

Interrogating theoretical models of neural computation with deep inference
Sean R. Bittner¹, Agostina Palmigiano¹, Alex T. Piet^{2,3,4}, Chunyu A. Duan⁵, Carlos D. Brody^{2,3,6},
Kenneth D. Miller¹, and John P. Cunningham⁷.

¹Department of Neuroscience, Columbia University,

²Princeton Neuroscience Institute,

³Princeton University,

⁴Allen Institute for Brain Science,

⁵Institute of Neuroscience, Chinese Academy of Sciences,

⁶Howard Hughes Medical Institute,

⁷Department of Statistics, Columbia University

¹ 1 Abstract

² A cornerstone of theoretical neuroscience is the circuit model: a system of equations that captures
³ a hypothesized neural mechanism. Such models are valuable when they give rise to an experi-
⁴ mentally observed phenomenon – whether behavioral or a pattern of neural activity – and thus
⁵ can offer insights into neural computation. The operation of these mechanistic circuits, like all
⁶ models, critically depends on the choices of model parameters. A key process in circuit modeling
⁷ is then to identify the model parameters consistent with observed phenomena: to solve the inverse
⁸ problem. To solve challenging inverse problems modeling neural datasets, neuroscientists have used
⁹ statistical inference techniques to much success. However, most research in theoretical neuroscience
¹⁰ focuses on how computation emerges in biologically interpretable circuit models, and how the model
¹¹ parameters govern computation; it is not focused on the latent structure of empirical models of
¹² noisy experimental datasets. In this work, we present a novel technique that brings the power
¹³ and versatility of the probabilistic modeling toolkit to theoretical inverse problems. Our method
¹⁴ uses deep neural networks to learn parameter distributions with rich structure that have specific
¹⁵ computational properties in biologically relevant models. This methodology is explained through
¹⁶ a motivational example inferring conductance parameters in an STG subcircuit model. Then, with
¹⁷ RNNs of increasing size, we show that only EPI allows precise control over the behavior of inferred
¹⁸ parameters, and that EPI scales better in parameter dimension than alternative techniques. In the
¹⁹ remainder of this work, we explain novel theoretical insights through the examination of intricate
²⁰ parametric structure in complex circuit models. In a model of primary visual cortex with multiple

21 neuron-types, where analysis becomes untenable with each additional neuron-type, we discovered
22 how noise distributed across neuron-types governs the excitatory population. Finally, in a model
23 of superior colliculus, we identified and characterized two distinct regimes of connectivity that
24 facilitate switching between opposite tasks amidst interleaved trials. We also found that all task-
25 switching connectivities in this model reproduce behaviors from inactivation experiments, further
26 establishing this hypothesized circuit model. Beyond its scientific contribution, this work illustrates
27 the variety of analyses possible once deep learning is harnessed towards solving theoretical inverse
28 problems.

29 2 Introduction

30 The fundamental practice of theoretical neuroscience is to use a mathematical model to understand
31 neural computation, whether that computation enables perception, action, or some intermediate
32 processing. A neural circuit is systematized with a set of equations – the mechanistic model – and
33 these equations are motivated by biophysics, neurophysiology, and other conceptual considerations
34 [1–4]. The function of this system is governed by the choice of model *parameters*, which when
35 configured in a particular way, give rise to a measurable signature of a computation. The work
36 of analyzing a model then requires solving the inverse problem: given a computation of interest,
37 how can we reason about particular parameter configurations? The inverse problem is crucial for
38 reasoning about likely parameter values, uniquenesses and degeneracies, and predictions made by
39 the model [5, 6].

40 Consider the idealized practice: one carefully designs a model and analytically derives how compu-
41 tational properties determine model parameters. Seminal examples of this gold standard include
42 our field’s understanding of memory capacity in associative neural networks [7], chaos and au-
43 tocorrelation timescales in random neural networks [8], the paradoxical effect [9], and decision
44 making [10]. Unfortunately, as circuit models include more biological realism, theory via analytical
45 derivation becomes intractable. Still, we can gain insight into these complex models by identifying
46 the distribution of parameters that produce computations. By solving the inverse problem in this
47 way, scientific analysis of biologically realistic models is made possible [6, 11–14].

48 While theoretical neuroscience is concerned with how model parameters govern computational
49 properties, existing methodology for statistical inference in neuroscience [15–36] (see review, [37])
50 requires that parameters be conditioned on an explicit dataset. The scientific insight for a model

51 of computation is then limited by the quantity and quality of available neural data. Even with a
52 vast amount of high-quality recordings, neural data often reflect uninstructed behaviors [38–40],
53 and thus may only reflect the computation of interest amidst a sea of task-irrelevant factors. A
54 common alternative is to synthesize an explicit dataset that is exemplary of that computation, so
55 that the framework of statistical inference can be applied for parameter identification. In this case,
56 well-defined computational properties are being shoehorned into artificial datasets for the purpose
57 of methodological compatibility.

58 Another key challenge is that as models of computation become more complex, statistical inference
59 becomes intractable. Such mechanistic models in theoretical neuroscience are noisy systems of
60 differential equations that can only be sampled or realized through forward simulation [41, 42];
61 they lack a tractable likelihood function, which is necessary for statistical inference. Therefore, the
62 most popular approaches to parameter inference in mechanistic models have been simulation-based
63 inference methods [43, 44], in which reasonable parameters are obtained via simulation and rejection.
64 A new class of techniques [45–47] use deep learning to improve upon traditional simulation-based
65 inference approaches. However, to use these methods in theoretical neuroscience, we must represent
66 computation with an explicit dataset in some way. Theorists are therefore barred from using the
67 probabilistic modeling toolkit for science with circuit models, unless they reformulate their inverse
68 problem into a framework for observational datasets.

69 To address the methodological incongruity between explicit datasets and emergent properties, we
70 present a statistical inference method for conditioning parameters of neural circuit models directly
71 on computation. In this work, we define computation by an emergent property, which is a statistical
72 description of the phenomena to be produced by the neural circuit model. In emergent property
73 inference (EPI), we infer the distribution of model parameters that produce this emergent property.
74 With EPI, parameters are conditioned directly on an implicit dataset defined by the computation
75 of interest. By using recent optimization techniques [48], EPI uses deep learning to make rich,
76 flexible approximations to the parameter distributions [49], the structure of which reveals scientific
77 insight about how parameters govern the emergent property.

78 Equipped with this method, we prove out the potential of EPI by demonstrating its capabilities and
79 presenting novel theoretical findings borne from its analysis. First, we show EPI’s ability to handle
80 mechanistic models using a classic model of parametric degeneracy in biology: the stomatogastric
81 ganglion [50, 51]. Then, we show EPI’s scalability to high dimensional parameter distributions by
82 inferring connectivities of recurrent neural networks (RNNs) that exhibit stable, yet amplified re-

sponses – a hallmark of neural responses throughout the brain [52–54]. In a model of primary visual cortex (V1) [55, 56] with different neuron-types, we show that the equation for excitatory variability become analytically intractable as more populations are added. Strikingly, the way in which noisy inputs across neuron-types governs excitatory variability is salient in the visualized structure of the EPI inferred parameter distribution. Finally, we investigated the possible connectivities of superior colliculus (SC) that allow execution of different tasks on interleaved trials [57]. EPI discovered a rich distribution containing two connectivity regimes with different solution classes. We queried the deep probability distribution learned by EPI to produce a mechanistic understanding of cortical responses in each regime. Intriguingly, all inferred connectivities reproduced results from optogenetic inactivation experiments in this behavioral paradigm – emergent phenomena that EPI was not conditioned upon. These theoretical insights afforded by EPI illustrate the value of deep inference for the interrogation of neural circuit models.

3 Results

3.1 Motivating emergent property inference of theoretical models

Consideration of the typical workflow of theoretical modeling clarifies the need for emergent property inference. First, one designs or chooses an existing model that, it is hypothesized, captures the computation of interest. To ground this process in a well-known example, consider the stomatogastric ganglion (STG) of crustaceans, a small neural circuit which generates multiple rhythmic muscle activation patterns for digestion [58]. Despite full knowledge of STG connectivity and a precise characterization of its rhythmic pattern generation, biophysical models of the STG have complicated relationships between circuit parameters and computation [12, 50].

A subcircuit model of the STG [51] is shown schematically in Figure 1A. The fast population (f_1 and f_2) represents the subnetwork generating the pyloric rhythm and the slow population (s_1 and s_2) represents the subnetwork of the gastric mill rhythm. The two fast neurons mutually inhibit one another, and spike at a greater frequency than the mutually inhibiting slow neurons. The hub neuron (hub) couples with either the fast or slow population, or both depending on modulatory conditions. The jagged connections indicate electrical coupling having electrical conductance g_{el} , smooth connections in the diagram are inhibitory synaptic projections having strength g_{synA} onto the hub neuron, and $g_{synB} = 5\text{nS}$ for mutual inhibitory connections. Note that the behavior of this model will be critically dependent on its parameterization – the choices of conductance parameters

113 $\mathbf{z} = [g_{el}, g_{synA}]$.

114 Second, once the model is selected, one must specify what the model should produce. In this STG
115 model, we are concerned with neural spiking frequency, which emerges from the dynamics of the
116 circuit model 1B. An emergent property studied by Gutierrez et al. of this stochastic model is the
117 hub neuron firing at an intermediate frequency between the intrinsic spiking rates of the fast and
118 slow populations. This emergent property is shown in Figure 1C at an average frequency of 0.55Hz.
119 Our notion of intermediate hub frequency is not strictly 0.55Hz, but also moderate deviations of
120 this frequency between the fast (.35Hz) and slow (.68Hz) frequencies, which are quantified in
121 the emergent property with variance 0.025^2Hz^2 .

122 Third, the model parameters producing these outputs are inferred. To infer the STG parameters of
123 intermediate hub frequency with existing methodology, we need an explicit dataset: experimentally
124 recorded or synthesized. By precisely quantifying the emergent property of interest as a statistical
125 feature of the model, we use EPI to condition directly on this emergent property. EPI learns a
126 probability distribution of model parameters constrained to produce the emergent property. In
127 this last step lies the opportunity for a shift away from a dataset-oriented representation of model
128 output towards that of an implicit dataset, where the only structure is the emergent property of
129 interest.

130 Before presenting technical details (in the following section), let us understand emergent property
131 inference schematically. EPI (Fig. 1D) takes, as input, the model and the specified emergent
132 property, and as its output, produces the parameter distribution EPI (Fig. 1E). This distribution –
133 represented for clarity as samples from the distribution – is a parameter distribution that produces
134 the emergent property. Scientifically, we can use this parameter distribution to efficiently generate
135 many parameters producing the emergent property or analyze the structure of the distribution
136 which informs how model parameters govern the emergent property.

137 3.2 A deep generative modeling approach to emergent property inference

138 Emergent property inference (EPI) formalizes the three-step procedure of the previous section with
139 deep probability distributions. First, as is typical, we consider the model as a coupled set of
140 differential equations. In this STG example, the model activity $\mathbf{x} = [x_{f1}, x_{f2}, x_{hub}, x_{s1}, x_{s2}]$ is the
141 membrane potential for each neuron, which evolves according to the biophysical conductance-based



Figure 1: Emergent property inference (EPI) in the stomatogastric ganglion. **A.** Conductance-based biophysical model of the STG subcircuit. **B.** Spiking frequency $\omega(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is an emergent property statistic. Simulated at $g_{el} = 4.5\text{nS}$ and $g_{synA} = 3\text{nS}$. **C.** The emergent property of intermediate hub frequency. Simulated activity traces are colored by $\log q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$ of generating parameters. (Panel E). **D.** For a choice of model and emergent property, emergent property inference (EPI) learns a deep probability distribution of parameters \mathbf{z} . **E.** The EPI distribution producing intermediate hub frequency. Samples are colored by log probability density. Contours of hub neuron frequency error are shown at levels of .525, .53,575 Hz (dark to light gray away from mean). Dimension of sensitivity \mathbf{v}_1 (solid) and degeneracy \mathbf{v}_2 (dashed). **F** (Top) The predictive distribution of EPI. The black and gray dashed lines show the mean and two standard deviations according the emergent property. (Bottom) Simulations at the starred parameter values.

142 equation:

$$C_m \frac{d\mathbf{x}(t)}{dt} = -h(\mathbf{x}(t); \mathbf{z}) + d\mathbf{B} \quad (1)$$

143 where $C_m = 1\text{nF}$, and \mathbf{h} is a sum of the leak, calcium, potassium, hyperpolarization, electrical, and
144 synaptic currents, all of which have their own complicated dependence on activity \mathbf{x} and parameters
145 $\mathbf{z} = [g_{el}, g_{synA}]$, and $d\mathbf{B}$ is white gaussian noise [51, 59] (see Section 5.2.1 for more detail).

146 Second, we stipulate that our model should produce the emergent property of “intermediate hub
147 frequency” (Figure 1C). We stipulate that the hub neuron’s spiking frequency – denoted $\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x})$
148 is close to a frequency of 0.55Hz, between that of the slow and fast frequencies. Mathematically,
149 we define this emergent property with two statistical constraints: that the mean hub frequency is
150 0.55Hz,

$$\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = 0.55 \quad (2)$$

151 and that the variance of the hub frequency is moderate

$$\text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = 0.025^2. \quad (3)$$

152 The hub neuron frequency is constrained over the distribution of parameters \mathbf{z} and the distribution
153 of the data \mathbf{x} that those parameters produce. Formally, the emergent property is the collection of
154 these two constraints

$$\mathcal{X} : \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = 0.55, \quad \text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = 0.025^2. \quad (4)$$

155 In general, an emergent property is a collection of first-, second- and higher moments of statistics
156 that together define the phenomena.

157 Third, we perform emergent property inference: we find a distribution over parameter configu-
158 rations \mathbf{z} that produces the emergent property; in other words, they obey the constraints intro-
159 duced in Equation 4. This distribution will be chosen from a family of probability distributions
160 $\mathcal{Q} = \{q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z}) : \boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta\}$, defined by a deep neural network [49, 60, 61] (Figure 1D, EPI box). Deep
161 probability distributions map a simple random variable \mathbf{z}_0 through a deep neural network with
162 weights and biases $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ to parameters $\mathbf{z} = g_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z}_0)$ to a suitably complicated distribution (see Section
163 5.1.2 for more details). Many distributions in \mathcal{Q} will respect the emergent property constraints,
164 so we select the most random (highest entropy) distribution, which is the same choice made in
165 variational bayesian methods (see Section 5.1.6). In EPI optimization, stochastic gradient steps in
166 $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ are taken such that entropy is maximized, and the emergent property \mathcal{X} is produced (see Section

167 5.1) The inferred EPI distribution is denoted $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$, since it is conditioned upon emergent
168 property \mathcal{X} . This is meant to share the same notation as a posterior distribution $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathbf{x})$ that is
169 conditioned upon an explicit dataset.

170 EPI produces parameter distributions that can be queried for scientific insight. The modes of
171 $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$ indicate parameter choices exemplary of the emergent property (Fig. 1E yellow star). As
172 probability in the EPI inferred distribution decreases, the emergent property deteriorates. Perturb-
173 ing \mathbf{z} along a dimension in which $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$ does not change will not disturb the emergent property,
174 making this parameter combination *degenerate* with respect to the emergent property. In contrast,
175 if \mathbf{z} is perturbed along a dimension that strongly decreases $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$, we call that parameter com-
176 bination *sensitive*. By querying the second order derivative (Hessian) of $\log q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$ at a mode,
177 we can quantitatively identify how sensitive (or robust) each eigenvector is by its eigenvalue; the
178 more negative the eigenvalue, the more sensitive. Indeed, samples equidistant from the mode along
179 these EPI-identified dimensions of sensitivity (v_1 , smaller eigenvalue) and robustness (v_2 , greater
180 eigenvalue) (Fig. 1E, arrows) agree with error contours (Fig. 1E contours) and have diminished or
181 preserved hub frequency, respectively (Fig. 1F activity traces). Once an EPI distribution has been
182 inferred, this Hessian calculation requires trivial computation (see Section 5.2.4).

183 In the following sections, we demonstrate EPI on three neural circuit models across ranges of
184 biological realism, neural system function, and network scale. First, we demonstrate the superior
185 scalability of EPI compared to alternative techniques by inferring high-dimensional distributions of
186 recurrent neural network (RNN) connectivities that exhibit amplified, yet stable responses. Also
187 in this RNN example, we emphasize that EPI is the only technique that controls the predictions
188 made by the inferred parameter distribution. Next, in a model of primary visual cortex [55,56], we
189 show how EPI captures a curved manifold of parametric degeneracy, revealing how input variability
190 across neuron types affects the excitatory population. Finally, in a model of superior colliculus [57],
191 we used EPI to capture multiple parametric regimes of task switching, and queried the dimensions
192 of sensitivity ($\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z})$) to mechanistically characterize each regime.

193 3.3 Scaling inference of RNN connectivity with EPI

194 Transient amplification is a hallmark of neural activity throughout cortex, and is often thought to be
195 intrinsically generated by recurrent connectivity in the responding cortical area [52–54]. It has been
196 shown that to generate such amplified, yet stabilized responses, the connectivity of RNNs must be
197 non-normal [52,62], and satisfy additional constraints [63]. In theoretical neuroscience, RNNs are

198 optimized and then examined to show how dynamical systems could execute a given computation
 199 [64, 65], but such biologically realistic constraints on connectivity are ignored during optimization
 200 for practical reasons. In general, access to distributions of connectivity adhering to theoretical
 201 criteria like stable amplification, chaotic fluctuations [8], or low tangling [66] would add scientific
 202 value and context to existing research with RNNs. Here, we use EPI to learn RNN connectivities
 203 producing stable amplification, and demonstrate the superior scalability and efficiency of EPI to
 204 alternative approaches.

205 We consider a rank-2 RNN with N neurons having connectivity $W = UV^\top$ and dynamics

$$\tau \dot{\mathbf{x}} = -\mathbf{x} + W\mathbf{x}, \quad (5)$$

206 where $U = [\mathbf{u}_1 \ \mathbf{u}_2] + g\chi^{(U)}$, $V = [\mathbf{v}_1 \ \mathbf{v}_2] + g\chi^{(V)}$, $\mathbf{u}_1, \mathbf{u}_2, \mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2 \in [-1, 1]^N$, and $\chi_{i,j}^{(U)}, \chi_{i,j}^{(V)} \sim$
 207 $\mathcal{N}(0, 1)$. We infer connectivity parameterizations $\mathbf{z} = [\mathbf{u}_1^\top, \mathbf{u}_2^\top, \mathbf{v}_1^\top, \mathbf{v}_2^\top]^\top$ that produce stable ampli-
 208 fication. Two conditions are necessary and sufficient for RNNs to exhibit stable amplification [63]:
 209 $\text{real}(\lambda_1) < 1$ and $\lambda_1^s > 1$, where λ_1 is the eigenvalue of W with greatest real part and λ^s is the max-
 210 imum eigenvalue of $W^s = \frac{W+W^\top}{2}$. RNNs with $\text{real}(\lambda_1) = 0.5 \pm 0.5$ and $\lambda_1^s = 1.5 \pm 0.5$ will be stable
 211 with modest decay rate ($\text{real}(\lambda_1)$ close to its upper bound of 1) and exhibit modest amplification
 212 (λ_1^s close to its lower bound of 1). EPI can naturally condition on this emergent property

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{X} : \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} \begin{bmatrix} \text{real}(\lambda_1) \\ \lambda_1^s \end{bmatrix} &= \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \\ 1.5 \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} \begin{bmatrix} \text{real}(\lambda_1) \\ \lambda_1^s \end{bmatrix} &= \begin{bmatrix} 0.25^2 \\ 0.25^2 \end{bmatrix}, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

213 under the notion that variance constraints with standard deviation 0.25 predicate that the vast
 214 majority of samples (those within two standard deviations) are within the specified ranges.

215 For comparison, we infer the parameters \mathbf{z} likely to produce stable amplification using two al-
 216 ternative simulation-based inference approaches. We ran sequential Monte Carlo approximate
 217 Bayesian computation (SMC-ABC) [43] and sequential neural posterior estimation (SNPE) [45]
 218 with observation $\mathbf{x}_0 = \boldsymbol{\mu}$. SMC-ABC is a rejection sampling approach that SMC techniques to
 219 improve efficiency, and SNPE approximates posteriors with deep probability distributions using
 220 a two-network architecture (see Section 5.1.1). Unlike EPI, these statistical inference techniques
 221 do not constrain the statistics of the predictive distribution, and these predictions of the inferred
 222 posteriors are typically affected by model characteristics (e.g. N and g , Fig. 11). To compare the



Figure 2: **A.** Wall time of EPI (blue), SNPE (orange), and SMC-ABC (green) to converge on RNN connectivities producing stable amplification. Each dot shows convergence time for an individual random seed. For reference, the mean wall time for EPI to achieve its full constraint convergence (means and variances) is shown (blue line). **B.** Simulation count of each algorithm to achieve convergence. Same conventions as A. **C.** The predictive distributions of connectivities inferred by EPI (blue), SNPE (orange), and SMC-ABC (green), with reference to $\mathbf{x}_0 = \mu$ (gray star). **D.** Simulations of networks inferred by each method ($\tau = 100ms$). Each trace (15 per algorithm) corresponds to simulation of one z . (Below) Ratio of obtained samples producing stable amplification, monotonic decay, and instability.

223 efficiency of these different techniques, we measured the time and number of simulations necessary
224 for the distance of the predictive mean to be less than 0.5 from $\mu = \mathbf{x}_0$ (see Section 5.3).

225 As the number of neurons N in the RNN is scaled, and thus the dimension of the parameter
226 space $\mathbf{z} \in [-1, 1]^{4N}$, we see that EPI converges at greater speed and at greater dimension than
227 SMC-ABC and SNPE (Fig. 2A). It also becomes most efficient to use EPI in terms of simulation
228 count at $N = 50$ (Fig. 2B). It is well known that ABC techniques struggle in dimensions greater
229 than about 30 [67], yet we were careful to assess the scalability of the more comparable approach
230 SNPE. Between EPI and SNPE, we closely controlled the number of parameters in deep probability
231 distributions by dimensionality (Fig. 10), and tested more aggressive SNPE hyperparameterizations
232 when SNPE failed to converge (Fig. 12). From this analysis, we see that deep inference techniques
233 EPI and SNPE are far more amenable to inference of high dimensional parameter distributions than
234 rejection sampling techniques like SMC-ABC, and that EPI outperforms SNPE in both criteria in
235 high dimensions.

236 No matter the number of neurons, EPI always produces connectivity distributions with mean and
237 variance of $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$ and λ_1^s according to \mathcal{X} (Fig. 2C, blue). For the dimensionalities in which
238 SMC-ABC is tractable, the inferred parameters are concentrated and offset from \mathbf{x}_0 (Fig. 2C,
239 green). When using SNPE, the predictions of the inferred parameters are highly concentrated at
240 some RNN sizes and widely varied in others (Fig. 2C, orange). We see these properties reflected in
241 simulations from the inferred distributions: EPI produces a consistent variety of stable, amplified
242 activity norms $|r(t)|$, SMC-ABC produces a limited variety of responses, and the changing variety
243 of responses from SNPE emphasizes the control of EPI on parameter predictions.

244 EPI outperforms SNPE in high dimensions by using gradient information (from $\nabla_{\mathbf{z}}f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) =$
245 $\nabla_{\mathbf{z}}[\text{real}(\lambda_1), \lambda_1^s]^{\top}$) on each iteration of optimization. This agrees with recent speculation that such
246 gradient information could improve the efficiency of simulation-based inference techniques [68].
247 Since gradients of the emergent property statistics are necessary in EPI optimization, gradient
248 tractability is a key criteria when determining the suitability of a simulation-based inference tech-
249 nique. Evidenced by this analysis, EPI is a clear choice for inferring high dimensional parameter
250 distributions when the emergent property gradient is efficiently calculated. This can be invaluable
251 for understanding how RNNs produce complex emergent phenomena. Even with a high degree
252 of biophysical realism and expensive emergent property gradients, EPI was run successfully on
253 intermediate hub frequency in a 5-neuron subcircuit model of the STG (Section 3.1). However,
254 conditioning on the pyloric rhythm [69] in a model of the pyloric subnetwork model [12] proved

255 to be prohibitive with EPI. The pyloric subnetwork requires many time steps for simulation and
 256 many key emergent property statistics (e.g. burst duration and phase gap) are not calculable or
 257 easily approximated with differentiable functions. In such cases, approaches that do not require
 258 differentiability of the emergent property like SNPE have proved to be a powerful approach [45]. In
 259 the next two sections, we use EPI for novel scientific insight by examining the structure of inferred
 260 distributions.

261 **3.4 EPI reveals how noisy input across neuron-types governs excitatory vari-
 262 ability in a V1 model**

263 Dynamical models of excitatory (E) and inhibitory (I) populations with supralinear input-output
 264 function have succeeded in explaining a host of experimentally documented phenomena. In a regime
 265 characterized by inhibitory stabilization of strong recurrent excitation, these models give rise to
 266 paradoxical responses [9], selective amplification [52, 62], surround suppression [70] and normaliza-
 267 tion [71]. Despite their strong predictive power, E-I circuit models rely on the assumption that
 268 inhibition can be studied as an indivisible unit. However, experimental evidence shows that inhibi-
 269 tion is composed of distinct elements – parvalbumin (P), somatostatin (S), VIP (V) – composing
 270 80% of GABAergic interneurons in V1 [72–74], and that these inhibitory cell types follow specific
 271 connectivity patterns (Fig. 3A) [75]. While research has shown that V1 only shares specific dimen-
 272 sions of neuronal variability with downstream areas [76], the role played by recurrent dynamics and
 273 the connectivity across neuron-type populations is not understood. Here, in a model of V1 with
 274 biologically realistic connectivity, we use EPI to show how the structure of input across neuron
 275 types affects the variability of the excitatory population – the population largely responsible for
 276 projecting to other brain areas [77].

277 We considered response variability of a nonlinear dynamical V1 circuit model (Fig. 3A) with a
 278 state comprised of each neuron-type population’s rate $\mathbf{x} = [x_E, x_P, x_S, x_V]^\top$. Each population
 279 receives recurrent input $W\mathbf{x}$, where W is the effective connectivity matrix (see Section 5.4). Each
 280 population also experiences an external input \mathbf{h} , which determines population rate via supralinear
 281 nonlinearity $\phi(\cdot) = [\cdot]_+^2$. There is also an additive noisy input ϵ parameterized by variances for
 282 each neuron type population $\sigma^2 = [\sigma_E^2, \sigma_P^2, \sigma_S^2, \sigma_V^2]$. This noise has a slower dynamical timescale
 283 $\tau_{\text{noise}} > \tau$ than the population rate, allowing fluctuations around a stimulus-dependent steady-state
 284 (Fig. 3B). This model is the stochastic stabilized supralinear network (SSSN) [78]

$$\tau \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = -\mathbf{x} + \phi(W\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h} + \epsilon). \quad (7)$$

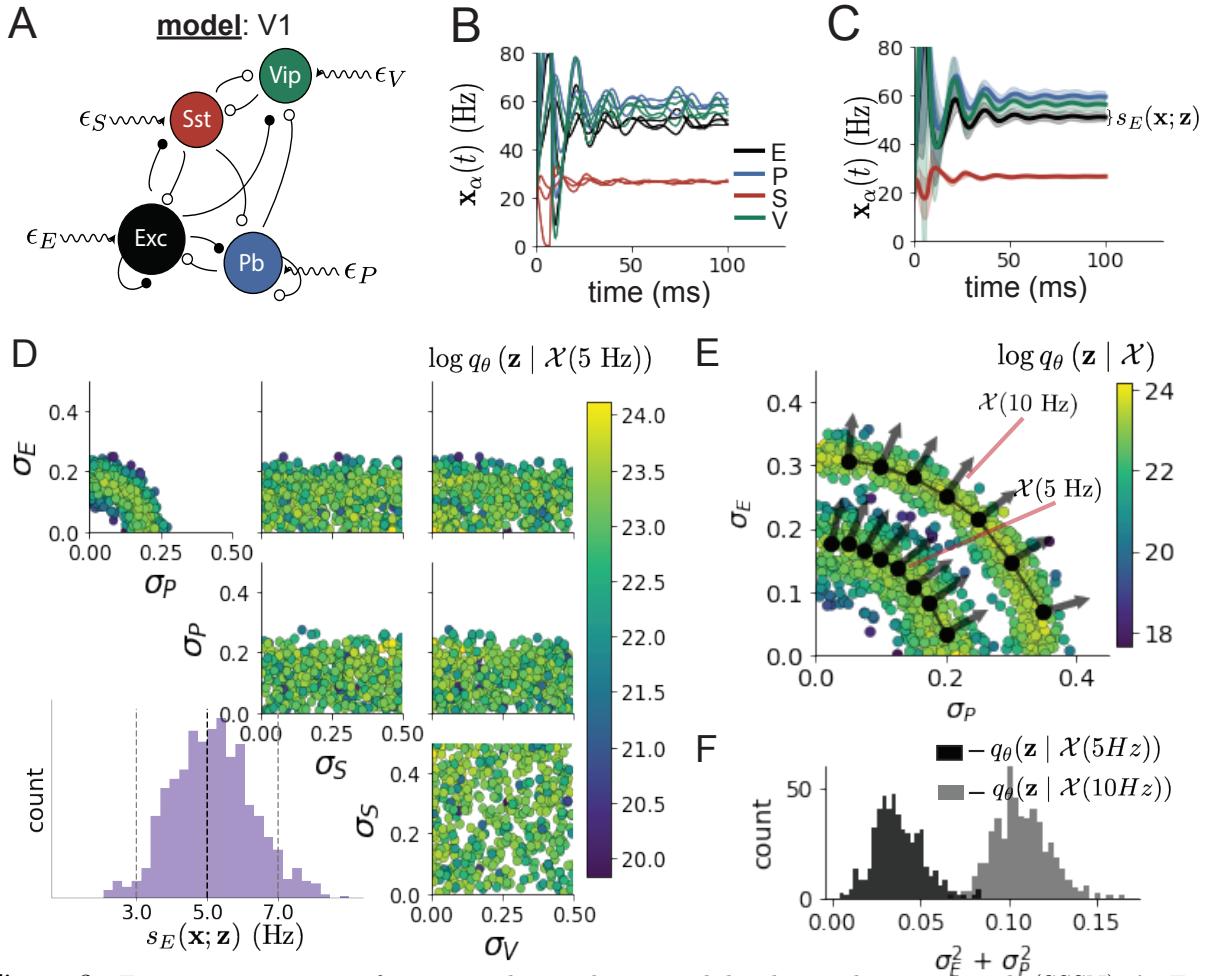


Figure 3: Emergent property inference in the stochastic stabilized supralinear network (SSSN). **A.** Four-population model of primary visual cortex with excitatory (black), parvalbumin (blue), somatostatin (red), and VIP (green) neurons (excitatory and inhibitory projections filled and unfilled, respectively). Some neuron-types largely do not form synaptic projections to others ($|W_{\alpha_1, \alpha_2}| < 0.025$). Each neural population receives a baseline input \mathbf{h}_b , and the E- and P-populations also receive a contrast-dependent input \mathbf{h}_c . Additionally, each neural population receives a slow noisy input ϵ . **B.** Transient network responses of the SSSN model. Traces are independent trials with varying initialization $\mathbf{x}(0)$ and noise ϵ . **C.** Mean (solid line) and standard deviation $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ (shading) across 100 trials. **D.** EPI distribution of noise parameters \mathbf{z} conditioned on E-population variability. The EPI predictive distribution of $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is show on the bottom-left. **E.** (Top) Enlarged visualization of the σ_E - σ_P marginal distribution of EPI $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(5 \text{ Hz}))$ and $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(10 \text{ Hz}))$. Each black dot shows the mode at each σ_P . The arrows show the most sensitive dimensions of the Hessian evaluated at these modes. **F.** The predictive distributions of $\sigma_E^2 + \sigma_P^2$ of each inferred distribution $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(5 \text{ Hz}))$ and $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(10 \text{ Hz}))$.

generalized to have multiple inhibitory neuron types, and introduces stochasticity to previous four neuron-type models of V1 [55]. Stochasticity and inhibitory multiplicity introduce substantial complexity to mathematical derivations (see Section 5.4.4) motivating the treatment of this model with EPI. Here, we consider fixed weights W and input \mathbf{h} [56], and study the effect of input variability $\mathbf{z} = [\sigma_E, \sigma_P, \sigma_S, \sigma_V]^\top$ on excitatory variability.

We quantify levels y of E-population variability with the emergent property

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{X}(y) &: \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}} [s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = y \\ \text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}} [s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] &= 1\text{Hz}^2,\end{aligned}\tag{8}$$

where $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is the standard deviation of the stochastic E-population response about its steady state (Fig. 3C). In the following analyses, we compare levels of 5Hz and 10Hz, and select 1 Hz² variance such that the two emergent properties do not overlap in $s_E(\mathbf{z}; \mathbf{x})$.

First, we ran EPI to obtain parameter distribution $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(5 \text{ Hz}))$ producing E-population variability around 5 Hz (Fig. 3D). From the marginal distribution of σ_E and σ_P (Fig. 3D, top-left), we can see that $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is sensitive to various combinations of σ_E and σ_P . Alternatively, both σ_S and σ_V are degenerate with respect to $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ evidenced by the high variability in those dimensions (Fig. 3D, bottom-right). Together, these observations imply a curved path with respect to $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ of 5 Hz, which is indicated by the modes along σ_P (Fig. 3E).

Figure 3E suggests a quadratic relationship in E-population fluctuations and the standard deviation of E- and P-population input; as the square of either σ_E or σ_P increases, the other compensatorily decreases to preserve the level of $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$. This quadratic relationship is preserved at greater level of E-population variability $\mathcal{X}(10 \text{ Hz})$ (Fig. 3E). Indeed, the sum of squares of σ_E and σ_P is larger in $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(10 \text{ Hz}))$ than $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}(5 \text{ Hz}))$ (Fig 3F, $p < 1 \times 10^{-10}$), while the sum of squares of σ_S and σ_V are not significantly different in the two EPI distributions (Fig. 15, $p = .40$), in which parameters were bounded from 0 to 0.5. The strong interactive influence of E- and P-population input variability on excitatory variability is intriguing, since this circuit exhibits a paradoxical effect in the P-population (and no other inhibitory types) (Fig. 15), meaning that the E-population is P-stabilized. Future research may uncover a link between the population of network stabilization and compensatory interactions governing excitatory variability.

EPI revealed the quadratic dependence of excitatory variability on input variability to the E- and P-populations, as well as its independence to input from the other two inhibitory populations. We show that with each neuron-type population added to this E-I model, calculations of excitatory

314 variability with respect to noise parameters become unruly and challenging to work with (see
 315 Section 5.4.4). This emphasizes the value of streamlined methods for gaining understanding about
 316 theoretical models when mathematical analysis becomes onerous or impractical. While EPI can
 317 be used to investigate fundamental aspects of sensory processing, in the next section, we use the
 318 probabilistic tools of EPI to identify and characterize two distinct parametric regimes of a neural
 319 circuit executing a computation, and then relate these insights to behavioral experiments.

320 3.5 EPI identifies two regimes of rapid task switching

321 It has been shown that rats can learn to switch from one behavioral task to the next on randomly
 322 interleaved trials [79], and an important question is what types of neural connectivity allow this
 323 ability. In this experimental setup, rats were explicitly cued on each trial to either orient towards
 324 a visual stimulus in the Pro (P) task or orient away from a visual stimulus in the Anti (A) task
 325 (Fig. 4A). Neural recordings in superior colliculus (SC) exhibited two populations of neurons that
 326 represented task context (Pro or Anti). Furthermore, Pro/Anti neurons in each hemisphere were
 327 strongly correlated with the animal’s decision [57]. These results motivated a model of SC that
 328 is a four-population dynamical system with functionally-defined neuron-types. Here, our goal is
 329 to understand how connectivity in this circuit model governs the ability to perform rapid task
 330 switching: to respond with satisfactory accuracy in both tasks on randomly interleaved trials.

331 In this SC model, there are Pro- and Anti-populations in each hemisphere (left (L) and right
 332 (R)) with activity variables $\mathbf{x} = [x_{LP}, x_{LA}, x_{RP}, x_{RA}]^\top$. The connectivity of these populations is
 333 parameterized by self sW , vertical vW , diagonal dW and horizontal hW connections (Fig. 4B). The
 334 input \mathbf{h} is comprised of a positive cue-dependent signal to the Pro or Anti populations, a positive
 335 stimulus-dependent input to either the Left or Right populations, and a choice-period input to the
 336 entire network (see Section 5.5.1). Model responses are bounded from 0 to 1 as a function ϕ of an
 337 internal variable \mathbf{u}

$$\begin{aligned}\tau \frac{d\mathbf{u}}{dt} &= -\mathbf{u} + W\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h} + d\mathbf{B} \\ \mathbf{x} &= \phi(\mathbf{u}).\end{aligned}\tag{9}$$

338 The model responds to the side with greater Pro neuron activation; e.g. the response is left if
 339 $x_{LP} > x_{RP}$ at the end of the trial. Here, we use EPI to determine the network connectivity
 340 $\mathbf{z} = [sW, vW, dW, hW]^\top$ that produces rapid task switching.
 341 Rapid task switching is formalized mathematically as an emergent property with two statistics:



Figure 4: **A.** Rapid task switching behavioral paradigm (see text). **B.** Model of superior colliculus (SC). Neurons: LP - left pro, RP - right pro, LA - left anti, RA - right anti. Parameters: sW - self, hW - horizontal, vW - vertical, dW - diagonal weights. **C.** The EPI inferred distribution of rapid task switching networks. Red and purple stars indicate modes \mathbf{z}^* of each connectivity regime. Sensitivity vectors $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)$ are shown by arrows. (Bottom-left) EPI predictive distribution of task accuracies. **D.** The connectivity regimes have different responses to perturbation. (Top) Mean and standard error ($N_{\text{test}} = 25$) of accuracy with respect to perturbation along the sensitivity dimension of each mode \mathbf{z}^* . (Middle) Same with perturbation in the dimension of increasing λ_{task} (\mathbf{v}_{task}). (Bottom) Same with perturbation in the dimension of increasing λ_{diag} (\mathbf{v}_{diag}).

accuracy in the Pro task $p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ and Anti task $p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$. We stipulate that accuracy be on average .75 in each task with variance .075²

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{X} : \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}} \begin{bmatrix} p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \end{bmatrix} &= \begin{bmatrix} .75 \\ .75 \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}} \begin{bmatrix} p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \end{bmatrix} &= \begin{bmatrix} .075^2 \\ .075^2 \end{bmatrix}. \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

75% accuracy is a realistic level of performance in each task, and with the chosen variance, inferred models will not exhibit fully random responses (50%), nor perfect performance (100%).

The EPI inferred distribution (Fig. 4C) produces Pro and Anti task accuracies (Fig. 4C, middle-left) consistent with rapid task switching (Equation 10). This parameter distribution has intricate structure, that is not captured well by simple linear correlations (Fig. 17). Specifically, the shape of the EPI distribution changes dramatically on different sides of parameter space. This is most saliently pointed out in the marginal distribution of $sW-hW$ (Fig. 4C top-right), where anticorrelation between sW and hW switches to correlation with decreasing sW . The two regimes produce different types of responses in the Pro and Anti tasks (Fig. SC2). Not only has EPI captured this complicated distribution of connectivities producing rapid task switching, we can query the EPI distribution $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$ to understand these two parametric regimes of SC connectivity.

To distinguish these two regimes, we use the EPI distribution to identify two sets of modes. By fixing hW to different values and doing gradient ascent on $\log q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$, we arrive at two solutions $\mathbf{z}^*(hW_{\text{fixed}}, r)$ where regime $r \in [1, 2]$, and regime 1 is that of greater sW (see Section 5.5.4). As hW_{fixed} increases, the modes coalesce to intermediate parameters reflecting a transition between the two sets of modes (Fig. 20 top). By using EPI to connect these two regimes through this transitional region of parameter space, we can explore what distinguishes the two regimes by stepping from the prototypical connectivity of regime 1 to that of regime 2.

While the connectivities gradually coalesce to the transitional part of parameter space, the sensitivity dimensions $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z})$ are categorically different across regimes (Fig. 20 bottom). The sensitivity dimension identifies the parameter combination which causes the emergent property to diminish with the shortest perturbation. Since the two regimes have different $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z})$, this suggests they have different pathologies in their connectivity. By perturbing connectivity in each regime along the sensitivity dimension, we can get a sense of the differing nature of these pathologies.

When perturbing connectivity along the sensitivity dimension, Pro accuracy monotonically increases in both regimes (Fig. 4D, top-left). However, there is a stark difference between regimes in

370 Anti accuracy. Anti accuracy falls in either direction of \mathbf{v}_1 in regime 1, yet monotonically increases
371 along with Pro accuracy in regime 2 (Fig. 4D, top-right). These distinct pathologies of rapid task
372 switching are caused by distinct connectivity changes ($\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*(r=1))$ vs $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*(r=2))$) and explain
373 the sharp change in local structure of the EPI distribution.

374 To further examine the two regimes, we can perturb \mathbf{z} in the same way along dimensions that inde-
375 pendently change the eigenvalues of the connectivity matrix (which has constant eigenvectors with
376 respect to \mathbf{z}). These eigenvalues λ_{all} , λ_{side} , λ_{task} , and λ_{diag} correspond to connectivity eigenmodes
377 with intuitive roles in processing in this task (Fig. 19A). For example, greater λ_{task} will strengthen
378 internal representations of task, while greater λ_{diag} will amplify dominance of Pro and Anti pairs in
379 opposite hemispheres (Section 5.5.6). Perturbation analyses reveal that decreasing λ_{task} has close
380 to the same effect on Anti accuracy as perturbations along the sensitivity dimension (Fig. 4D,
381 middle). This suggests that there is a carefully tuned strength of task representation in regime
382 1, which if disturbed results in random Anti trial responses. Finally, we recognize that increasing
383 λ_{diag} has opposite effects on Anti accuracy in each regime (Fig. 4D, bottom). In the next section,
384 we build on these mechanistic characterizations of each regime by examining their resilience to
385 optogenetic silencing.

386 **3.6 EPI inferred SC connectivities reproduce results from optogenetic inacti-
387 vation experiments**

388 During the delay period of this task, the circuit must prepare to execute the correct task based
389 on the cue input. Experimental results from Duan et al. found that optogenetic inactivation of
390 SC during the delay period consistently decreased performance in the Anti task, but had no effect
391 on the Pro task (Fig. 5A). This suggests that SC maintains a representation of task throughout
392 the delay period, which is important for correct execution of the Anti task. Network connectivities
393 inferred by EPI exhibited this same effect in simulation at high optogenetic strength $\gamma \in [0, 1]$ (Fig.
394 5B) (see Section 5.5.7). To emphasize, EPI inferred connectivities were only conditioned upon the
395 emergent property of rapid task switching, not on Anti task failure during delay period silencing.

396 The mean increase in Anti error is closest to the experimentally measured value of 7% at $\gamma = 0.675$
397 (Fig. 5B, black dot). At this level of optogenetic strength, only regime 1 exhibits an increase in
398 Anti error with delay period silencing (Fig. 5C, left). The connectivities in regime 2 are thus more
399 resilient in the Anti task to delay period silencing than regime 1. In regime 1, greater λ_{task} and
400 λ_{diag} decrease Anti error (Fig. 5C, right). In other words, these anticorrelations show that stronger

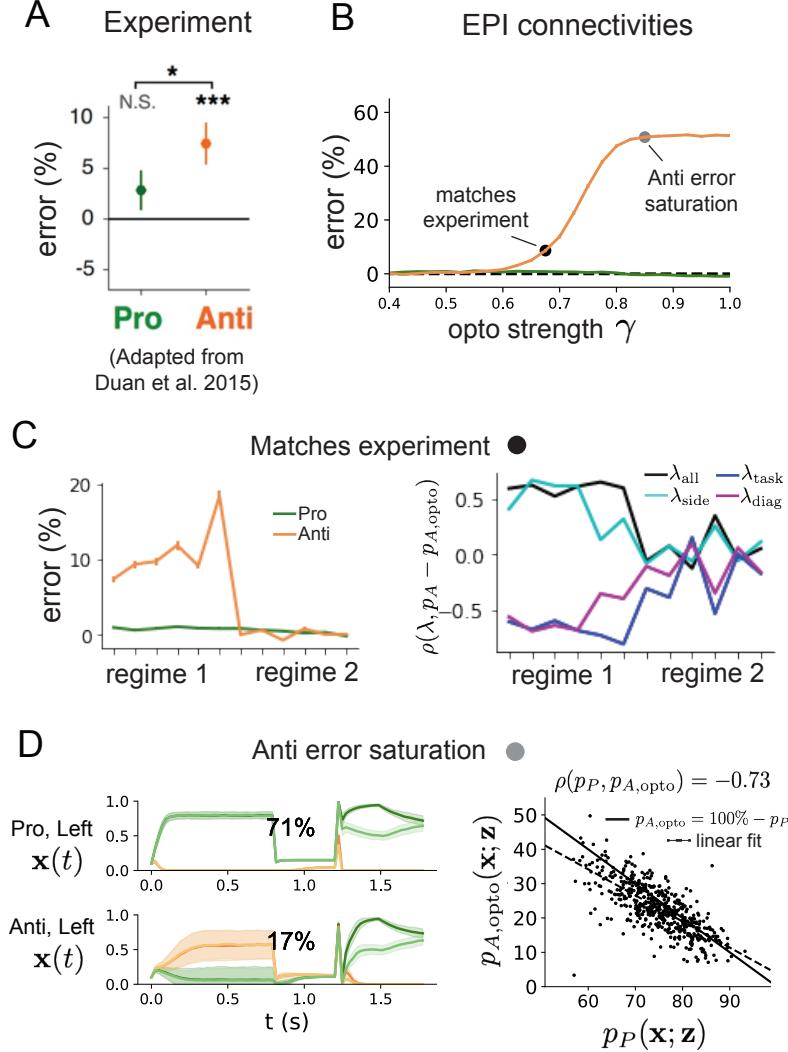


Figure 5: **A.** Experimental effect of delay period silencing on Pro and Anti task accuracy in rats. **B.** Mean and standard error (bars) across EPI distribution of Pro and Anti error induced by delay period inactivation of varying optogenetic strength. **C.** (Left) Mean and standard error of Pro and Anti error from regime 1 to regime 2 at $\gamma = 0.675$. (Right) Correlations of connectivity eigenvalues with Anti error from regime 1 to regime 2 at $\gamma = 0.675$. **D.** (Left) Responses of the SC model at the mode of the EPI distribution to delay period inactivation at $\gamma = 0.85$. (Right) Anti accuracy following delay period inactivation at $\gamma = 0.85$ versus accuracy in the Pro task across connectivities in the EPI distribution.

401 task representations and diagonal amplification make the SC model more resilient to delay period
402 silencing in the Anti task. All correlations of connectivity eigenvalue with Anti error degrade in
403 regime 2, where there is no effect of delay period silencing on Anti error (Fig. 5C, right).

404 At about $\gamma = 0.85$ (Fig. 5B, gray dot), the Anti error saturates, while Pro error remains at zero
405 Following delay period inactivation at this optogenetic strength, there are strong similarities in
406 the responses of Pro and Anti trials during the choice period (Fig. 5D, left). We interpreted
407 these similarities to suggest that delay period inactivation at this saturated level flips the internal
408 representation of task (from Anti to Pro) in the model. This would explain why the Anti error
409 saturates at 50%: the average Anti accuracy in EPI inferred connectivities is 75%, but is 25% when
410 the internal representation is flipped during delay period silencing. This hypothesis prescribes a
411 model of Anti accuracy during delay period silencing of $p_{A,\text{opto}} = 100\% - p_P$, which is fit closely
412 across both regimes of the EPI inferred connectivities (Fig. 5D, right). Similarities between Pro
413 and Anti trial responses were not present at the experiment-matching level of $\gamma = 0.675$ (Fig. 22
414 left) and neither was anti-correlation in p_P and $p_{A,\text{opto}}$ (Fig. 22 right).

415 In summary, the connectivity inferred by EPI to perform rapid task switching replicated results
416 from optogenetic silencing experiments. We found that at levels of optogenetic strength matching
417 experimental levels of Anti error, only one regime actually exhibited the effect. This suggests that
418 one regime is less resilient to optogenetic perturbation, and perhaps more biologically realistic.
419 Finally, we mechanistically characterized the pathology in Anti error that occurs in both regimes
420 when optogenetic strength is increased to high levels. The probabilistic tools afforded by EPI
421 yielded this insight: we identified two regimes and the continuum of connectivities between them
422 by taking gradients of parameter probabilities in the EPI distribution, we identified sensitivity
423 dimensions by measuring the Hessian of the EPI distribution, and we obtained many parameter
424 samples at each step along the continuum (in 7.36 seconds with the EPI distribution rather than
425 4.2 days with brute force methods, see Section 5.5).

426 4 Discussion

427 In neuroscience, machine learning has primarily been used to reveal structure in neural datasets [37].
428 Careful inference procedures are developed for these statistical models allowing precise, quantita-
429 tive reasoning, which clarifies the way data informs beliefs about the model parameters. However,
430 these statistical models often lack resemblance to the underlying biology, making it unclear how

431 to go from the structure revealed by these methods, to the neural mechanisms giving rise to it. In
432 contrast, theoretical neuroscience has focused on careful mechanistic modeling and the production
433 of emergent properties of computation, rather than measuring structure in some noisy observed
434 dataset. In this work, we improve upon parameter inference techniques in theoretical neuroscience
435 with emergent property inference, harnessing deep learning towards parameter inference with re-
436 spect to emergent phenomena in interpretable models of neural computation (see Section 5.1.1).

437 Methodology for statistical inference in mechanistic models of neural circuits has evolved consider-
438 ably in recent years. Early work used rejection sampling techniques [43, 80, 81], but more recently
439 developed methodology employs deep learning to improve efficiency or provide flexible distribution
440 approximations. SNPE [45] and other sequential techniques for inference in mechanistic models
441 developed along with EPI (see Section 5.1.1) have been used for posterior inference with noisy
442 experimental datasets. On the other hand, EPI is a deep inference technique designed to condition
443 directly on emergent properties, such that the parameter distribution only produces the computa-
444 tion of interest. EPI is thus ideally suited for questions in theoretical neuroscience, and we show
445 that it has superior scaling properties to these other inference techniques (see Section 3.3).

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453 **Data availability statement:**

454 The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the
455 corresponding author upon reasonable request.

456 **Code availability statement:**

457 All software written for the current study is available at <https://github.com/cunningham-lab/epi>.

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732 **5 Methods**

733 **5.1 Emergent property inference (EPI)**

734 Determining the combinations of model parameters that can produce observed data or a desired
735 output is a key part of scientific practice. Solving inverse problems is especially important in
736 neuroscience, since we require complex models to describe the complex phenomena of neural com-
737 putations. While much machine learning research has focused on how to find latent structure
738 in large-scale neural datasets, less has focused on inverting theoretical circuit models conditioned
739 upon the emergent phenomena they produce. Here, we introduce a novel method for statistical
740 inference, which finds distributions of parameter solutions that only produce the desired emer-
741 gent property. This method seamlessly handles neural circuit models with stochastic nonlinear
742 dynamical generative processes, which are predominant in theoretical neuroscience.

743 Consider model parameterization \mathbf{z} , which is a collection of scientifically interesting variables that
744 govern the complex simulation of data \mathbf{x} . For example (see Section 3.1), \mathbf{z} may be the electrical
745 conductance parameters of an STG subcircuit, and \mathbf{x} the evolving membrane potentials of the five
746 neurons. In terms of statistical modeling, this circuit model has an intractable likelihood $p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})$,
747 which is predicated by the stochastic differential equations that define the model. Even so, we do
748 not scientifically reason about how \mathbf{z} governs all of \mathbf{x} , but rather specific phenomena that are a
749 function of the data $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$. In the STG example, $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ measures hub neuron frequency from the
750 evolution of \mathbf{x} governed by \mathbf{z} . With EPI, we learn distributions of \mathbf{z} that results in an average and
751 variance of $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$, denoted $\boldsymbol{\mu}$ and σ^2 . We refer to the collection of these statistical moments as an
752 emergent property. Such emergent properties \mathcal{X} are defined through choice of $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ (which may
753 be one or multiple statistics), $\boldsymbol{\mu}$, and σ^2

$$\mathcal{X} : \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = \boldsymbol{\mu}, \text{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = \sigma^2. \quad (11)$$

754 Precisely, the emergent property statistics $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ must have means $\boldsymbol{\mu}$ and variances σ^2 over the
755 EPI distribution of parameters and stochasticity of the data given the parameters. By defining
756 these means and variances over both levels of stochasticity – the inferred distribution and that of
757 the model – there is a fine degree of control over predictions made by the inferred parameters.
758 In EPI, deep probability distributions are optimized to learn the inferred distribution. In deep
759 probability distributions, a simple random variable $\mathbf{z}_0 \sim q_0(\mathbf{z}_0)$ is mapped deterministically via a
760 sequence of deep neural network layers (g_1, \dots, g_l) parameterized by weights and biases $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ to the

761 support of the distribution of interest:

$$\mathbf{z} = g_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}_0) = g_l(\dots g_1(\mathbf{z}_0)) \sim q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}). \quad (12)$$

762 Such deep probability distributions embed the inferred distribution in a deep network. Once opti-
763 mized, this deep network representation has remarkably useful properties: fast sampling, probability
764 evaluations, and also first- and second-order probability gradient evaluations.

765 By choosing a neural circuit model, often represented as a system of differential equations, we
766 implicitly define a model likelihood $p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})$, which may be unknown or intractable for our purposes.
767 Given this model choice and that of an emergent property \mathcal{X} , $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})$ is optimized via the neural
768 network parameters θ to find a maximally entropic distribution q_{θ}^* within the deep variational
769 family \mathcal{Q} producing the emergent property \mathcal{X} :

$$q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X}) = q_{\theta}^*(\mathbf{z}) = \operatorname{argmax}_{q_{\theta} \in \mathcal{Q}} H(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})) \quad (13)$$
$$\text{s.t. } \mathcal{X} : \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = \boldsymbol{\mu}, \operatorname{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = \boldsymbol{\sigma}^2.$$

770 Entropy is chosen as the normative selection principle to match that of variational Bayesian methods
771 (see Section 5.1.5). However, a key difference is that variational Bayesian methods do not constrain
772 the predictions of their inferred parameter distribution. This optimization is executed using the
773 algorithm of Maximum Entropy Flow Networks (MEFNs) [48].

774 In the remainder of Section 5.1, we will explain the finer details and motivation of the EPI method.
775 First, we explain related approaches and what EPI introduces to this domain (Section 5.1.1). Sec-
776 ond, we describe the special class of deep probability distributions used in EPI called normalizing
777 flows (Section 5.1.2). Next, we explain the constrained optimization technique used to solve Equa-
778 tion 13 (Section 5.1.3). Then, we demonstrate the details of this optimization in a toy example
779 (Section 5.1.4). Finally, we establish the known relationship between maximum entropy distribu-
780 tions and exponential families (Section 5.1.5), which is used to explain how EPI can be viewed as
781 a form of variational inference (Section 5.1.6).

782 5.1.1 Related approaches

783 When Bayesian inference problems lack conjugacy, scientists use approximate inference methods like
784 variational inference (VI) [82] and Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) [83, 84]. After optimization,
785 variational methods return a parameterized posterior distribution, which we can analyze. Also, the
786 variational approximating distribution class is often chosen such that it permits fast sampling. In

787 contrast MCMC methods only produce samples from the approximated posterior distribution. No
788 parameterized distribution is estimated, and additional samples are always generated with the same
789 sampling complexity. Inference in models defined by systems of differential has been demonstrated
790 with MCMC [85], although this approach requires tractable likelihoods. Advancements have lever-
791 aged structure in stochastic differential equation models to improve likelihood approximations, thus
792 expanding the domain of applicable models [86].

793 Simulation-based inference [68] is model parameter inference in the absence of a tractable likelihood
794 function. The most prevalent approach to simulation-based inference is approximate Bayesian
795 computation [80], in which satisfactory parameter samples are kept from random prior sampling
796 according to a rejection heuristic. The obtained set of parameters do not have a probabilities,
797 and further insight about the model must be gained from examination of the parameter set and
798 their generated activity. Methodological advances to ABC methods have come through the use
799 of Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC-ABC) [81] and sequential Monte Carlo (SMC-ABC) [43]
800 sampling techniques. SMC-ABC is considered state-of-the-art ABC, yet this approach still struggles
801 to scale in dimensionality (cf. Fig. 2). Furthermore, once a parameter set has been obtained by
802 SMC-ABC from a finite set of particles, the SMC-ABC algorithm must be run again from scratch
803 with a new population of initialized particles to obtain additional samples.

804 For scientific model analysis, we seek a parameter distribution exhibiting the properties of a well-
805 chosen variational approximation: a parametric form conferring analytic calculations, and trivial
806 sampling time. For this reason, ABC and MCMC techniques are unattractive, since they only
807 produce a set of parameter samples and have unchanging sampling rate. EPI infers parameters
808 in mechanistic models using the MEFN [48] algorithm using a deep variational approximation.
809 The deep neural network of EPI defines the parametric form of the distribution approximation.
810 Furthermore, the EPI distribution is constrained to produce an emergent property. In other words,
811 the summary statistics of the posterior predictive distribution are fixed to have certain first and
812 second moments. EPI optimization is enabled using stochastic gradient techniques in the spirit
813 of likelihood-free variational inference [87]. The analytic relationship between EPI and variational
814 inference is explained in Secton 5.1.6.

815 We note that, during our preparation and early presentation of this work [88, 89], another work
816 has arisen with broadly similar goals: bringing statistical inference to mechanistic models of neural
817 circuits ([45, 90, 91]). We are encouraged by this general problem being recognized by others in the
818 community, and we emphasize that these works offer complementary neuroscientific contributions

819 (different theoretical models of focus) and use different technical methodologies (ours is built on
820 our prior work [48], theirs similarly [92]).

821 The method EPI differs from SNPE in some key ways. SNPE belongs to a “sequential” class
822 of recently developed simulation-based inference methods in which two neural networks are used
823 for posterior inference. This first neural network is a deep probability distribution (normalizing
824 flow) used to estimate the posterior $p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})$ (SNPE) or the likelihood $p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})$ (sequential neural
825 likelihood (SNL [46])). A recent advance uses an unconstrained neural network to estimate the
826 likelihood ratio (sequential neural ratio estimation (SNRE [47])). In SNL and SNRE, MCMC
827 sampling techniques are used to obtain samples from the approximated posterior. This contrasts
828 with EPI and SNPE, which use deep probability distributions to model parameters, which facilitates
829 immediate measurements of sample probability, gradient, or Hessian for system analysis. The
830 second neural network in this sequential class of methods is the amortizer. This unconstrained
831 deep network maps data \mathbf{x} (or statistics $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$) or model parameters \mathbf{z} to the weights and biases of
832 the first neural network. These methods are optimized on a conditional density (or ratio) estimation
833 objective. The data used to optimize this objective are generated via an adaptive procedure, in
834 which training data pairs $(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{z}_i)$ become sequentially closer to the true data and posterior.

835 The approximating fidelity of the deep probability distribution in sequential approaches is opti-
836 mized to generalize across the training distribution of the conditioning variable. This generalization
837 property of the sequential methods can reduce the accuracy at the singular posterior of interest.
838 Whereas in EPI, the entire expressivity of the deep probability distribution is dedicated to learning
839 a single distribution as well as possible. Amortization is not possible in EPI, since EPI learns
840 an exponential family distribution parameterized by its mean (see Section 5.1.5). Since EPI dis-
841 tributions are defined by the mean $\boldsymbol{\mu}$ of their statistics, there is the well-known inverse mapping
842 problem of exponential families [93] that prohibits an amortization based approach. However, we
843 have shown that the same two-network architecture of the sequential simulation-based inference
844 methods can be used for amortized inference in intractable exponential family posteriors using their
845 natural parameterization [94].

846 Finally, one important differentiating factor between EPI and sequential simulation-based infer-
847 ence methods is that EPI leverages gradients $\nabla_{\mathbf{z}} f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ during optimization. These gradients can
848 improve convergence time and scalability, as we have shown on an example conditioning low-rank
849 RNN connectivity on the property of stable amplification (see Section 3.3). With EPI, we prove
850 out the suggestion that a deep inference technique can improve efficiency by leveraging these model

gradients when they are tractable. Sequential simulation-based inference techniques may be better suited for scientific problems where $\nabla_{\mathbf{z}} f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is intractable or unavailable: when there is a non-differentiable model or it requires lengthy simulations. However, the sequential simulation-based inference techniques cannot constrain the predictions of the inferred distribution in the manner of EPI.

Structural identifiability analysis involves the measurement of sensitivity and unidentifiabilities in natural models. Around a point, one can measure the Jacobian. One approach that scales well is EAR [95]. A popular efficient approach for systems of ODEs has been neural ODE adjoint [96] and its stochastic adaptation [97]. Casting identifiability as a statistical estimation problem, the profile likelihood can assess via iterated optimization while holding parameters fixed [98]. An exciting recent method is capable of recovering the functional form of such unidentifiabilities away from a point by following degenerate dimensions of the fisher information matrix [99]. Global structural non-identifiabilities can be found for models with polynomial or rational dynamics equations using DAISY [100]. With EPI, we have all the benefits given by a statistical inference method plus the ability to query the first- or second-order gradient of the probability of the inferred distribution at any chosen parameter value. The second-order gradient of the log probability (the Hessian), which is directly afforded by EPI distributions, produces salient information about parametric sensitivity of the emergent property. For example, the eigenvector with most negative eigenvalue of the Hessian shows parametric combinations away from a parameter choice that decrease the in EPI distribution probability the fastest. We refer to this eigenvector as the sensitivity dimension, and it is used to generate scientific insight about a model of superior colliculus connectivity (see Section 3.5).

5.1.2 Deep probability distributions and normalizing flows

Deep probability distributions are comprised of multiple layers of fully connected neural networks (Equation 12). When each neural network layer is restricted to be a bijective function, the sample density can be calculated using the change of variables formula at each layer of the network. For

$\mathbf{z}_i = g_i(\mathbf{z}_{i-1})$,

$$p(\mathbf{z}_i) = p(g_i^{-1}(\mathbf{z}_i)) \left| \det \frac{\partial g_i^{-1}(\mathbf{z}_i)}{\partial \mathbf{z}_i} \right| = p(\mathbf{z}_{i-1}) \left| \det \frac{\partial g_i(\mathbf{z}_{i-1})}{\partial \mathbf{z}_{i-1}} \right|^{-1}. \quad (14)$$

However, this computation has cubic complexity in dimensionality for fully connected layers. By restricting our layers to normalizing flows [49, 101] – bijective functions with fast log determinant Jacobian computations, which confer a fast calculation of the sample log probability. Fast log

880 probability calculation confers efficient optimization of the maximum entropy objective (see Section
881 5.1.3).

882 We use the Real NVP [60] normalizing flow class, because its coupling architecture confers both
883 fast sampling (forward) and fast log probability evaluation (backward). Fast probability evaluation
884 facilitates fast gradient and Hessian evaluation of log probability throughout parameter space.
885 Glow permutations were used in between coupling stages [102]. This is in contrast to autoregressive
886 architectures [61, 103], in which only one of the forward or backward passes can be efficient. In this
887 work, normalizing flows are used as flexible parameter distribution approximations $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})$ having
888 weights and biases θ . We specify the architecture used in each application by the number of Real-
889 NVP affine coupling stages, and the number of neural network layers and units per layer of the
890 conditioning functions.

891 When calculating Hessians of log probabilities in deep probability distributions, it is important to
892 consider the normalizing flow architecture. With autoregressive architectures [61, 103], fast sam-
893 pling and fast log probability evaluations are mutually exclusive. That makes these architectures
894 undesirable for EPI, where efficient sampling is important for optimization, and log probability
895 evaluation speed predicates the efficiency of gradient and Hessian calculations. With Real NVP
896 coupling architectures, we get both fast sampling and fast Hessians making both optimization and
897 scientific analysis efficient.

898 5.1.3 Augmented Lagrangian optimization

899 To optimize $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})$ in Equation 13, the constrained maximum entropy optimization is executed using
900 the augmented Lagrangian method. The following objective is minimized:

$$L(\theta; \eta_{\text{opt}}, c) = -H(q_{\theta}) + \eta_{\text{opt}}^T R(\theta) + \frac{c}{2} \|R(\theta)\|^2 \quad (15)$$

901 where average constraint violations $R(\theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\theta}} [\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{z})} [T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - \mu_{\text{opt}}]]$, $\eta_{\text{opt}} \in \mathbb{R}^m$ are the
902 Lagrange multipliers where $m = |\mu_{\text{opt}}| = |T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})| = 2|f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})|$, and c is the penalty coefficient. The
903 sufficient statistics $T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ and mean parameter μ_{opt} are determined by the means μ and variances
904 σ^2 of emergent property statistics $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ defined in Equation 13 (see Section 5.1.6). Specifically,
905 $T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is a concatenation of the first and second moments, μ_{opt} is a concatenation of μ and σ^2
906 (see section 5.1.5), and the Lagrange multipliers are closely related to the natural parameters η of
907 exponential families (see Section 5.1.5). Weights and biases θ of the deep probability distribution
908 are optimized according to Equation 15 using the Adam optimizer with learning rate 10^{-3} [104].

909 The gradient with respect to entropy $H(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}))$ can be expressed using the reparameterization trick
 910 as an expectation of the negative log density of parameter samples \mathbf{z} over the randomness in the
 911 parameterless initial distribution $q_0(\mathbf{z}_0)$:

$$H(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})) = \int -q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}) \log(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})) d\mathbf{z} = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\theta}} [-\log(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}))] = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}_0 \sim q_0} [-\log(q_{\theta}(g_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}_0)))]. \quad (16)$$

912 Thus, the gradient of the entropy of the deep probability distribution can be estimated as an
 913 average with respect to the base distribution \mathbf{z}_0 :

$$\nabla_{\theta} H(q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}_0 \sim q_0} [-\nabla_{\theta} \log(q_{\theta}(g_{\theta}(\mathbf{z}_0)))]. \quad (17)$$

914 The lagrangian parameters η_{opt} are initialized to zero and adapted following each augmented
 915 Lagrangian epoch, which is a period of optimization with fixed (η_{opt}, c) for a given number of
 916 stochastic optimization iterations. A low value of c is used initially, and conditionally increased
 917 after each epoch based on constraint error reduction. The penalty coefficient is updated based
 918 on the result of a hypothesis test regarding the reduction in constraint violation. The p-value of
 919 $\mathbb{E}[|R(\theta_{k+1})|] > \gamma \mathbb{E}[|R(\theta_k)|]$ is computed, and c_{k+1} is updated to βc_k with probability $1 - p$. The
 920 other update rule is $\eta_{\text{opt},k+1} = \eta_{\text{opt},k} + c_k \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (T(\mathbf{x}^{(i)}) - \mu_{\text{opt}})$ given a batch size n . Throughout
 921 the study, $\gamma = 0.25$, while β was chosen to be either 2 or 4. The batch size of EPI also varied
 922 according to application.

923 The intention is that c and η_{opt} start at values encouraging entropic growth early in optimization.
 924 With each training epoch in which the update rule for c is invoked by unsatisfactory constraint
 925 error reduction, the constraint satisfaction terms are increasingly weighted, resulting in a decreased
 926 entropy. This encourages the discovery of suitable regions of parameter space, and the subsequent
 927 refinement of the distribution to produce the emergent property (see example in Section 5.1.4). The
 928 momentum parameters of the Adam optimizer are reset at the end of each augmented Lagrangian
 929 epoch.

930 Rather than starting optimization from some θ drawn from a randomized distribution, we found
 931 that initializing $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})$ to approximate an isotropic Gaussian distribution conferred more stable, con-
 932 sistent optimization. The parameters of the Gaussian initialization were chosen on an applica-
 933 specific basis. Throughout the study, we chose isotropic Gaussian initializations with mean μ_{init}
 934 at the center of the distribution support and some standard deviation σ_{init} , except for one case,
 935 where an initialization informed by random search was used (see Section 5.2).

936 To assess whether the EPI distribution $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z})$ produces the emergent property, we assess whether
 937 each individual constraint on the means and variances of $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is satisfied. We consider the EPI

938 to have converged when a null hypothesis test of constraint violations $R(\boldsymbol{\theta})_i$ being zero is accepted
 939 for all constraints $i \in \{1, \dots, m\}$ at a significance threshold $\alpha = 0.05$. This significance threshold is
 940 adjusted through Bonferroni correction according to the number of constraints m . The p-values for
 941 each constraint are calculated according to a two-tailed nonparametric test, where 200 estimations
 942 of the sample mean $R(\boldsymbol{\theta})^i$ are made using N_{test} samples of $\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z})$ at the end of the augmented
 943 Lagrangian epoch.

944 When assessing the suitability of EPI for a particular modeling question, there are some important
 945 technical considerations. First and foremost, as in any optimization problem, the defined emergent
 946 property should always be appropriately conditioned (constraints should not have wildly different
 947 units). Furthermore, if the program is underconstrained (not enough constraints), the distribution
 948 grows (in entropy) unstably unless mapped to a finite support. If overconstrained, there is no pa-
 949 rameter set producing the emergent property, and EPI optimization will fail (appropriately). Next,
 950 one should consider the computational cost of the gradient calculations. In the best circumstance,
 951 there is a simple, closed form expression (e.g. Section 5.3) for the emergent property statistic given
 952 the model parameters. On the other end of the spectrum, many forward simulation iterations
 953 may be required before a high quality measurement of the emergent property statistic is available
 954 (e.g. Section 5.2). In such cases, backpropagating gradients through the SDE evolution will be
 955 expensive.

956 5.1.4 Example: 2D LDS

957 To gain intuition for EPI, consider a two-dimensional linear dynamical system (2D LDS) model
 958 (Fig. S1A):

$$\tau \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = A\mathbf{x} \quad (18)$$

959 with

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} a_1 & a_2 \\ a_3 & a_4 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (19)$$

960 To run EPI with the dynamics matrix elements as the free parameters $\mathbf{z} = [a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4]$ (fix-
 961 ing $\tau = 1$), the emergent property statistics $T(\mathbf{x})$ were chosen to contain the first and second
 962 moments of the oscillatory frequency, $\frac{\text{imag}(\lambda_1)}{2\pi}$, and the growth/decay factor, $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$, of the oscil-
 963 lating system. λ_1 is the eigenvalue of greatest real part when the imaginary component is zero, and
 964 alternatively of positive imaginary component when the eigenvalues are complex conjugate pairs.
 965 To learn the distribution of real entries of A that produce a band of oscillating systems around

966 1Hz, we formalized this emergent property as $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$ having mean zero with variance 0.25^2 , and
 967 the oscillation frequency $2\pi\text{imag}(\lambda_1)$ having mean $\omega = 1$ Hz with variance $(0.1\text{Hz})^2$:

$$\mathbb{E}[T(\mathbf{x})] \triangleq \mathbb{E} \begin{bmatrix} \text{real}(\lambda_1) \\ \text{imag}(\lambda_1) \\ (\text{real}(\lambda_1) - 0)^2 \\ (\text{imag}(\lambda_1) - 2\pi\omega)^2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.0 \\ 2\pi\omega \\ 0.25^2 \\ (2\pi 0.1)^2 \end{bmatrix} \triangleq \boldsymbol{\mu}. \quad (20)$$

968

969 Unlike the models we presented in the main text, this model admits an analytical form for the
 970 mean emergent property statistics given parameter \mathbf{z} , since the eigenvalues can be calculated using
 971 the quadratic formula:

$$\lambda = \frac{\left(\frac{a_1+a_4}{\tau}\right) \pm \sqrt{\left(\frac{a_1+a_4}{\tau}\right)^2 + 4\left(\frac{a_2a_3-a_1a_4}{\tau}\right)}}{2}. \quad (21)$$

972 Importantly, even though $\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{z})}[T(\mathbf{x})]$ is calculable directly via a closed form function and
 973 does not require simulation, we cannot derive the distribution $q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}^*$ directly. This fact is due to the
 974 formally hard problem of the backward mapping: finding the natural parameters η from the mean
 975 parameters $\boldsymbol{\mu}$ of an exponential family distribution [93]. Instead, we used EPI to approximate this
 976 distribution (Fig. S1B). We used a real-NVP normalizing flow architecture with four masks, two
 977 neural network layers of 15 units per mask, with batch normalization momentum 0.99, mapped
 978 onto a support of $z_i \in [-10, 10]$. (see Section 5.1.2).

979 Even this relatively simple system has nontrivial (though intuitively sensible) structure in the
 980 parameter distribution. To validate our method, we analytically derived the contours of the prob-
 981 ability density from the emergent property statistics and values. In the a_1 - a_4 plane, the black
 982 line at $\text{real}(\lambda_1) = \frac{a_1+a_4}{2} = 0$, dotted black line at the standard deviation $\text{real}(\lambda_1) = \frac{a_1+a_4}{2} \pm 0.25$,
 983 and the dotted gray line at twice the standard deviation $\text{real}(\lambda_1) = \frac{a_1+a_4}{2} \pm 0.5$ follow the contour
 984 of probability density of the samples (Fig. S2A). The distribution precisely reflects the desired
 985 statistical constraints and model degeneracy in the sum of a_1 and a_4 . Intuitively, the parameters
 986 equivalent with respect to emergent property statistic $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$ have similar log densities.

987 To explain the bimodality of the EPI distribution, we examined the imaginary component of λ_1 .

988 When $\text{real}(\lambda_1) = \frac{a_1+a_4}{2} = 0$, we have

$$\text{imag}(\lambda_1) = \begin{cases} \sqrt{\frac{a_1a_4-a_2a_3}{\tau}}, & \text{if } a_1a_4 < a_2a_3 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}. \quad (22)$$

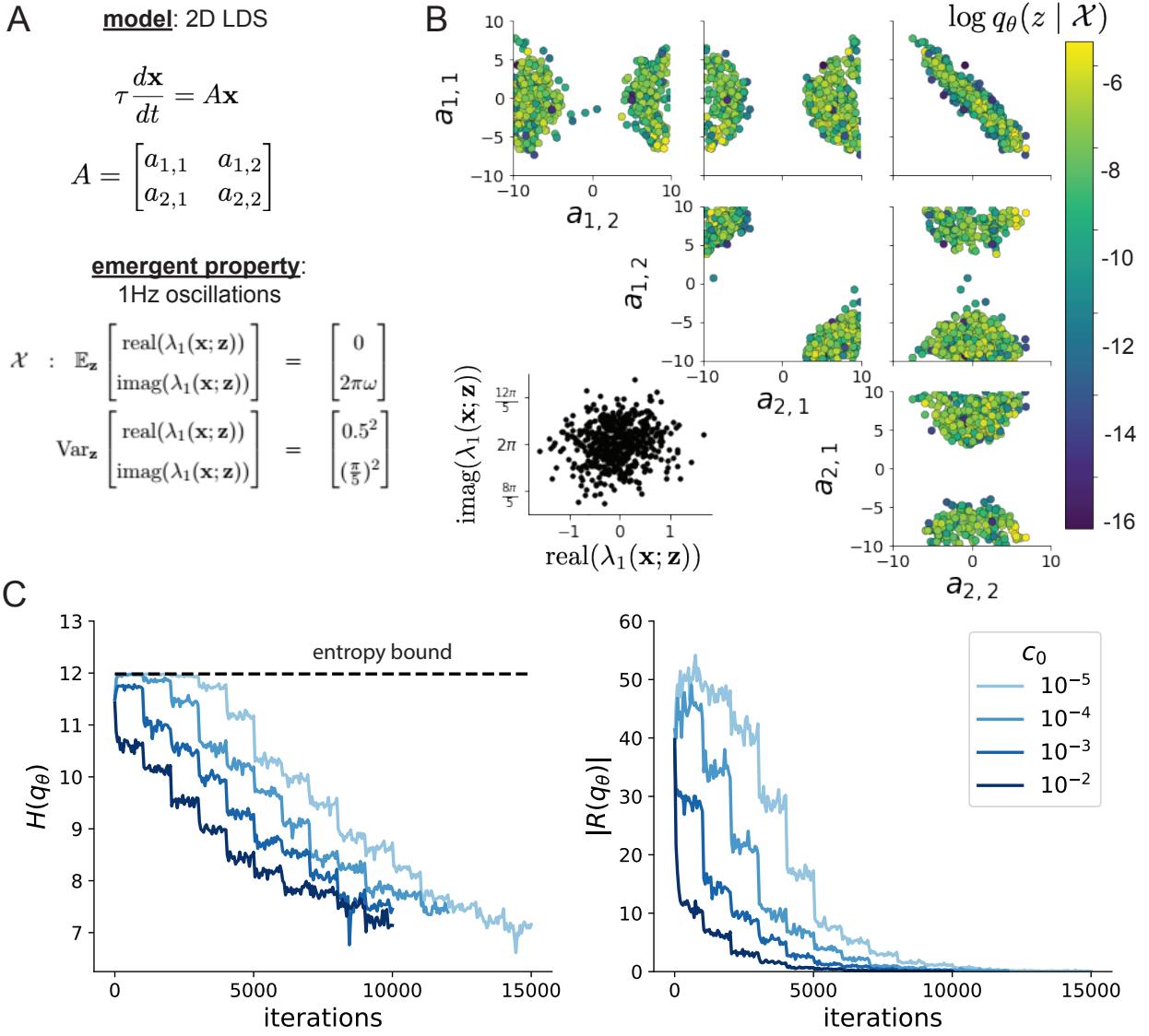


Figure 6: (LDS1): **A.** Two-dimensional linear dynamical system model, where real entries of the dynamics matrix A are the parameters. **B.** The EPI distribution for a two-dimensional linear dynamical system with $\tau = 1$ that produces an average of 1Hz oscillations with some small amount of variance. Dashed lines indicate the parameter axes. **C.** Entropy throughout the optimization. At the beginning of each augmented Lagrangian epoch (2,000 iterations), the entropy dipped due to the shifted optimization manifold where emergent property constraint satisfaction is increasingly weighted. **D.** Emergent property moments throughout optimization. At the beginning of each augmented Lagrangian epoch, the emergent property moments adjust closer to their constraints.

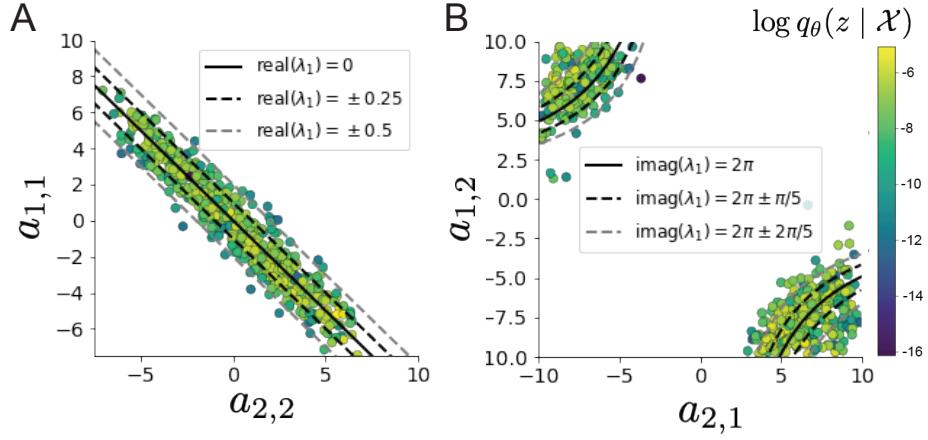


Figure 7: (LDS2): **A.** Probability contours in the a_1 - a_4 plane were derived from the relationship to emergent property statistic of growth/decay factor $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$. **B.** Probability contours in the a_2 - a_3 plane were derived from the emergent property statistic of oscillation frequency $2\pi\text{imag}(\lambda_1)$.

When $\tau = 1$ and $a_1a_4 > a_2a_3$ (center of distribution above), we have the following equation for the other two dimensions:

$$\text{imag}(\lambda_1)^2 = a_1a_4 - a_2a_3 \quad (23)$$

Since we constrained $\mathbb{E}_{z \sim q_\theta} [\text{imag}(\lambda)] = 2\pi$ (with $\omega = 1$), we can plot contours of the equation $\text{imag}(\lambda_1)^2 = a_1a_4 - a_2a_3 = (2\pi)^2$ for various a_1a_4 (Fig. S2B). With $\sigma_{1,4} = \mathbb{E}_{z \sim q_\theta} (|a_1a_4 - E_{q_\theta}[a_1a_4]|)$, we show the contours as $a_1a_4 = 0$ (black), $a_1a_4 = -\sigma_{1,4}$ (black dotted), and $a_1a_4 = -2\sigma_{1,4}$ (grey dotted). This validates the curved structure of the inferred distribution learned through EPI. We took steps in negative standard deviation of a_1a_4 (dotted and gray lines), since there are few positive values a_1a_4 in the learned distribution. Subtler combinations of model and emergent property will have more complexity, further motivating the use of EPI for understanding these systems. As we expect, the distribution results in samples of two-dimensional linear systems oscillating near 1Hz (Fig. S3).

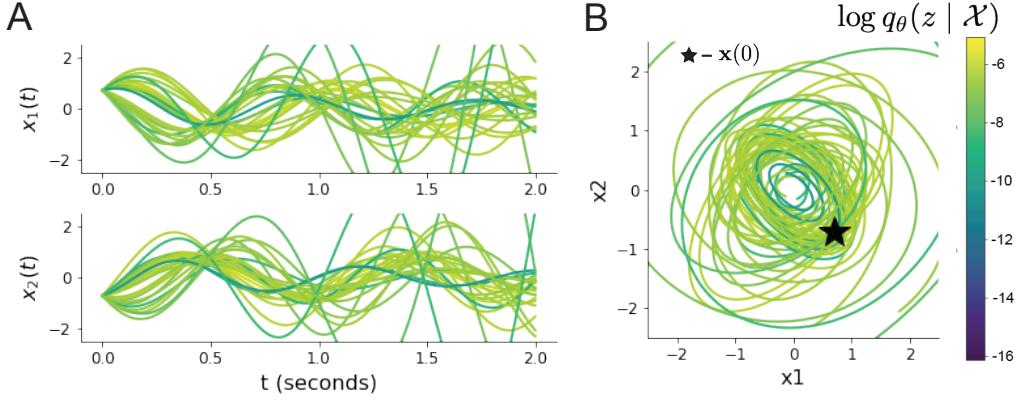


Figure 8: (LDS3): Sampled dynamical systems $\mathbf{z} \sim q_\theta(\mathbf{z})$ and their simulated activity from $\mathbf{x}(0) = [\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}, -\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}]$ colored by log probability. **A.** Each dimension of the simulated trajectories throughout time. **B.** The simulated trajectories in phase space.

1000 5.1.5 Maximum entropy distributions and exponential families

1001 EPI is a maximum entropy distribution, which have fundamental links to exponential family dis-
 1002 tributions. A maximum entropy distribution of form:

$$p^*(\mathbf{z}) = \underset{p \in \mathcal{P}}{\operatorname{argmax}} H(p(\mathbf{z})) \quad (24)$$

s.t. $\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim p} [T(\mathbf{z})] = \boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt.}}$

1003 will have probability density in the exponential family:

$$p^*(\mathbf{z}) \propto \exp(\boldsymbol{\eta}^\top T(\mathbf{z})). \quad (25)$$

1004 The mappings between the mean parameterization $\boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt}}$ and the natural parameterization $\boldsymbol{\eta}$ are
 1005 formally hard to identify except in special cases [93].

1006 In EPI, emergent properties are defined as statistics having a fixed mean and variance as in Equation
 1007 4. The variance constraint is a second moment constraint on $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$

$$\operatorname{Var}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} \left[(f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - \boldsymbol{\mu})^2 \right] \quad (26)$$

1008 As a general maximum entropy distribution (Equation 24), the sufficient statistics vector contains
 1009 both first and second order moments of $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$

$$T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \begin{bmatrix} f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ (f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - \boldsymbol{\mu})^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (27)$$

1010 which are constrained to the chosen means and variances

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt}} = \begin{bmatrix} \boldsymbol{\mu} \\ \sigma^2 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (28)$$

1011 5.1.6 EPI as variational inference

1012 In Bayesian inference a prior belief about model parameters \mathbf{z} is stated in a prior distribution $p(\mathbf{z})$,
 1013 and the statistical model capturing the effect of \mathbf{z} on observed data points \mathbf{x} is formalized in the
 1014 likelihood distribution $p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})$. In Bayesian inference, we obtain a posterior distribution $p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})$,
 1015 which captures how the data inform our knowledge of model parameters using Bayes' rule:

$$p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x}) = \frac{p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})p(\mathbf{z})}{p(\mathbf{x})}. \quad (29)$$

1016 The posterior distribution is analytically available when the prior is conjugate with the likelihood.
 1017 However, conjugacy is rare in practice, and alternative methods, such as variational inference [82],
 1018 are utilized.

1019 In variational inference, a posterior approximation $q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}^*$ is chosen from within some variational family
 1020 \mathcal{Q}

$$q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}^*(\mathbf{z}) = \underset{q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}} \in \mathcal{Q}}{\operatorname{argmin}} KL(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z}) || p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})). \quad (30)$$

1021 The KL divergence can be written in terms of entropy of the variational approximation:

$$KL(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z}) || p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}} [\log(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}(\mathbf{z}))] - \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}} [\log(p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x}))] \quad (31)$$

$$= -H(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}) - \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}} [\log(p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})) + \log(p(\mathbf{z})) - \log(p(\mathbf{x}))] \quad (32)$$

1023 Since the marginal distribution of the data $p(\mathbf{x})$ (or ‘evidence’) is independent of $\boldsymbol{\theta}$, variational
 1024 inference is executed by optimizing the remaining expression. This is usually framed as maximizing
 1025 the evidence lower bound (ELBO)

$$\underset{q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}} \in \mathcal{Q}}{\operatorname{argmin}} KL(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}} || p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})) = \underset{q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}} \in \mathcal{Q}}{\operatorname{argmax}} H(q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}) + \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\boldsymbol{\theta}}} [\log(p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z})) + \log(p(\mathbf{z}))]. \quad (33)$$

1026 Now, consider the setting where we have chosen a uniform prior, and stipulate a mean-field gaussian
 1027 likelihood on a chosen statistic of the data $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$

$$p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z}) = \mathcal{N}(f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) | \boldsymbol{\mu}_f, \Sigma_f), \quad (34)$$

1028 where $\Sigma_f = \text{diag}(\boldsymbol{\sigma}_f^2)$. The log likelihood is then proportional to a dot product of the natural
 1029 parameter of this mean-field gaussian distribution and the first and second moment statistics.

$$\log p(\mathbf{x} | \mathbf{z}) \propto \boldsymbol{\eta}_f^\top T(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}), \quad (35)$$

1030 where

$$\boldsymbol{\eta}_f = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\boldsymbol{\mu}_f}{\sigma_f^2} \\ \frac{-1}{2\sigma_f^2} \end{bmatrix}, \text{ and} \quad (36)$$

1031

$$T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \begin{bmatrix} f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ (f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - \boldsymbol{\mu}_f)^2 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (37)$$

1032 The variational objective is then

$$\operatorname{argmax}_{q_{\theta} \in Q} H(q_{\theta}) + \boldsymbol{\eta}_f^\top \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z} \sim q_{\theta}} [T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] \quad (38)$$

1033 Comparing this to the Lagrangian objective (without augmentation) of EPI, we see they are the

1034 same

$$\begin{aligned} q_{\theta}^*(\mathbf{z}) &= \operatorname{argmin}_{q_{\theta} \in Q} -H(q_{\theta}) + \boldsymbol{\eta}_{\text{opt}}^\top (\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] - \boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt}}) \\ &= \operatorname{argmin}_{q_{\theta} \in Q} -H(q_{\theta}) + \boldsymbol{\eta}_{\text{opt}}^\top \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})]. \end{aligned} \quad (39)$$

1035 where $T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ consists of the first and second moments of the emergent property statistic $f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$
 1036 (Equation 27). Thus, EPI is implicitly executing variational inference with a uniform prior and a
 1037 mean-field gaussian likelihood on the emergent property statistics. The mean and variances of the
 1038 mean-field gaussian likelihood are predicated by $\boldsymbol{\eta}_{\text{opt}}$ (Equations 36 and 38), which is adapted after
 1039 each EPI optimization epoch based on \mathcal{X} (see Section 5.1.3). In EPI, the inferred distribution is
 1040 not conditioned on a finite dataset as in variational inference, but rather the emergent property
 1041 \mathcal{X} dictates the likelihood parameterization such that the inferred distribution will produce the
 1042 emergent property. As a note, we could not simply choose $\boldsymbol{\mu}_f$ and σ_f directly from the outset, since
 1043 we do not know which of these choices will produce the emergent property \mathcal{X} , which necessitates
 1044 the EPI optimization routine that adapts $\boldsymbol{\eta}_{\text{opt}}$. Accordingly, we replace the notation of $p(\mathbf{z} | \mathbf{x})$
 1045 with $p(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$ conceptualizing an inferred distribution that obeys emergent property \mathcal{X} (see Section
 1046 5.1).

1047 5.2 Stomatogastric ganglion

1048 In Section 3.1 and 3.2, we used EPI to infer conductance parameters in a model of the stomatogastric
 1049 ganglion (STG) [51]. This 5-neuron circuit model represents two subcircuits: that generating the
 1050 pyloric rhythm (fast population) and that generating the gastric mill rhythm (slow population).
 1051 The additional neuron (the IC neuron of the STG) receives inhibitory synaptic input from both
 1052 subcircuits, and can couple to either rhythm dependent on modulatory conditions. There is also

1053 a parametric regime in which this neuron fires at an intermediate frequency between that of the
 1054 fast and slow populations [51], which we infer with EPI as a motivational example. This model
 1055 is not to be confused with an STG subcircuit model of the pyloric rhythm [69], which has been
 1056 statistically inferred in other studies [12, 45].

1057 **5.2.1 STG model**

1058 We analyze how the parameters $\mathbf{z} = [g_{el}, g_{synA}]$ govern the emergent phenomena of intermediate
 1059 hub frequency in a model of the stomatogastric ganglion (STG) [51] shown in Figure 1A with
 1060 activity $\mathbf{x} = [x_{f1}, x_{f2}, x_{hub}, x_{s1}, x_{s2}]$, using the same hyperparameter choices as Gutierrez et al.
 1061 Each neuron's membrane potential $x_\alpha(t)$ for $\alpha \in \{f1, f2, hub, s1, s2\}$ is the solution of the following
 1062 stochastic differential equation:

$$C_m \frac{dx_\alpha}{dt} = -[h_{leak}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + h_{Ca}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + h_K(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + h_{hyp}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + h_{elec}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + h_{syn}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] + dB. \quad (40)$$

1063 The input current of each neuron is the sum of the leak, calcium, potassium, hyperpolarization,
 1064 electrical and synaptic currents. Each current component is a function of all membrane potentials
 1065 and the conductance parameters \mathbf{z} . Finally, we include gaussian noise dB to the model of Gutierrez
 1066 et al. so that the model stochastic, although this is not required by EPI.

1067 The capacitance of the cell membrane was set to $C_m = 1nF$. Specifically, the currents are the
 1068 difference in the neuron's membrane potential and that current type's reversal potential multiplied
 1069 by a conductance:

$$h_{leak}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_{leak}(x_\alpha - V_{leak}) \quad (41)$$

$$h_{elec}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_{el}(x_\alpha^{post} - x_\alpha^{pre}) \quad (42)$$

$$h_{syn}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_{syn}S_\infty^{pre}(x_\alpha^{post} - V_{syn}) \quad (43)$$

$$h_{Ca}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_{Ca}M_\infty(x_\alpha - V_{Ca}) \quad (44)$$

$$h_K(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_KN(x_\alpha - V_K) \quad (45)$$

$$h_{hyp}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = g_hH(x_\alpha - V_{hyp}). \quad (46)$$

1075 The reversal potentials were set to $V_{leak} = -40mV$, $V_{Ca} = 100mV$, $V_K = -80mV$, $V_{hyp} = -20mV$,
 1076 and $V_{syn} = -75mV$. The other conductance parameters were fixed to $g_{leak} = 1 \times 10^{-4}\mu S$. g_{Ca} ,
 1077 g_K , and g_{hyp} had different values based on fast, intermediate (hub) or slow neuron. The fast
 1078 conductances had values $g_{Ca} = 1.9 \times 10^{-2}$, $g_K = 3.9 \times 10^{-2}$, and $g_{hyp} = 2.5 \times 10^{-2}$. The intermediate

conductances had values $g_{Ca} = 1.7 \times 10^{-2}$, $g_K = 1.9 \times 10^{-2}$, and $g_{hyp} = 8.0 \times 10^{-3}$. Finally, the slow conductances had values $g_{Ca} = 8.5 \times 10^{-3}$, $g_K = 1.5 \times 10^{-2}$, and $g_{hyp} = 1.0 \times 10^{-2}$.

Furthermore, the Calcium, Potassium, and hyperpolarization channels have time-dependent gating dynamics dependent on steady-state gating variables M_∞ , N_∞ and H_∞ , respectively:

$$M_\infty = 0.5 \left(1 + \tanh \left(\frac{x_\alpha - v_1}{v_2} \right) \right) \quad (47)$$

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = \lambda_N (N_\infty - N) \quad (48)$$

$$N_\infty = 0.5 \left(1 + \tanh \left(\frac{x_\alpha - v_3}{v_4} \right) \right) \quad (49)$$

$$\lambda_N = \phi_N \cosh \left(\frac{x_\alpha - v_3}{2v_4} \right) \quad (50)$$

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = \frac{(H_\infty - H)}{\tau_h} \quad (51)$$

$$H_\infty = \frac{1}{1 + \exp \left(\frac{x_\alpha + v_5}{v_6} \right)} \quad (52)$$

$$\tau_h = 272 - \left(\frac{-1499}{1 + \exp \left(\frac{-x_\alpha + v_7}{v_8} \right)} \right). \quad (53)$$

where we set $v_1 = 0mV$, $v_2 = 20mV$, $v_3 = 0mV$, $v_4 = 15mV$, $v_5 = 78.3mV$, $v_6 = 10.5mV$, $v_7 = -42.2mV$, $v_8 = 87.3mV$, $v_9 = 5mV$, and $v_{th} = -25mV$.

Finally, there is a synaptic gating variable as well:

$$S_\infty = \frac{1}{1 + \exp \left(\frac{v_{th} - x_\alpha}{v_9} \right)}. \quad (54)$$

When the dynamic gating variables are considered, this is actually a 15-dimensional nonlinear dynamical system. The gaussian noise $d\mathbf{B}$ has variance $(1 \times 10^{-12})^2$ A², and introduces variability in frequency at each parameterization \mathbf{z} .

5.2.2 Hub frequency calculation

In order to measure the frequency of the hub neuron during EPI, the STG model was simulated for $T = 300$ time steps of $dt = 25\text{ms}$. The chosen dt and T were the most computationally convenient choices yielding accurate frequency measurement. We used a basis of complex exponentials with frequencies from 0.0-1.0 Hz at 0.01Hz resolution to measure frequency from simulated time series

$$\Phi = [0.0, 0.01, \dots, 1.0]^\top \dots \quad (55)$$

1100 To measure spiking frequency, we processed simulated membrane potentials with a relu (spike
 1101 extraction) and low-pass filter with averaging window of size 20, then took the frequency with the
 1102 maximum absolute value of the complex exponential basis coefficients of the processed time-series.
 1103 The first 20 temporal samples of the simulation are ignored to account for initial transients.
 1104 To differentiate through the maximum frequency identification, we used a soft-argmax Let $X_\alpha \in$
 1105 $\mathcal{C}^{|\Phi|}$ be the complex exponential filter bank dot products with the signal $x_\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^N$, where $\alpha \in$
 1106 $\{f1, f2, \text{hub}, s1, s2\}$. The soft-argmax is then calculated using temperature parameter $\beta = 100$

$$\psi_\alpha = \text{softmax}(\beta |X_\alpha| \odot i), \quad (56)$$

1107 where $i = [0, 1, \dots, 100]$. The frequency is then calculated as

$$\omega_\alpha = 0.01\psi_\alpha \text{Hz}. \quad (57)$$

1108 Intermediate hub frequency, like all other emergent properties in this work, is defined by the mean
 1109 and variance of the emergent property statistics. In this case, we have one statistic, hub neuron
 1110 frequency, where the mean was chosen to be 0.55Hz, and variance was chosen to be $(0.025\text{Hz})^2$
 1111 (Equation 4).

1112 5.2.3 EPI details for the STG model

1113 As a maximum entropy distribution, $T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is comprised of both these first and second moments
 1114 of the hub neuron frequency (as in Equations 27 and 28)

$$T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \begin{bmatrix} \omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ (\omega_{\text{hub}}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - 0.55)^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (58)$$

1115

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt}} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.55 \\ 0.025^2 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (59)$$

1116 Throughout optimization, the augmented Lagrangian parameters η and c , were updated after each
 1117 epoch of 5,000 iterations(see Section 5.1.3). The optimization converged after five epochs (Fig. S4).

1118 For EPI in Fig 1E, we used a real NVP architecture with three Real NVP coupling layers and two-
 1119 layer neural networks of 25 units per layer. The normalizing flow architecture mapped $\mathbf{z}_0 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, I)$
 1120 to a support of $\mathbf{z} = [g_{\text{el}}, g_{\text{synA}}] \in [4, 8] \times [0.01, 4]$, initialized to a gaussian approximation of samples
 1121 returned by a preliminary ABC search. We did not include $g_{\text{synA}} < 0.01$, for numerical stability.
 1122 EPI optimization was run using 5 different random seeds for architecture initialization $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ with an

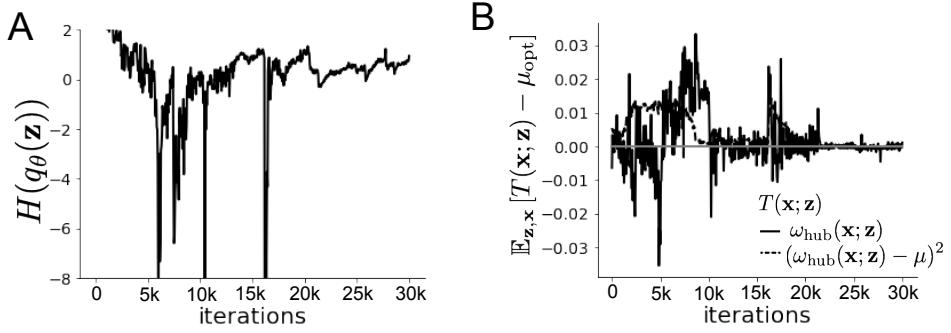


Figure 9: (STG1): EPI optimization of the STG model producing network syncing. **A.** Entropy throughout optimization. **B.** The emergent property statistic means and variances converge to their constraints at 25,000 iterations following the fifth augmented Lagrangian epoch.

1123 augmented Lagrangian coefficient of $c_0 = 10^5$, a batch size $n = 400$, and $\beta = 2$. The architecture
 1124 converged with criteria $N_{\text{test}} = 100$.

1125 5.2.4 Hessian sensitivity vectors

1126 To quantify the second-order structure of the EPI distribution, we evaluated the Hessian of the log
 1127 probability $\frac{\partial^2 \log q(\mathbf{z}|\mathcal{X})}{\partial \mathbf{z} \partial \mathbf{z}^T}$. The eigenvector of this Hessian with most negative eigenvalue is defined as
 1128 the sensitivity dimension \mathbf{v}_1 , and all subsequent eigenvectors are ordered by increasing eigenvalue.
 1129 These eigenvalues are quantifications of how fast the emergent property deteriorates via the param-
 1130 eter combination of their associated eigenvector. In Figure 1D, the sensitivity dimension v_1 (solid)
 1131 and the second eigenvector of the Hessian v_2 (dashed) are shown evaluated at the mode of the
 1132 distribution. Since the Hessian eigenvectors have sign degeneracy, the visualized directions in 2-D
 1133 parameter space were chosen to have positive g_{synA} . The length of the arrows is inversely propor-
 1134 tional to the square root of the absolute value of their eigenvalues $\lambda_1 = -10.7$ and $\lambda_2 = -3.22$. For
 1135 the same magnitude perturbation away from the mode, intermediate hub frequency only diminishes
 1136 along the sensitivity dimension \mathbf{v}_1 (Fig. 1E-F).

₁₁₃₇ **5.3 Scaling EPI for stable amplification in RNNs**

₁₁₃₈ **5.3.1 Rank-2 RNN model**

₁₁₃₉ We examined the scaling properties of EPI by learning connectivities of RNNs of increasing size
₁₁₄₀ that exhibit stable amplification. Rank-2 RNN connectivity was modeled as $W = UV^\top$, where
₁₁₄₁ $U = [\mathbf{u}_1 \ \mathbf{u}_2] + g\chi^{(W)}$, $V = [\mathbf{v}_1 \ \mathbf{v}_2] + g\chi^{(V)}$, and $\chi_{i,j}^{(W)}, \chi_{i,j}^{(V)} \sim \mathcal{N}(0, 1)$. This RNN model has
₁₁₄₂ dynamics

$$\tau \dot{\mathbf{x}} = -\mathbf{x} + W\mathbf{x}. \quad (60)$$

₁₁₄₃ In this analysis, we inferred connectivity parameterizations $\mathbf{z} = [\mathbf{u}_1^\top, \mathbf{u}_2^\top, \mathbf{v}_1^\top, \mathbf{v}_2^\top]^\top \in [-1, 1]^{(4N)}$
₁₁₄₄ that produced stable amplification using EPI, SMC-ABC [43], and SNPE [45] (see Section Related
₁₁₄₅ Methods).

₁₁₄₆ **5.3.2 Stable amplification**

₁₁₄₇ For this RNN model to be stable, all real eigenvalues of W must be less than 1: $\text{real}(\lambda_1) < 1$,
₁₁₄₈ where λ_1 denotes the greatest real eigenvalue of W . For a stable RNN to amplify at least one input
₁₁₄₉ pattern, the symmetric connectivity $W^s = \frac{W+W^\top}{2}$ must have an eigenvalue greater than 1: $\lambda_1^s > 1$,
₁₁₅₀ where λ^s is the maximum eigenvalue of W^s . These two conditions are necessary and sufficient for
₁₁₅₁ stable amplification in RNNs [63].

₁₁₅₂ **5.3.3 EPI details for RNNs**

₁₁₅₃ We defined the emergent property of stable amplification with means of these eigenvalues (0.5
₁₁₅₄ and 1.5, respectively) that satisfy these conditions. To complete the emergent property definition,
₁₁₅₅ we chose variances (0.25^2) about those means such that samples rarely violate the eigenvalue
₁₁₅₆ constraints. In terms of the EPI optimization variables, this is written as

$$T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \begin{bmatrix} \text{real}(\lambda_1)(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ \lambda_1^s(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ (\text{real}(\lambda_1)(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - 0.5)^2 \\ (\lambda_1^s(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - 1.5)^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (61)$$

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_{\text{opt}} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \\ 1.5 \\ 0.25^2 \\ 0.25^2 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (62)$$

1158 Gradients of maximum eigenvalues of Hermitian matrices like W^s are available with modern auto-
 1159 automatic differentiation tools. To differentiate through the $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$, we solved the following equation
 1160 for eigenvalues of rank-2 matrices using the rank reduced matrix $W^r = V^\top U$

$$\lambda_{\pm} = \frac{\text{Tr}(W^r) \pm \sqrt{\text{Tr}(W^r)^2 - 4\text{Det}(W^r)}}{2}. \quad (63)$$

1161 For EPI in Fig. 2, we used a real NVP architecture with three coupling layers of affine transfor-
 1162 mations parameterized by two-layer neural networks of 100 units per layer. The initial distribution
 1163 was a standard isotropic gaussian $\mathbf{z}_0 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, I)$ mapped to the support of $\mathbf{z}_i \in [-1, 1]$. We used
 1164 an augmented Lagrangian coefficient of $c_0 = 10^3$, a batch size $n = 200$, $\beta = 4$, and chose to use
 1165 500 iterations per augmented Lagrangian epoch and emergent property constraint convergence was
 1166 evaluated at $N_{\text{test}} = 200$ (Fig. 2B blue line, and Fig. 2C-D blue).

1167 5.3.4 Methodological comparison

1168 We compared EPI to two alternative simulation-based inference techniques, since the likelihood
 1169 of these eigenvalues given \mathbf{z} is not available. Approximate Bayesian computation (ABC) [80] is a
 1170 rejection sampling technique for obtaining sets of parameters \mathbf{z} that produce activity \mathbf{x} close to some
 1171 observed data \mathbf{x}_0 . Sequential Monte Carlo approximate Bayesian computation (SMC-ABC) is the
 1172 state-of-the-art ABC method, which leverages SMC techniques to improve sampling speed. We ran
 1173 SMC-ABC with the pyABC package [105] to infer RNNs with stable amplification: connectivities
 1174 having eigenvalues within an ϵ -defined l_2 distance of

$$x_0 = \begin{bmatrix} \text{real}(\lambda_1) \\ \lambda_1^s \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \\ 1.5 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (64)$$

1175 SMC-ABC was run with a uniform prior over $\mathbf{z} \in [-1, 1]^{(4N)}$, a population size of 1,000 particles
 1176 with simulations parallelized over 32 cores, and a multivariate normal transition model.

1177 SNPE, the next approach in our comparison, is far more similar to EPI. Like EPI, SNPE treats pa-
 1178 rameters in mechanistic models with deep probability distributions, yet the two learning algorithms

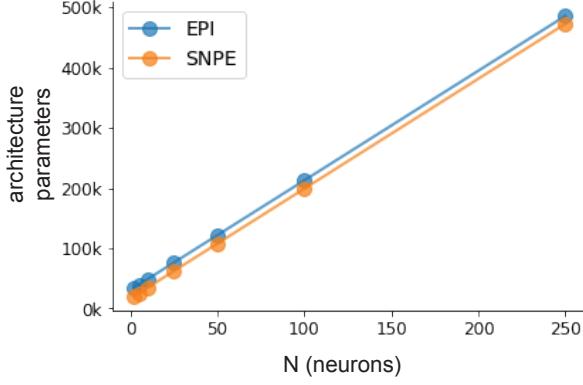


Figure 10: (RNN1): Number of parameters in deep probability distribution architectures of EPI (blue) and SNPE (orange) by RNN size (N).

are categorically different. SNPE uses a two-network architecture to approximate the posterior distribution of the model conditioned on observed data \mathbf{x}_0 . The amortizing network maps observations \mathbf{x}_i to the parameters of the deep probability distribution. The weights and biases of the parameter network are optimized by sequentially augmenting the training data with additional pairs $(\mathbf{z}_i, \mathbf{x}_i)$ based on the most recent posterior approximation. This sequential procedure is important to get training data \mathbf{z}_i to be closer to the true posterior, and \mathbf{x}_i to be closer to the observed data. For the deep probability distribution architecture, we chose a masked autoregressive flow with affine couplings (the default choice), three transforms, 50 hidden units, and a normalizing flow mapping to the support as in EPI. This architectural choice closely tracked the size of the architecture used by EPI (Fig. 10). As in SMC-ABC, we ran SNPE with $\mathbf{x}_0 = \mu$. All SNPE optimizations were run for a limit of 1.5 days on a Tesla V100 GPU, or until two consecutive rounds resulted in a validation log probability lower than the maximum observed for that random seed.

To clarify the difference in objectives of EPI and SNPE, we show their results on RNN models with different numbers of neurons N and random strength g . The parameters inferred by EPI consistently produces the same mean and variance of $\text{real}(\lambda_1)$ and λ_1^s , while those inferred by SNPE change according to the model definition (Fig. 11A). For $N = 2$ and $g = 0.01$, the SNPE posterior has greater concentration in eigenvalues around \mathbf{x}_0 than at $g = 0.1$, where the model has greater randomness (Fig. 11B top, orange). At both levels of g when $N = 2$, the posterior of SNPE has lower entropy than EPI at convergence (Fig. 11B top). However at $N = 10$, SNPE results in a predictive distribution of more widely dispersed eigenvalues (Fig. 11A bottom), and an inferred posterior with greater entropy than EPI (Fig. 11B bottom). We highlight these differences not

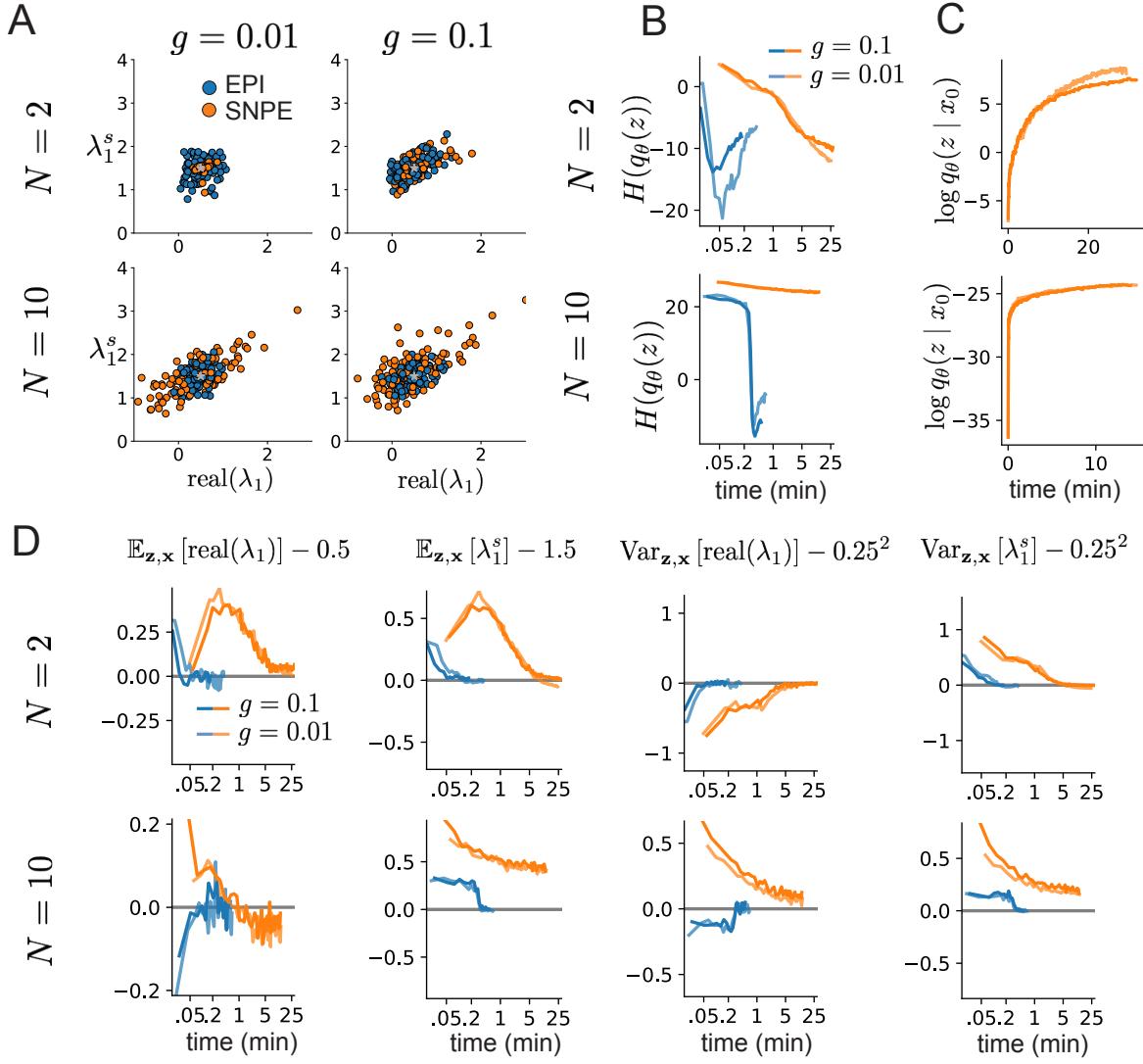


Figure 11: (RNN2): Model characteristics affect predictions of posteriors inferred by SNPE, while predictions of parameters inferred by EPI remain fixed. **A.** Predictive distribution of EPI (blue) and SNPE (orange) inferred connectivity of RNNs exhibiting stable amplification with $N = 2$ (top), $N = 10$ (bottom), $g = 0.01$ (left), and $g = 0.1$ (right). **B.** Entropy of parameter distribution approximations throughout optimization with $N = 2$ (top), $N = 10$ (bottom), $g = 0.1$ (dark shade), and $g = 0.01$ (light shade). **C.** Validation log probabilities throughout SNPE optimization. Same conventions as B. **D.** Adherence to EPI constraints. Same conventions as B.

1200 to focus on an insightful trend, but to emphasize that these methods optimize different objectives
1201 with different implications.

1202 Note that SNPE converges when it's validation log probability has saturated after several rounds
1203 of optimization (Fig. 11C), and that EPI converges after several epochs of its own optimization
1204 to enforce the emergent property constraints (Fig. 11D blue). Importantly, as SNPE optimizes
1205 its posterior approximation, the predictive means change, and at convergence may be different
1206 than \mathbf{x}_0 (Fig. 11D orange, left). It is sensible to assume that predictions of a well-approximated
1207 SNPE posterior should closely reflect the data on average (especially given a uniform prior and
1208 a low degree of stochasticity), however this is not a given. Furthermore, no aspect of the SNPE
1209 optimization controls the variance of the predictions (Fig. 11D orange, right).

1210 To compare the efficiency of these algorithms for inferring RNN connectivity distributions producing
1211 stable amplification, we develop a convergence criteria that can be used across methods. While EPI
1212 has its own hypothesis testing convergence criteria for the emergent property, it would not make
1213 sense to use this criteria on SNPE and SMC-ABC which do not constrain the means and variances
1214 of their predictions. Instead, we consider EPI and SNPE to have converged after completing its
1215 most recent optimization epoch (EPI) or round (SNPE) in which the distance

$$d(q_\theta(z)) = |\mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{z}, \mathbf{x}} [f(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})] - \boldsymbol{\mu}|_2 \quad (65)$$

1216 is less than 0.5. We consider SMC-ABC to have converged once the population produces samples
1217 within the $\epsilon = 0.5$ ball ensuring stable amplification.

1218 When assessing the scalability of SNPE, it is important to check that alternative hyperparameter-
1219 izations could not yield better performance. Key hyperparameters of the SNPE optimization are
1220 the number of simulations per round n_{round} , the number of atoms used in the atomic proposals of
1221 the SNPE-C algorithm [106], and the batch size n . To match EPI, we used a batch size of $n = 200$
1222 for $N \leq 25$, however we found $n = 1,000$ to be helpful for SNPE in higher dimensions. While
1223 $n_{\text{round}} = 1,000$ yielded SNPE convergence for $N \leq 25$, we found that a substantial increase to
1224 $n_{\text{round}} = 25,000$ yielded more consistent convergence at $N = 50$ (Fig. 12A). By increasing n_{round} ,
1225 we also necessarily increase the duration of each round. At $N = 100$, we tried two hyperparameter
1226 modifications. As suggested in [106], we increased n_{atom} by an order of magnitude to improve
1227 gradient quality, but this had little effect on the optimization (much overlap between same random
1228 seeds) (Fig. 12B). Finally, we increased n_{round} by an order of magnitude, which yielded convergence
1229 in one case, but no others. We found no way to improve the convergence rate of SNPE without
1230 making more aggressive hyperparameter choices requiring high numbers of simulations.

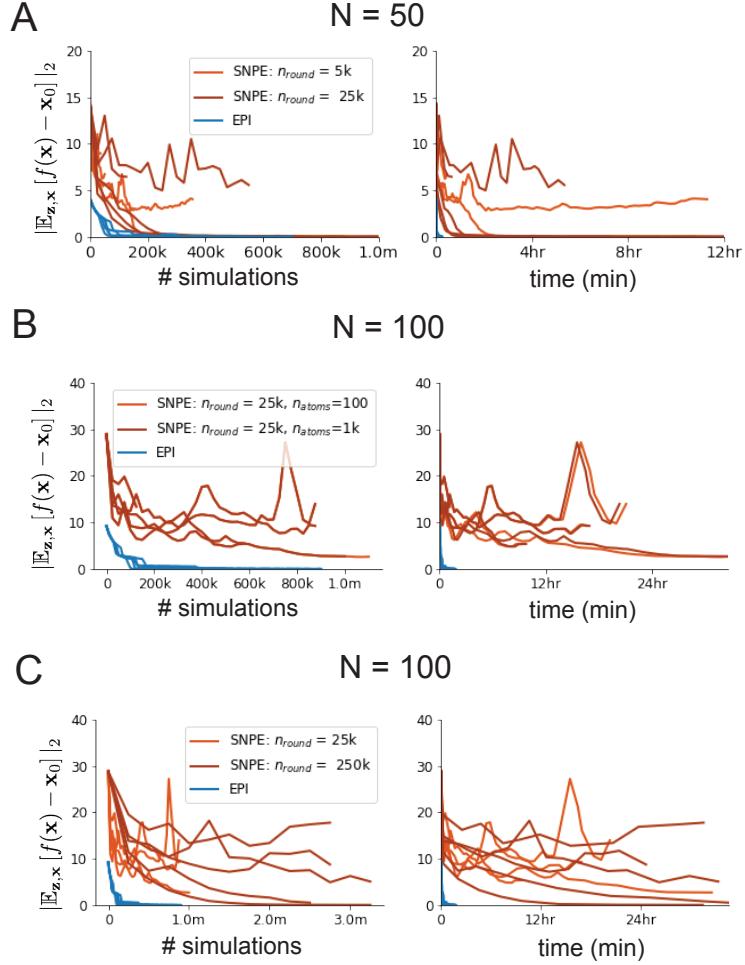


Figure 12: (RNN3): SNPE convergence was enabled by increasing n_{round} , not n_{atom} . **A.** Difference of mean predictions \mathbf{x}_0 throughout optimization at $N = 50$ with by simulation count (left) and wall time (right) of SNPE with $n_{\text{round}} = 5,000$ (light orange), SNPE with $n_{\text{round}} = 25,000$ (dark orange), and EPI (blue). Each line shows an individual random seed. **B.** Same conventions as A at $N = 100$ of SNPE with $n_{\text{atom}} = 100$ (light orange) and $n_{\text{atom}} = 1,000$ (dark orange). **C.** Same conventions as A at $N = 100$ of SNPE with $n_{\text{round}} = 25,000$ (light orange) and $n_{\text{round}} = 250,000$ (dark orange).

1231 In Figure 2C-D, we show samples from the random seed resulting in emergent property convergence
 1232 at greatest entropy (EPI), the random seed resulting in greatest validation log probability (SNPE),
 1233 and the result of all converged random seeds (SMC).

1234 **5.4 Primary visual cortex**

1235 **5.4.1 V1 model**

1236 In the stochastic stabilized supralinear network [78], population rate responses \mathbf{x} to input \mathbf{h} , recur-
 1237 rent input $W\mathbf{x}$ and slow noise ϵ are governed by

$$\tau \frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = -\mathbf{x} + \phi(W\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h} + \epsilon), \quad (66)$$

1238 where the noise is an Ornstein-Uhlenbeck process $\epsilon \sim OU(\tau_{\text{noise}}, \sigma)$

$$\tau_{\text{noise}} d\epsilon_\alpha = -\epsilon_\alpha dt + \sqrt{2\tau_{\text{noise}}} \tilde{\sigma}_\alpha dB \quad (67)$$

1239 with $\tau_{\text{noise}} = 5\text{ms} > \tau = 1\text{ms}$. The noisy process is parameterized as

$$\tilde{\sigma}_\alpha = \sigma_\alpha \sqrt{1 + \frac{\tau}{\tau_{\text{noise}}}}, \quad (68)$$

1240 so that σ parameterizes the variance of the noisy input in the absence of recurrent connectivity
 1241 ($W = \mathbf{0}$). As contrast $c \in [0, 1]$ increases, input to the E- and P-populations increases relative to
 1242 a baseline input $\mathbf{h} = \mathbf{h}_b + c\mathbf{h}_c$. Connectivity (W_{fit}) and input ($\mathbf{h}_{b,\text{fit}}$ and $\mathbf{h}_{c,\text{fit}}$) parameters were fit
 1243 using the deterministic V1 circuit model [56]

$$W_{\text{fit}} = \begin{bmatrix} W_{EE} & W_{EP} & W_{ES} & W_{EV} \\ W_{PE} & W_{PP} & W_{PS} & W_{PV} \\ W_{SE} & W_{SP} & W_{SS} & W_{SV} \\ W_{VE} & W_{VP} & W_{VS} & W_{VV} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2.18 & -1.19 & -.594 & -.229 \\ 1.66 & -.651 & -.680 & -.242 \\ .895 & -5.22 \times 10^{-3} & -1.51 \times 10^{-4} & -.761 \\ 3.34 & -2.31 & -.254 & -2.52 \times 10^{-4} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (69)$$

$$\mathbf{h}_{b,\text{fit}} = \begin{bmatrix} .416 \\ .429 \\ .491 \\ .486 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (70)$$

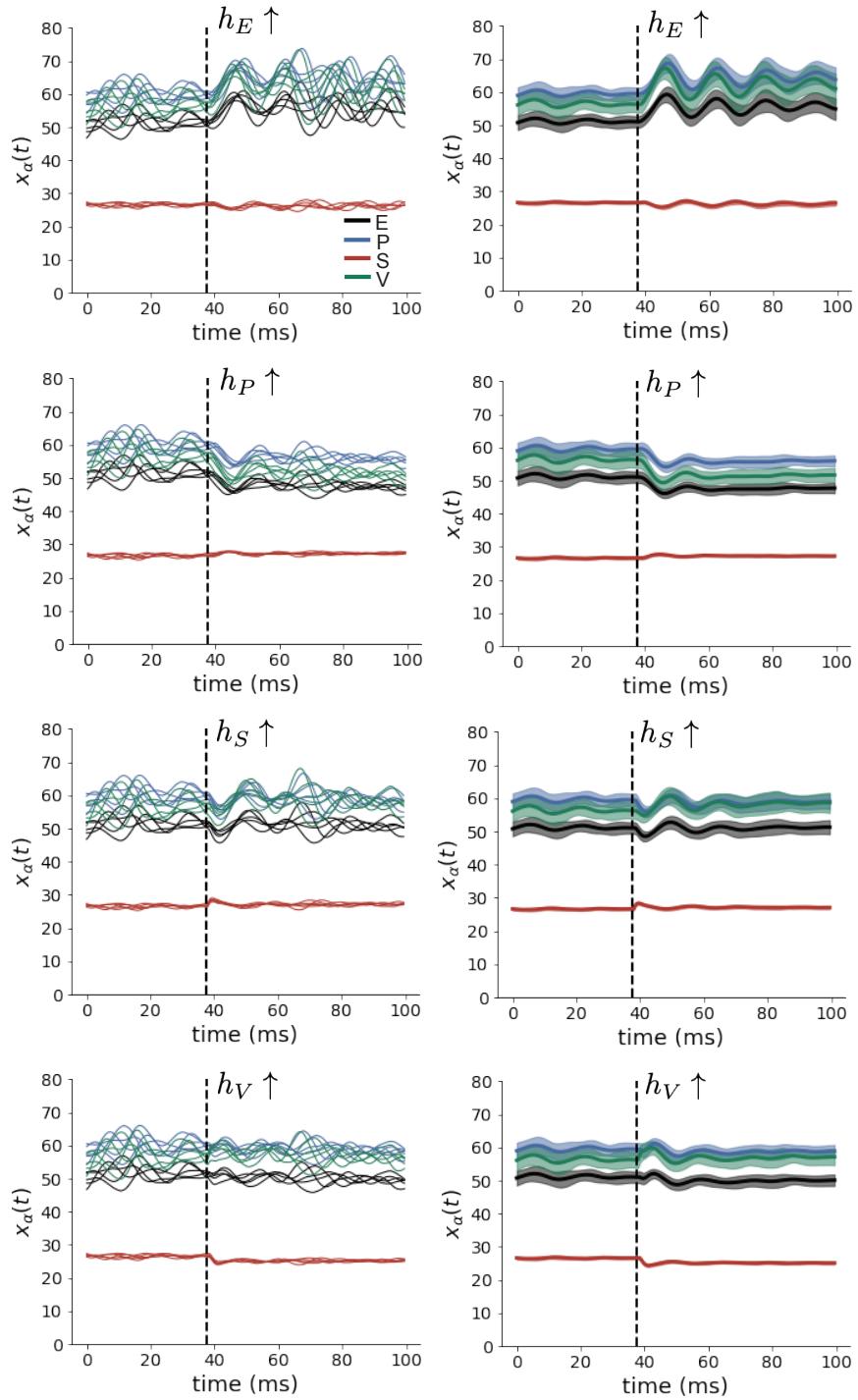


Figure 13: (V1 1) (Left) Simulations for small increases in neuron-type population input. Input magnitudes are chosen so that effect is salient (0.002 for E and P, but 0.02 for S and V). (Right) Average (solid) and standard deviation (shaded) of stochastic fluctuations of responses.

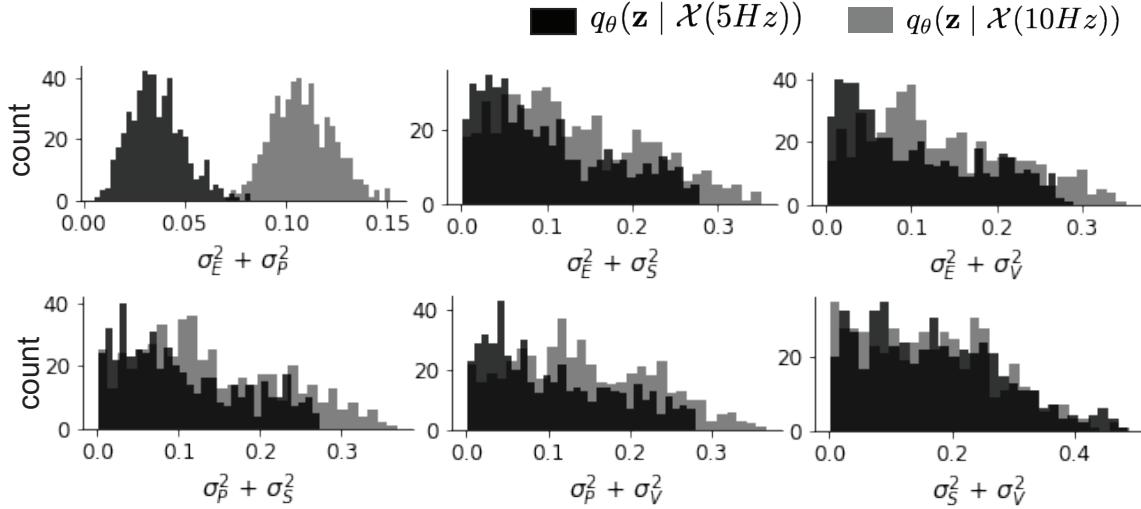


Figure 14: (V1 2) EPI predictive distributions of the sum of squares of each pair of noise parameters.

¹²⁴⁴ and

$$\mathbf{h}_{c,\text{fit}} = \begin{bmatrix} .359 \\ .403 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (71)$$

¹²⁴⁵ To obtain rates on a realistic scale (100-fold greater), we map these fitted parameters to an equiv-
¹²⁴⁶ alence class

$$W = \begin{bmatrix} W_{EE} & W_{EP} & W_{ES} & W_{EV} \\ W_{PE} & W_{PP} & W_{PS} & W_{PV} \\ W_{SE} & W_{SP} & W_{SS} & W_{SV} \\ W_{VE} & W_{VP} & W_{VS} & W_{VV} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} .218 & -.119 & -.0594 & -.0229 \\ .166 & -.0651 & -.068 & -.0242 \\ .0895 & -5.22 \times 10^{-4} & -1.51 \times 10^{-5} & -.0761 \\ .334 & -.231 & -.0254 & -2.52 \times 10^{-5} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (72)$$

$$\mathbf{h}_b = \begin{bmatrix} h_{b,E} \\ h_{b,P} \\ h_{b,S} \\ h_{b,V} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 4.16 \\ 4.29 \\ 4.91 \\ 4.86 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (73)$$

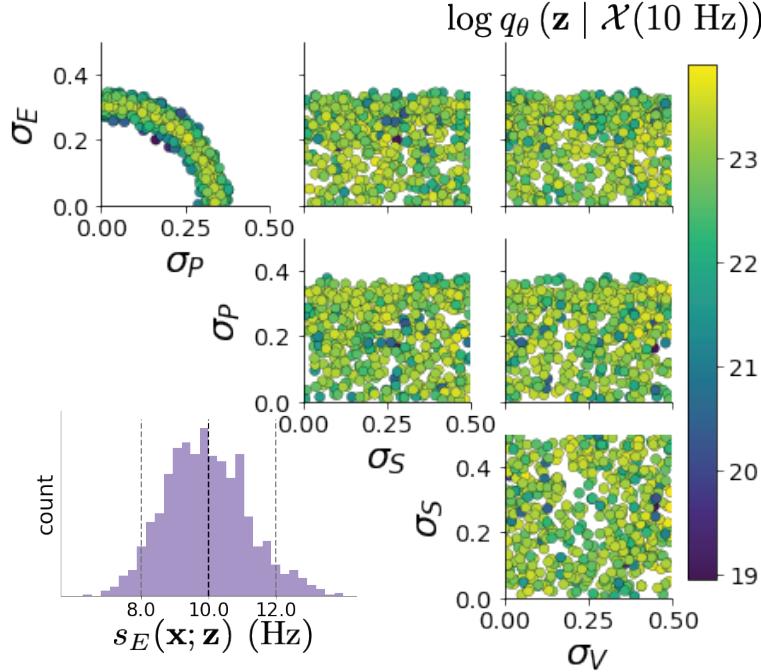


Figure 15: (V1 3) EPI inferred distribution for $\mathcal{X}(10 \text{ Hz})$.

1247 and

$$\mathbf{h}_c = \begin{bmatrix} h_{c,E} \\ h_{c,P} \\ h_{c,S} \\ h_{c,V} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 3.59 \\ 4.03 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (74)$$

1248 Circuit responses are simulated using $T = 200$ time steps at $dt = 0.5\text{ms}$ from an initial condition
 1249 drawn from $\mathbf{x}(0) \sim U[10 \text{ Hz}, 25 \text{ Hz}]$. Standard deviation of the E-population $s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z})$ is calculated
 1250 as the square root of the temporal variance from $t_{ss} = 75\text{ms}$ to $Tdt = 100\text{ms}$ averaged over 100
 1251 independent trials.

$$s_E(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \mathbb{E}_x \left[\sqrt{\mathbb{E}_{t > t_{ss}} [(x_E(t) - \mathbb{E}_{t > t_{ss}} [x_E(t)])^2]} \right] \quad (75)$$

1252 **5.4.2 EPI details for the V1 model**

1253 For EPI in Fig 3D-E, we used a real NVP architecture with three Real NVP coupling layers
 1254 and two-layer neural networks of 50 units per layer. The normalizing flow architecture mapped
 1255 $z_0 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, I)$ to a support of $\mathbf{z} = [\sigma_E, \sigma_P, \sigma_S, \sigma_V] \in [0.0, 0.5]^4$. EPI optimization was run using three
 1256 different random seeds for architecture initialization $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ with an augmented Lagrangian coefficient of

1257 $c_0 = 10^{-1}$, a batch size $n = 100$, and $\beta = 2$. The distributions shown are those of the architectures
1258 converging with criteria $N_{\text{test}} = 100$ at greatest entropy across three random seeds.

1259 **5.4.3 Sensitivity analyses**

1260 In Fig. 3E, we visualize the modes of $q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X})$ throughout the σ_E - σ_P marginal. Specifically, we
1261 calculated

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{z}^*(\sigma_{P,\text{fixed}}) &= \underset{\mathbf{z}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \log q_{\theta}(\mathbf{z} \mid \mathcal{X}) \\ \text{s.t. } \sigma_P &= \sigma_{P,\text{fixed}} \end{aligned} \quad (76)$$

1262 At each mode \mathbf{z}^* , we calculated the Hessian and visualized the sensitivity dimension in the direction
1263 of positive σ_E .

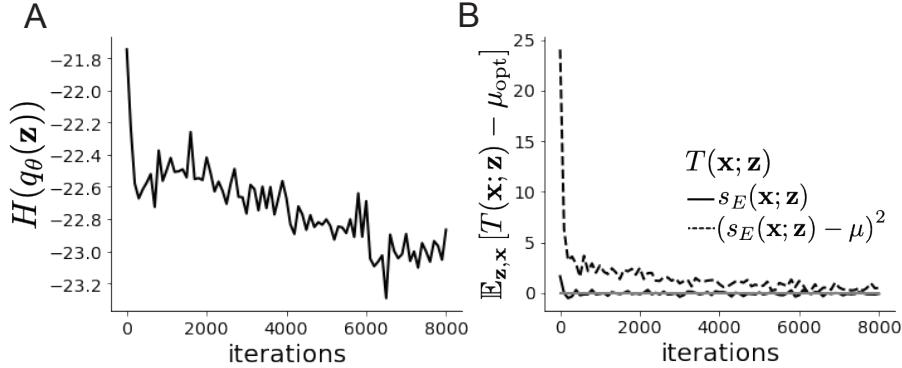


Figure 16: (V1 4) Optimization for V1

1264 **5.4.4 Primary visual cortex: challenges to analysis**

1265 TODO Agostina and I are putting this together now.

1266 **5.5 Superior colliculus**

1267 **5.5.1 SC model**

1268 The ability to switch between two separate tasks throughout randomly interleaved trials, or “rapid
1269 task switching,” has been studied in rats, and midbrain superior colliculus (SC) has been show to
1270 play an important in this computation [79]. Neural recordings in SC exhibited two populations of

1271 neurons that simultaneously represented both task context (Pro or Anti) and motor response (con-
 1272 tralateral or ipsilateral to the recorded side), which led to the distinction of two functional classes:
 1273 the Pro/Contra and Anti/Ipsi neurons [57]. Given this evidence, Duan et al. proposed a model
 1274 with four functionally-defined neuron-type populations: two in each hemisphere corresponding to
 1275 the Pro/Contra and Anti/Ipsi populations. We study how the connectivity of this neural circuit
 1276 governs rapid task switching ability.

1277 The four populations of this model are denoted as left Pro (LP), left Anti (LA), right Pro (RP)
 1278 and right Anti (RA). Each unit has an activity (x_α) and internal variable (u_α) related by

$$x_\alpha = \phi(u_\alpha) = \left(\frac{1}{2} \tanh\left(\frac{u_\alpha - a}{b}\right) + \frac{1}{2} \right), \quad (77)$$

1279 where $\alpha \in \{LP, LA, RA, RP\}$, $a = 0.05$ and $b = 0.5$ control the position and shape of the nonlin-
 1280 earity. We order the neural populations of x and u in the following manner

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_{LP} \\ x_{LA} \\ x_{RP} \\ x_{RA} \end{bmatrix} \quad \mathbf{u} = \begin{bmatrix} u_{LP} \\ u_{LA} \\ u_{RP} \\ u_{RA} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (78)$$

1281 which evolve according to

$$\tau \frac{d\mathbf{u}}{dt} = -\mathbf{u} + W\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{h} + d\mathbf{B}. \quad (79)$$

1282 with time constant $\tau = 0.09s$, step size 24ms and Gaussian noise $d\mathbf{B}$ of variance 0.2^2 . These
 1283 hyperparameter values are motivated by modeling choices and results from [57].

1284 The weight matrix has 4 parameters for self sW , vertical vW , horizontal hW , and diagonal dW
 1285 connections:

$$W = \begin{bmatrix} sW & vW & hW & dW \\ vW & sW & dW & hW \\ hW & dW & sW & vW \\ dW & hW & vW & sW \end{bmatrix}. \quad (80)$$

1286 We study the role of parameters $\mathbf{z} = [sW, vW, hW, dW]^\top$ in rapid task switching.

1287 The circuit receives four different inputs throughout each trial, which has a total length of 1.8s.

$$\mathbf{h} = \mathbf{h}_{\text{constant}} + \mathbf{h}_{\text{P,bias}} + \mathbf{h}_{\text{rule}} + \mathbf{h}_{\text{choice-period}} + \mathbf{h}_{\text{light}}. \quad (81)$$

1288 There is a constant input to every population,

$$\mathbf{h}_{\text{constant}} = I_{\text{constant}}[1, 1, 1, 1]^\top, \quad (82)$$

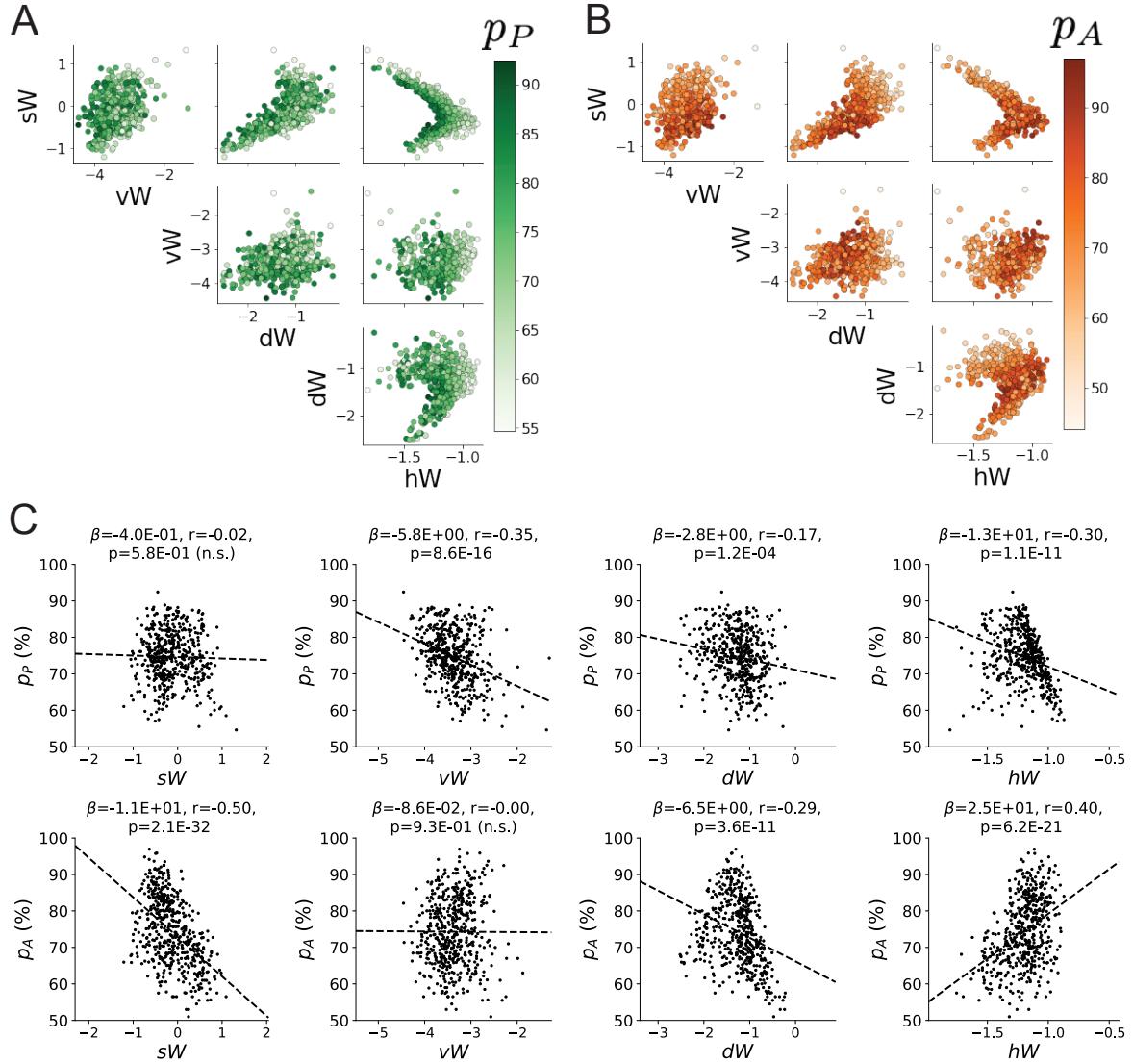


Figure 17: (SC1): **A.** Same pairplot as Fig. 4C colored by Pro task accuracy. **B.** Same as A colored by Anti task accuracy. **C.** Connectivity parameters of EPI distributions versus task accuracies. β is slope coefficient of linear regression, r is correlation, and p is the two-tailed p-value.

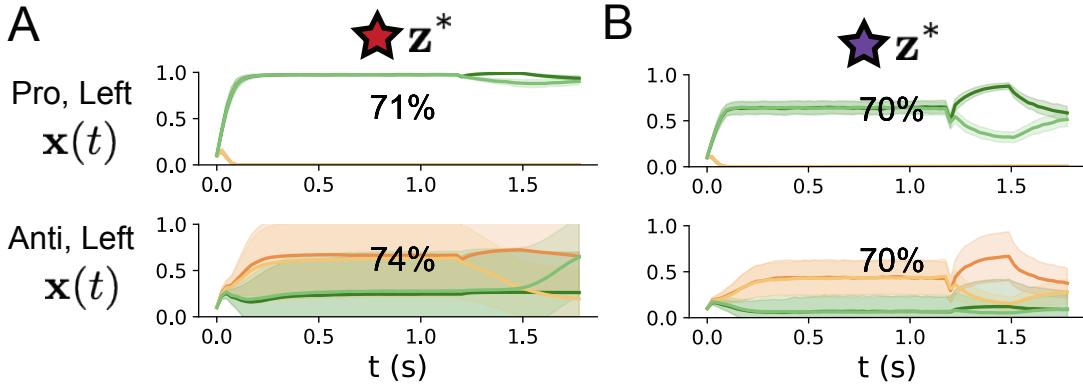


Figure 18: (SC2): **A.** Simulations in network regime 1 ($hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.5$). **B.** Simulations in network regime 2 ($hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.5$) .

1289 a bias to the Pro populations

$$\mathbf{h}_{P,\text{bias}} = I_{P,\text{bias}}[1, 0, 1, 0]^\top, \quad (83)$$

1290 rule-based input depending on the condition

$$\mathbf{h}_{P,\text{rule}}(t) = \begin{cases} I_{P,\text{rule}}[1, 0, 1, 0]^\top, & \text{if } t \leq 1.2s \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (84)$$

1291

$$\mathbf{h}_{A,\text{rule}}(t) = \begin{cases} I_{A,\text{rule}}[0, 1, 0, 1]^\top, & \text{if } t \leq 1.2s \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}, \quad (85)$$

1292 a choice-period input

$$\mathbf{h}_{\text{choice}}(t) = \begin{cases} I_{\text{choice}}[1, 1, 1, 1]^\top, & \text{if } t > 1.2s \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}, \quad (86)$$

1293 and an input to the right or left-side depending on where the light stimulus is delivered

$$\mathbf{h}_{\text{light}}(t) = \begin{cases} I_{\text{light}}[1, 1, 0, 0]^\top, & \text{if } 1.2s < t < 1.5s \text{ and Left} \\ I_{\text{light}}[0, 0, 1, 1]^\top, & \text{if } 1.2s < t < 1.5s \text{ and Right} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}. \quad (87)$$

1294 The input parameterization was fixed to $I_{\text{constant}} = 0.75$, $I_{P,\text{bias}} = 0.5$, $I_{P,\text{rule}} = 0.6$, $I_{A,\text{rule}} = 0.6$,

1295 $I_{\text{choice}} = 0.25$, and $I_{\text{light}} = 0.5$.

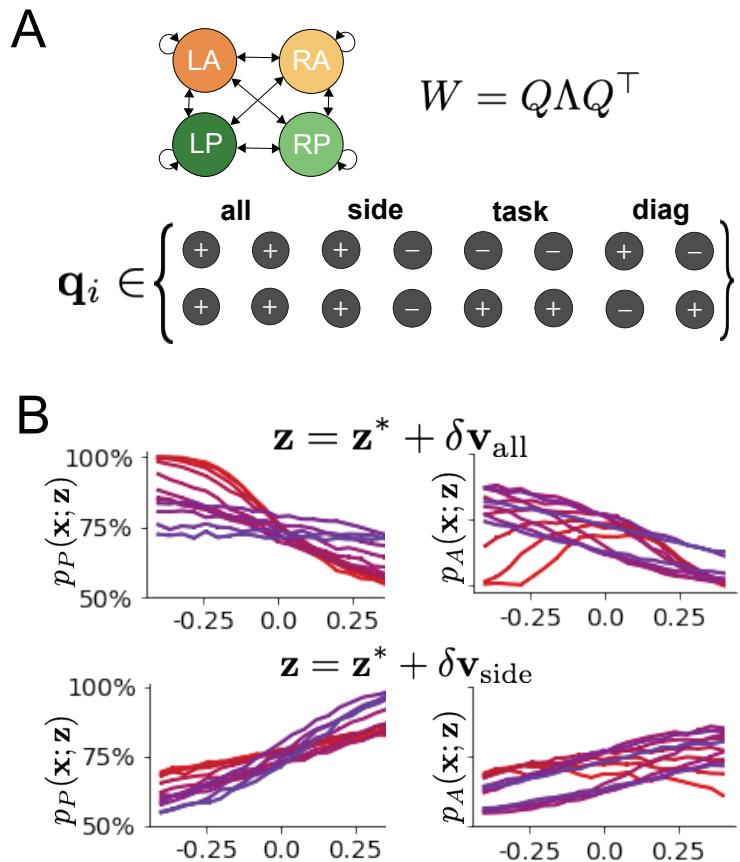


Figure 19: (SC3): **A.** Invariant eigenvectors of connectivity matrix W . **B.** Accuracies for connectivity perturbations for increasing λ_{all} and λ_{side} (rest shown in Fig. 4D).

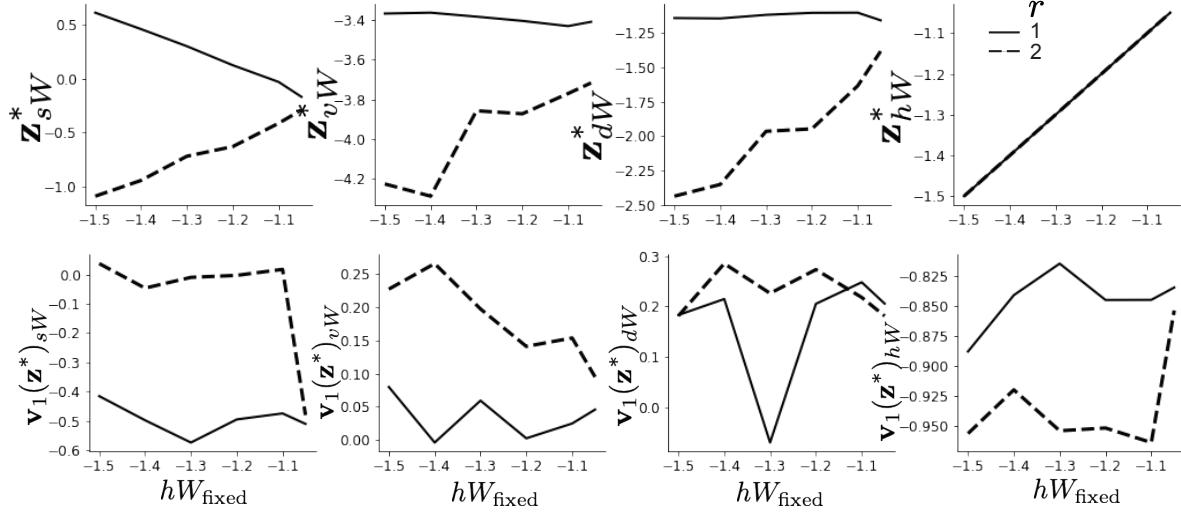


Figure 20: (SC4): **A.** The individual parameters of each mode throughout the two regimes. **B.** The individual sensitivities of parameters of each mode throughout the two regimes.

1296 5.5.2 Task accuracy calculation

1297 The accuracies of each task p_P and p_A are calculated as

$$p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} [\Theta[x_{LP}(t = 1.8s) - x_{RP}(t = 1.8s)]] \quad (88)$$

1298 and

$$p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x}} [\Theta[x_{RP}(t = 1.8s) - x_{LP}(t = 1.8s)]] \quad (89)$$

1299 given that the stimulus is on the left side, where Θ is the Heaviside step function, and the accuracy
1300 is averaged over 200 independent trials. The Heaviside step function is approximated as

$$\Theta(\mathbf{x}) = \text{sigmoid}(\beta \mathbf{x}), \quad (90)$$

1301 where $\beta = 100$.

1302 5.5.3 EPI details for the SC model

1303 Writing the EPI distribution as a maximum entropy distribution, $T(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z})$ is comprised of both these
1304 first and second moments of the accuracy in each task (as in Equations 27 and 28)

$$T(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) = \begin{bmatrix} p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \\ (p_P(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - 75\%)^2 \\ (p_A(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) - 75\%)^2 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (91)$$

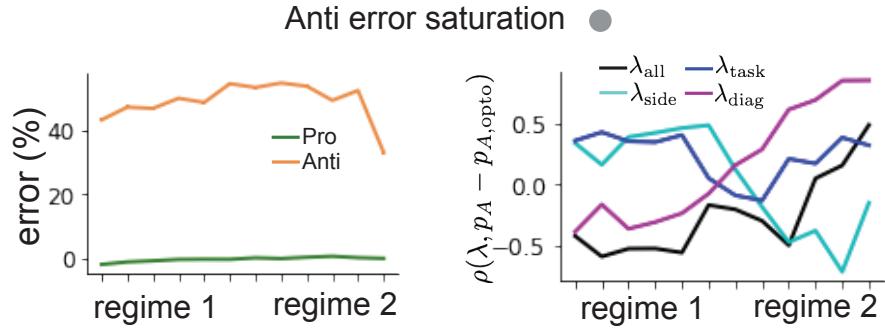


Figure 21: (SC5): (Left) Mean and standard error of Pro and Anti error from regime 1 to regime 2 at $\gamma = 0.85$. (Right) Correlations of connectivity eigenvalues with Anti error from regime 1 to regime 2 at $\gamma = 0.85$.

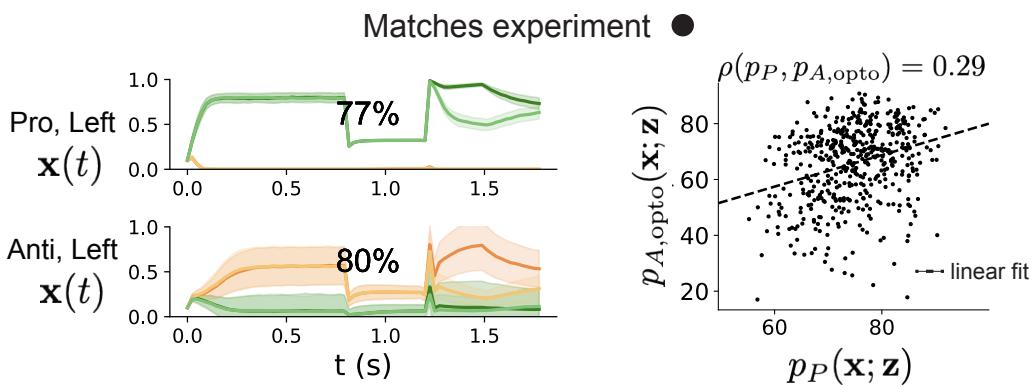


Figure 22: (SC6): (Left) Responses of the SC model at the mode of the EPI distribution to delay period inactivation at $\gamma = 0.675$. (Right) Anti accuracy following delay period inactivation at $\gamma = 0.675$ versus accuracy in the Pro task across connectivities in the EPI distribution.

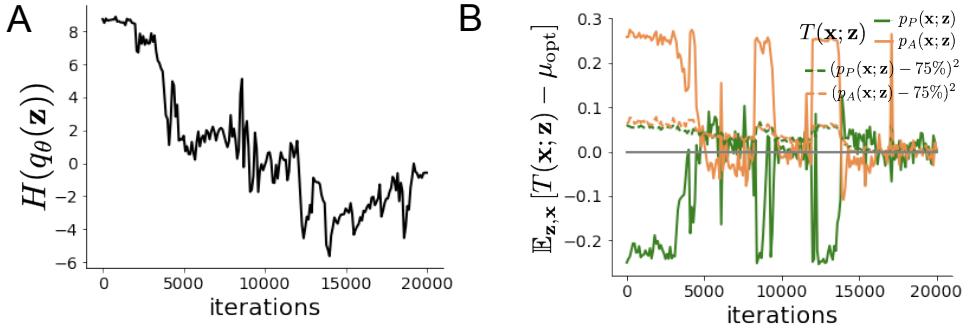


Figure 23: (SC7): **A.** Entropy throughout optimization. **B.** The emergent property statistic means and variances converge to their constraints at 20,000 iterations following the tenth augmented Lagrangian epoch.

$$\mu_{\text{opt}} = \begin{bmatrix} 75\% \\ 75\% \\ 7.5\%^2 \\ 7.5\%^2 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (92)$$

1305 Throughout optimization, the augmented Lagrangian parameters η and c , were updated after each
 1306 epoch of 2,000 iterations (see Section 5.1.3). The optimization converged after ten epochs (Fig.
 1307 22).

1308 For EPI in Fig. 4C, we used a real NVP architecture with three coupling layers of affine transfor-
 1309 mations parameterized by two-layer neural networks of 50 units per layer. The initial distribution
 1310 was a standard isotropic gaussian $\mathbf{z}_0 \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, I)$ mapped to a support of $\mathbf{z}_i \in [-5, 5]$. We used an
 1311 augmented Lagrangian coefficient of $c_0 = 10^2$, a batch size $n = 100$, and $\beta = 2$. The distribution
 1312 was the greatest EPI distribution to converge across 5 random seeds with criteria $N_{\text{test}} = 25$.

1313 5.5.4 Regime identification with EPI

1314 We sought two sets of parameters from $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$ that were representative of each regime, so that we
 1315 could assess their implications on computation. For fixed values of hW , we hypothesized that there
 1316 are two modes: one in each regime of greater and lesser sW . To begin, we found one mode for each
 1317 regime at $hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.5$ using 200 steps of gradient ascent of the deep probability distribution
 1318 $q_\theta(\mathbf{z} | \mathcal{X})$. In regime 1, the initialization had positive sW , and the initialization had negative sW
 1319 in regime 2, which led to disparate modes (Fig. 20 top). These modes were then used as the
 1320 initialization to find the next mode at $hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.4$ and so on. 200 steps of gradient ascent
 1321 were always taken, and learning rates of 2.5×10^{-4} and 5×10^{-4} were used for regimes 1 and 2,

1322 respectively. Each of these modes is denoted $\mathbf{z}^*(hW_{\text{fixed}}, r)$ for regime $r \in \{1, 2\}$.

1323 For the analyses in Figure 5C and Figure 21, we obtained parameters for each step along the
1324 continuum between regimes 1 and 2 by sampling from the EPI distribution. Each sample was
1325 assigned to the closest mode $\mathbf{z}^*(hW_{\text{fixed}}, r)$. Sampling continued until 500 samples were assigned to
1326 each mode, which took 7.36 seconds. To obtain this many samples for each mode with brute force
1327 sampling over the chosen prior, this would take 4.20 days.

1328 5.5.5 Sensitivity analysis

1329 At each mode, we measure the sensitivity dimension (that of most negative eigenvalue in the Hessian
1330 of the EPI distribution) $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)$. To resolve sign degeneracy in eigenvectors, we chose $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)$ to have
1331 negative element in hW . This tells us what parameter combination rapid task switching is most
1332 sensitive to at this parameter choice in the regime. We see that while the modes of each regime
1333 gradually converge to similar connectivities at $hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.05$ (Fig. 20 top), the sensitivity
1334 dimensions remain categorically different throughout the two regimes (Fig. 20 bottom). Only at
1335 $hW_{\text{fixed}} = -1.05$ is there a flip in sensitivity from regime 2 to regime 1 (in $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)_{sW}$ and $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)_{hW}$).
1336 There is thus some ambiguity regarding the “regime” of $\mathbf{z}^*(-1.05, 2)$, since the mode is derived
1337 from an initialization in regime 2, but has sensitivity like regime 1. We can consider this as an
1338 intermediate transitional region of parameter space between the two regimes. To emphasize this,
1339 $\mathbf{z}^*(-1.05, 1)$ and $\mathbf{z}^*(-1.05, 2)$ have the same color.

1340 5.5.6 Connectivity eigendecomposition and processing modes

1341 To understand the connectivity mechanisms governing task accuracy, we took the eigendecomposi-
1342 tion of the symmetric connectivity matrices $W = Q\Lambda Q^{-1}$, which results in the same basis vectors
1343 \mathbf{q}_i for all W parameterized by \mathbf{z} (Fig. 19A). These basis vectors have intuitive roles in processing for
1344 this task, and are accordingly named the *all* eigenmode - all neurons co-fluctuate, *side* eigenmode
1345 - one side dominates the other, *task* eigenmode - the Pro or Anti populations dominate the other,
1346 and *diag* mode - Pro- and Anti-populations of opposite hemispheres dominate the opposite pair.
1347 Due to the parametric structure of the connectivity matrix, the parameters \mathbf{z} are a linear function
1348 of the eigenvalues $\boldsymbol{\lambda} = [\lambda_{\text{all}}, \lambda_{\text{side}}, \lambda_{\text{task}}, \lambda_{\text{diag}}]^\top$ associated with these eigenmodes.

$$\mathbf{z} = A\boldsymbol{\lambda} \quad (93)$$

$$A = \frac{1}{4} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & -1 & -1 \\ 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (94)$$

1350 We are interested in the effect of raising or lowering the amplification of each eigenmode in the
 1351 connectivity matrix. To test this, we calculate the unit vector of changes in the connectivity \mathbf{z} that
 1352 result from a change in the associated eigenvalues

$$\mathbf{v}_a = \frac{\frac{\partial \mathbf{z}}{\partial \lambda_a}}{\left\| \frac{\partial \mathbf{z}}{\partial \lambda_a} \right\|_2}, \quad (95)$$

1353 where

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{z}}{\partial \lambda_a} = A \mathbf{e}_a, \quad (96)$$

1354 and e.g. $\mathbf{e}_{\text{all}} = [1, 0, 0, 0]^\top$. So \mathbf{v}_a is the normalized column of A corresponding to eigenmode a .
 1355 While perturbations in the sensitivity dimension $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z}^*)$ adapt with the mode \mathbf{z}^* chosen, perturba-
 1356 tions in \mathbf{v}_a for $a \in \{\text{all, side, text, diag}\}$ are invariant to \mathbf{z} (Equation 96).

1357 To understand the connectivity mechanisms that distinguish these two regimes, we perturb connec-
 1358 tivity at each mode in dimensions that have well defined roles in processing for the Pro and Anti
 1359 tasks. A convenient property of this connectivity parameterization is that there are \mathbf{z} -invariant
 1360 eigenmodes of connectivity, whose eigenvalues (or degree of amplification) change with \mathbf{z} . These
 1361 eigenmodes have intuitive roles in processing in each task, and are accordingly named the *all*,
 1362 *side*, *task*, and *diag* eigenmodes (see Section 5.5). Furthermore, the parameter dimension \mathbf{v}_a
 1363 ($a \in \{\text{all, side, task, and diag}\}$) that increases the eigenvalue of connectivity λ_a is \mathbf{z} -invariant (un-
 1364 like the sensitivity dimension $\mathbf{v}_1(\mathbf{z})$) and $\mathbf{v}_a \perp \mathbf{v}_{b \neq a}$. Thus, by changing the degree of amplification
 1365 of each processing mode by perturbing \mathbf{z} along \mathbf{v}_a , we can elicit the differentiating properties of
 1366 the two regimes.

1367 5.5.7 Optogenetic silencing modeling

1368 We tested whether the inferred SC model connectivities could reproduce experimental effects of
 1369 optogenetic inactivation in rats [79]. During periods of simulated optogenetic inactivation, activity
 1370 was decreased proportional to the optogenetic strength γ

$$x_\alpha = (1 - \gamma)\phi(u_\alpha). \quad (97)$$

1371 Delay period inactivation was from $0.8 < t < 1.2$.