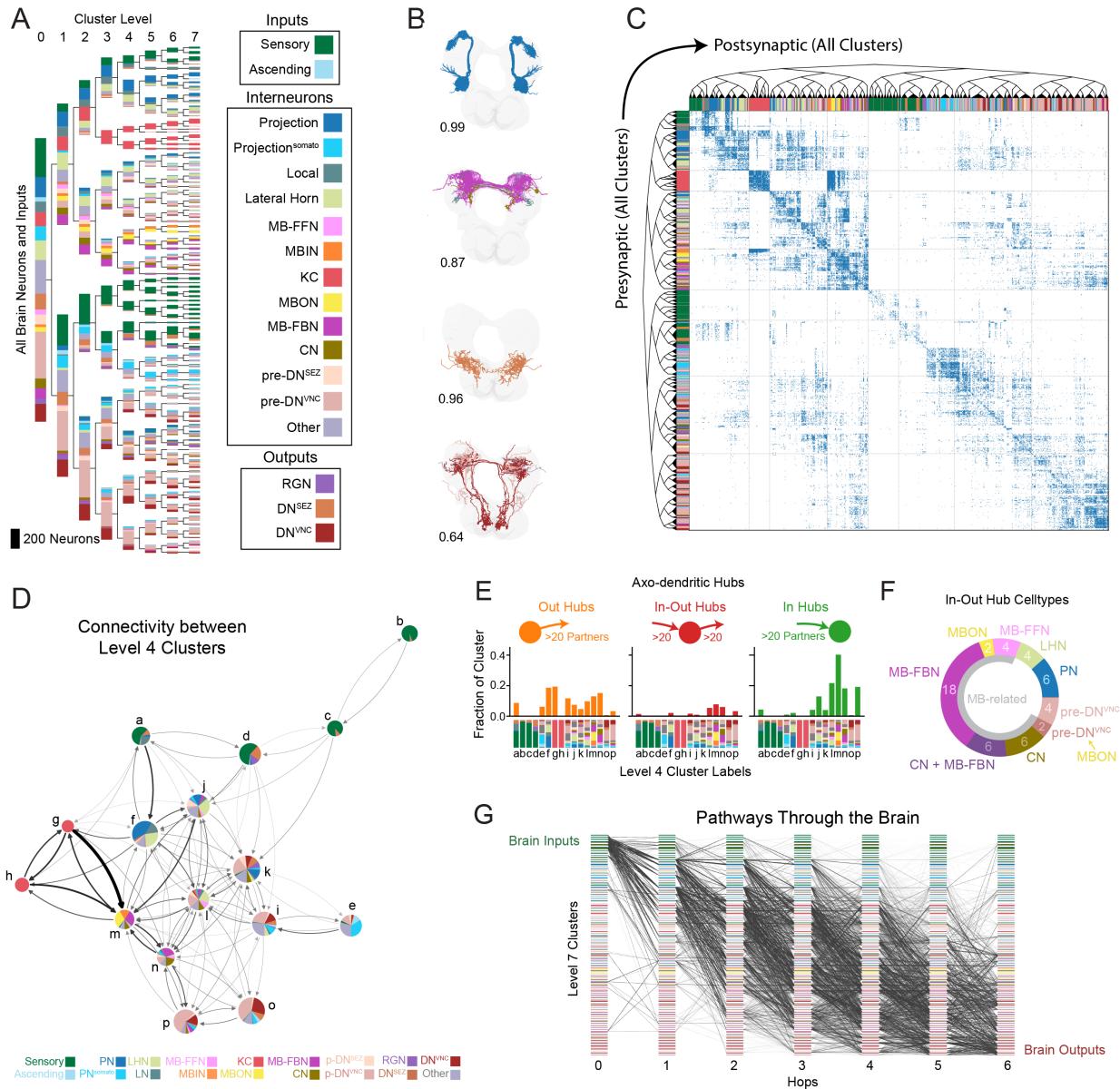


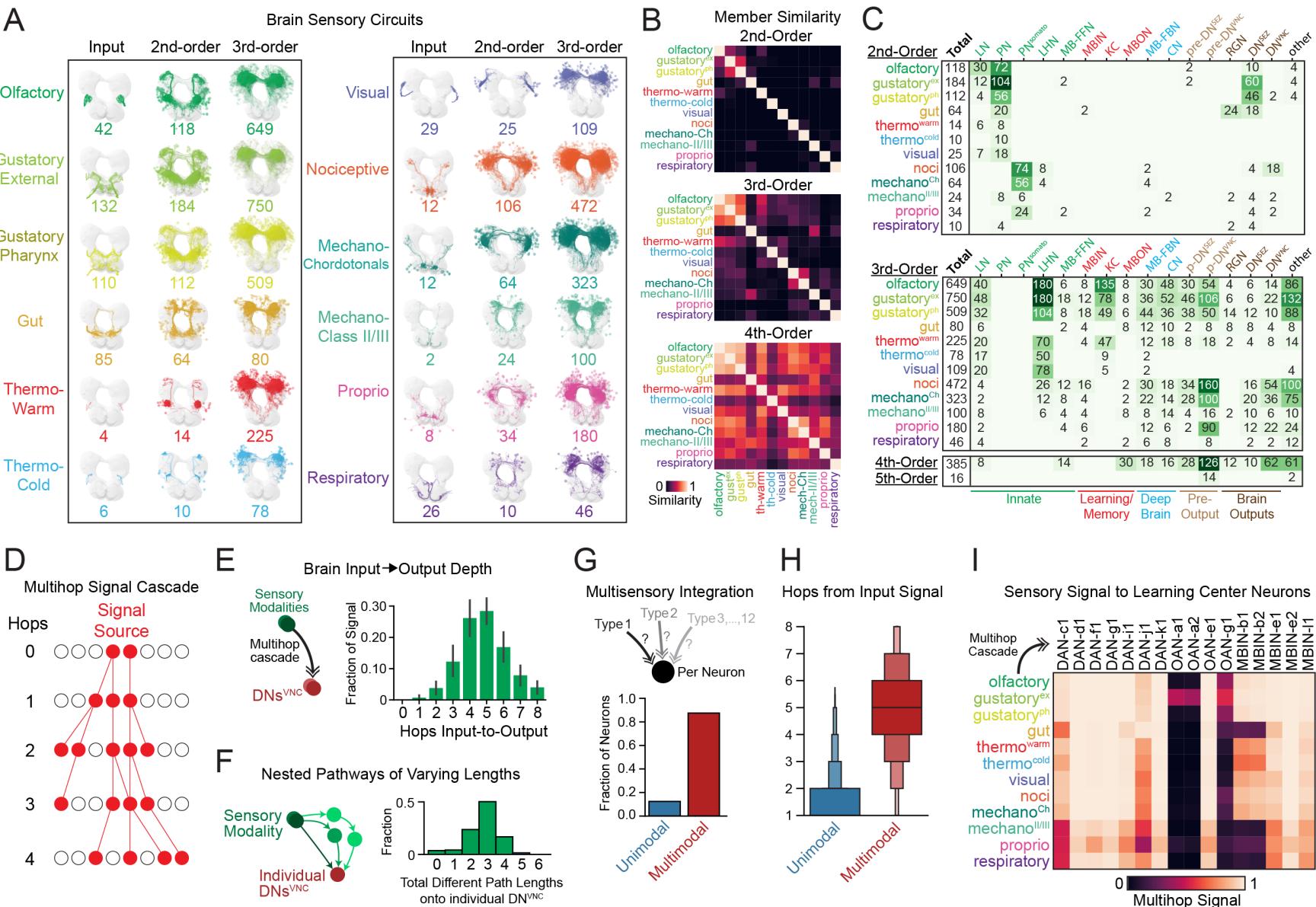
**B**

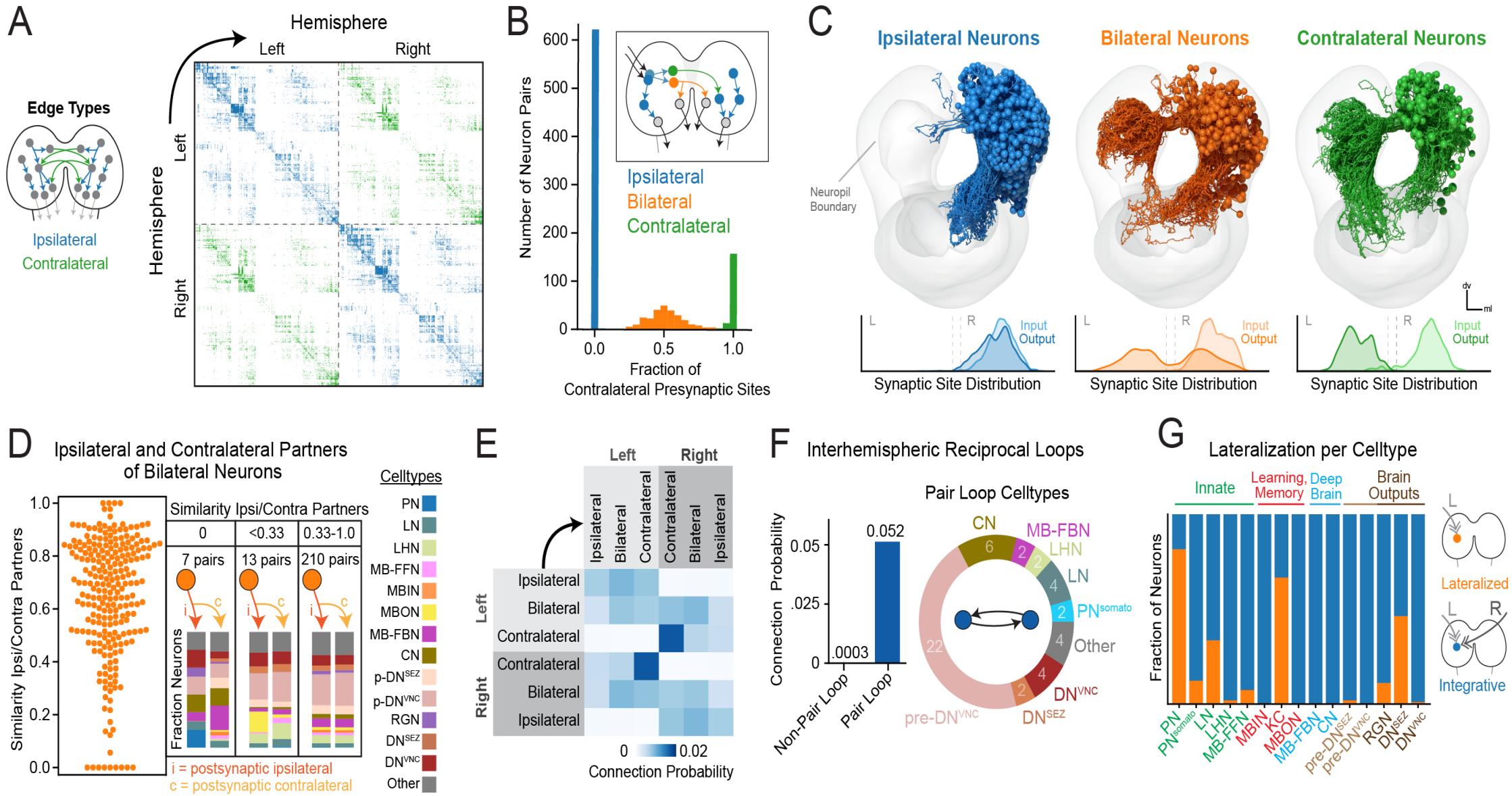
	Differentiated Neurons			Brain Synaptic Sites		
	Left	Right	All	Pre	Post	All
Total	1266	1270	2536	158k	575k	733k
Complete	1256	1259	2515	152K	396K	548K
% Complete	99.2%	99.1%	99.2%	96.2%	68.9%	74.8%

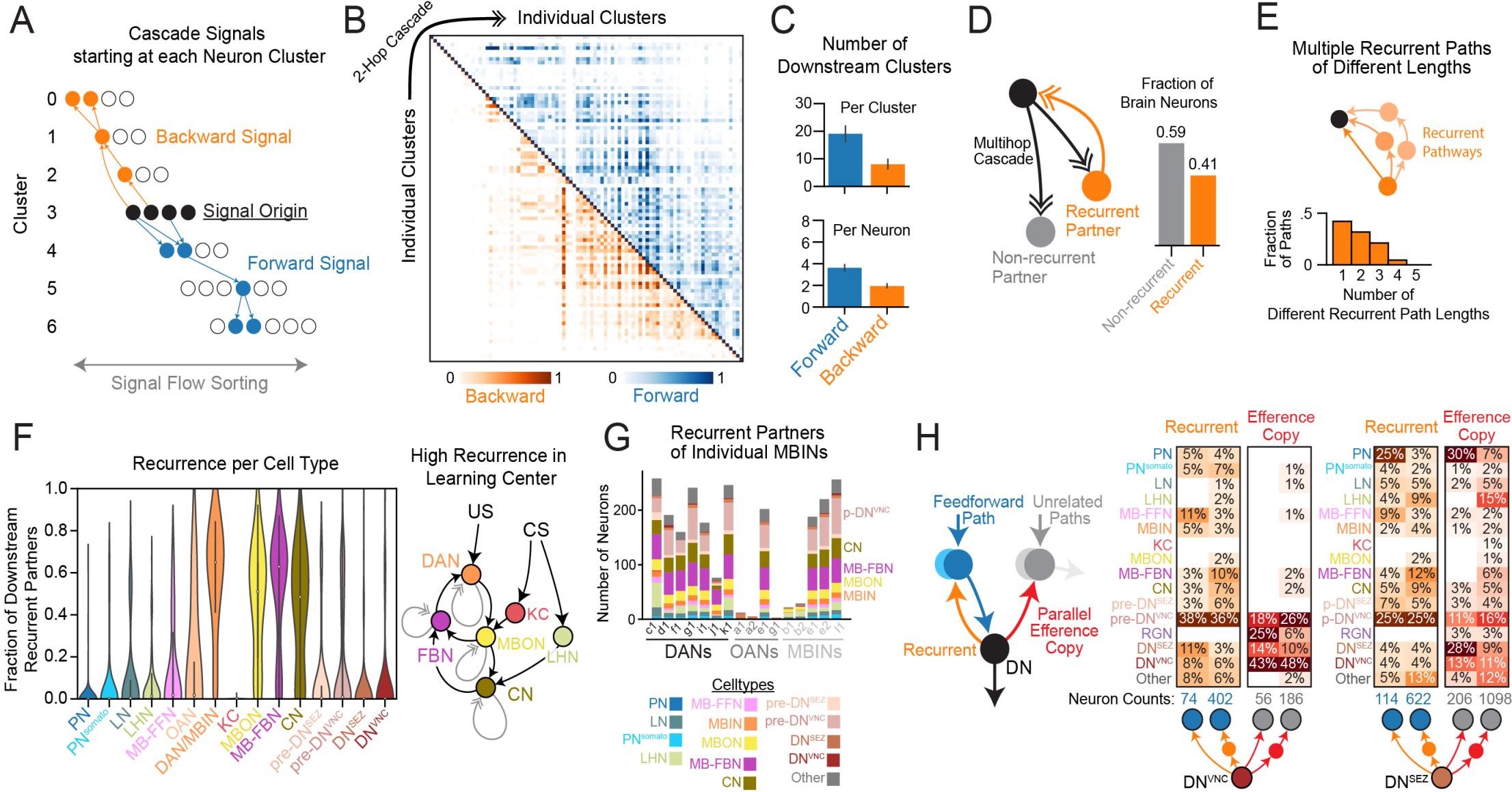


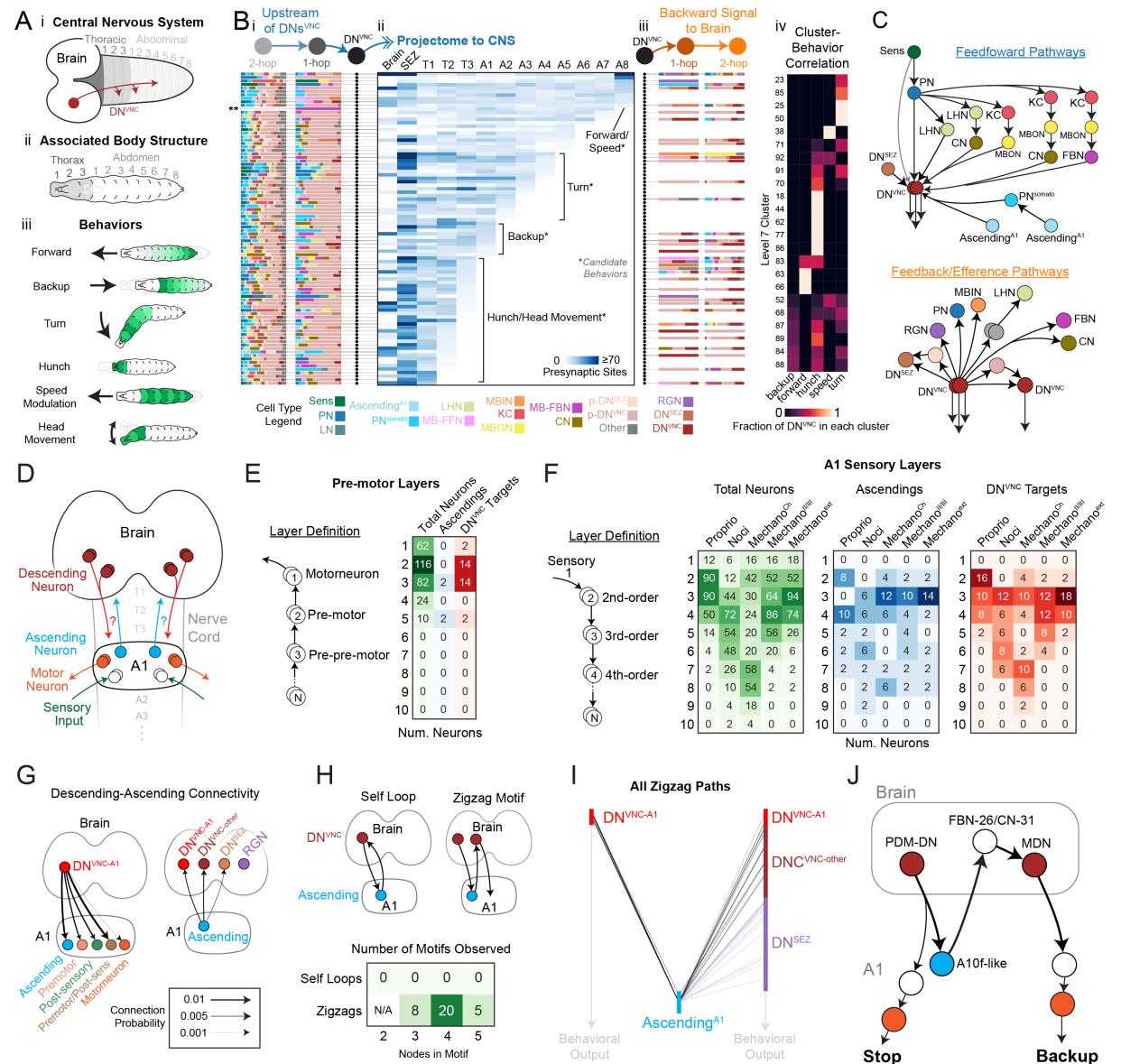






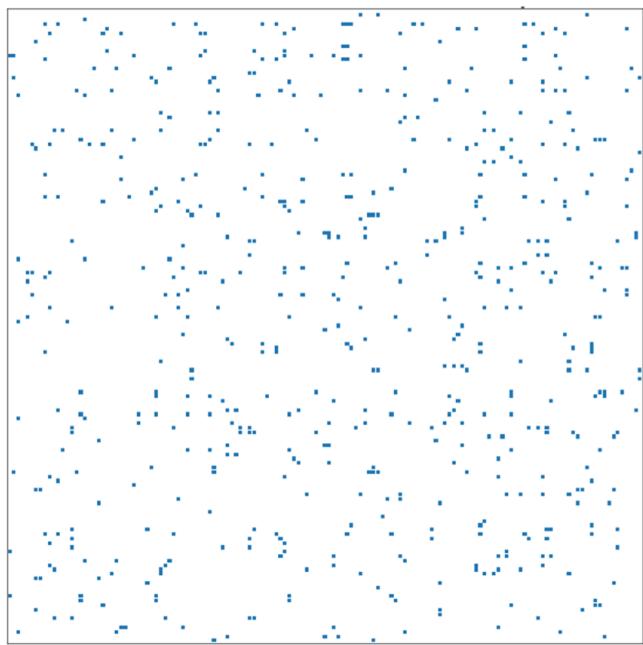






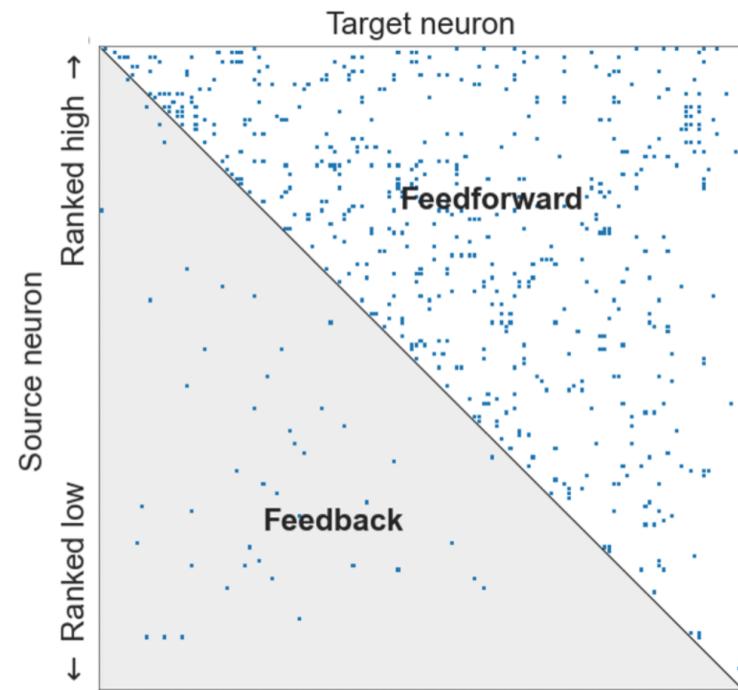
# Sorting the network

Adjacency matrix



Flow ordering  
• “Feedback minimization”  
• Signal flow  
• Random-walk based

Sorted adjacency

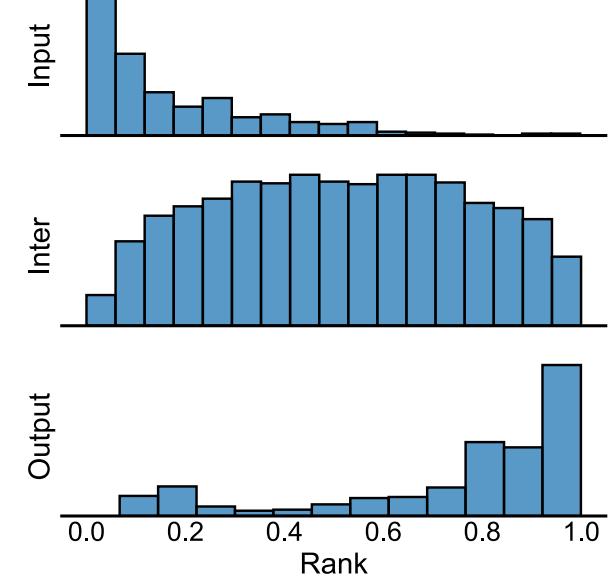
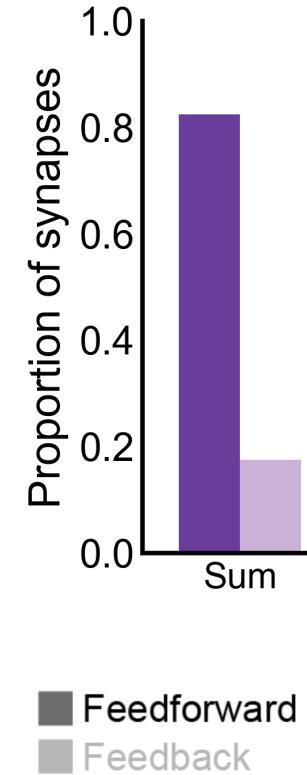
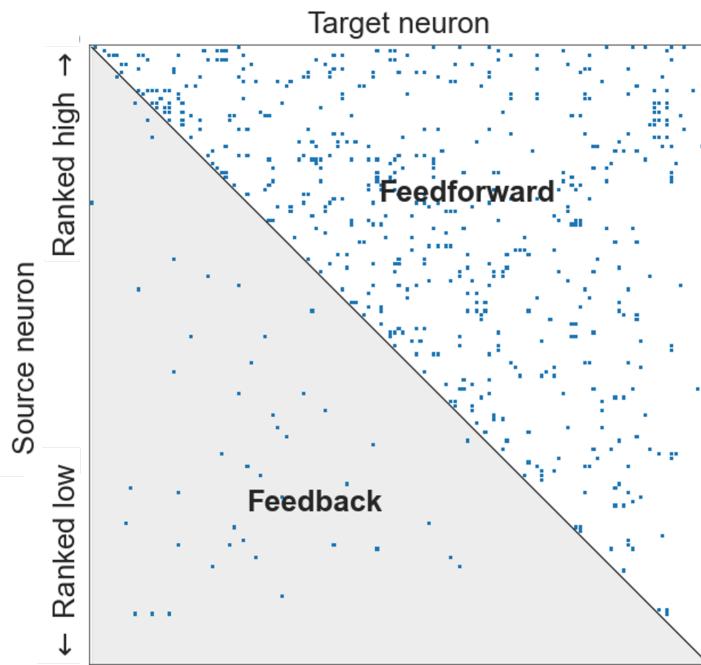


# "Feedback minimization" as graph matching

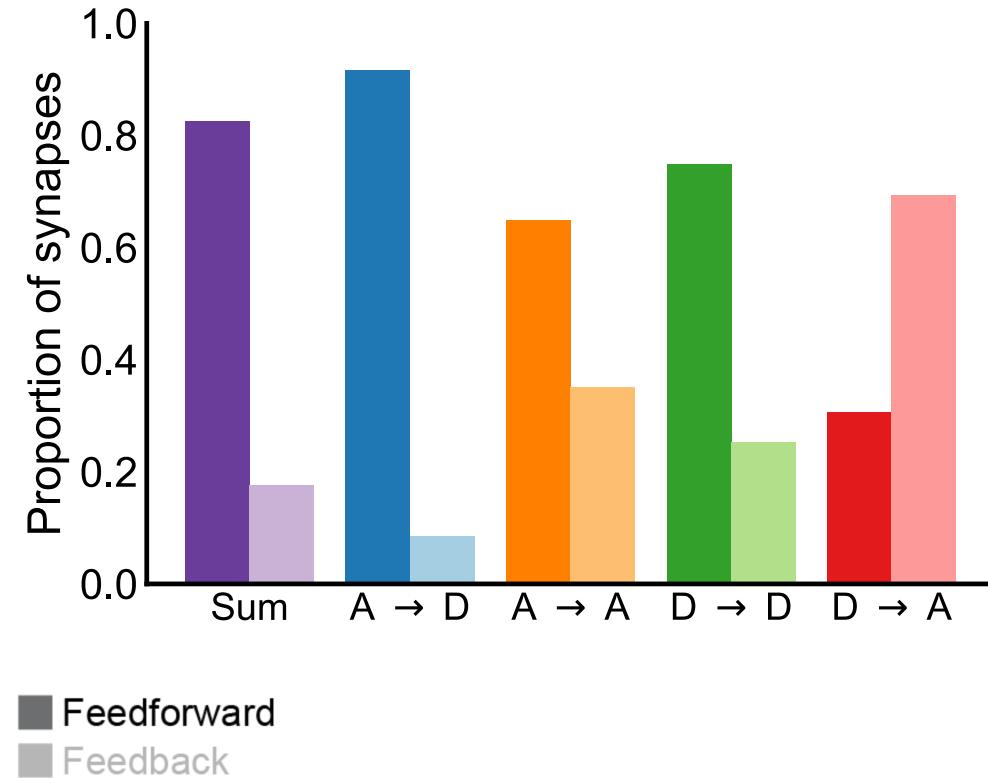
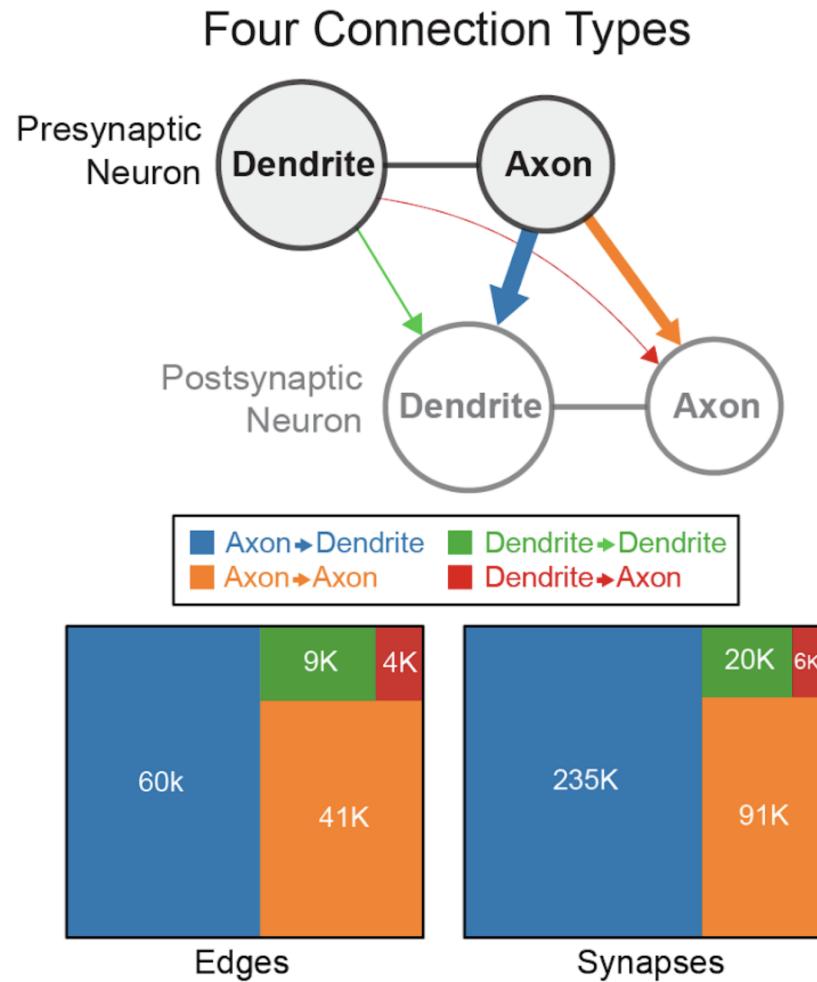
$$\min_P \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j < i} (PAP^T)_{ij}^2$$

- Minimand is the sum of squared elements in the lower triangle of reshuffled adjacency
- Solving produces an ordering of the network under which connections are likely to go "forward" in this ordering
- Equivalent to graph matching  $A$  to an upper triangular matrix of all 1s

# Quantifying high-level "feedforward/feedback"

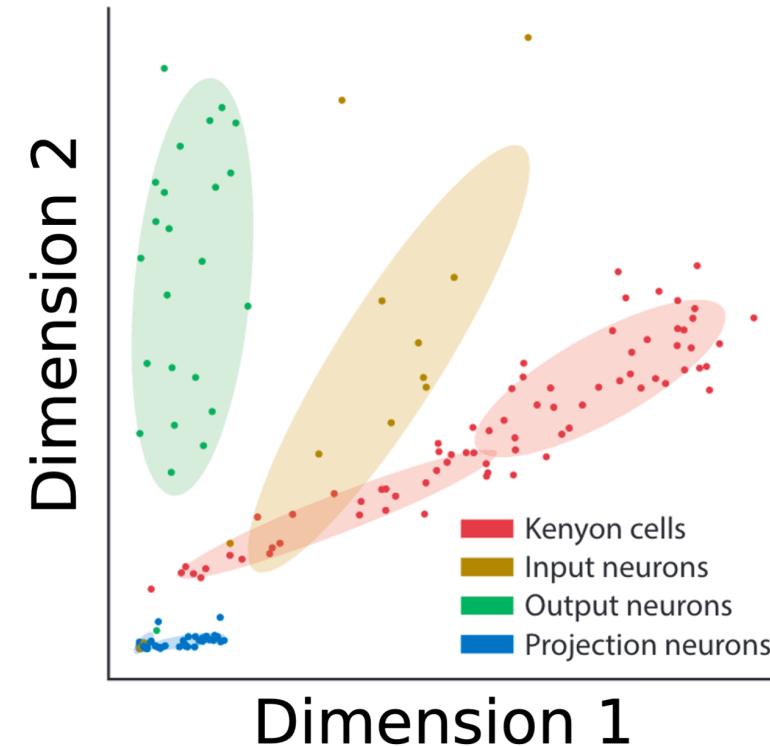


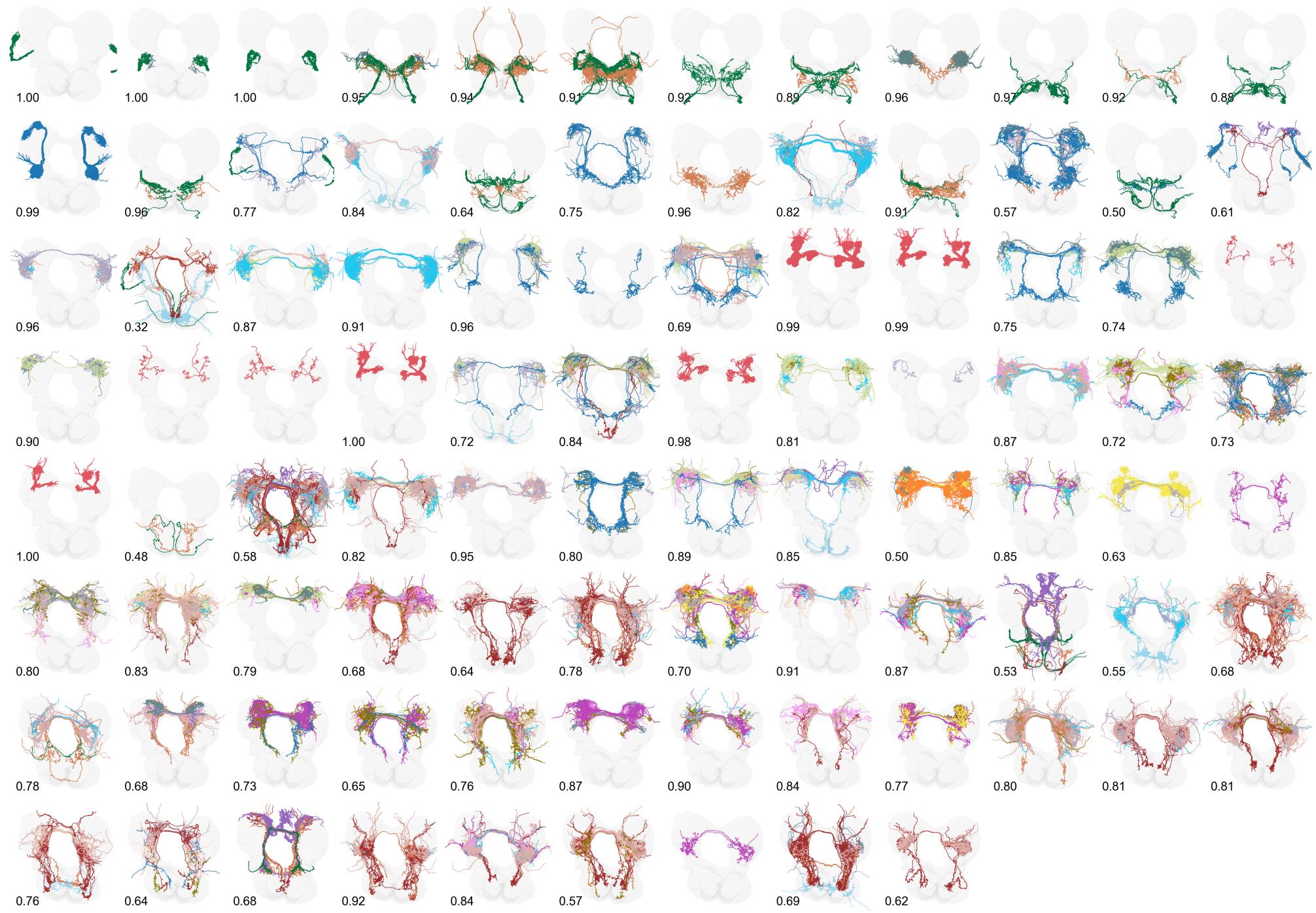
# Morphology enables splitting axons/dendrites



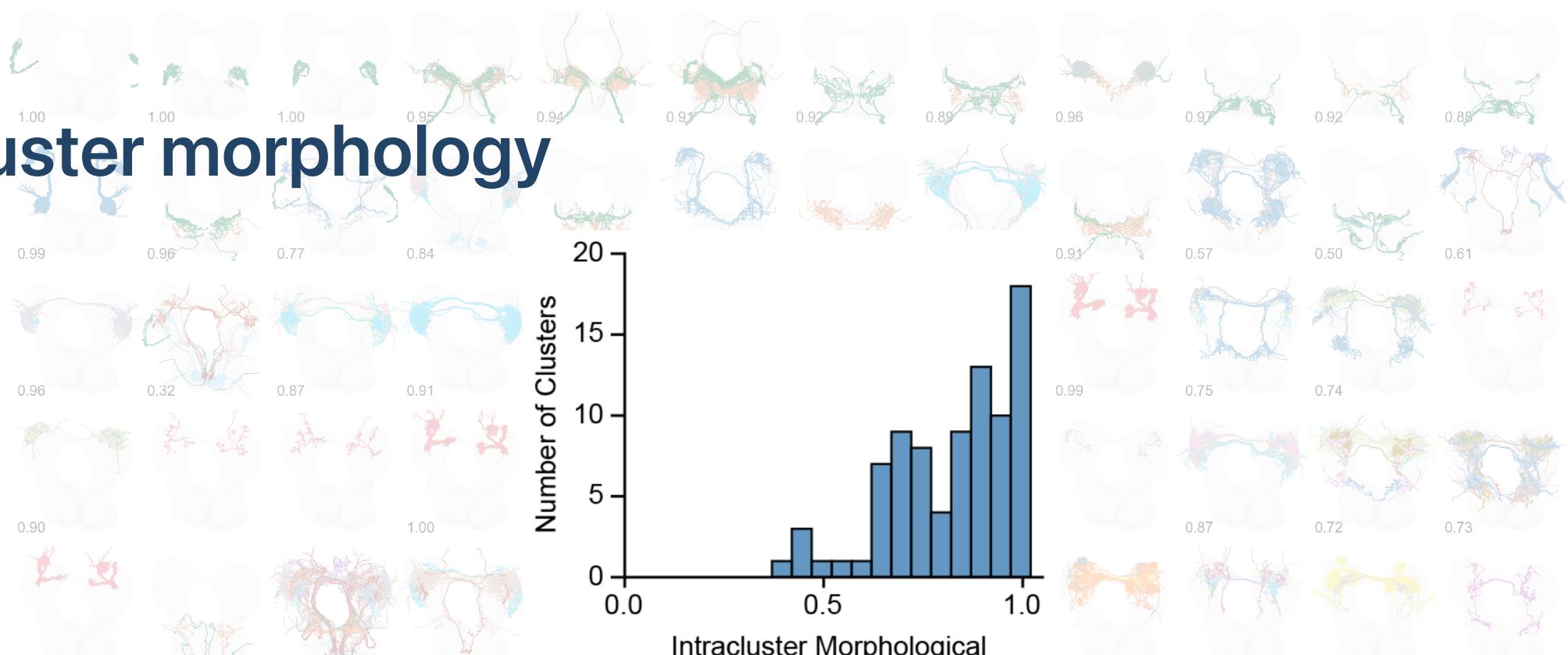
# Spectral embedding

- Spectral decomposition of the adjacency matrix (or Laplacian)





# Cluster morphology

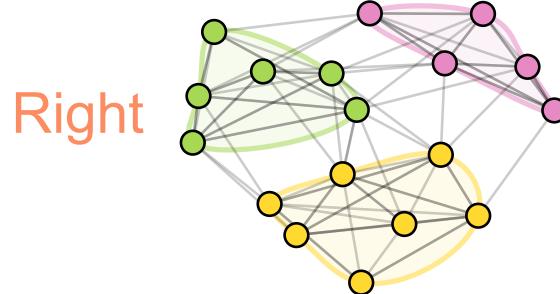
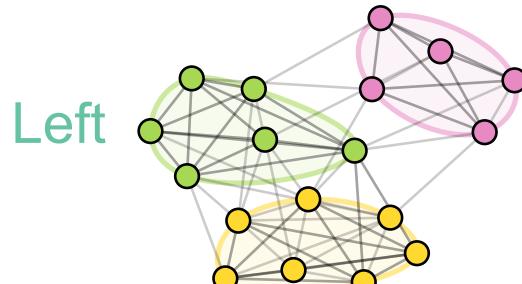


# Discriminability:

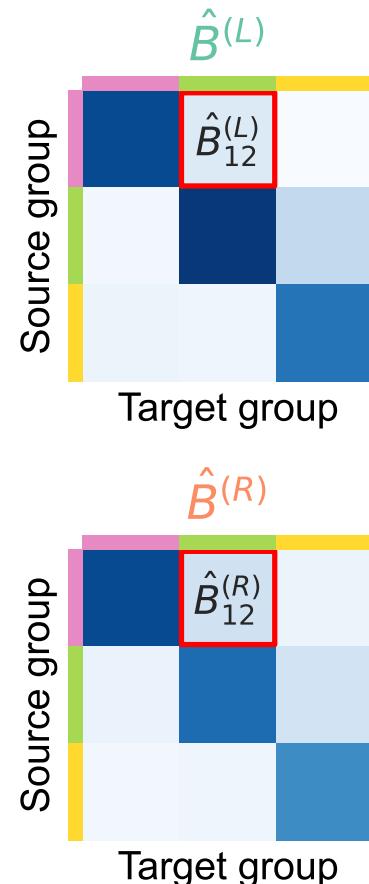
$P[\text{within cluster NBLAST sim.} > \text{between cluster NBLAST sim.}] \approx 0.81$

Pedigo et al. eLife (2023)

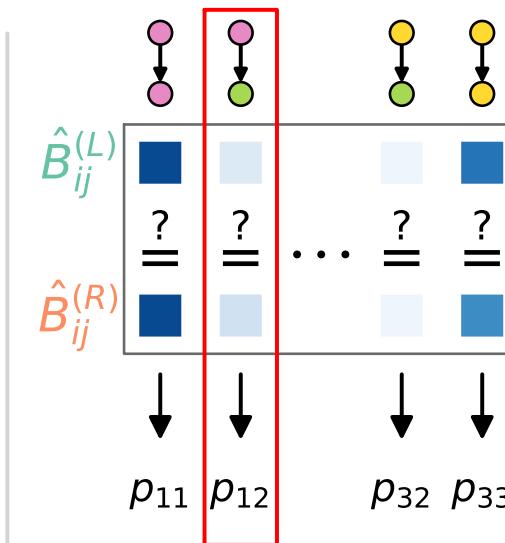
Group neurons



Estimate group connection probabilities



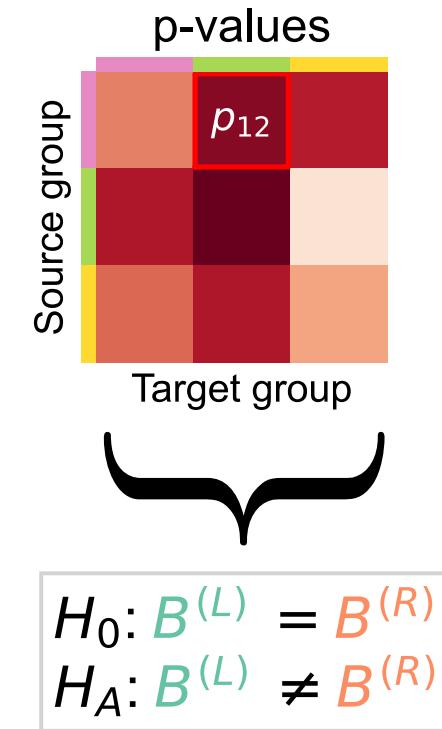
Compare probabilities, compute p-values

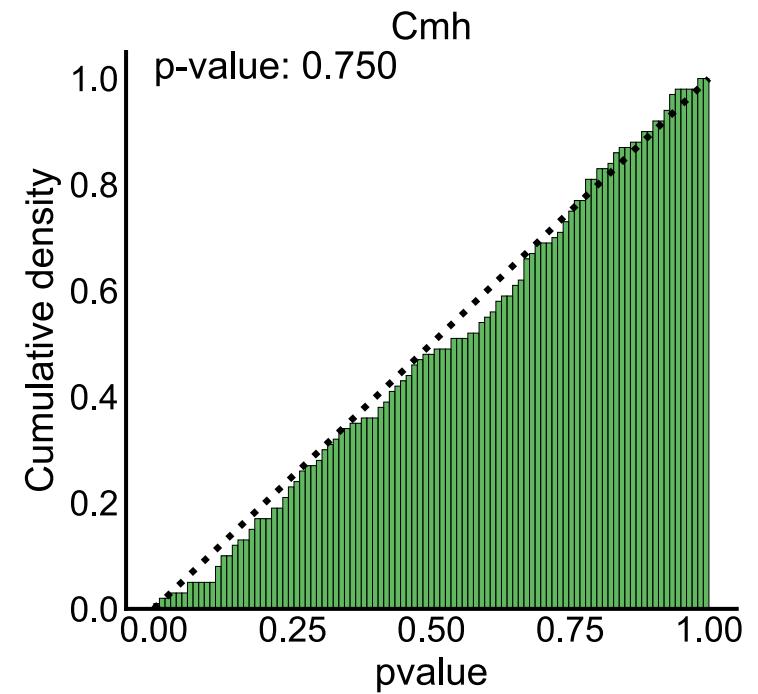
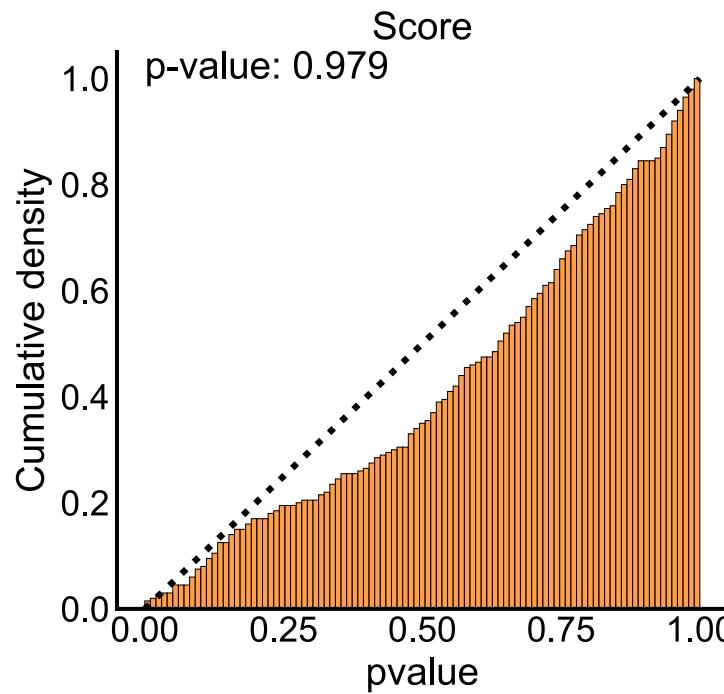
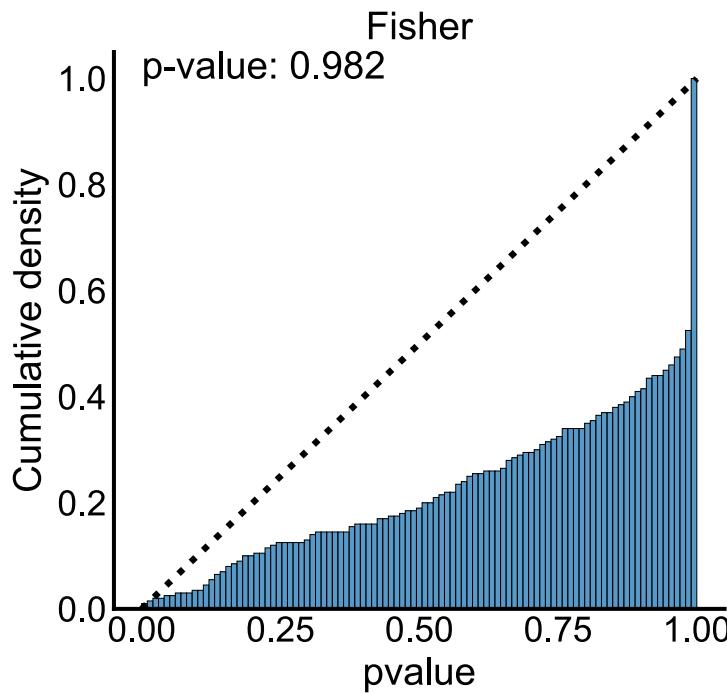


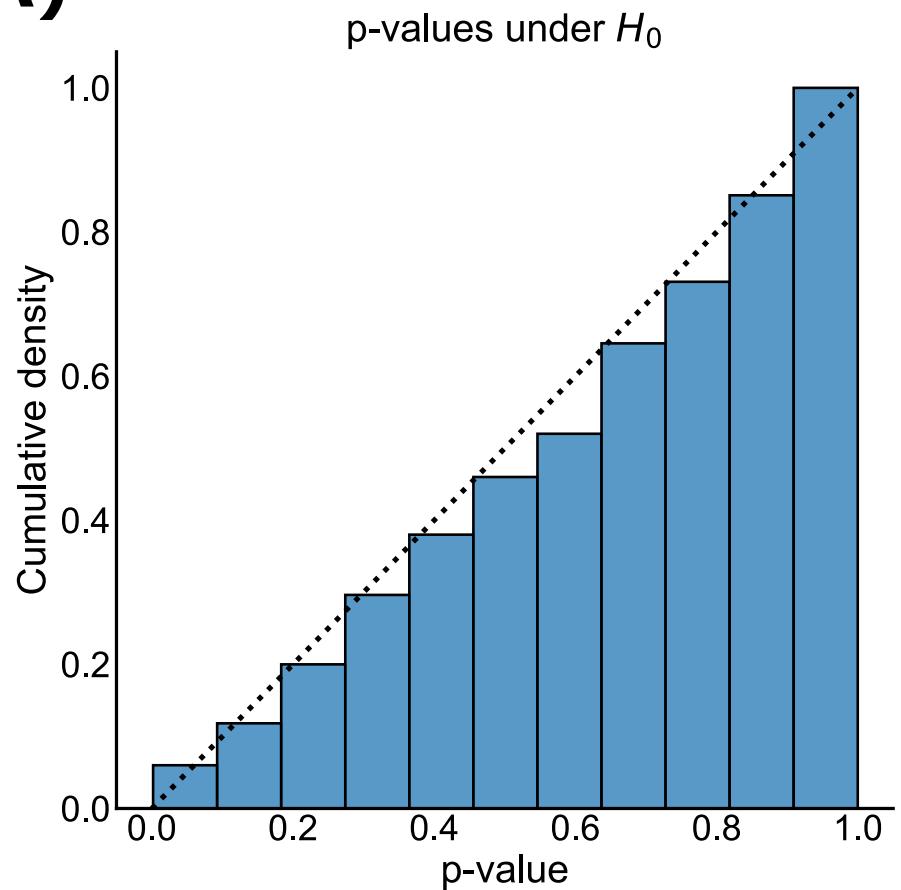
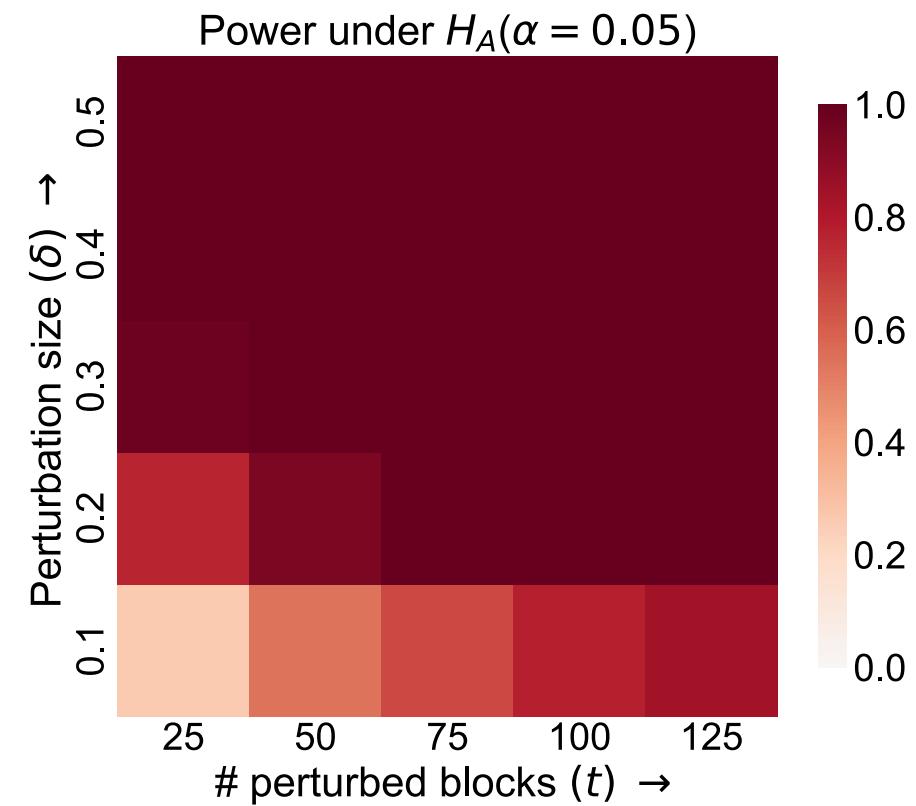
$$H_0: \hat{B}_{ij}^{(L)} = \hat{B}_{ij}^{(R)}$$

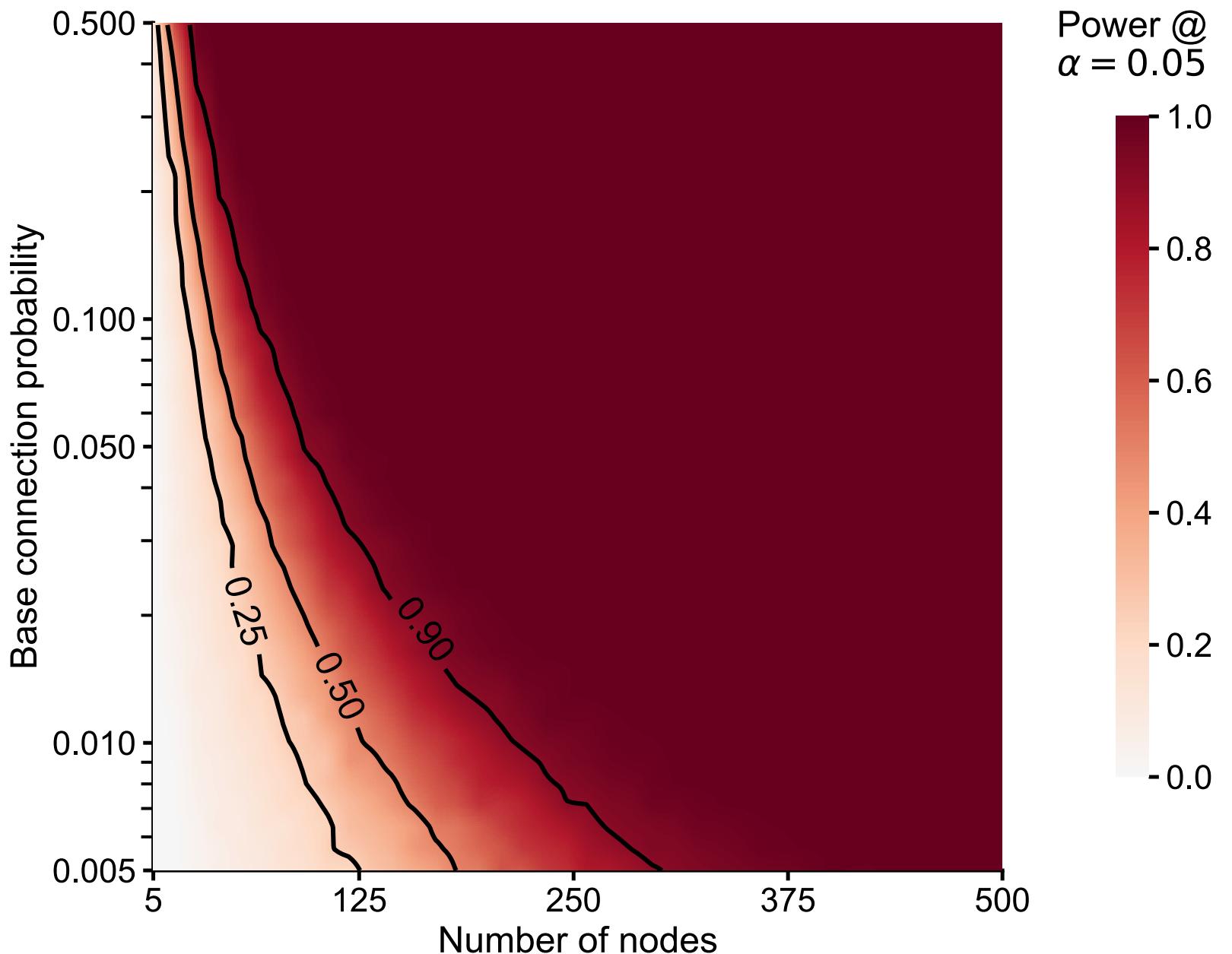
$$H_A: \hat{B}_{ij}^{(L)} \neq \hat{B}_{ij}^{(R)}$$

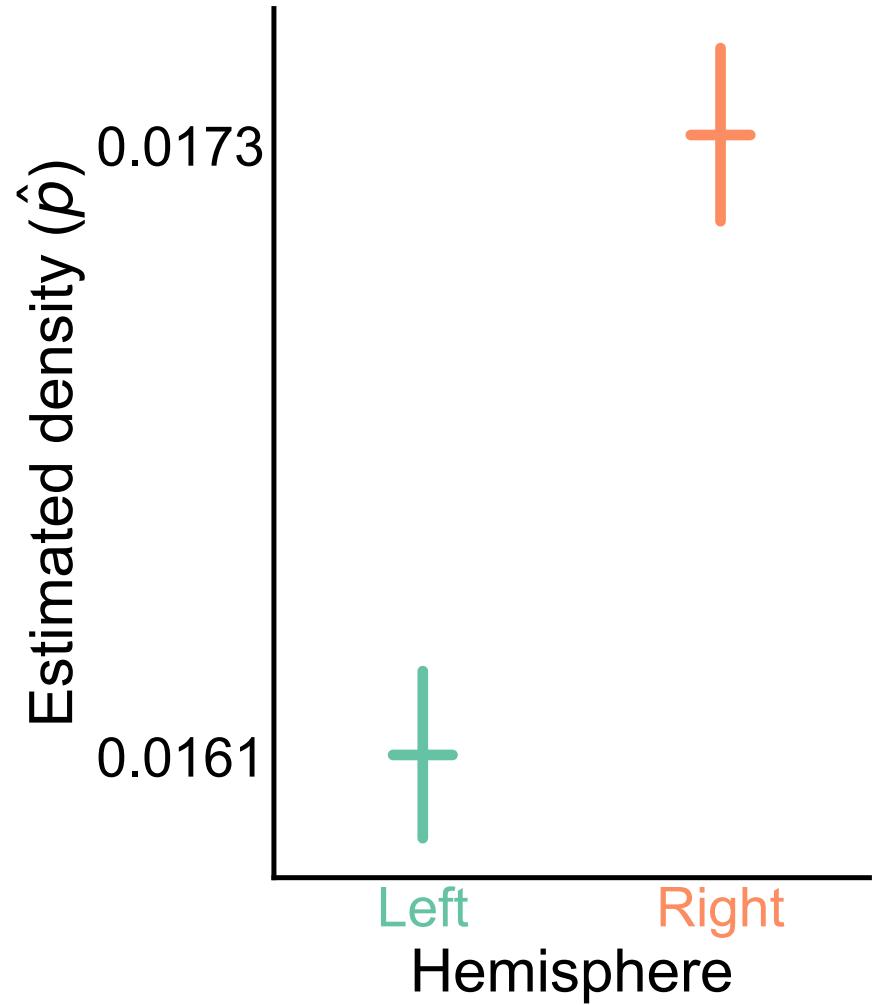
Combine p-values for overall test





**A)****B)**

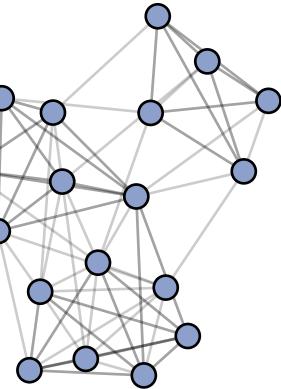




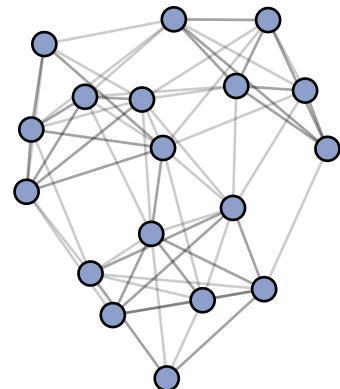
Compute global  
connection density

Compare ER  
models

Left

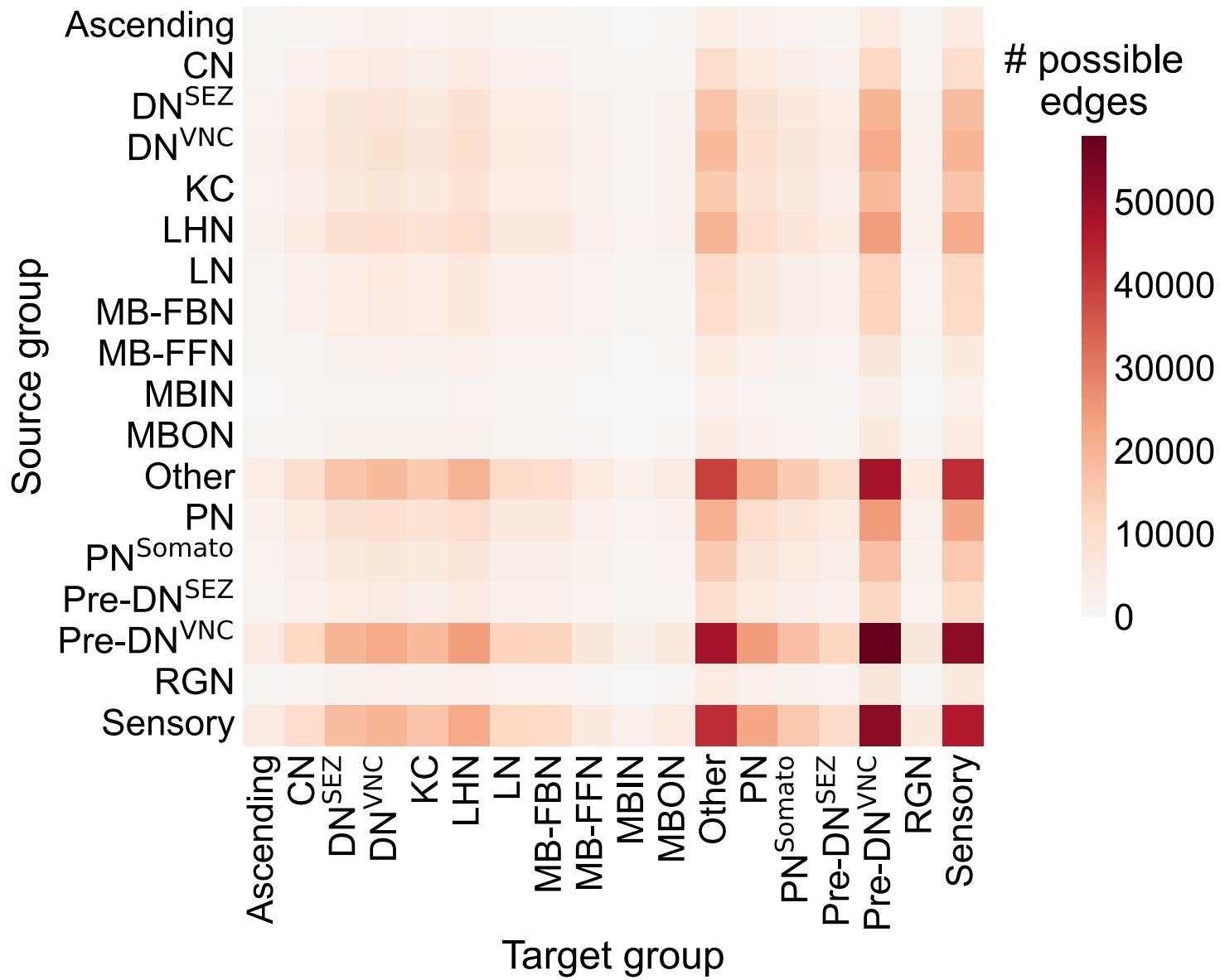


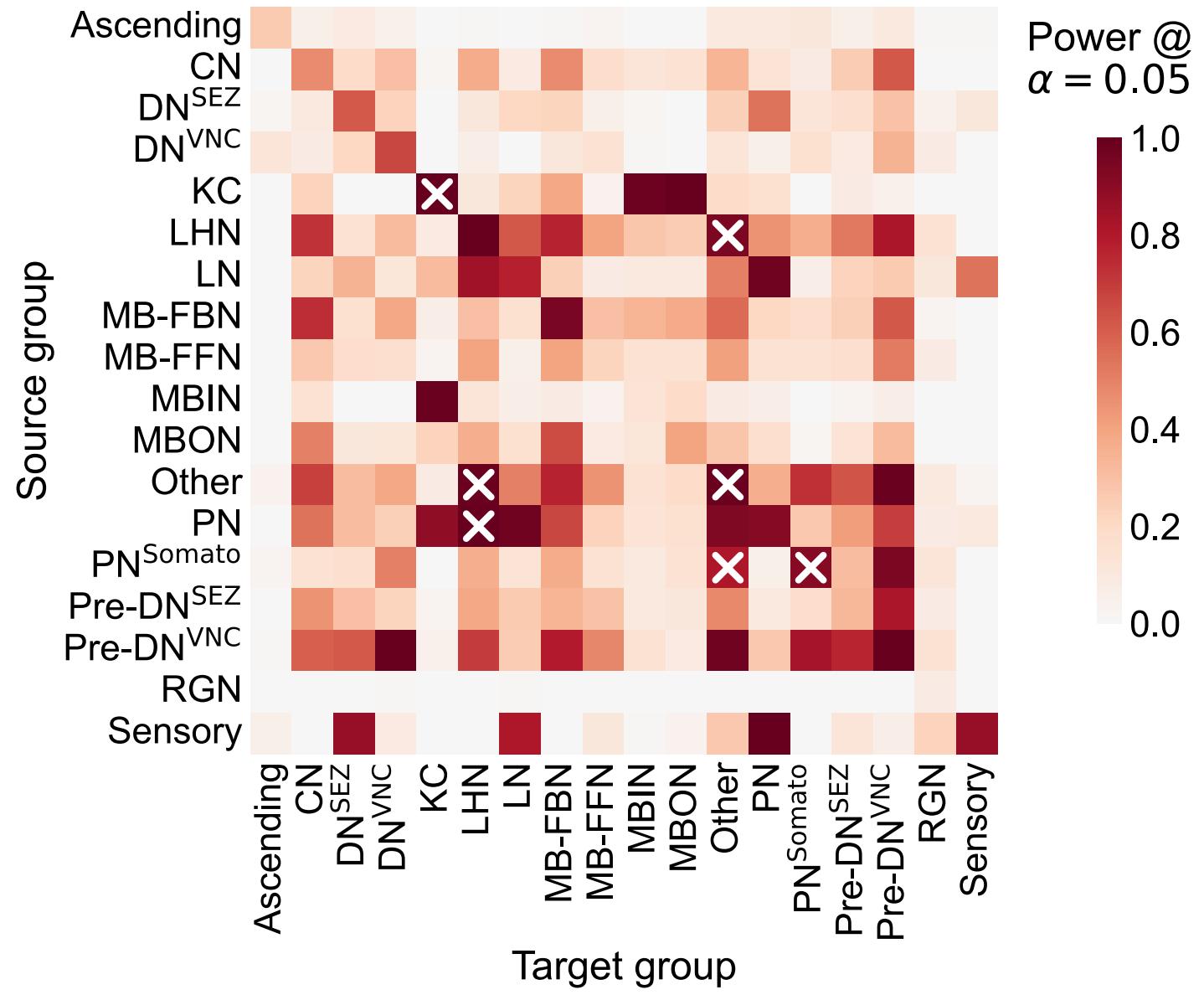
Right

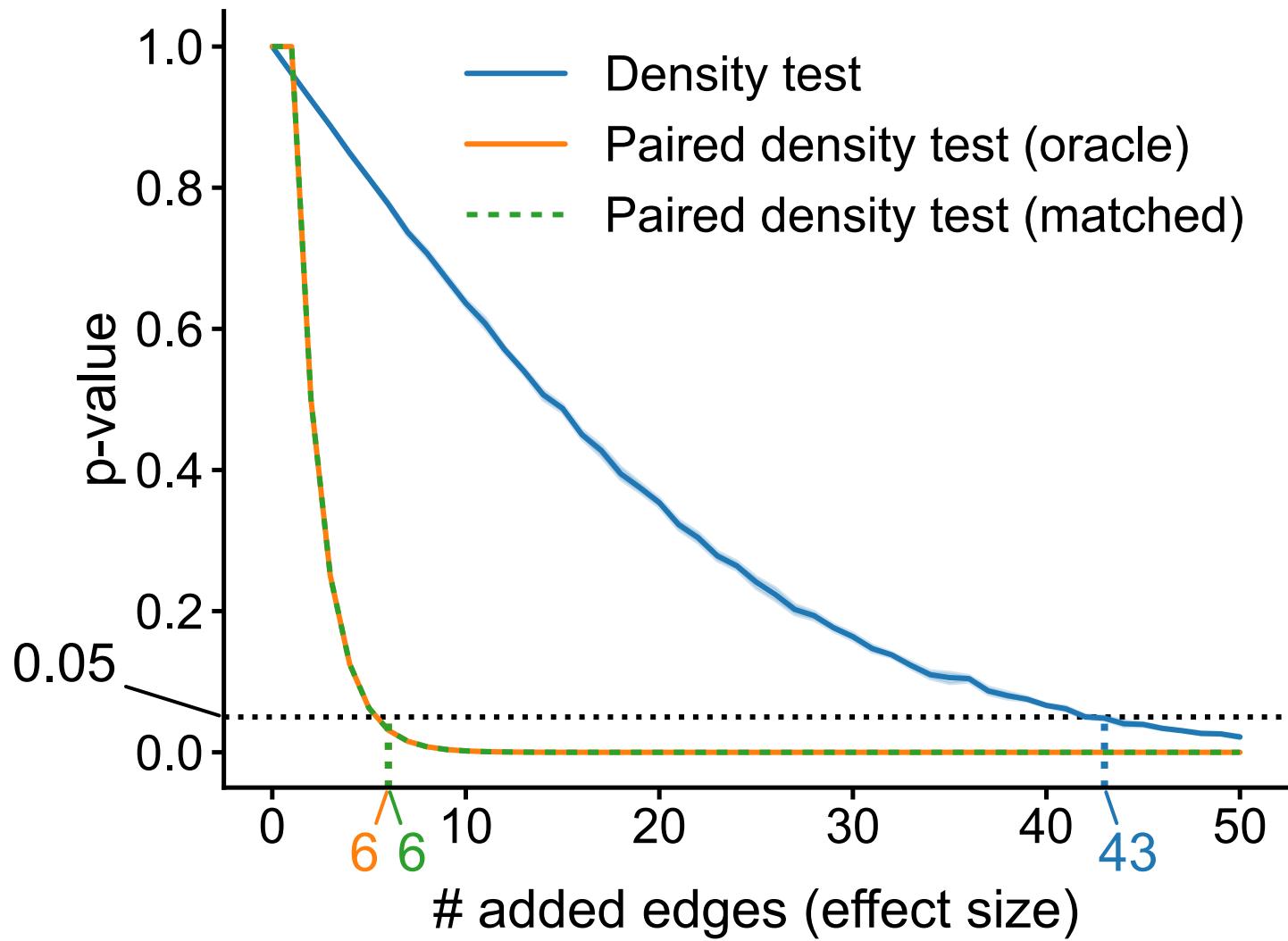


$$p = \frac{\# \text{ edges}}{\# \text{ potential edges}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} H_0: p^{(L)} &= p^{(R)} \\ H_A: p^{(L)} &\neq p^{(R)} \end{aligned}$$



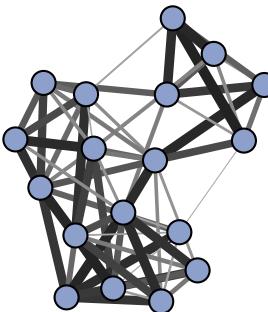




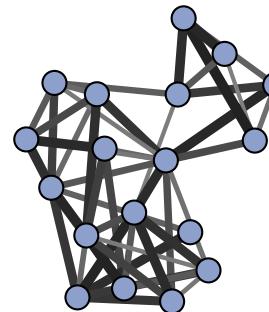
Increasing edge weight threshold



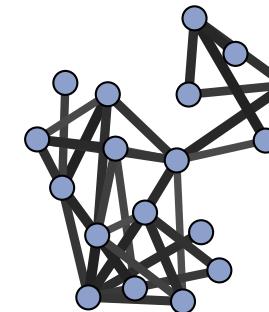
Left



?



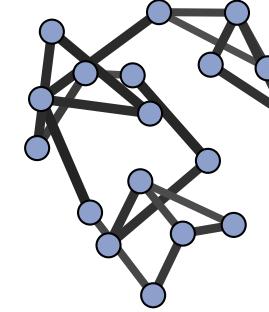
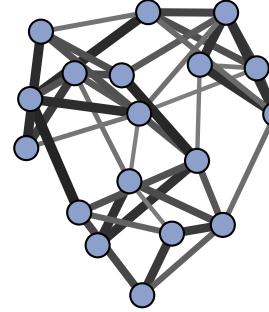
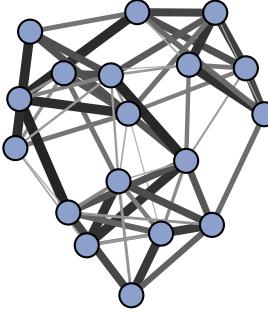
?

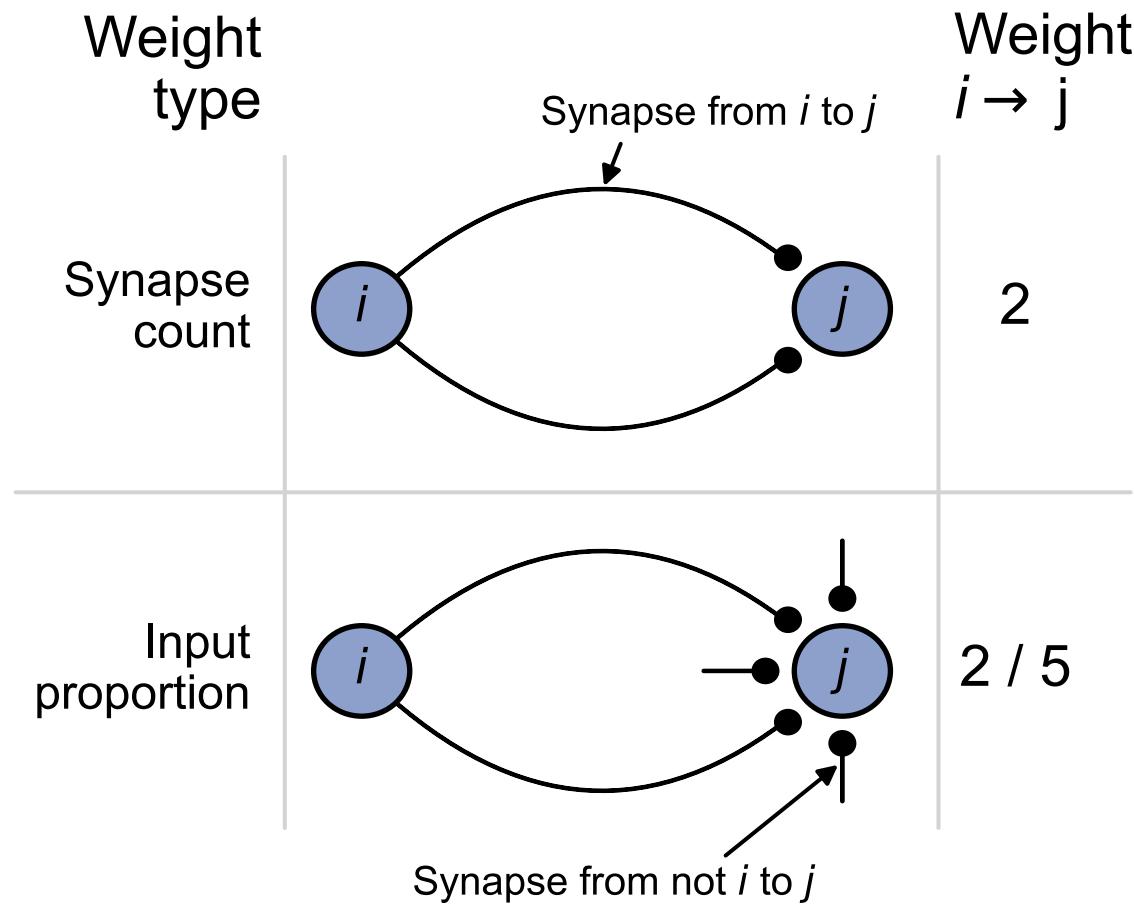


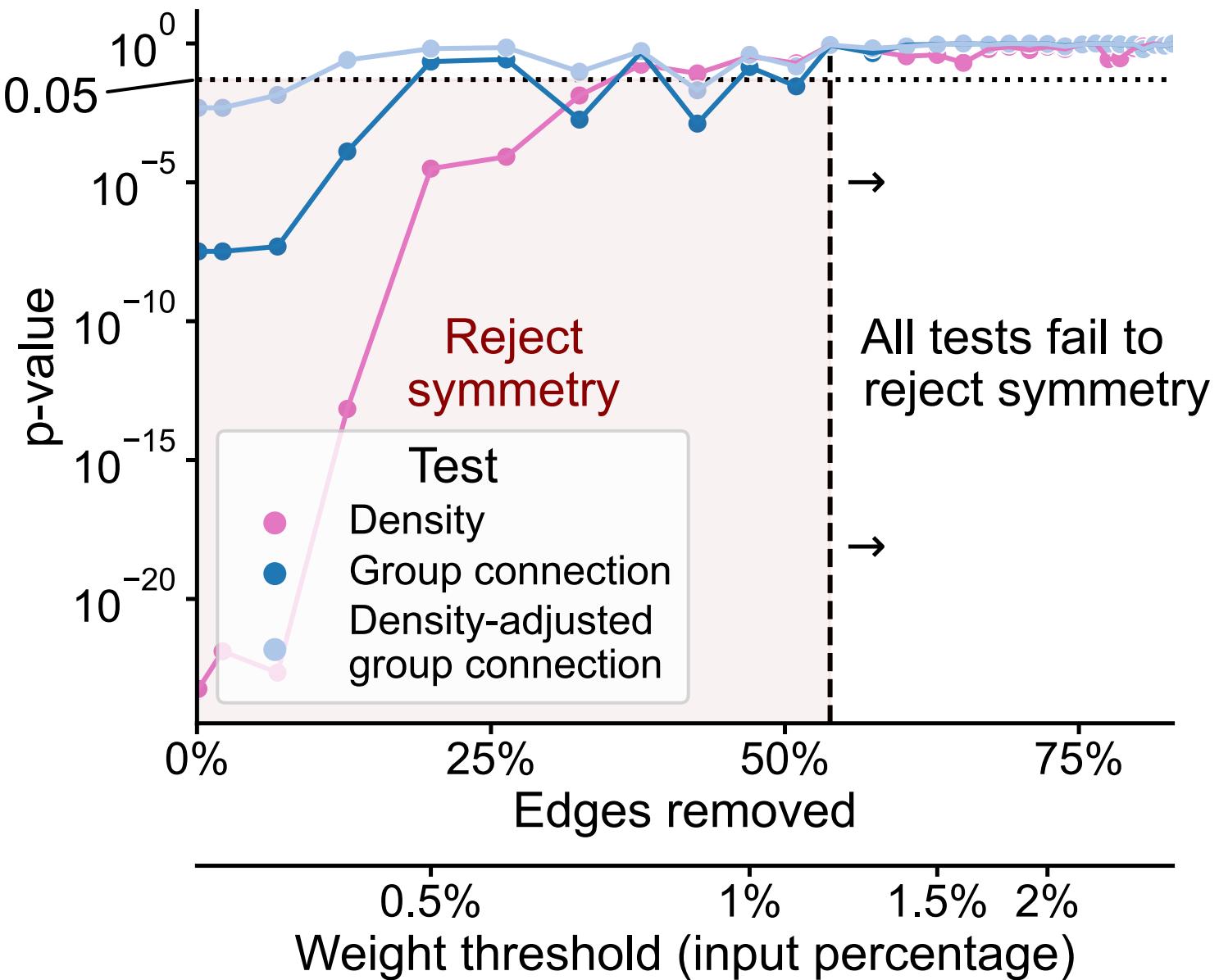
?

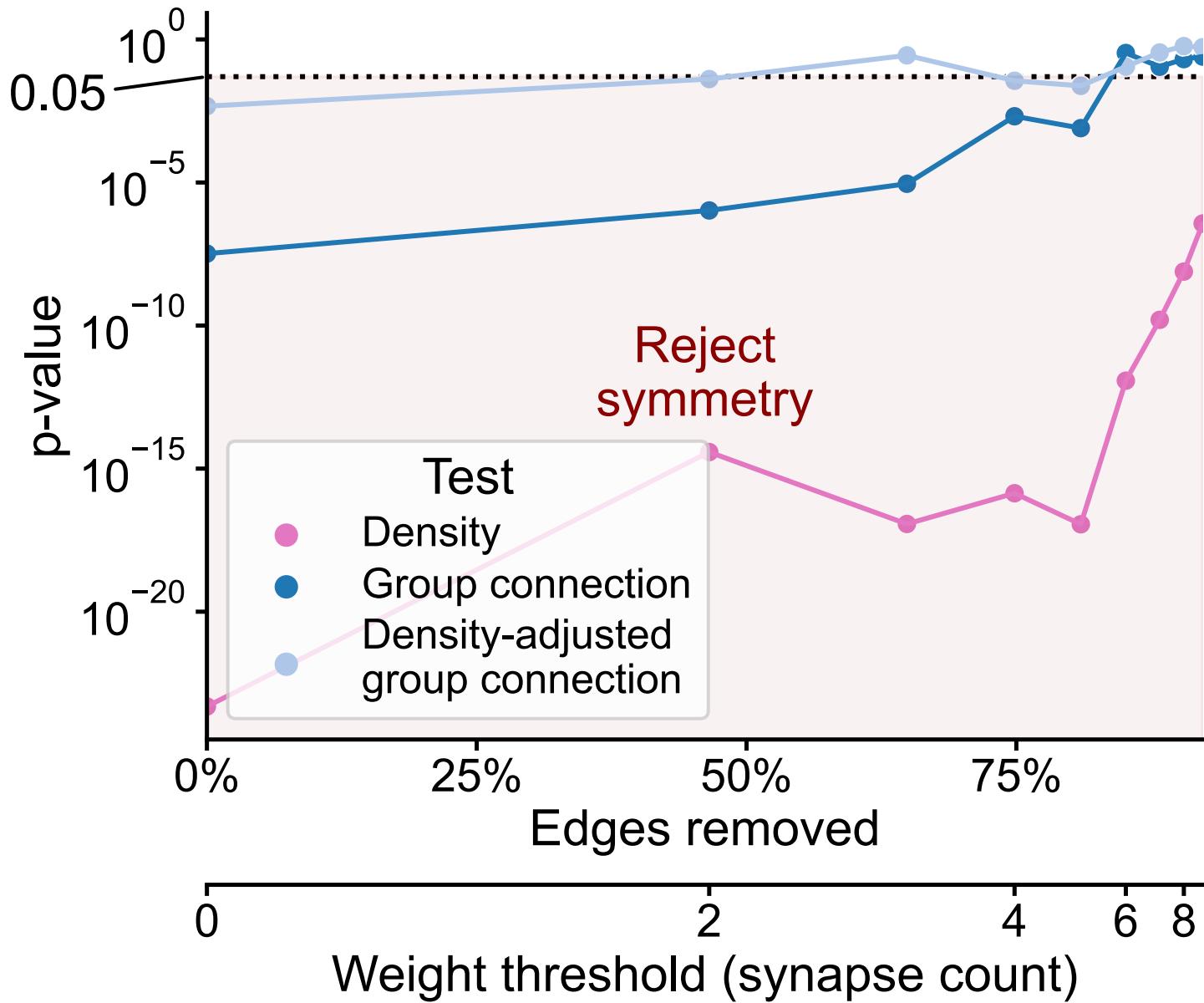
← Rerun all  
tests

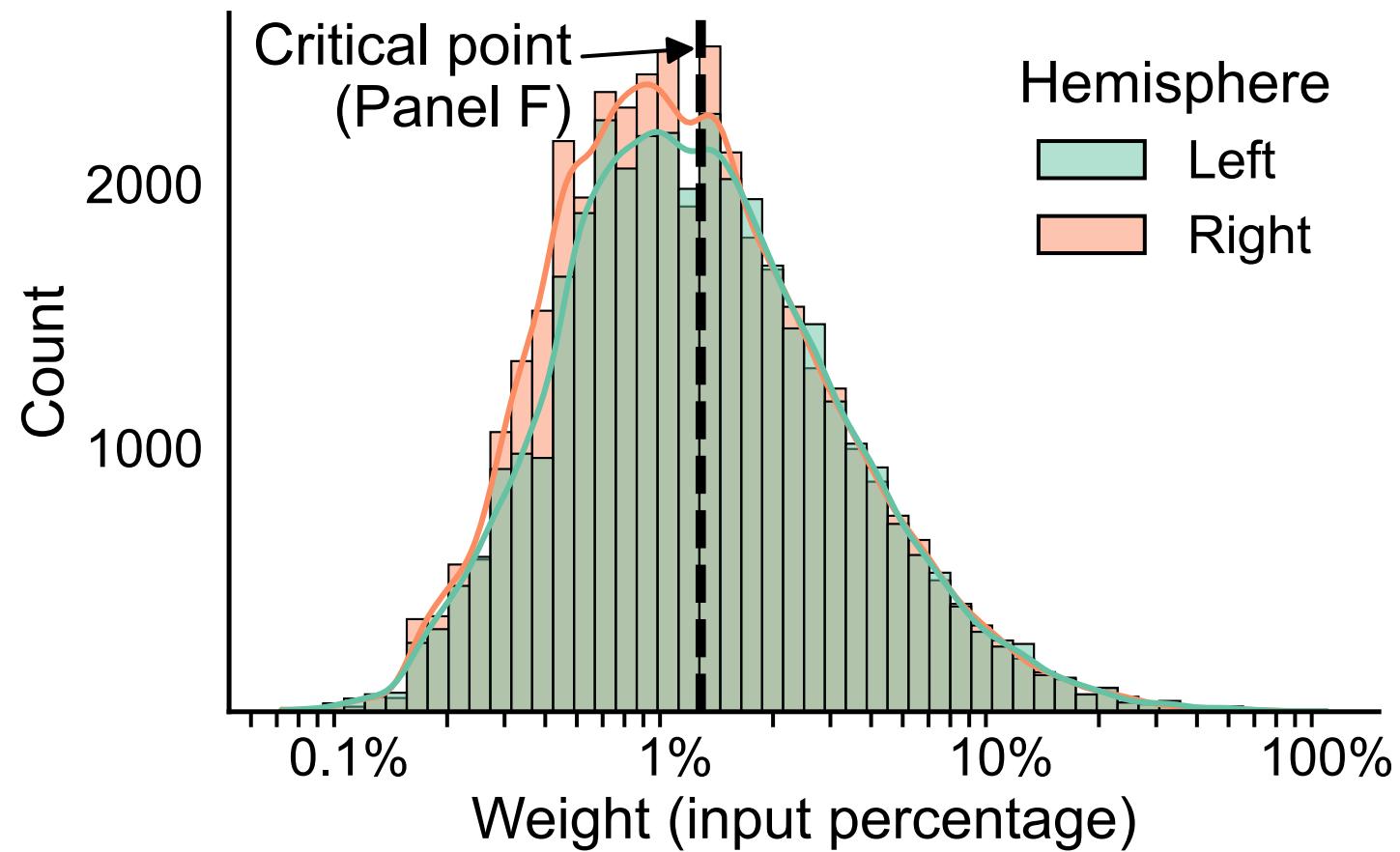
Right

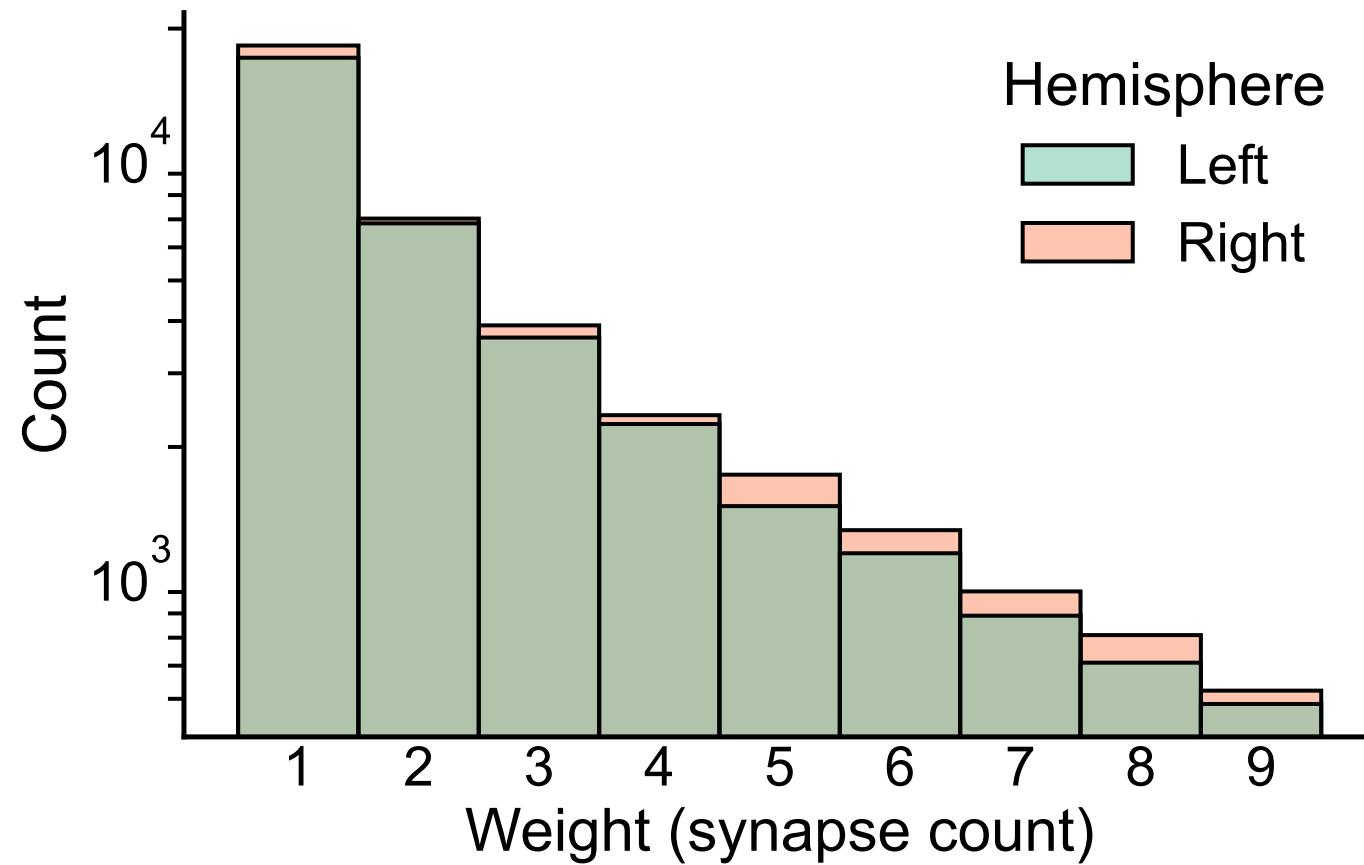


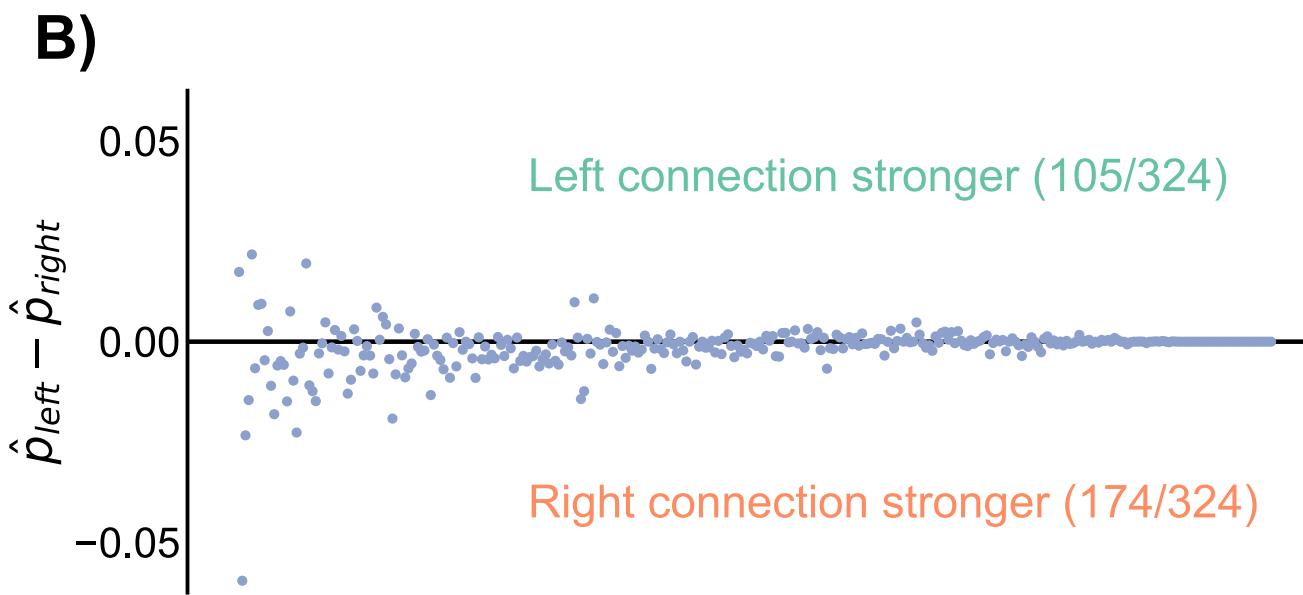




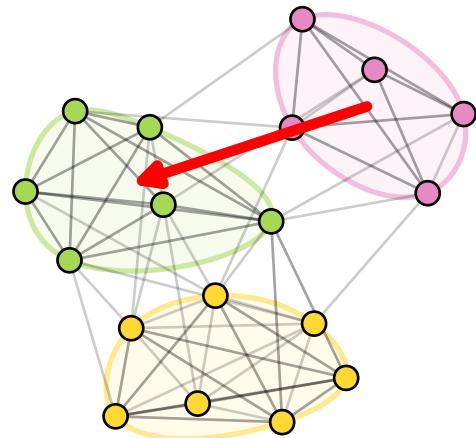




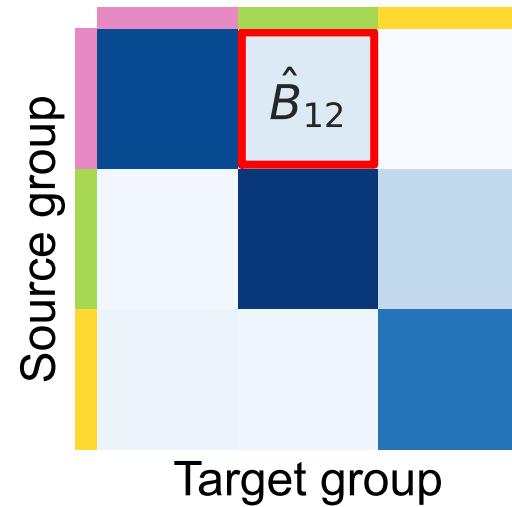


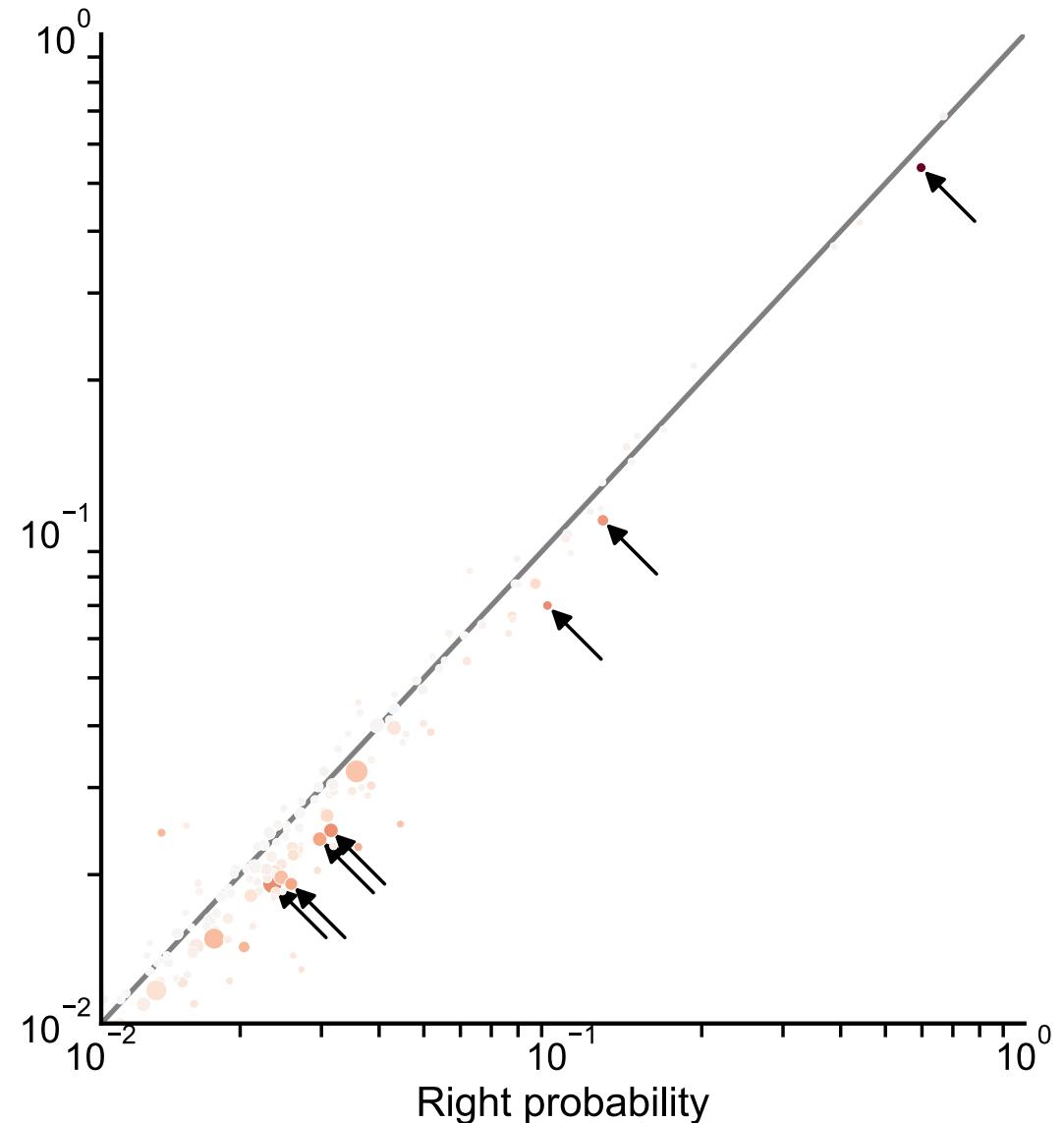
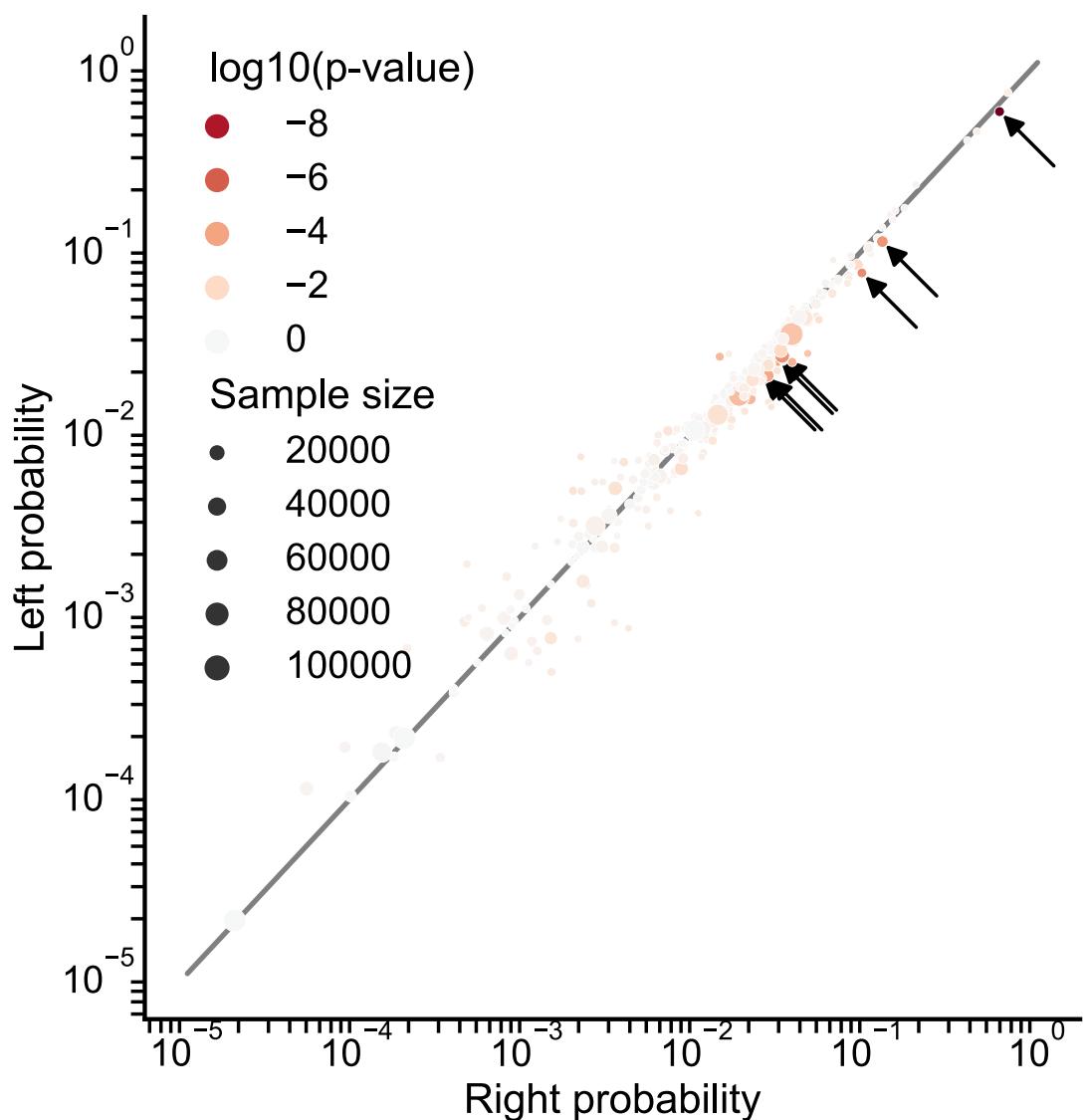


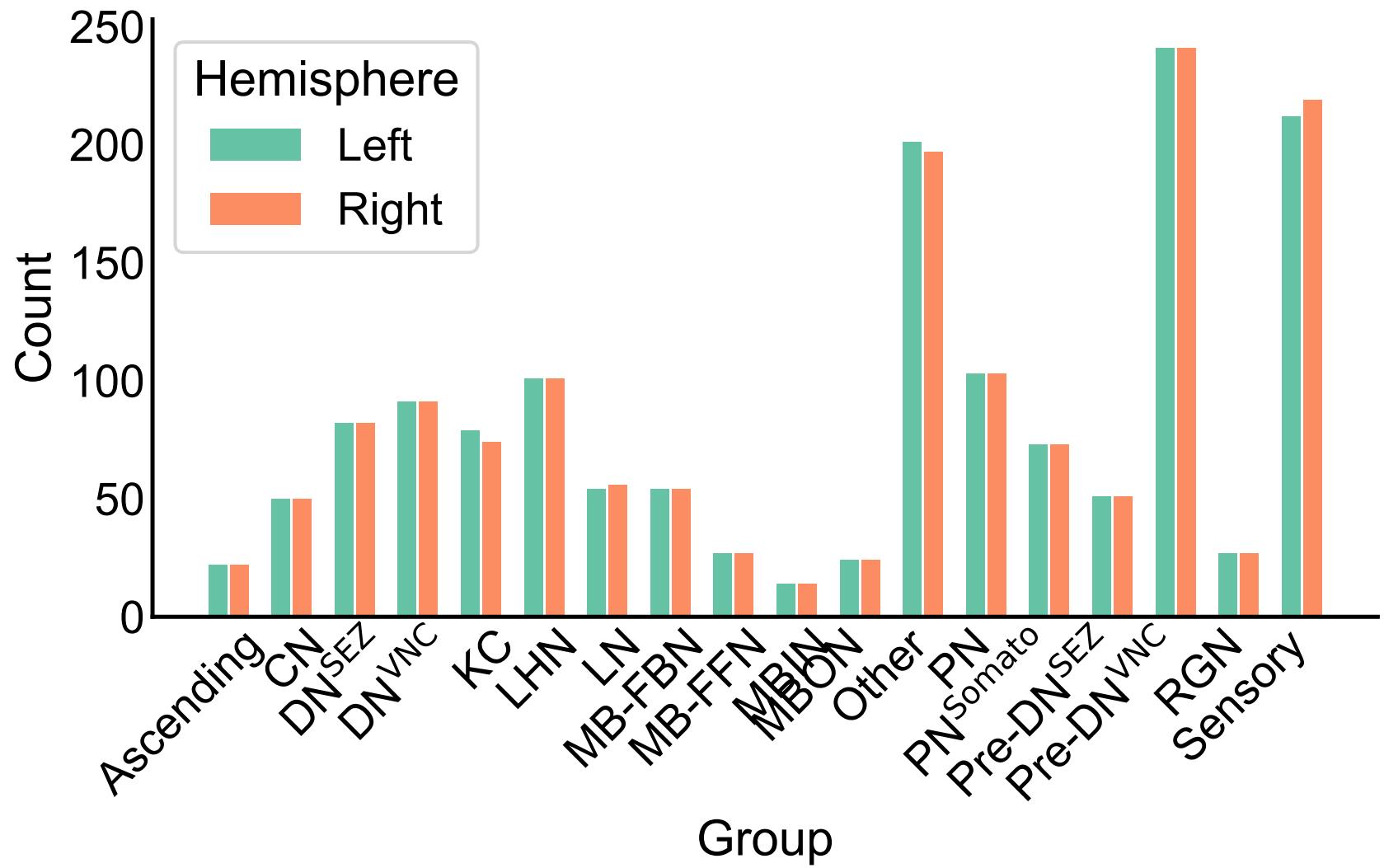
Group neurons



Estimate group-to-group  
connection probabilities ( $\hat{B}$ )







# Pedigo et al. Network Neuroscience (2022)

# How do we do graph matching?

- Relax the problem to a continuous space
  - Convex hull of permutation matrices
- Minimize a linear approximation of objective function (repeat)
- Project back to the closest permutation matrix

# Algorithm

---

**Algorithm 1** Bisected Graph Matching (BGM) via Frank-Wolfe. To recover the FAQ algorithm (Vogelstein et al., 2015) (GM), simply set  $A_{LR}, A_{RL}$  to the zero matrix.

---

**Require:** Adjacency matrices for each of the four subgraphs:  $A_{LL}, A_{RR}, A_{LR}, A_{RL} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ .

**Initialize:**  $P_{(0)} \in \mathcal{D}$ , barycenter ( $P_{(0)} = \frac{1}{n}\mathbf{1}_n \times \mathbf{1}_n^\top$ ) unless otherwise specified

**for**  $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$  while ( $i \leq \text{MAX ITER}$ ) and ( $\|P_i - P_{i-1}\|_F \geq \text{TOLERANCE}$ ) **do**

1. Compute  $\nabla f(P_{(i)}) = -\left(A_{LL}P_{(i)}A_{RR}^T + A_{LL}^TP_{(i)}A_{RR} + A_{LR}P_{(i)}^TA_{RL} + A_{RL}^TP_{(i)}^TA_{LR}\right)$

2. Compute  $Q_{(i)} \in \operatorname{argmin} \operatorname{tr}(Q^T \nabla f(P_{(i)}))$  over  $Q \in \mathcal{D}$  via linear assignment problem solver, e.g.  
Hungarian algorithm (Kuhn, 1955)

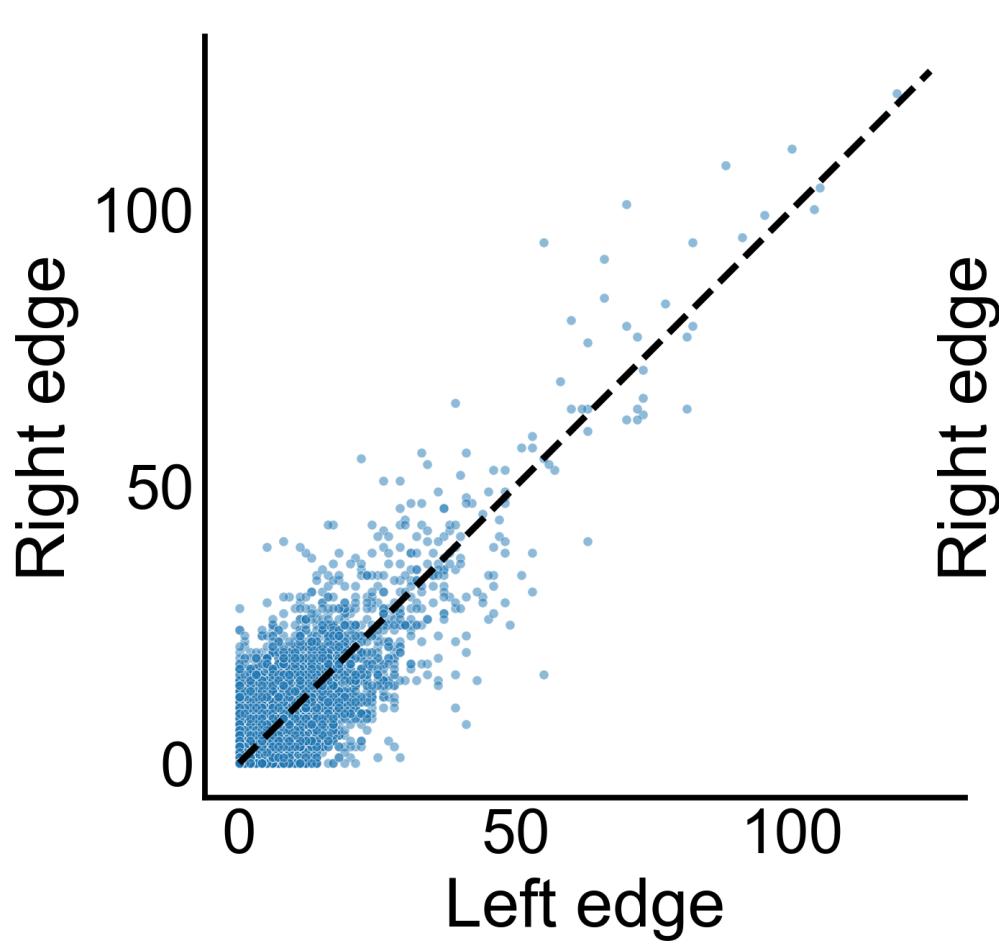
3. Compute step size  $\alpha^{(i)} \in \operatorname{argmin} f(\alpha P_{(i)} + (1 - \alpha)Q_{(i)})$ , for  $\alpha \in [0, 1]$

4. Set  $P_{(i+1)} = \alpha P_{(i)} + (1 - \alpha)Q_{(i)}$

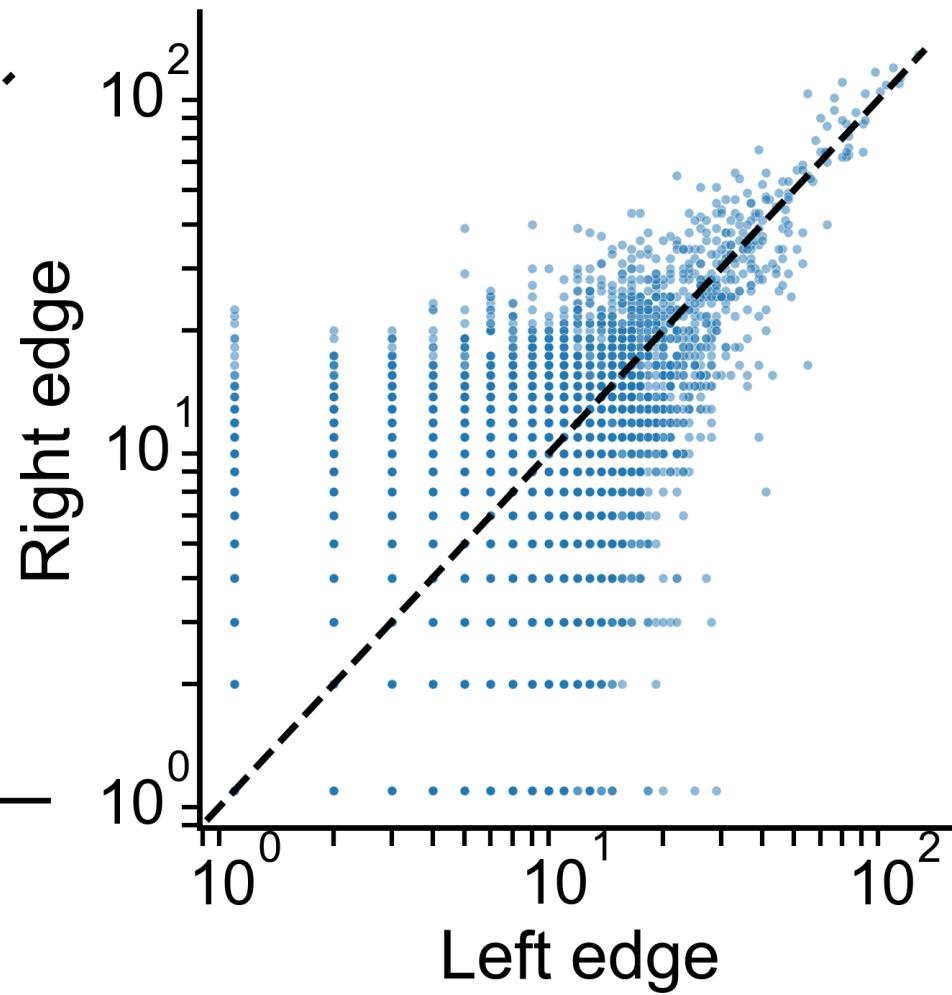
**end for**

**return**  $\hat{Q} \in \operatorname{argmin} \operatorname{tr}(Q^T \nabla f(P_{(final)}))$  over  $Q \in \mathcal{P}$  via linear assignment problem solver.

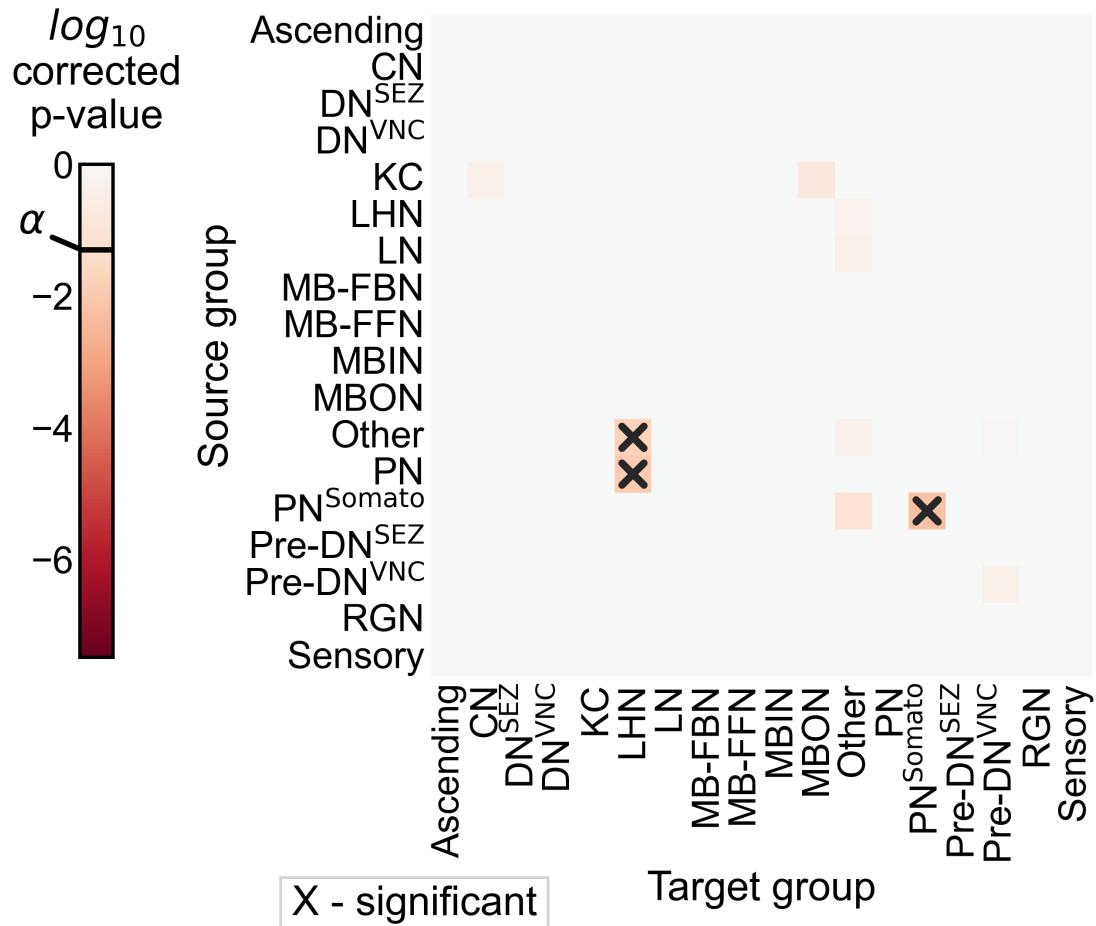
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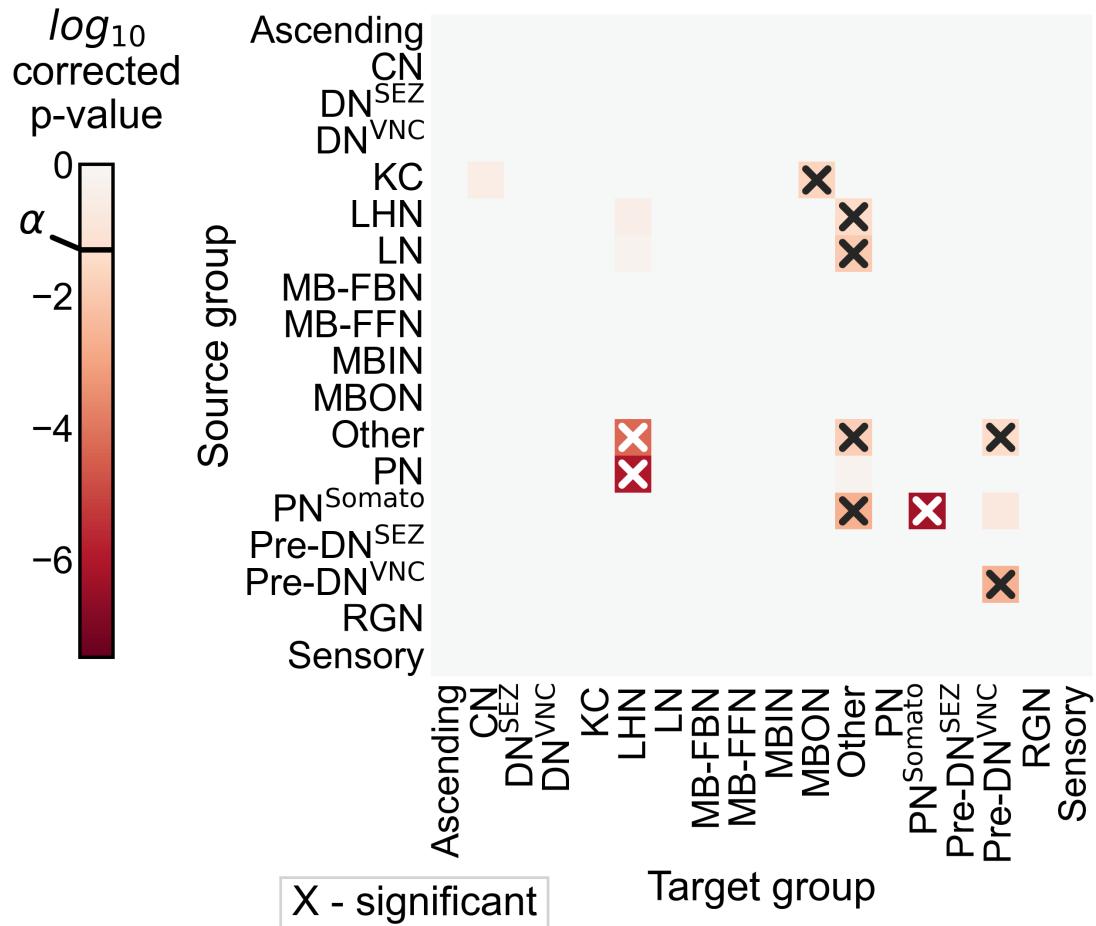
Pearson's corr = 0.82



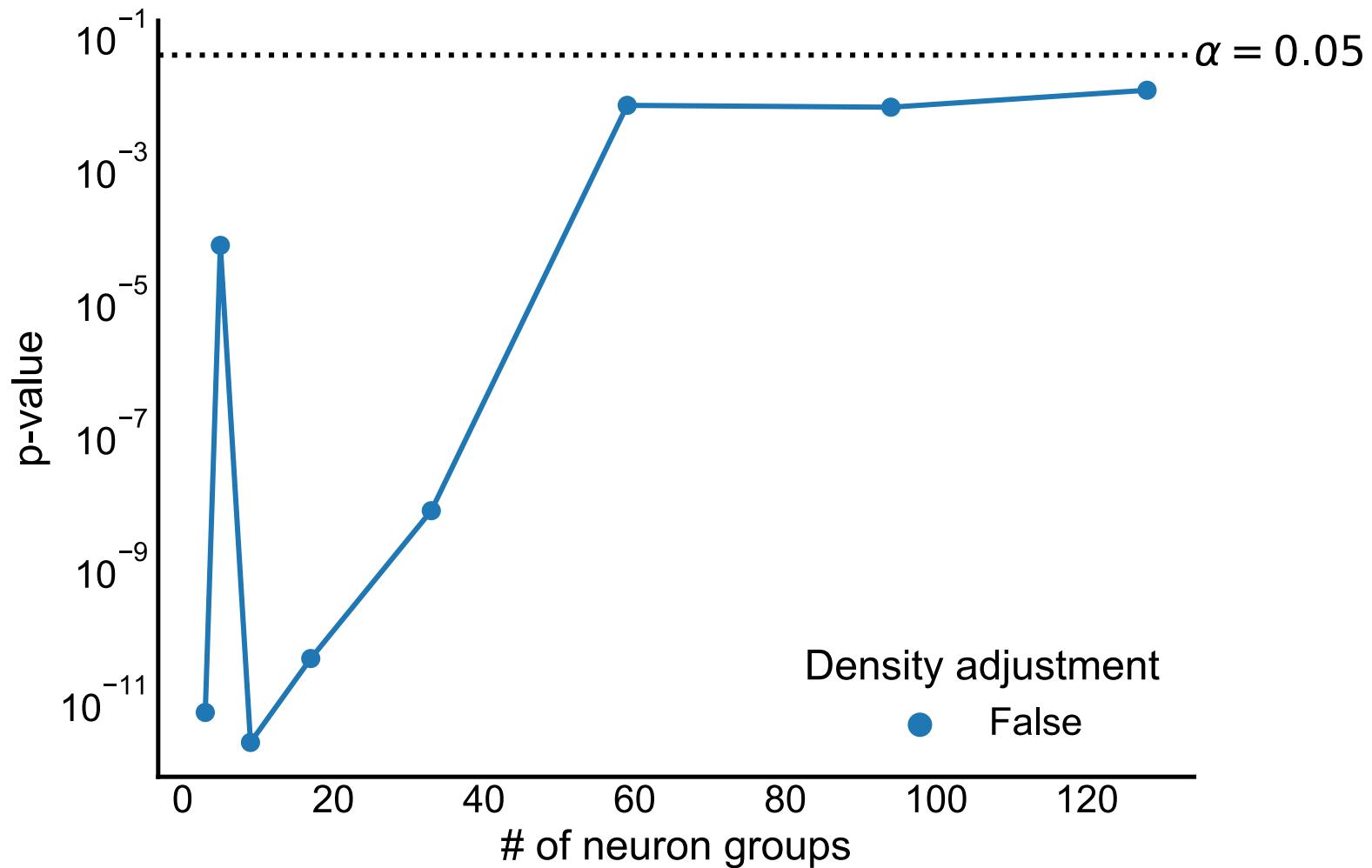
## Unpaired



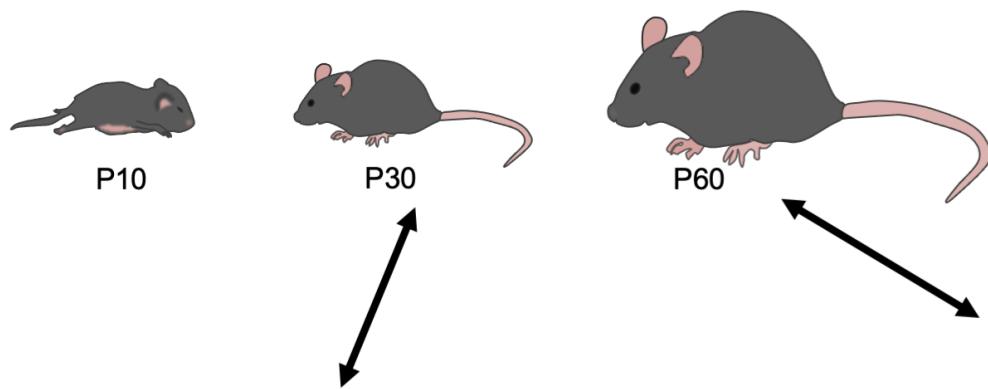
## Paired



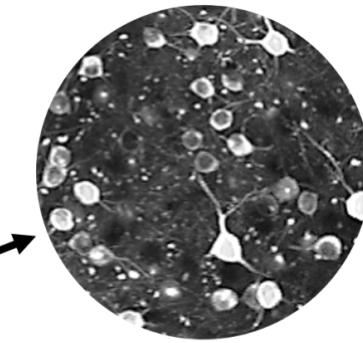
# Using predicted groups



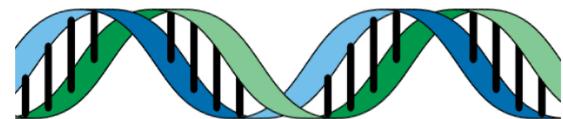
## Development



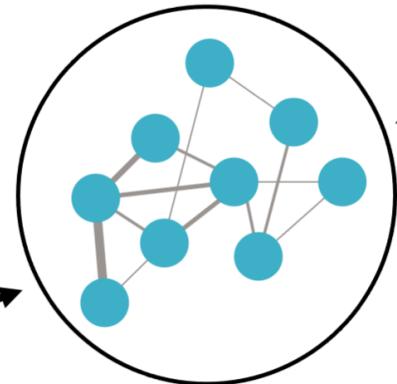
## Neural activity



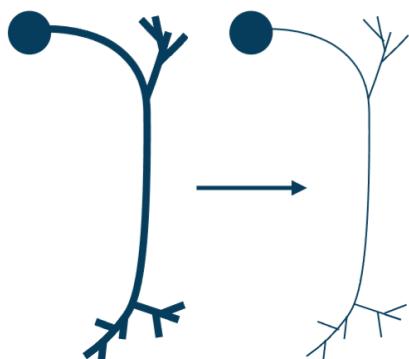
## Gene expression



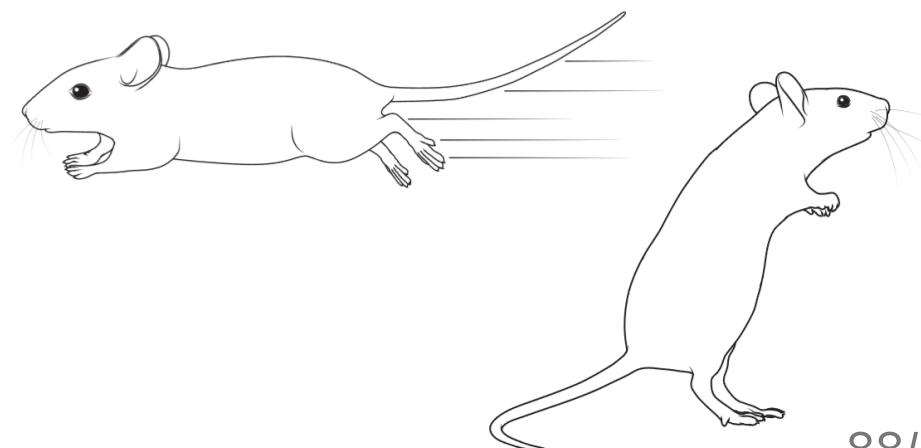
## Connectivity



## Disease

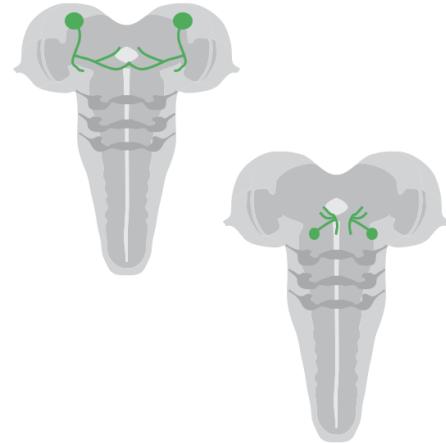


## Behavior

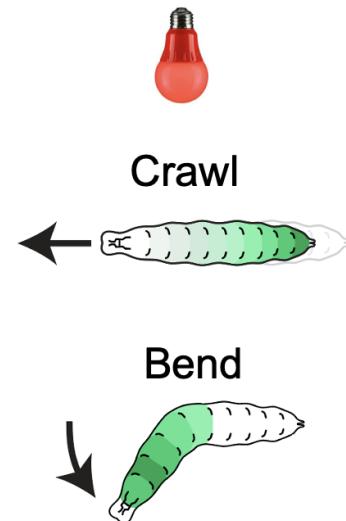


# A structure-function relationship in the larva

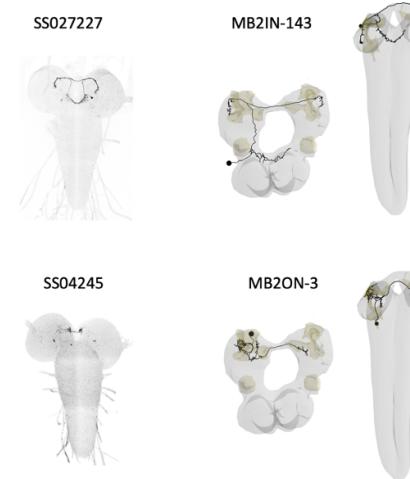
Genetic driver lines for L/R neuron pairs



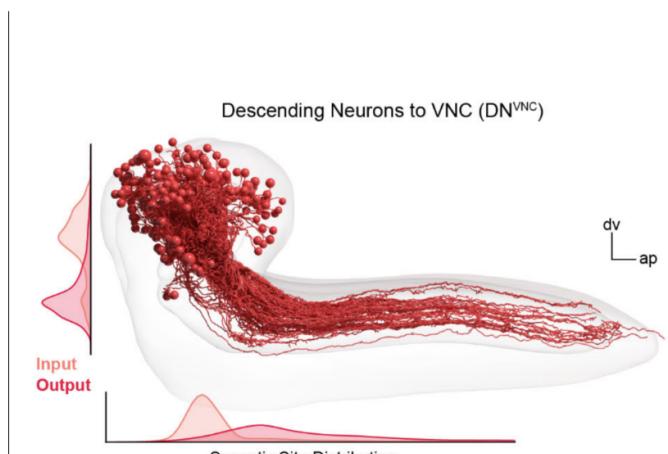
Behaviors measured under stimulation



Mapping to connectome via morphology



Comparison of projections to brain outputs



**Behavior probabilities significantly related to projections to brain outputs**

RV coefficient: 0.12, p-value: 0.0044

Distance correlation: 0.067, p-value: 0.0087