

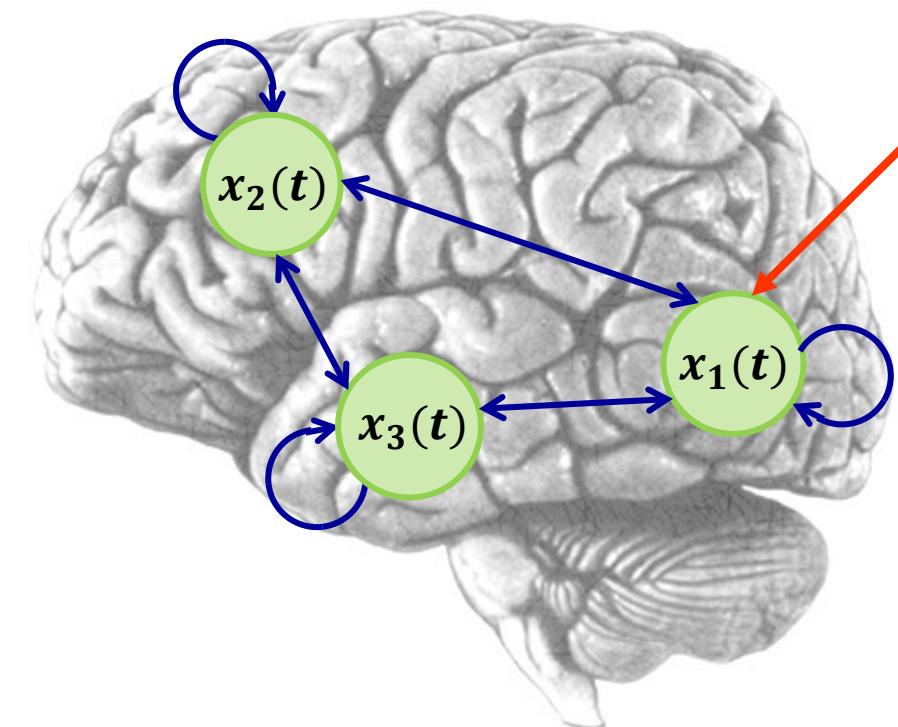
Modeling connectivity: Dynamic Causal Modeling for fMRI



Jakob Heinze

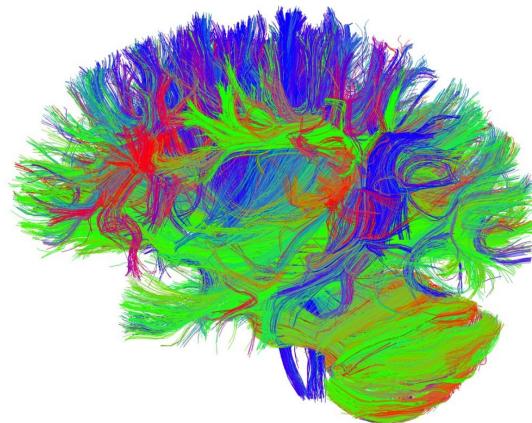
Translational Neuromodeling Unit (TNU),
Institute for Biomedical Engineering
University and ETH Zürich

CP Course 2024, Zürich, Switzerland



Structural, functional & effective connectivity

anatomical/structural

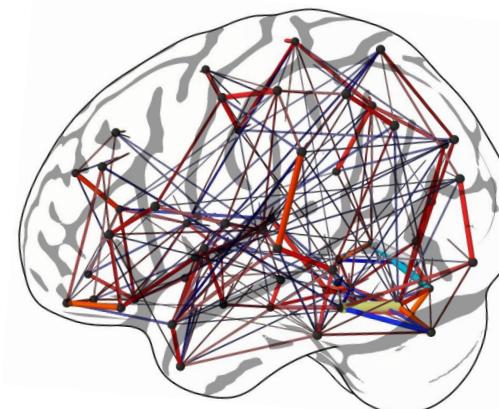


<https://optimalsurgerytle.weebly.com/imaging-and-dataset.html>

- presence of physical connections
- DWI, tractography, tracer studies (animals)

Context - independent

functional

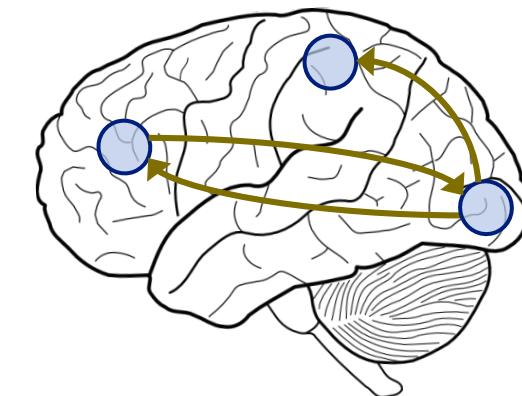


https://team.inria.fr/parietal/files/2013/02/pc_dag.jpg

- statistical dependency between regional time series
- correlations, ICA

Mechanism - free

effective



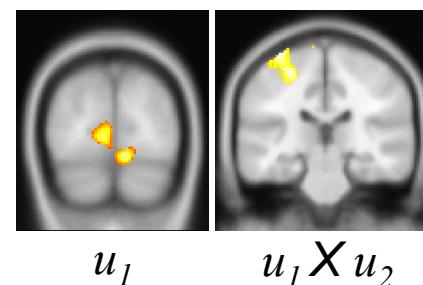
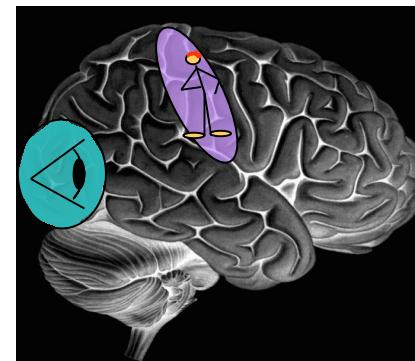
<http://www.clker.com/cliparts/e/S/Q/i/e/o/brain-line-drawing-md.png>

- direct influences between neuronal populations
- DCM

Mechanistic

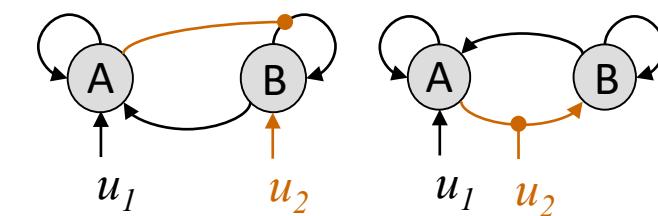
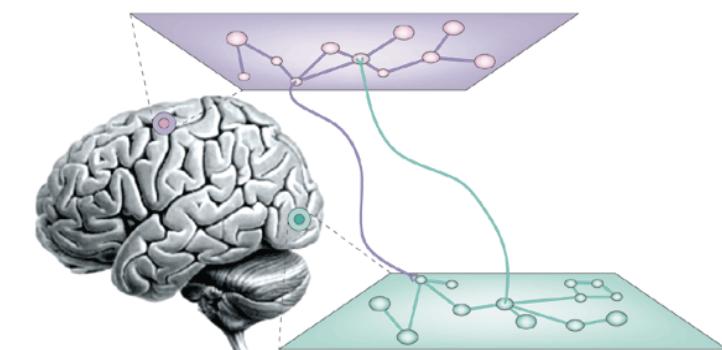
Specialisation vs. Integration

Functional Specialisation



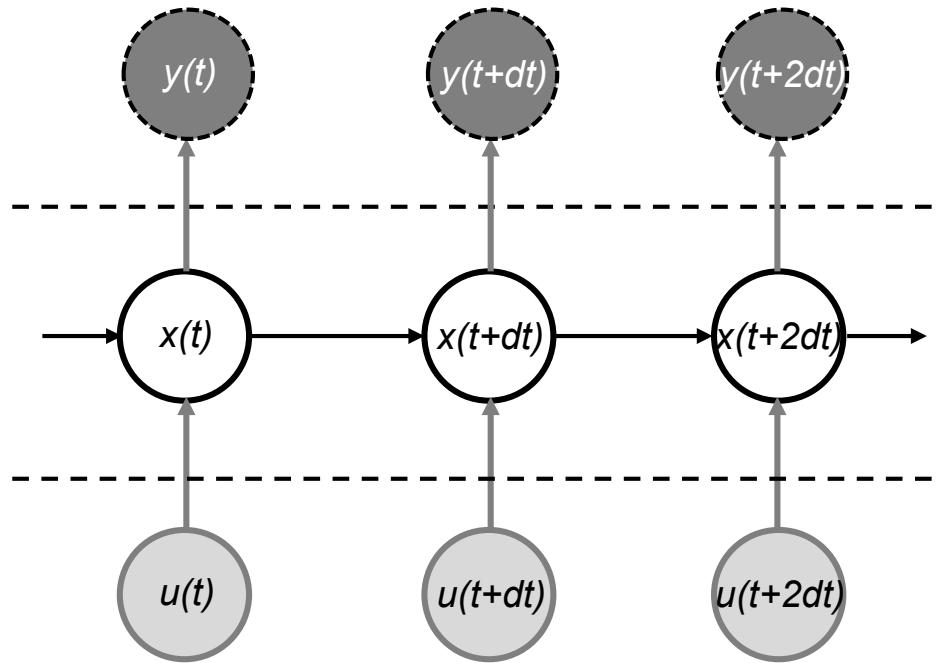
«**Where, in the brain, did my experimental manipulation have an effect?**»

Functional Integration



«**How did my experimental manipulation propagate through the network?**»

A reminder – generative models



Observed data (fMRI)

$$y = g(x, \theta_g) + \varepsilon$$

Hidden states (Brain activity)

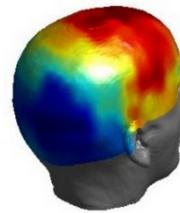
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = f(x, u, \theta_f) + \omega$$

Inputs (Exp. manipulations)

$$u(t)$$

Dynamic causal modelling

EEG,
MEG



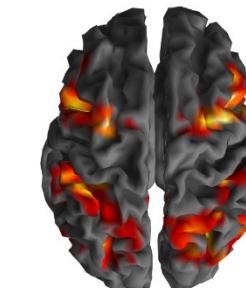
Forward model:
Predicting
measured activity

$$y = g(x, \theta) + \varepsilon$$

DCM for EEG
→ later today

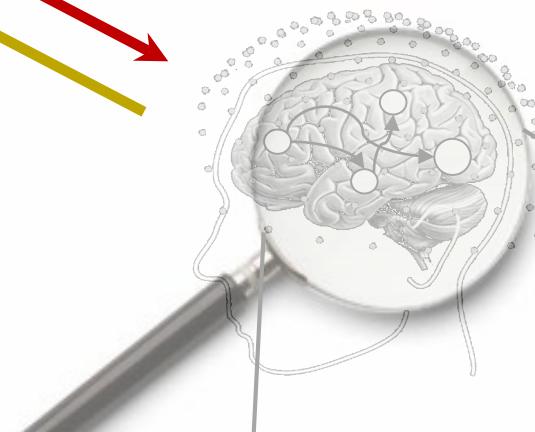
Model inversion:
Estimating
neuronal
mechanisms

fMRI



State equation:
Describing neuronal
dynamics (and
hemodynamics)

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = f(x, u, \theta) + \omega$$





University of
Zurich

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Translational Neuromodeling Unit

Dynamic causal modelling



ACADEMIC
PRESS

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com



NeuroImage 19 (2003) 1273–1302

NeuroImage

www.elsevier.com/locate/ynimng

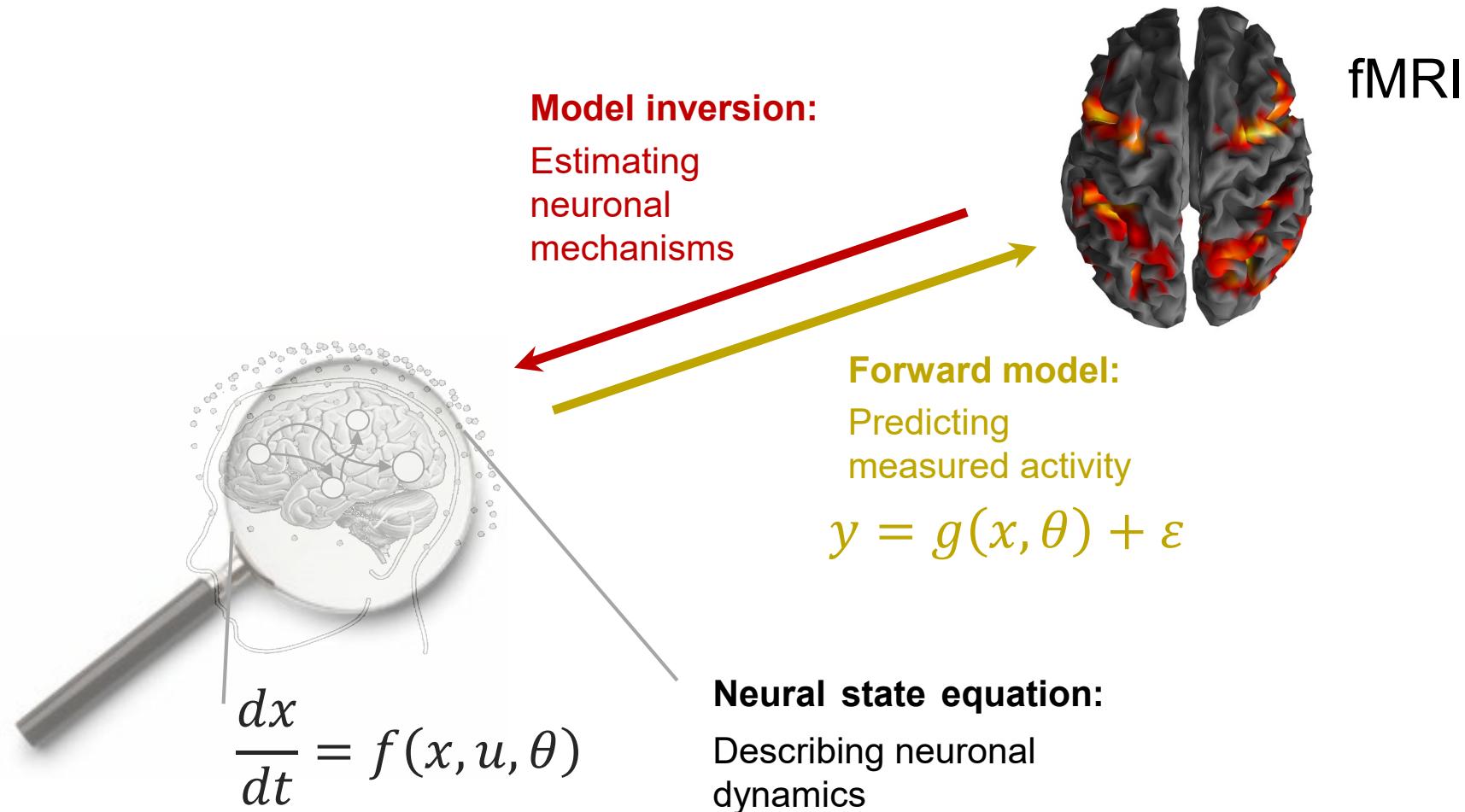
Dynamic causal modelling

K.J. Friston,* L. Harrison, and W. Penny

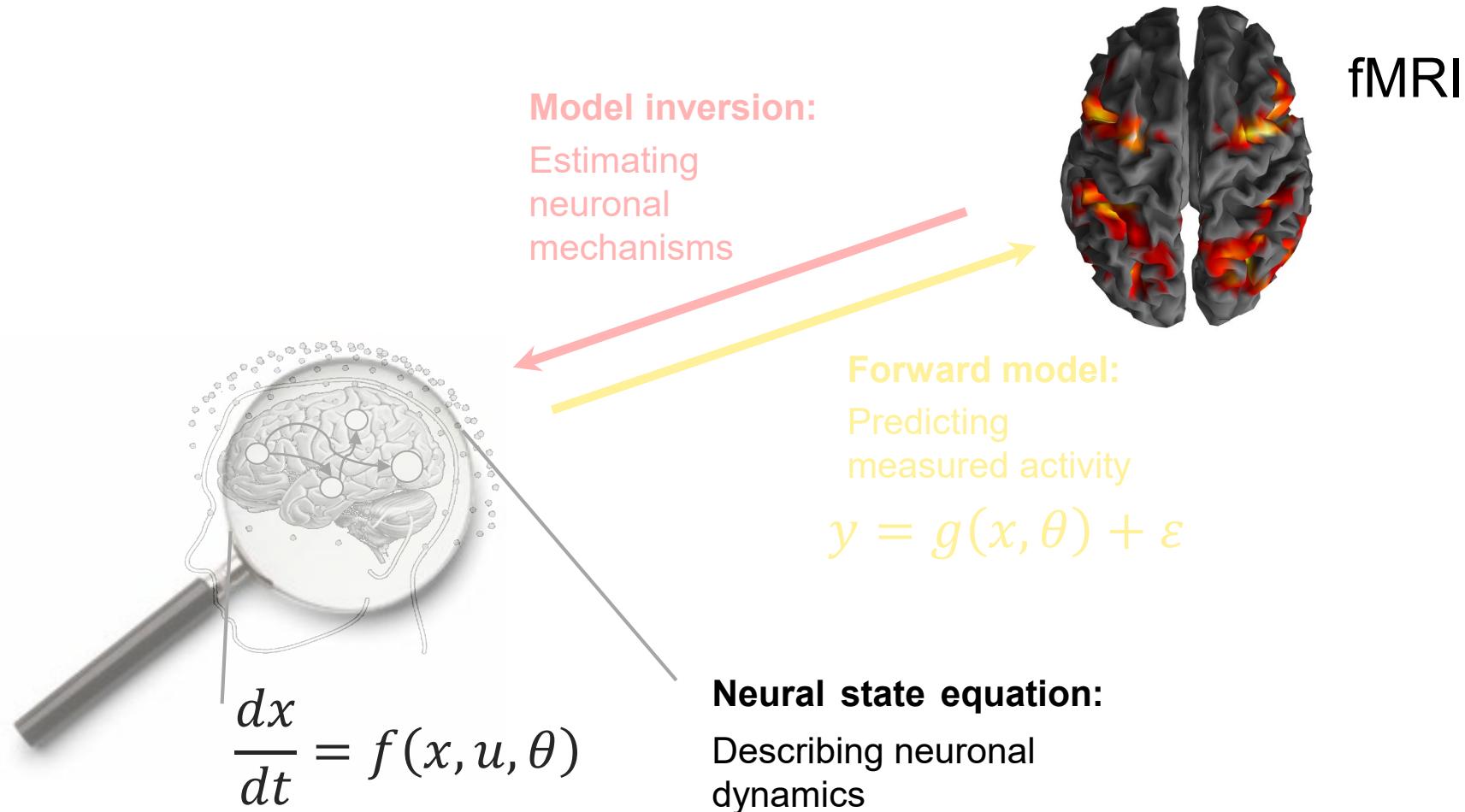
The Wellcome Department of Imaging Neuroscience, Institute of Neurology, Queen Square, London WC1N 3BG, UK

Received 18 October 2002; revised 7 March 2003; accepted 2 April 2003

DCM for fMRI - overview



DCM for fMRI - overview





University of
Zurich

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Translational Neuromodeling Unit

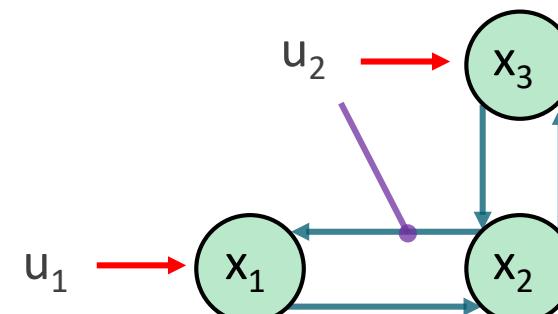
Neuronal state equations

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = f(x, u)$$

Neuronal state equations

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = f(x, u) \approx f(x_0, 0) + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} x + \frac{\partial f}{\partial u} u + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x \partial u} ux + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} \frac{x^2}{2} + \dots$$

A C B



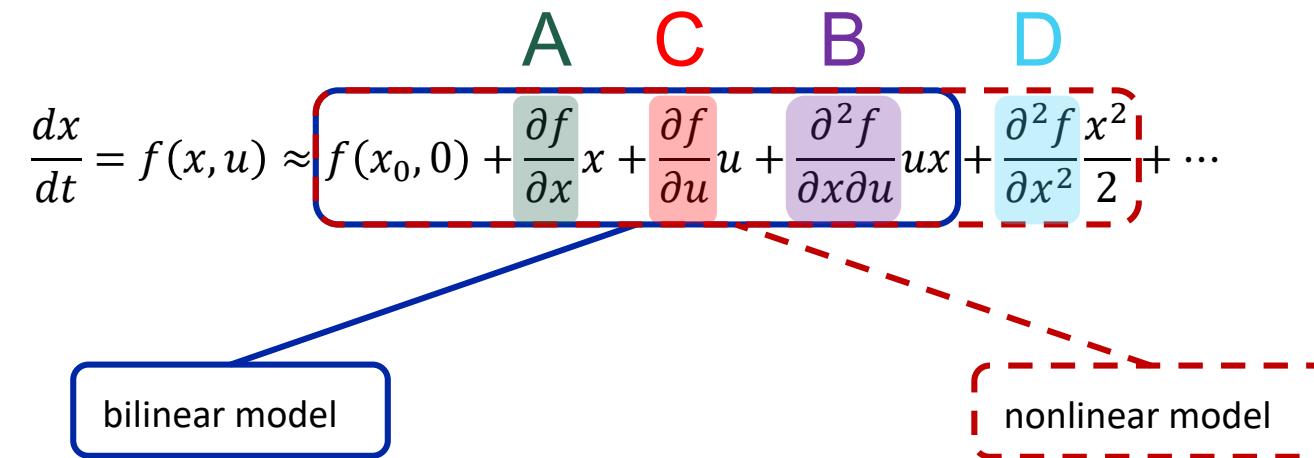
Neuronal state equations

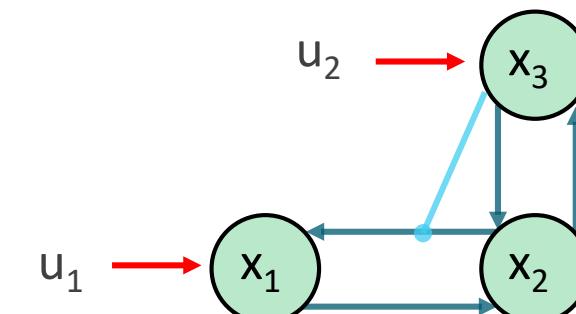
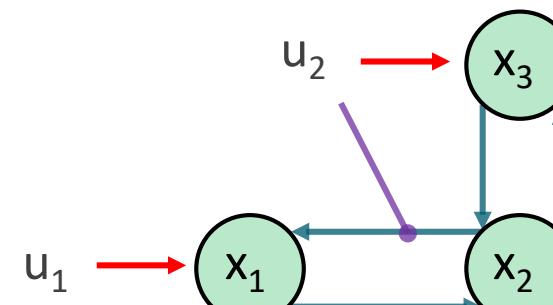
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = f(x, u) \approx f(x_0, 0) + \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} x + \frac{\partial f}{\partial u} u + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x \partial u} ux + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x^2} \frac{x^2}{2} + \dots$$

A C B D

bilinear model

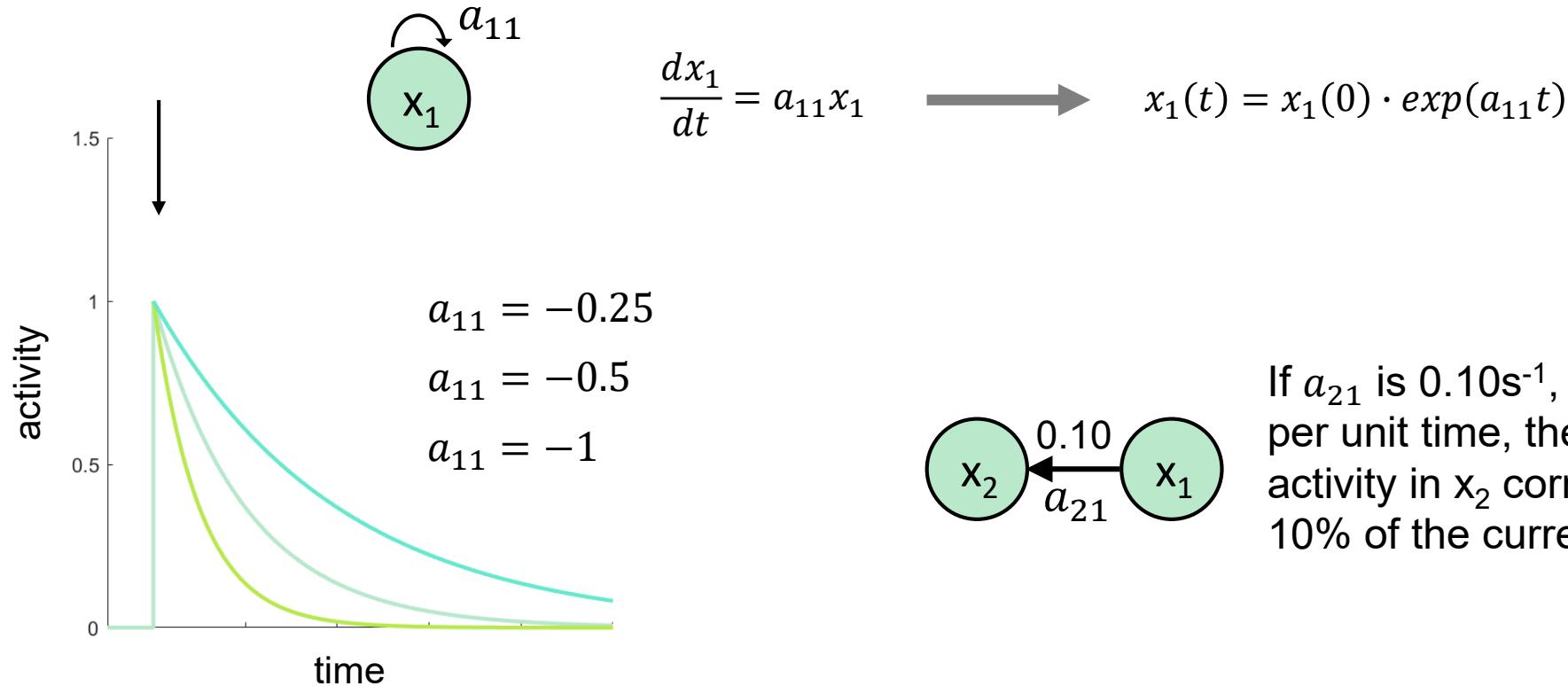
nonlinear model





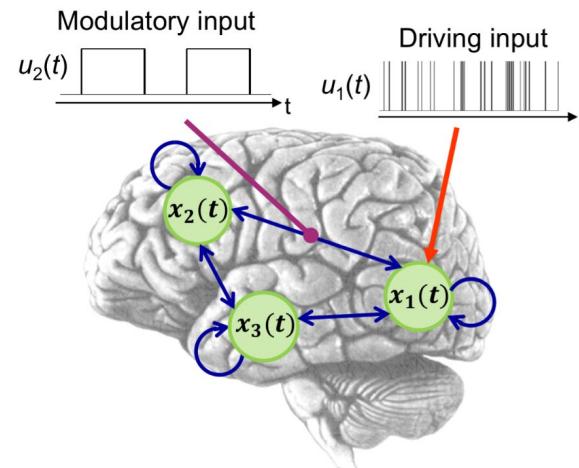
Neuronal state equations

DCM effective connectivity parameters are rate constants



Neuronal state equations

Interim summary: bilinear neuronal state equation



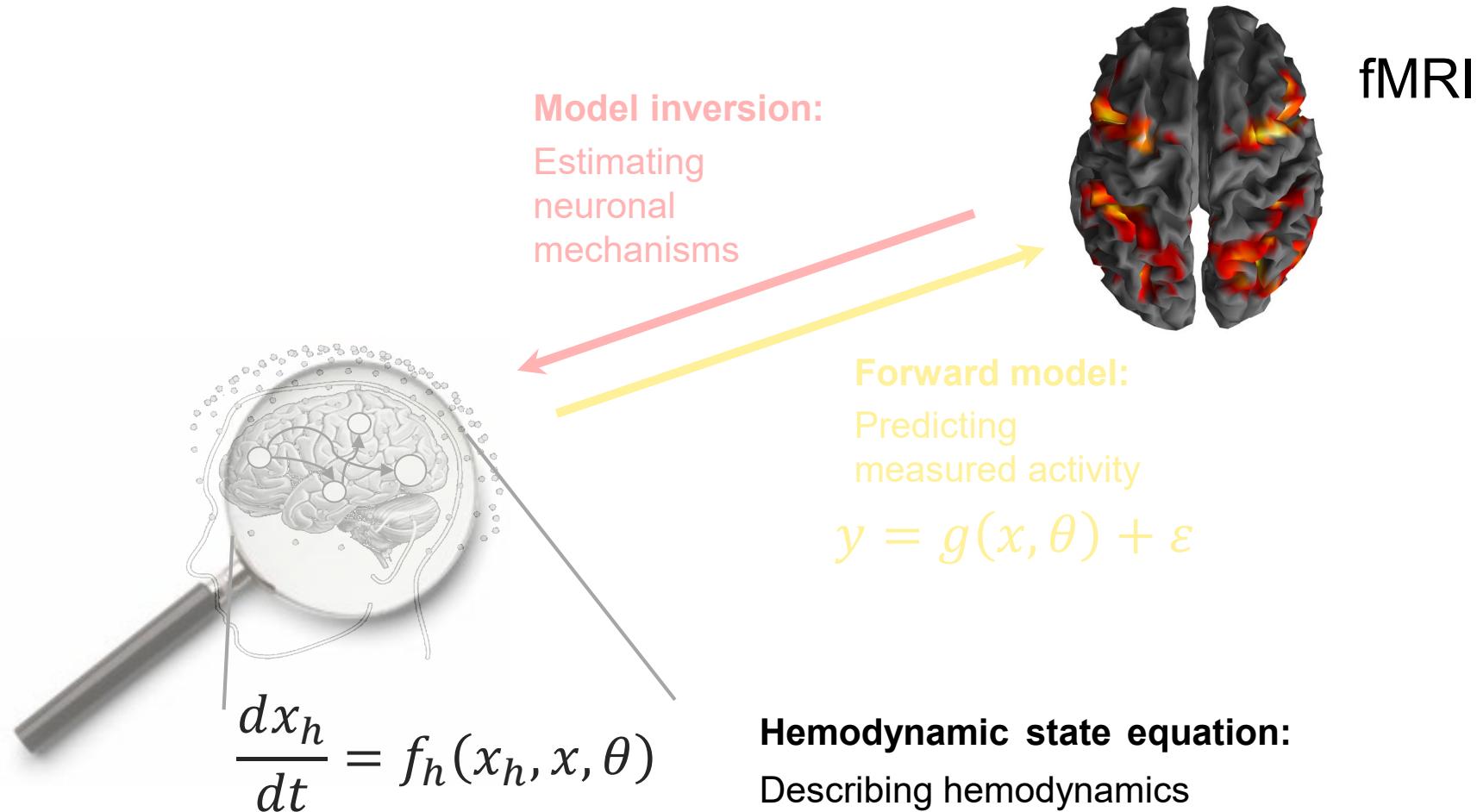
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = \underbrace{\left(A + \sum_{j=1}^m u_j B^{(j)} \right)}_{\text{connectivity}} x + Cu$$

State change External inputs Current state

Endogenous connectivity Modulatory connectivity Driving input weights

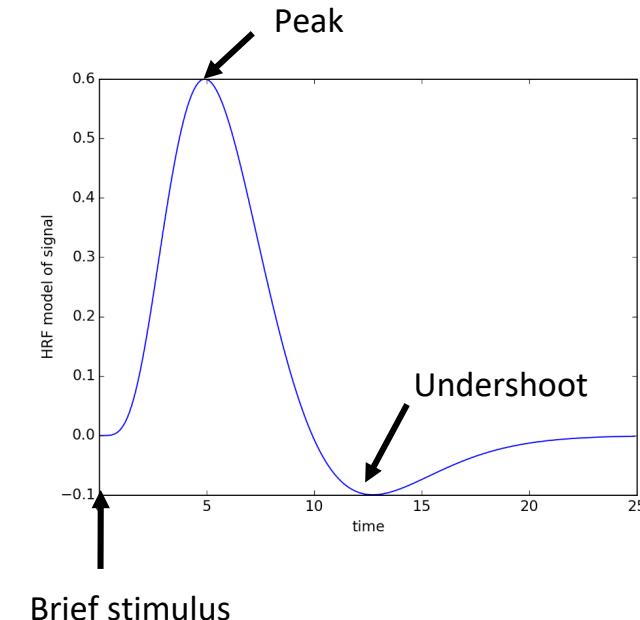
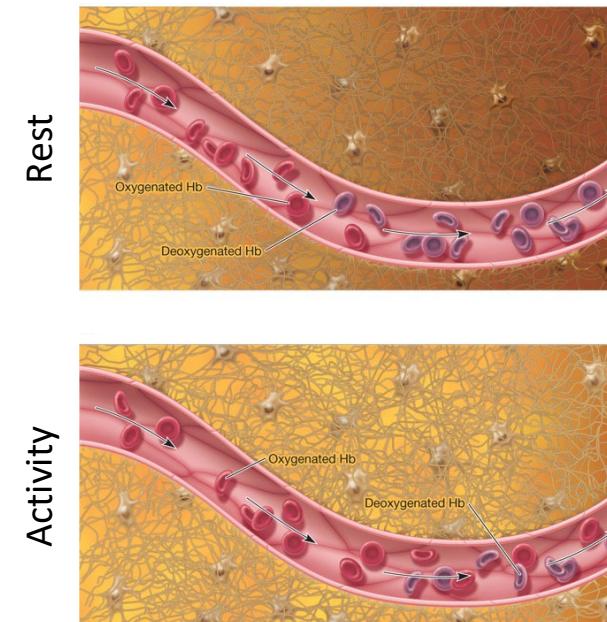
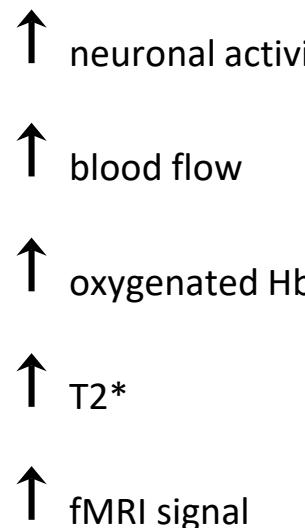
$\theta = \{A, B^{(1)}, \dots, B^{(m)}, C\}$

DCM for fMRI - overview



The hemodynamic response

Neuronal dynamics only indirectly observable via hemodynamic response



The hemodynamic model

6 parameters:

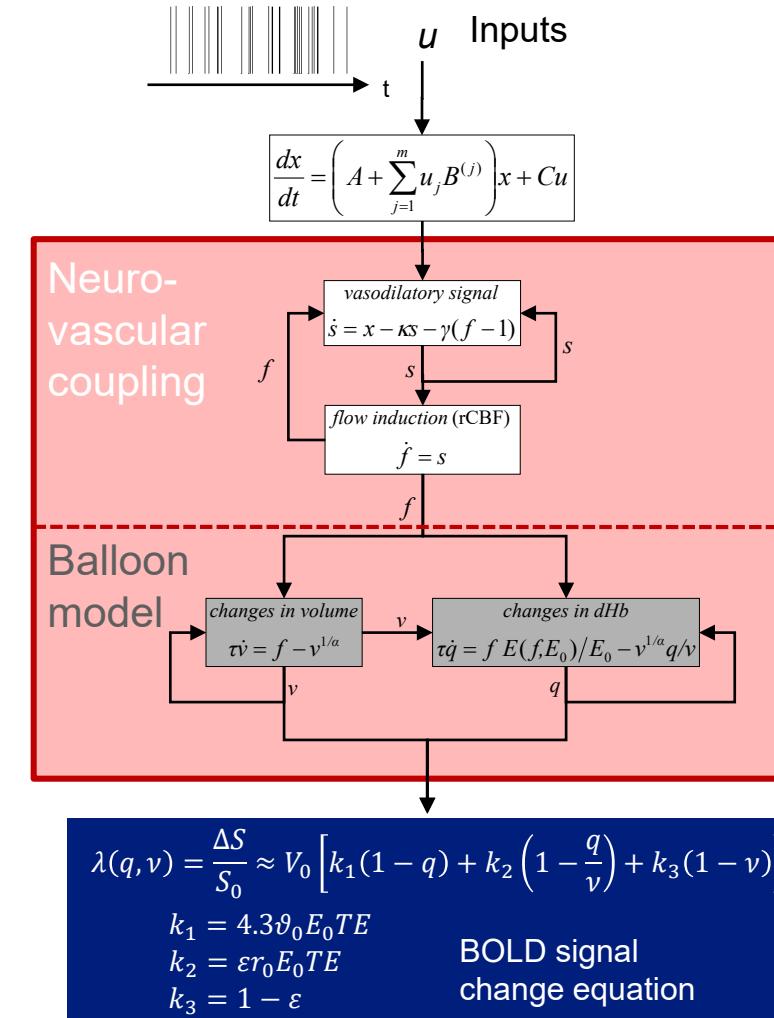
$$\theta^h = \{\kappa, \gamma, \tau, \alpha, \rho, \varepsilon\}$$

Important for model fitting,
but typically of no interest
for statistical inference.

Region specific HRF

→ Parameters computed
separately for each region

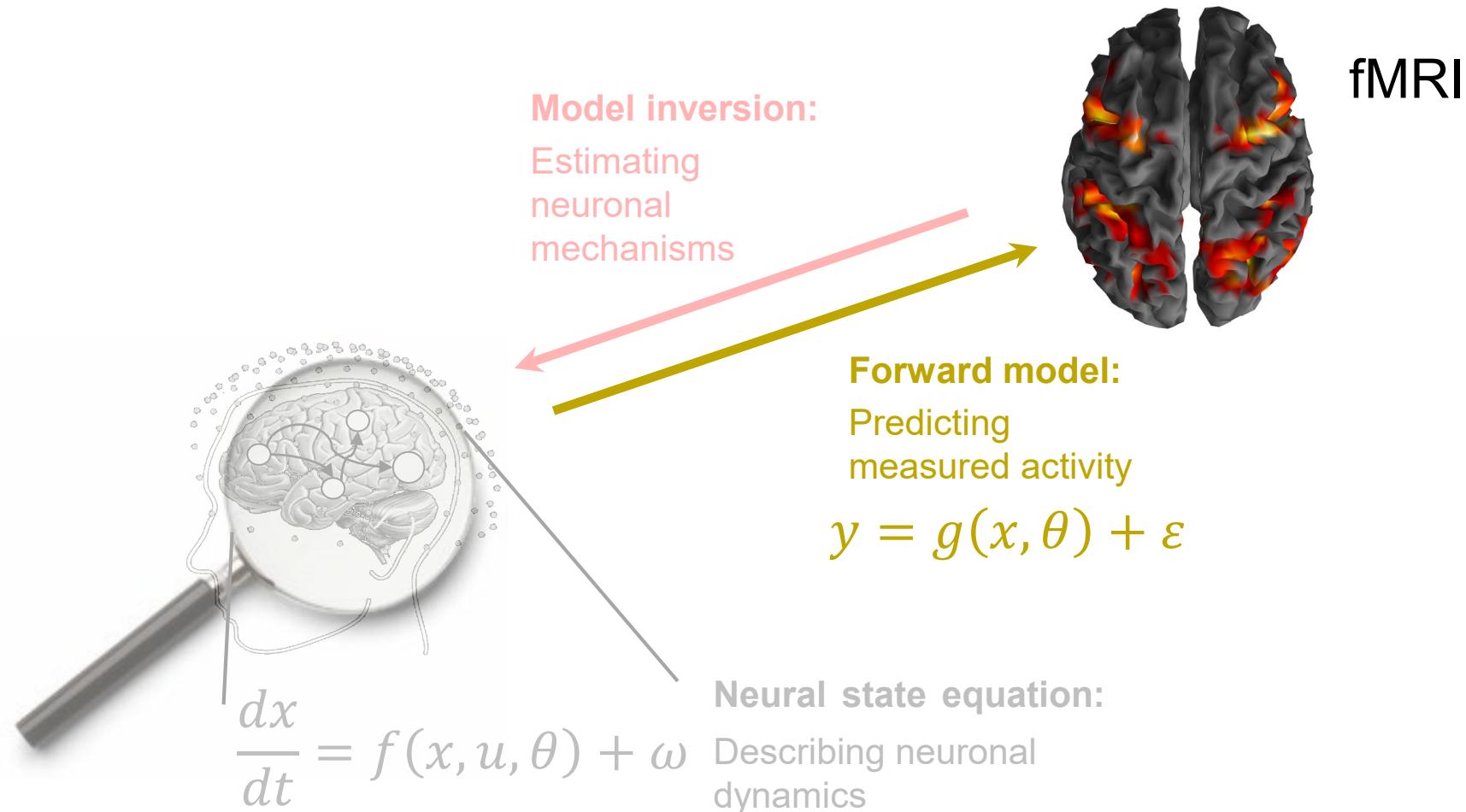
neural
hemodynamic



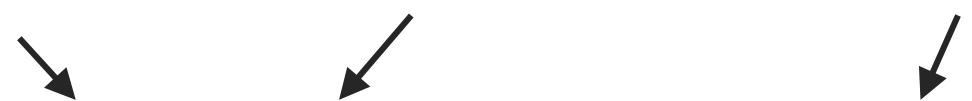
Vasodilation (s) and
blood flow changes (f)

Relative blood
volume (v) and
deoxyHB (q)

DCM for fMRI - overview



The BOLD signal equation


$$\lambda(q, v) = \frac{\Delta S}{S_0} \approx V_0 \left[k_1(1 - q) + k_2 \left(1 - \frac{q}{v} \right) + k_3(1 - v) \right]$$

BOLD-Signal Parameters:

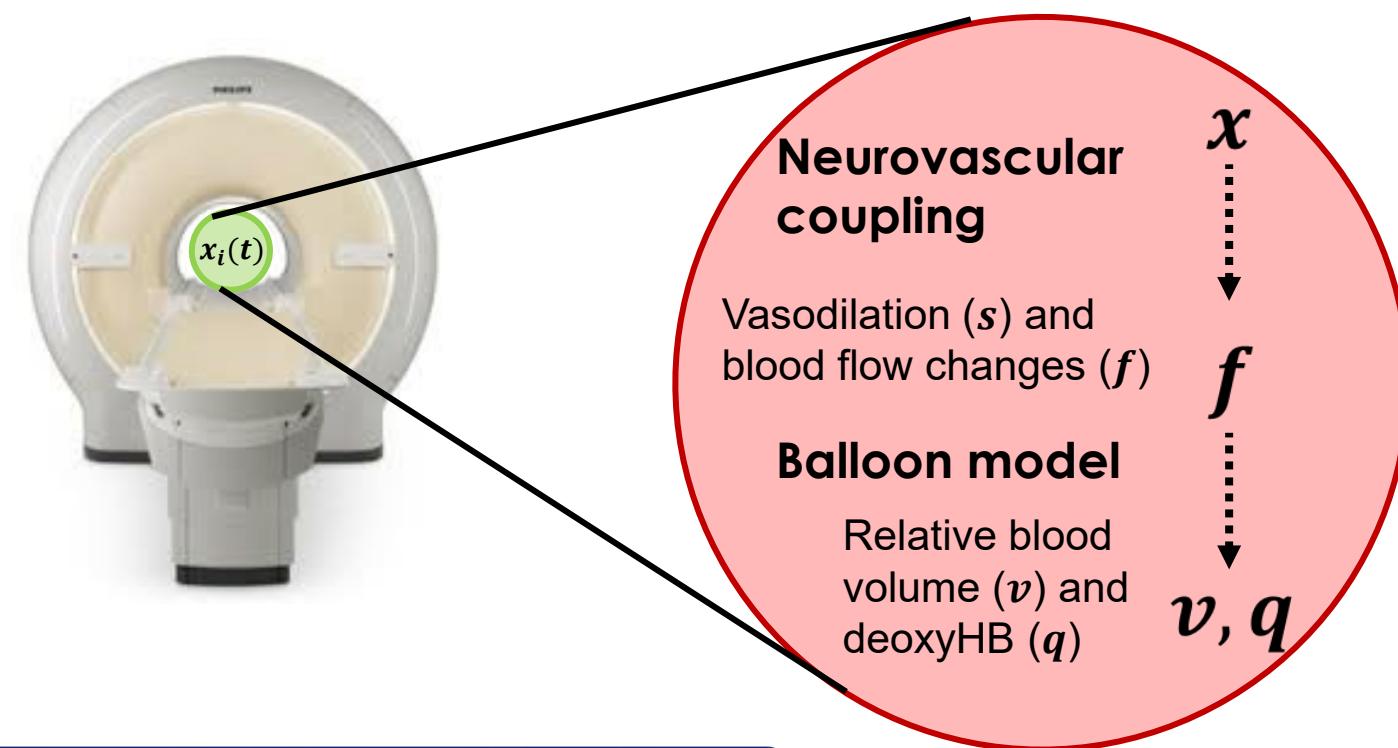
$$k_1 = 4.3\vartheta_0 E_0 TE$$

$$k_2 = \varepsilon r_0 E_0 TE$$

$$k_3 = 1 - \varepsilon$$

$V_0 = 0.04$	$E_0 = 0.32 - 0.4$	
At 1.5 Tesla	At 3 Tesla	At 7 Tesla
$\vartheta_0 \approx 40.3 \text{ s}^{-1}$	$\vartheta_0 \approx 80.6 \text{ s}^{-1}$	$\vartheta_0 \approx 188 \text{ s}^{-1}$
$r_0 \approx 25 \text{ s}^{-1}$	$r_0 \approx 110 \text{ s}^{-1}$	$r_0 \approx 340 \text{ s}^{-1}$
$TE \approx 0.04 \text{ s}$	$TE \approx 0.035 \text{ s}$	$TE \approx 0.025 \text{ s}$
$\varepsilon \approx 1.28$	$\varepsilon \approx 0.47$	$\varepsilon \approx 0.026$

From neural activity to the BOLD signal: summary

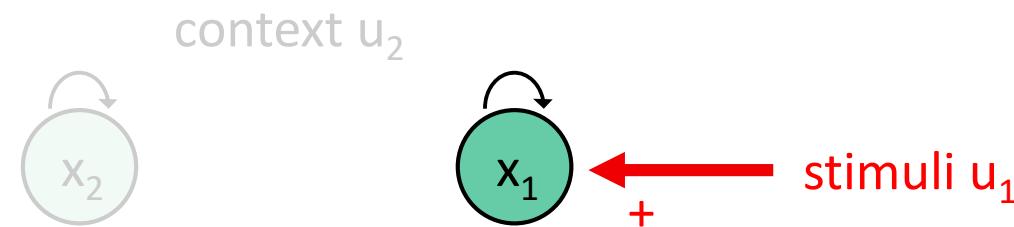


BOLD signal is a direct function of v and q

$$y = \frac{\Delta S}{S_0} = g(v, q) + \varepsilon$$

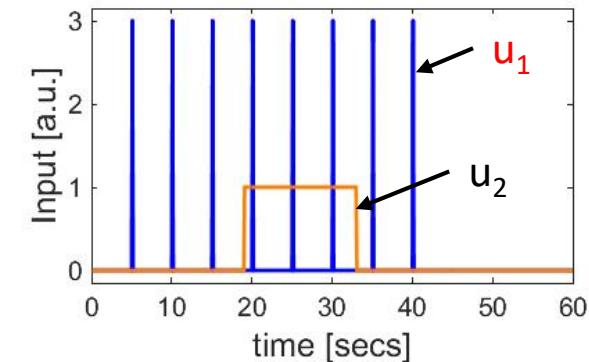
Simulation example: What can DCM explain?

Example: single node



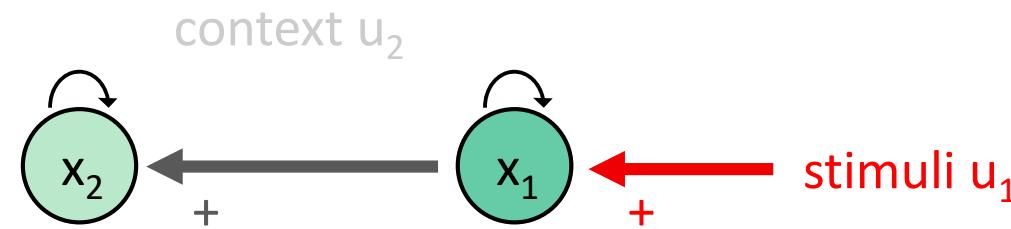
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = (A + u_2 B^{(2)})x + Cu_1$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \left(\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} + u_2 \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{bmatrix}$$



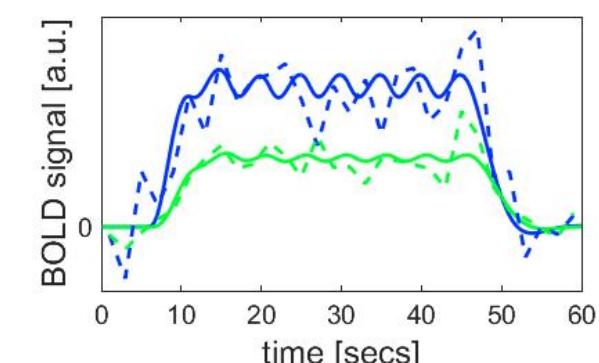
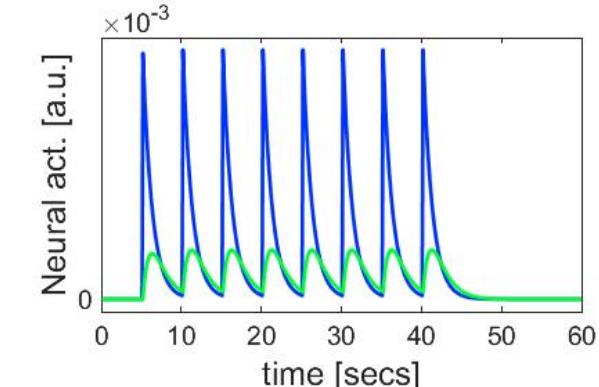
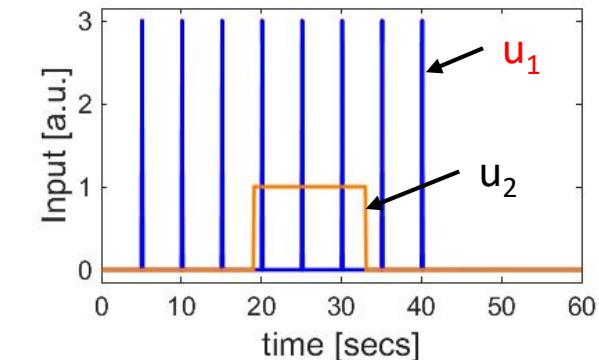
Simulation example: What can DCM explain?

Example: two connected node



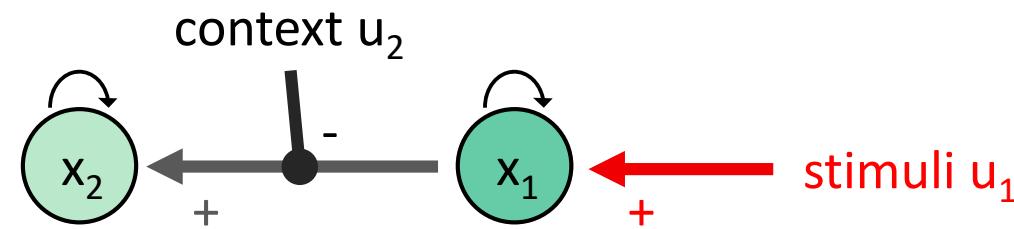
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = (A + u_2 B^{(2)})x + Cu_1$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \left(\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & 0 \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} + u_2 \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{bmatrix}$$



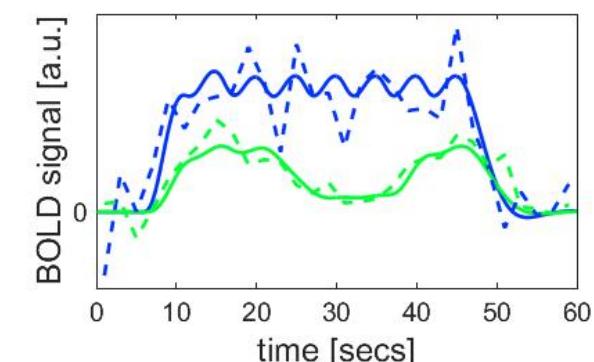
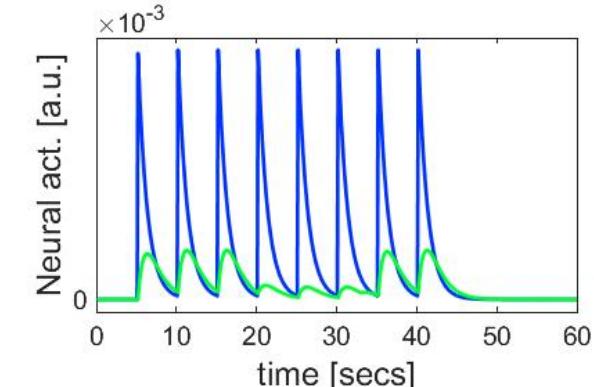
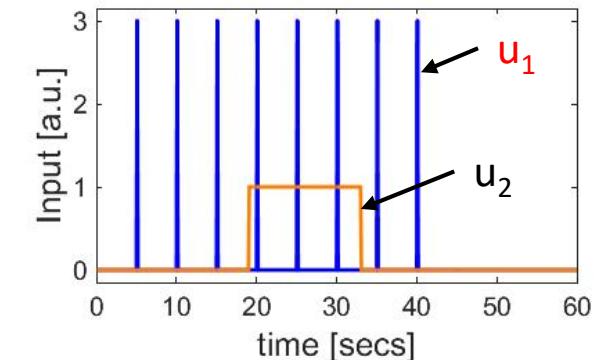
Simulation example: What can DCM explain?

Example: modulation of connection



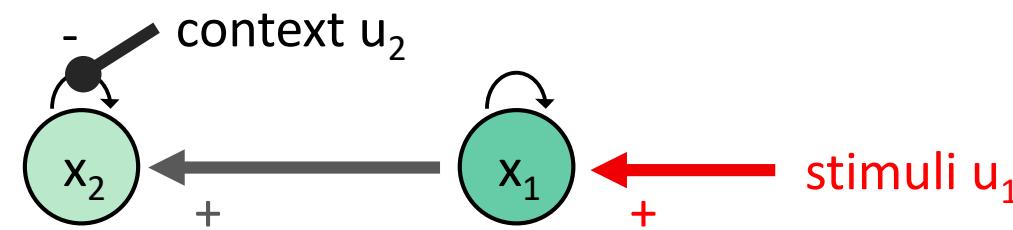
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = (A + u_2 B^{(2)})x + Cu_1$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \left(\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & 0 \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} + u_2 \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ b_{21}^{(2)} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \right) \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{bmatrix}$$



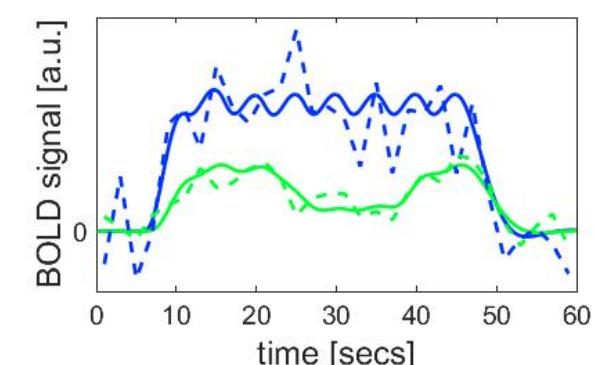
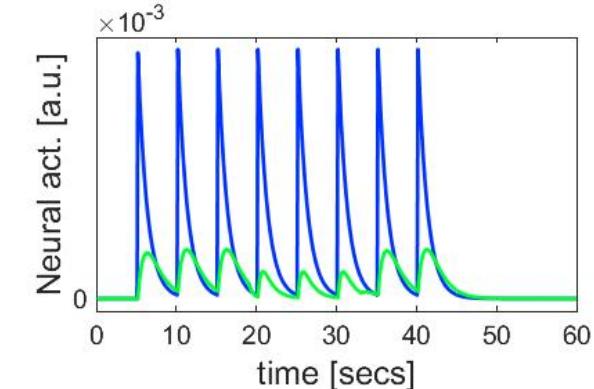
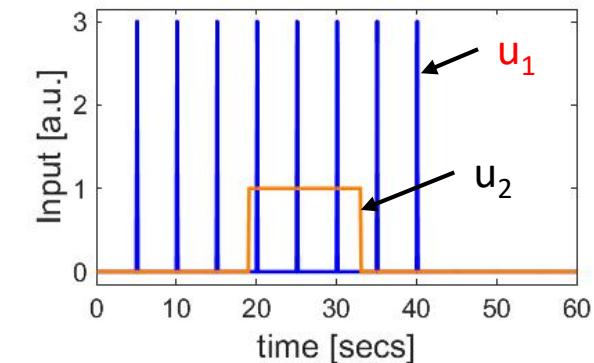
Simulation example: What can DCM explain?

Example: modulation of inhibitory self-connection



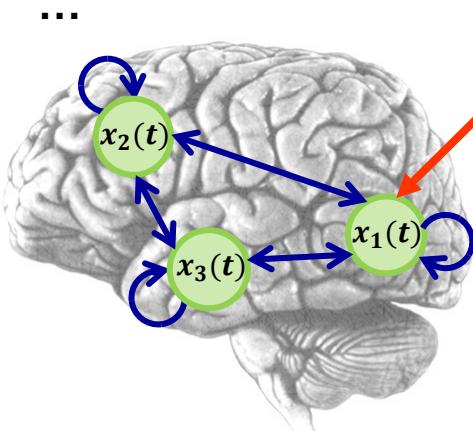
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = (A + u_2 B^{(2)})x + Cu_1$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1 \\ \dot{x}_2 \end{bmatrix} = \left(\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & 0 \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{bmatrix} + u_2 \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & b_{22}^{(2)} \end{bmatrix} \right) \cdot \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \end{bmatrix}$$



DCM for fMRI

A simple model of
a neural network



-  Neural node
-  Input
-  Connections

... described as a
dynamical system

...

$$\dot{x} = f(x, u, \theta)$$

... causes the data
(BOLD signal).

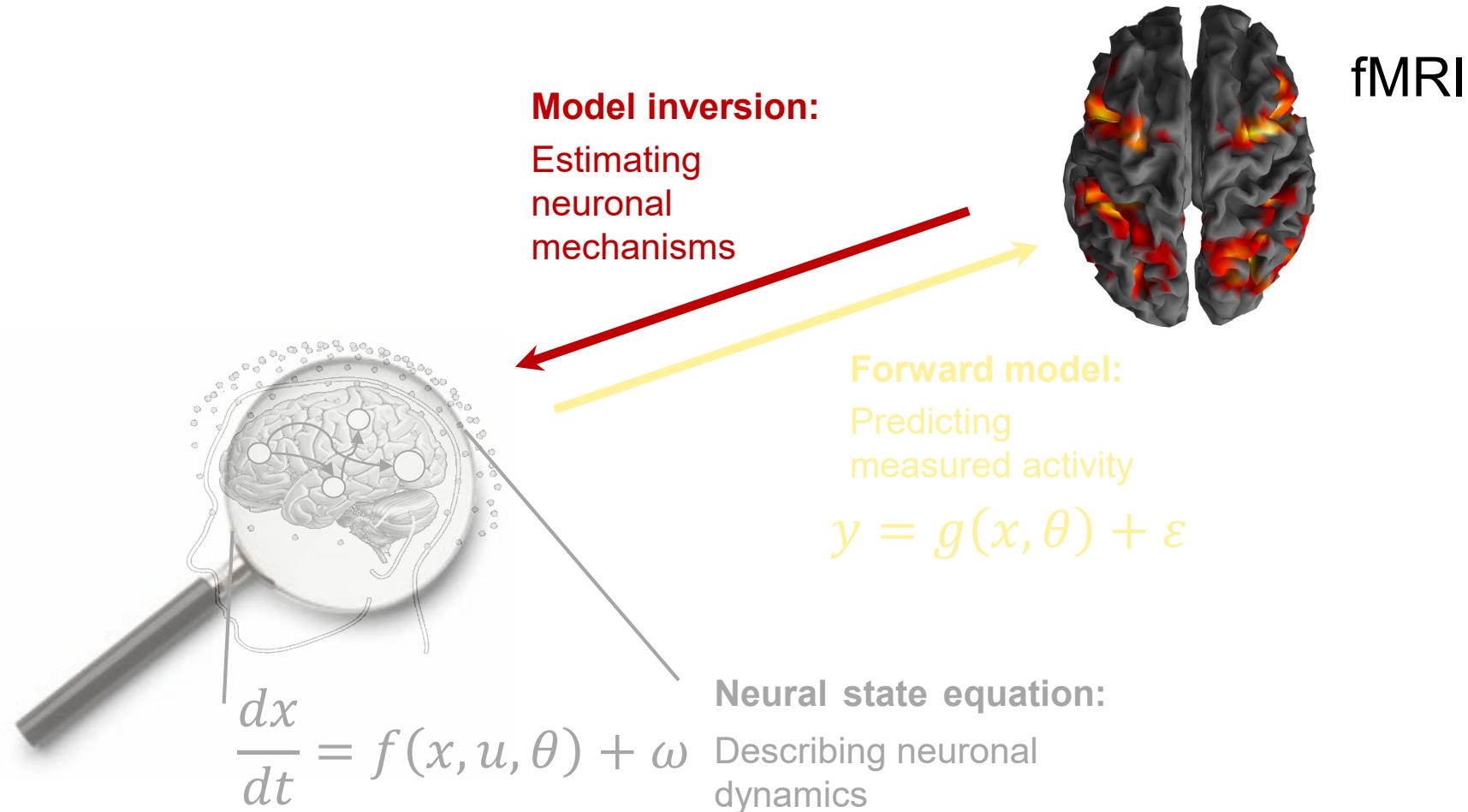
...

$$y = g(x, \theta) + \varepsilon$$

Simulate the system with input u and parameters θ

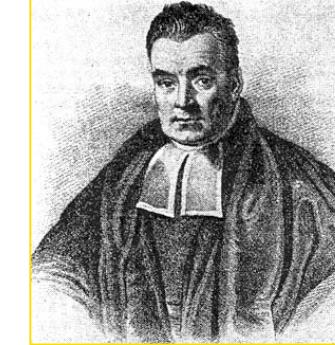
→ BOLD signal time course y that can be
compared to measured data.

DCM for fMRI - overview

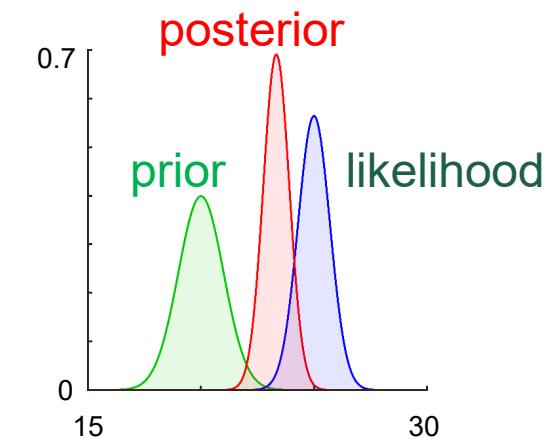


Bayes' theorem

$$\text{posterior} \quad p(\theta|y, m) = \frac{\text{likelihood} \quad p(y|\theta, m) \text{ prior} \quad p(\theta|m)}{\text{model evidence} \quad p(y|m)}$$



Reverend Thomas Bayes
(1702-1761)





The likelihood function for DCM

$$p(y(t)|\theta, m) = \mathcal{N}(y(t); g(\theta^n, \theta^h, u(t)), \theta^\sigma)$$

likelihood

Assume data is normally distributed around the prediction from the dynamical model (Gaussian noise)

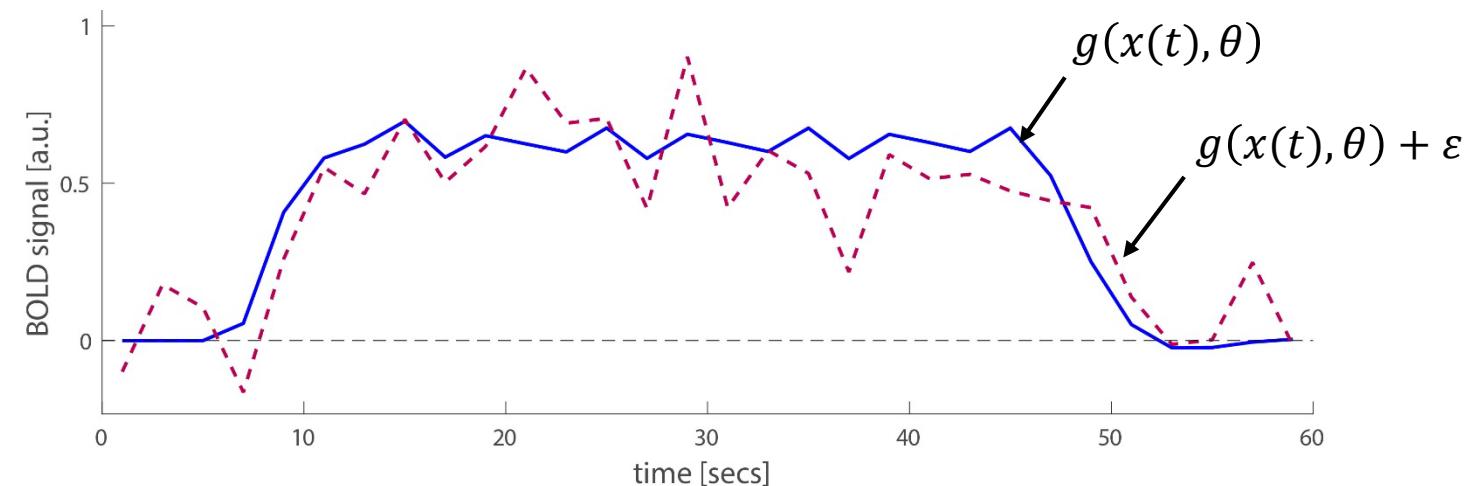
$$y(t) = g(x(t), \theta) + \varepsilon$$
$$\varepsilon \sim \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 I)$$

Data is prediction plus
Gaussian noise

The likelihood function for DCM

$$p(y(t)|\theta, m) = \mathcal{N}(y(t); g(\theta^n, \theta^h, u), \theta^\sigma)$$

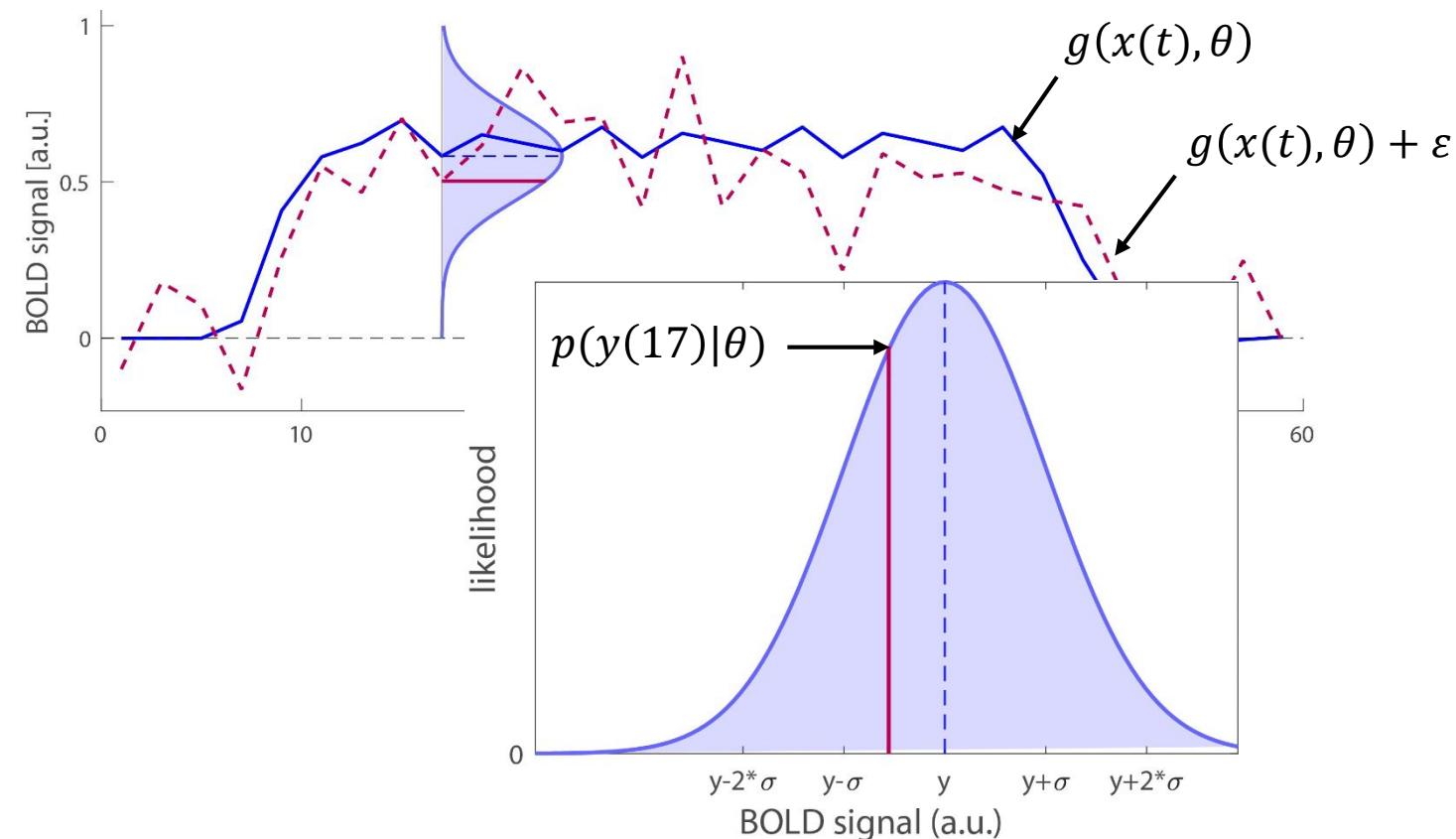
likelihood



The likelihood function for DCM

$$p(y(t)|\theta, m) = \mathcal{N}(y(t); g(\theta^n, \theta^h, u), \theta^\sigma)$$

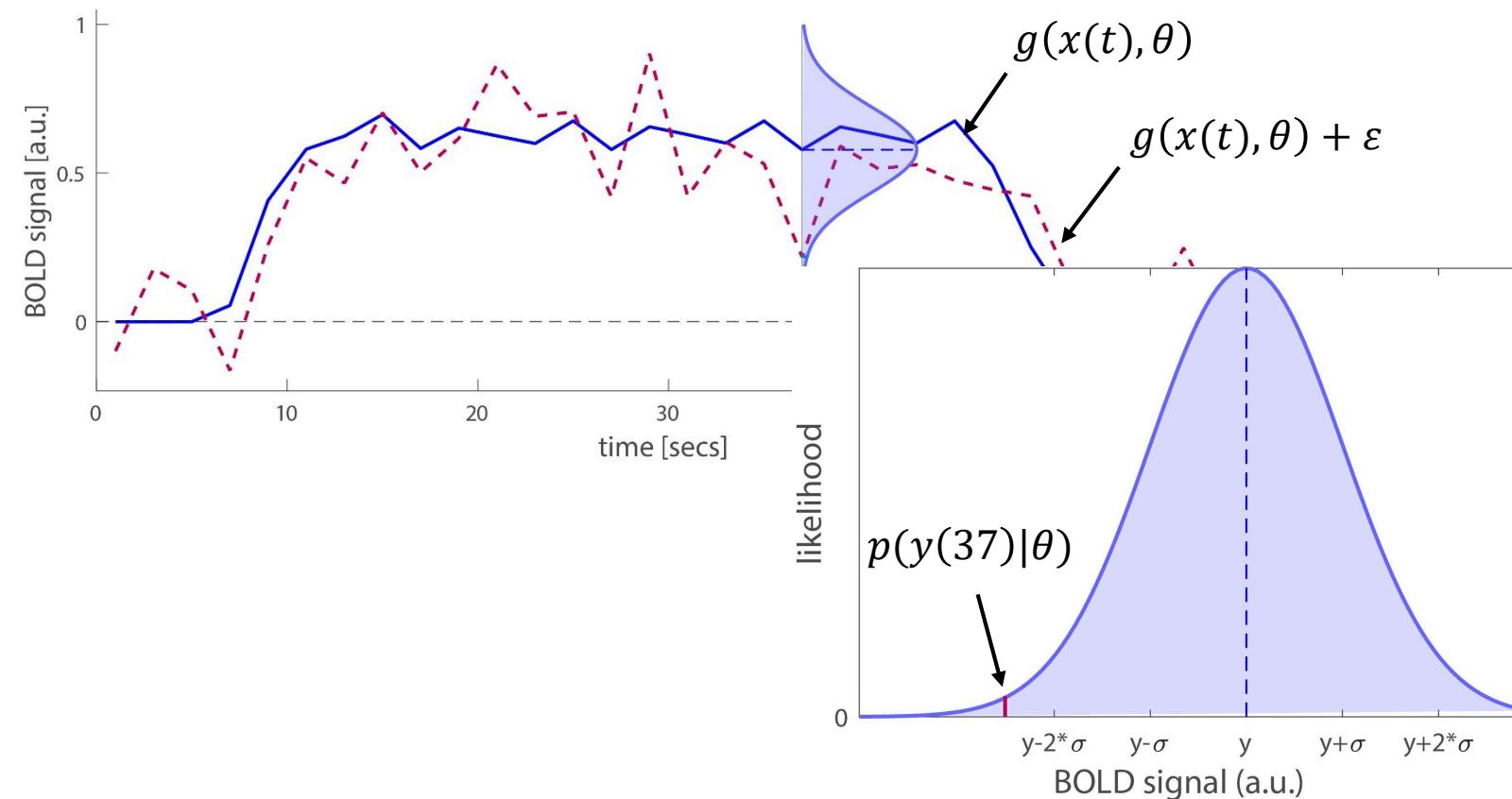
likelihood



The likelihood function for DCM

$$p(y(t)|\theta, m) = \mathcal{N}(y(t); g(\theta^n, \theta^h, u), \theta^\sigma)$$

likelihood



Priors

$$p(\theta|y, m) = \frac{p(y|\theta, m)p(\theta|m)}{p(y|m)}$$

prior

Neuronal parameters:

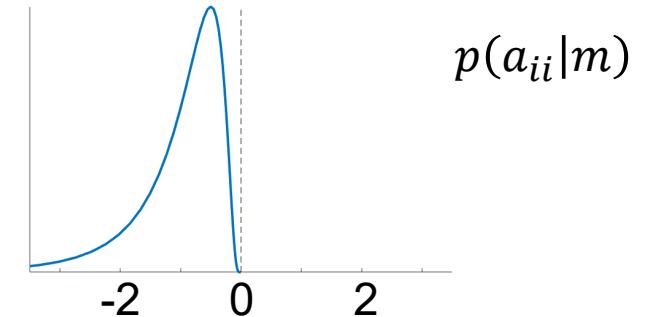
- self-connections: principled (to “ensure” that the system is stable)
- other parameters (between—region connections, modulation, inputs): shrinkage priors

Hemodynamic parameters:

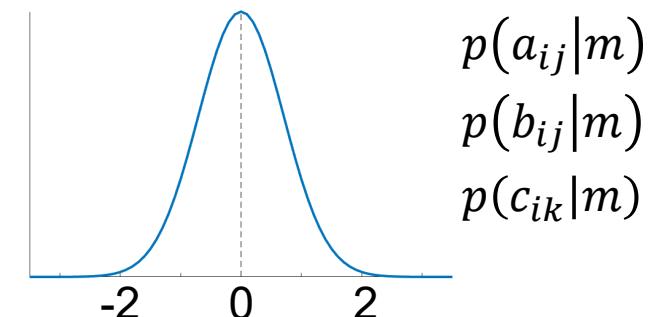
- empirical

Noise prior (hyperparameter):

- assume relatively noisy data
(not default in SPM12 → set DCM.options.hE = 0; DCM.options.hC = 1)



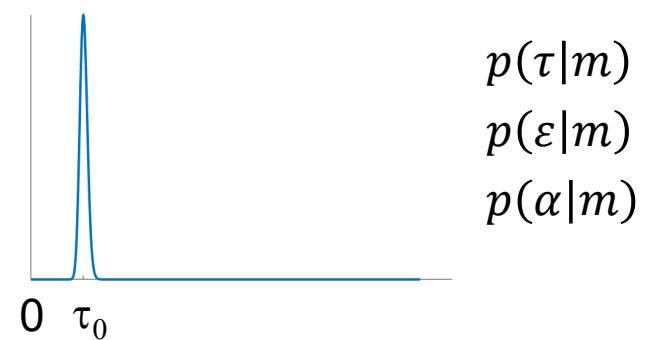
$$p(a_{ii}|m)$$



$$p(a_{ij}|m)$$

$$p(b_{ij}|m)$$

$$p(c_{ik}|m)$$

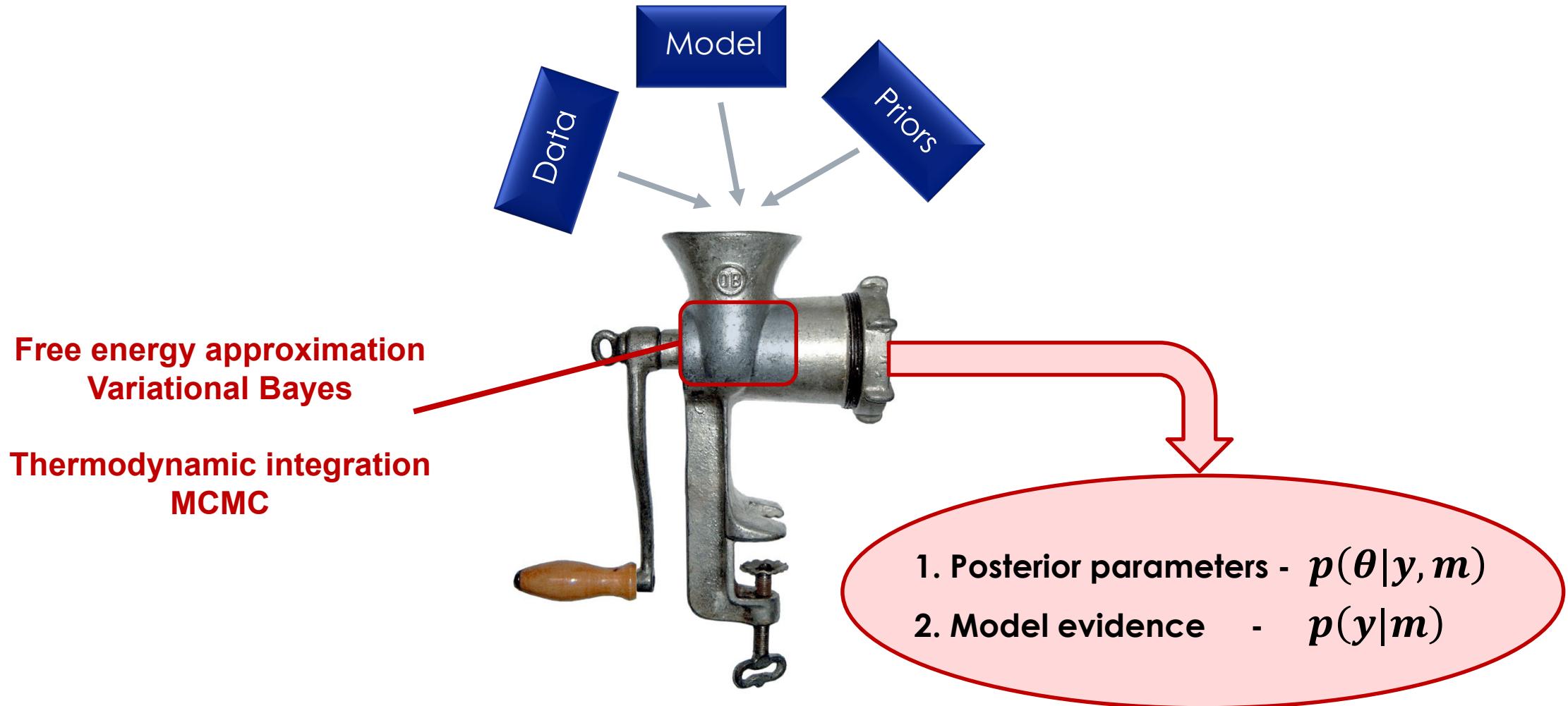


$$p(\tau|m)$$

$$p(\varepsilon|m)$$

$$p(\alpha|m)$$

Model estimation: running the machinery

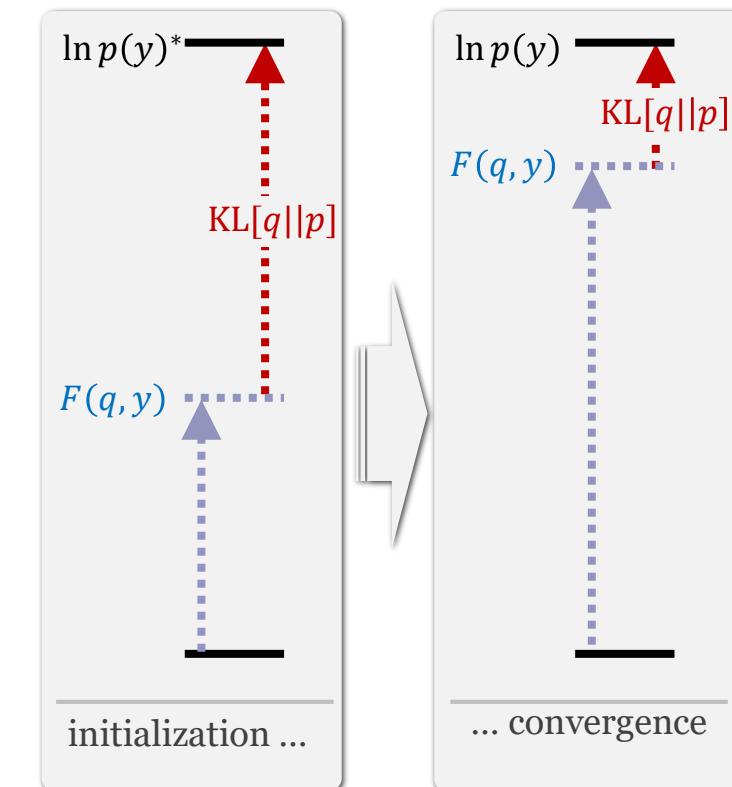


Inversion – variational Free Energy approximation to model evidence

model evidence

$$\ln p(y) = \underbrace{\text{KL}[q||p]}_{\substack{\text{divergence} \\ \geq 0 \\ (\text{unknown})}} + \underbrace{F(q, y)}_{\substack{\text{neg. free energy} \\ (\text{easy to evaluate} \\ \text{for a given } q)}}$$

When $F(q, y)$ is maximized,
 $q(\theta)$ is our best estimate of
the true posterior.



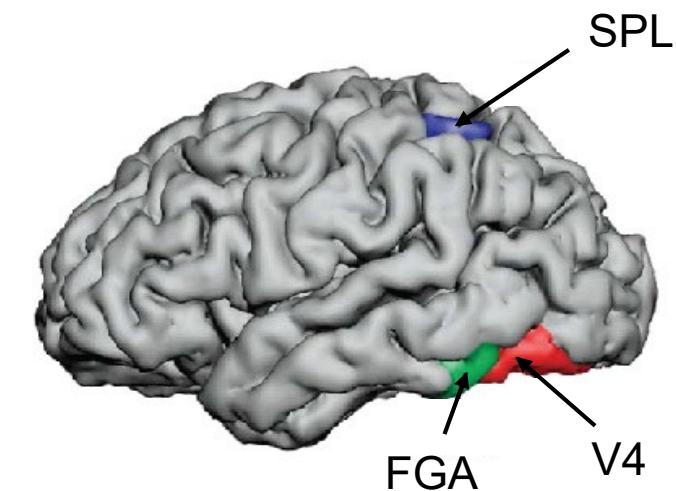


Model estimation: running the machinery



Model selection example: Synesthesia

- Specific sensory stimuli lead to unusual, additional experiences
- Grapheme-color synesthesia: **color**
- Involuntary, automatic; stable over time, prevalence ~4%
- Potential cause: aberrant **cross-activation/coupling** between brain areas
 - grapheme encoding area (FGA)
 - color area (V4)
 - superior parietal lobule (SPL)

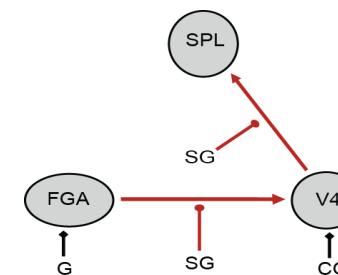


Hubbard, 2007

Bottom-up or Top-down “cross-activation”?

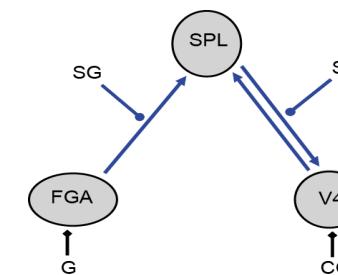
Bottom-up

(Ramachandran & Hubbard, 2001)



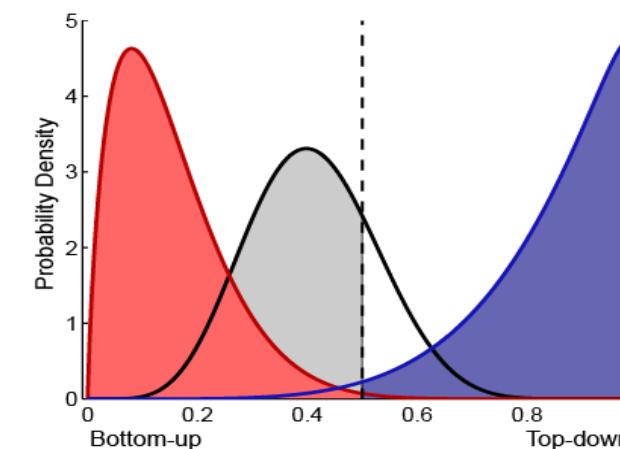
Top-down

(Grossenbacher & Lovelace, 2001)

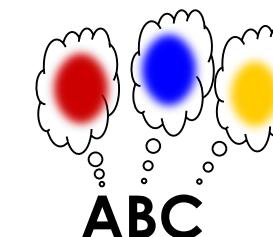


Projectors

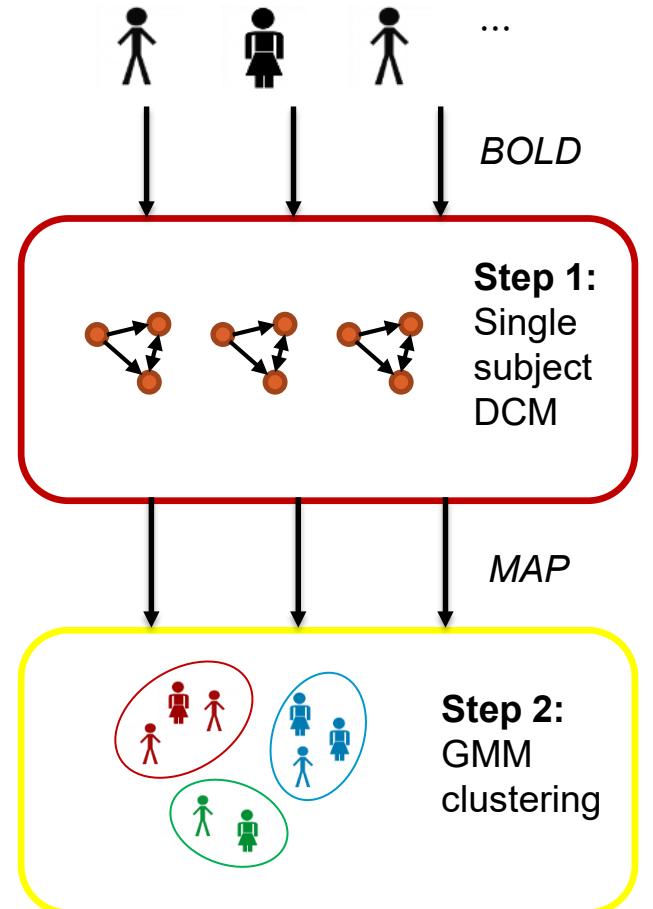
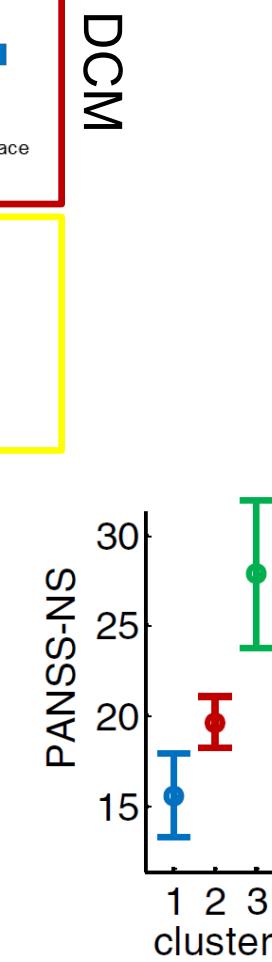
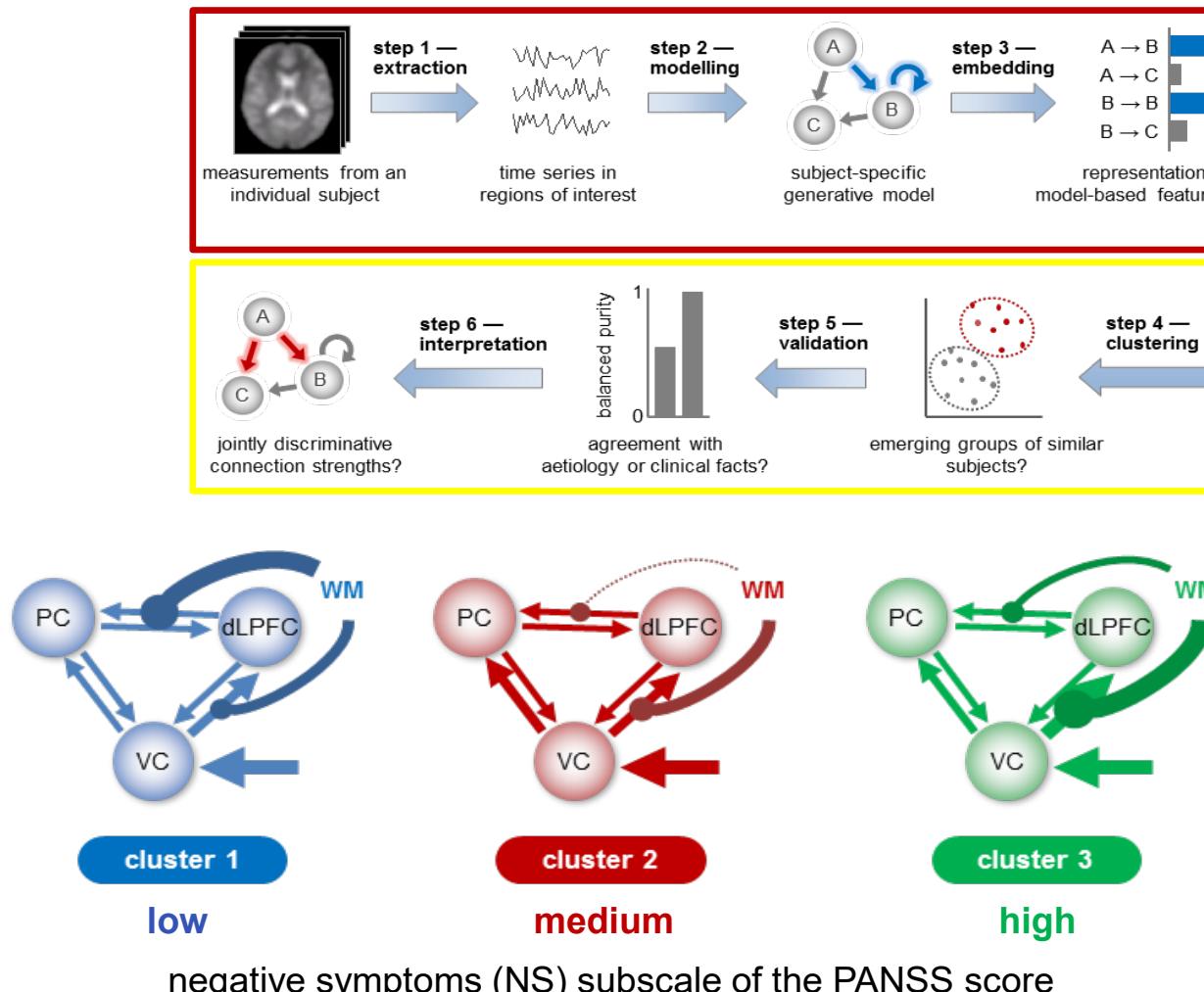
ABC



Associators



Example: DCM for physiologically plausible feature extraction (generative embedding)



What questions can we answer using DCM?

Model comparison

What is the functional architecture of a network of brain regions?

→ Synesthesia

Are optimal models different between groups?

→ Synesthesia

Which connections are modulated by experimental manipulations?

Parameter inference

Are parameters different between individuals/groups?

Use parameters as physiologically informed summary statistics

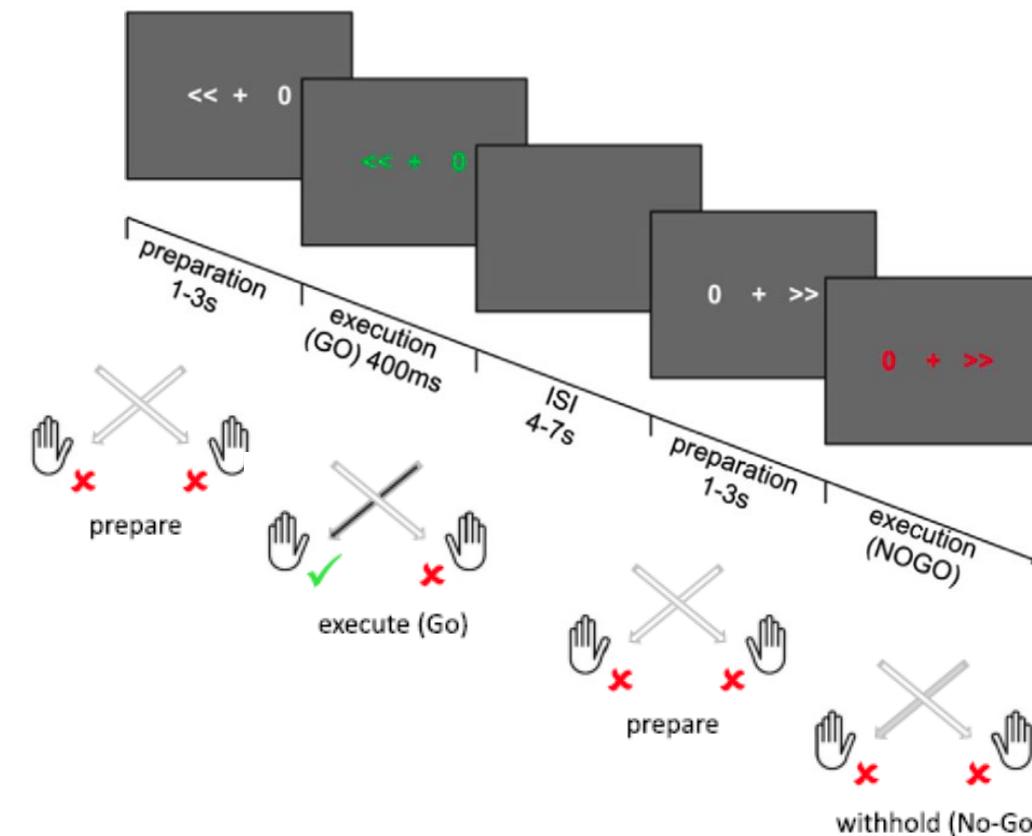
→ Generative embedding

... and of course many more!

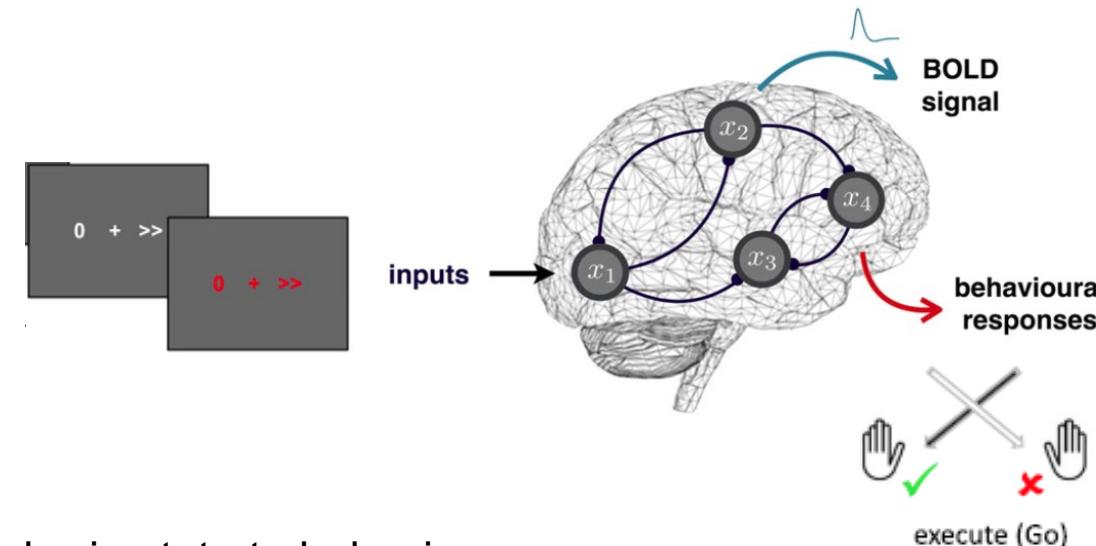
Limitations

- DCMs only have inputs, no outputs
 - Limits the study of behavioral paradigms
- Local minima
 - Variational approximation can get stuck in local minima of free energy
- Size of networks
 - Standard inversion too slow for large networks (>10 nodes).
- Regularization through fixed priors:
 - Regularization based on other data → empirical Bayes.

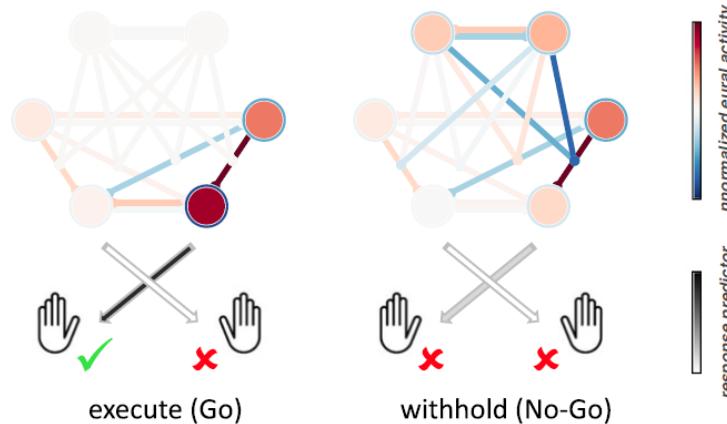
Behavioral DCM – a step towards a neurocomputational model



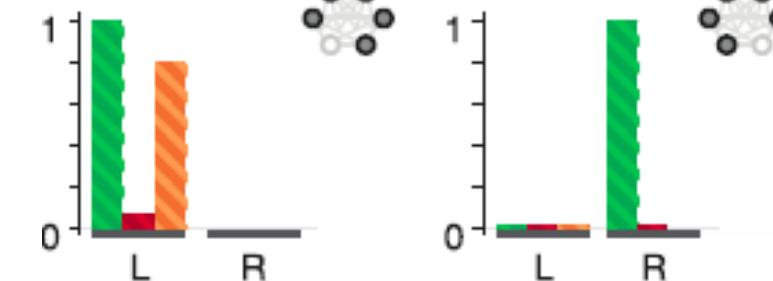
Behavioral DCM – a step towards a neurocomputational model



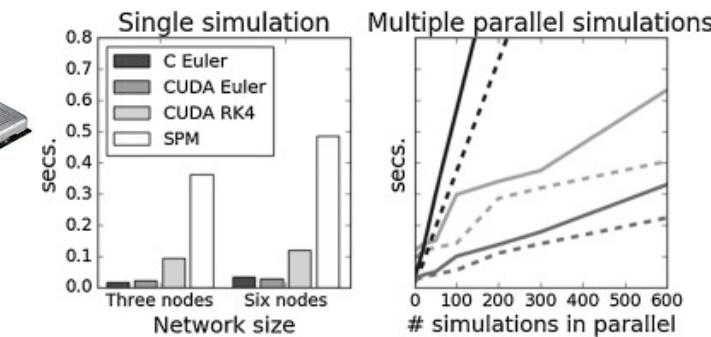
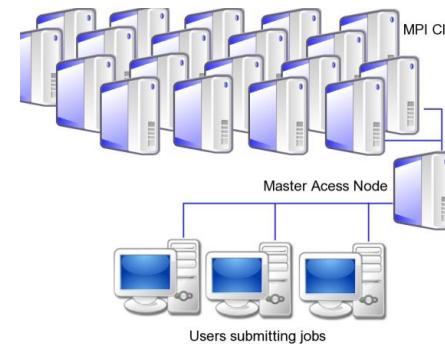
Mapping brain state to behavior



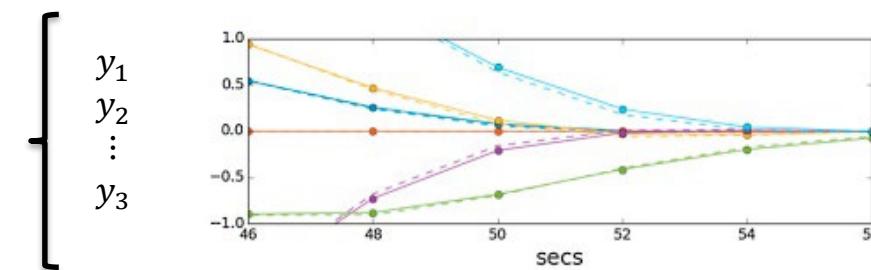
Lesion simulations



MCMC inversion of DCMs: Massively Parallel DCM - mpdcm



$$\begin{aligned} \dot{x} &= f(x, u_1, \theta_1) \\ \dot{x} &= f(x, u_2, \theta_2) \\ &\vdots \\ \dot{x} &= f(x, u_n, \theta_n) \end{aligned} \quad \left. \right\} \text{mpdcm_integrate(dcms)}$$



- Fast inversion of DCMs
 - MCMC based inversion possible
- **Thermodynamic Integration** (alternative to negative Free Energy)

Recent additions to DCM for fMRI

- Massively parallel dynamic causal modelling
 - **mpdcm** Aponte et al., J Neuroscience Methods, 2016
- Regression dynamic causal modelling
 - **rDCM** Frässle et al., Neuroimage, 2017
- Hierarchical unsupervised generative embedding
 - **HUGE** Yu et al., Neuroimage, 2019

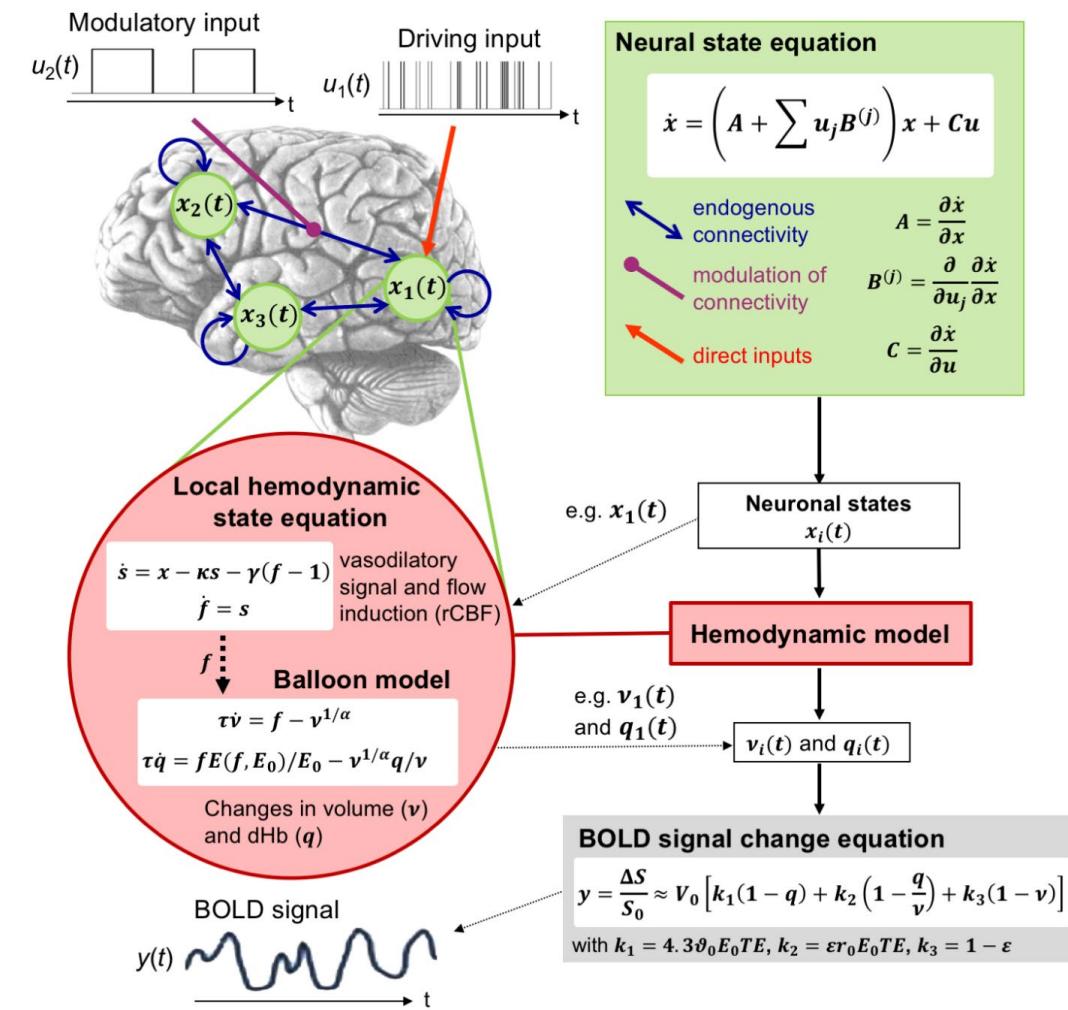
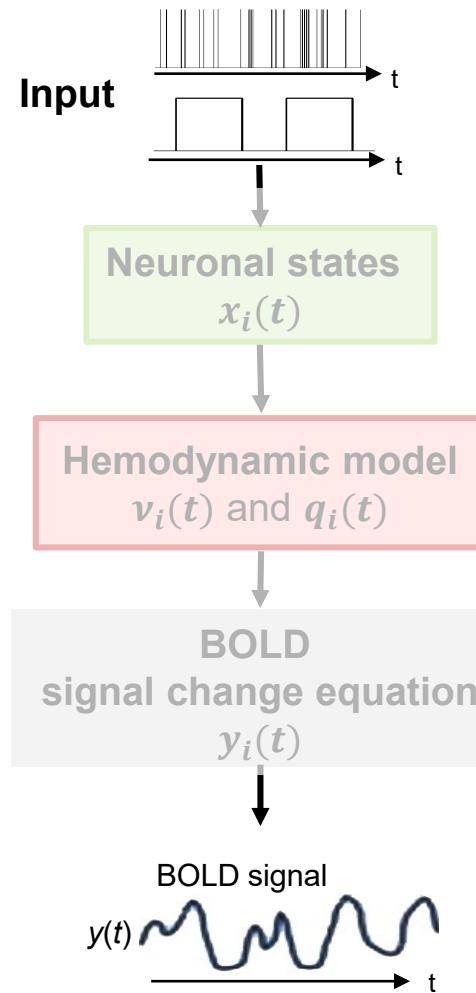
Modeling Connectivity:
Regression DCM for fMRI
→ later today

Available in TAPAS:
www.translationalneuromodeling.org/tapas

Summary – generative model



Summary – generative model

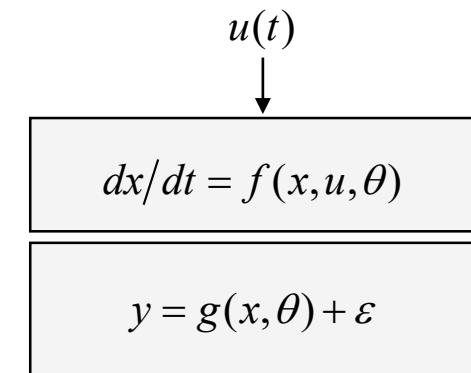


Summary - Bayesian system identification

Neural (and hemo-)
dynamics

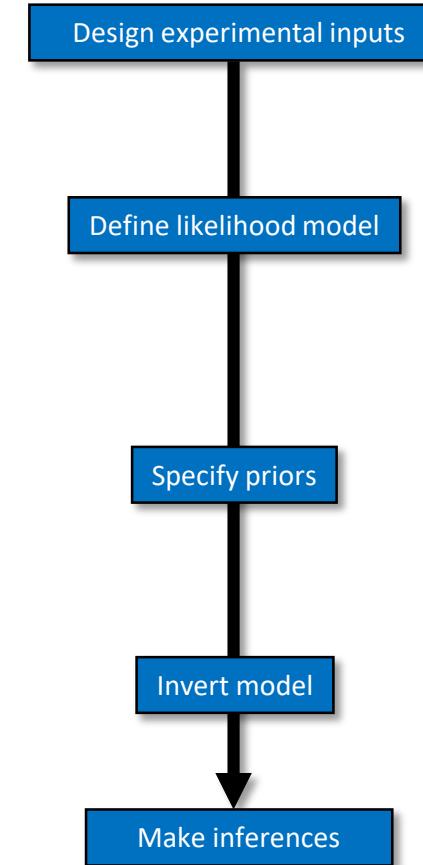
Observer function

Inference on model
structure
Inference on
parameters



$$p(y | \theta, m) = N(g(\theta), \Sigma(\theta))$$
$$p(\theta, m) = N(\mu_\theta, \Sigma_\theta)$$

$$p(y | m) = \int p(y | \theta, m) p(\theta) d\theta$$
$$p(\theta | y, m) = \frac{p(y | \theta, m) p(\theta, m)}{p(y | m)}$$





DCM software note

Basic functionality for DCM for fMRI is provided within

SPM

<https://www.fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk/spm/>



Thank you!

Many thanks to Stefan Frässle,
Klaas Enno Stephan, Hanneke den Ouden
and Jean Daunizeau for many of the slides!

List with suggested DCM literature in Appendix of this presentation!

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- Aponte EA, Yao Y, Raman S, Frässle S, Heinze J, Penny WD, Stephan KE (2021). An introduction to thermodynamic integration and application. *Cognitive Neurodynamics* 16: 1-15.
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- Friston K, Stephan KE, Li B, Daunizeau J (2010) Generalised filtering. *Mathematical Problems in Engineering* 2010: 621670.
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- Friston K, Penny W (2011) Post hoc Bayesian model selection. *Neuroimage* 56: 2089-2099.
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- **Frässle S, Lomakina EI, Razi A, Friston KJ, Buhmann JM, Stephan KE (2017) Regression DCM for fMRI. NeuroImage 155:406-421.**
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- Li B, Daunizeau J, Stephan KE, Penny WD, Friston KJ (2011). Stochastic DCM and generalised filtering. NeuroImage 58: 442-457
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- Penny WD, Stephan KE, Mechelli A, Friston KJ (2004a) Comparing dynamic causal models. NeuroImage 22:1157-1172.
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- Penny WD, Stephan KE, Daunizeau J, Joao M, Friston K, Schofield T, Leff AP (2010) Comparing Families of Dynamic Causal Models. PLoS Computational Biology 6: e1000709.
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- **Raman S, Deserno L, Schlagenhauf F, Stephan KE (2016). A hierarchical model for integrating unsupervised generative embedding and empirical Bayes. Journal of Neuroscience Methods 269: 6-20.**
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- Stephan KE, Weiskopf N, Drysdale PM, Robinson PA, Friston KJ (2007) Comparing hemodynamic models with DCM. *NeuroImage* 38:387-401.
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- Stephan KE, Tittgemeyer M, Knösche TR, Moran RJ, Friston KJ (2009b) Tractography-based priors for dynamic causal models. *NeuroImage* 47: 1628-1638.
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- **Zeidman P, Jafarian A, Corbin N, Seghier ML, Razi A, Price CJ, Friston KJ (2019) A guide to group effective connectivity analysis, part 1: First level analysis with DCM for fMRI. *NeuroImage*, DOI: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2019.06.031**
- **Zeidman P, Jafarian A, Seghier ML , Litvak V, Cagnan H , Price CJ, Friston KJ (2019) A guide to group effective connectivity analysis, part 2: Second level analysis with PEB. *NeuroImage*, DOI: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2019.06.032**