

Neural Random Utility and Measured Value

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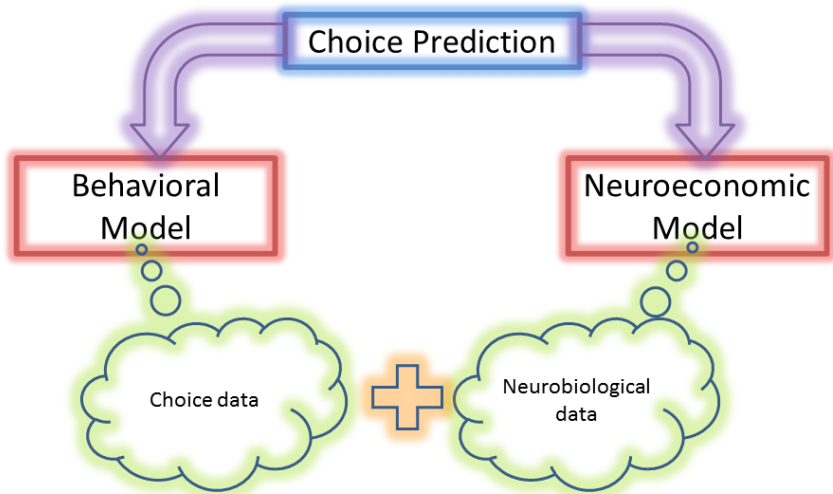
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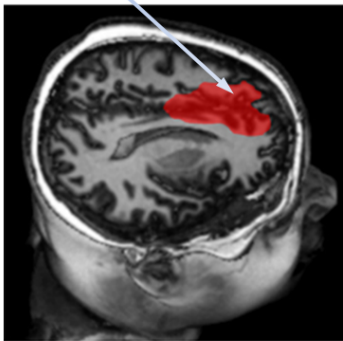
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Neurobiological dataset

Medial Prefrontal
Cortex (mPFC)

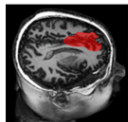


Functional Magnetic
Resonance Imaging
(fMRI) scanner



*Levy and Glimcher (2012), Bartra et al (2013): meta-studies indicating that **activity in mPFC** is tightly correlated with the values subjects place on choice objects*

Neural Random Utility Model

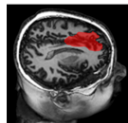


subjective value
(observable)

$$u_{i,t} = v_{i,t} + \eta_{i,t}$$

Note: subjective value can be measured even in the absence of the choice set

Neural Random Utility Model



subjective value
(observable)

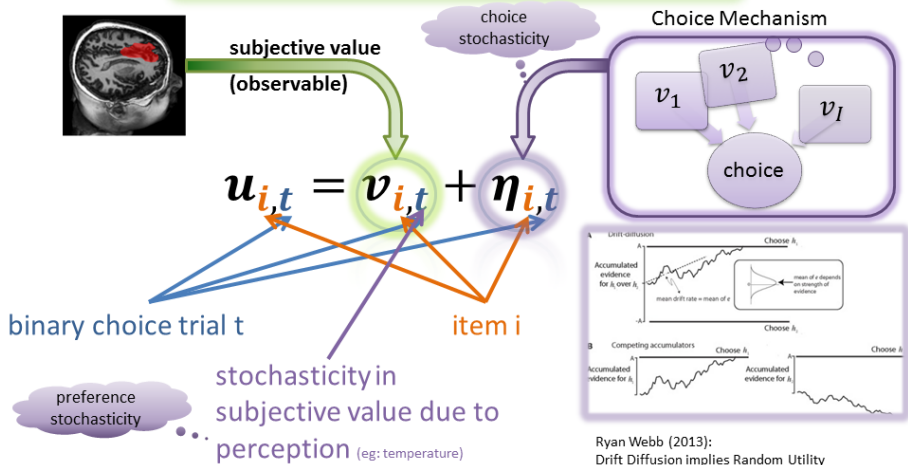
$$u_{i,t} = v_{i,t} + \eta_{i,t}$$

binary choice trial t

item i

Note: subjective value can be measured
even in the absence of the choice set

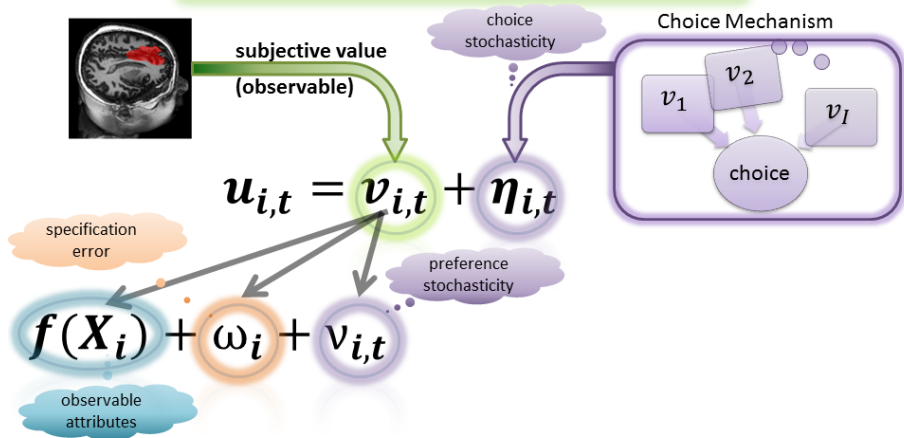
Neural Random Utility Model



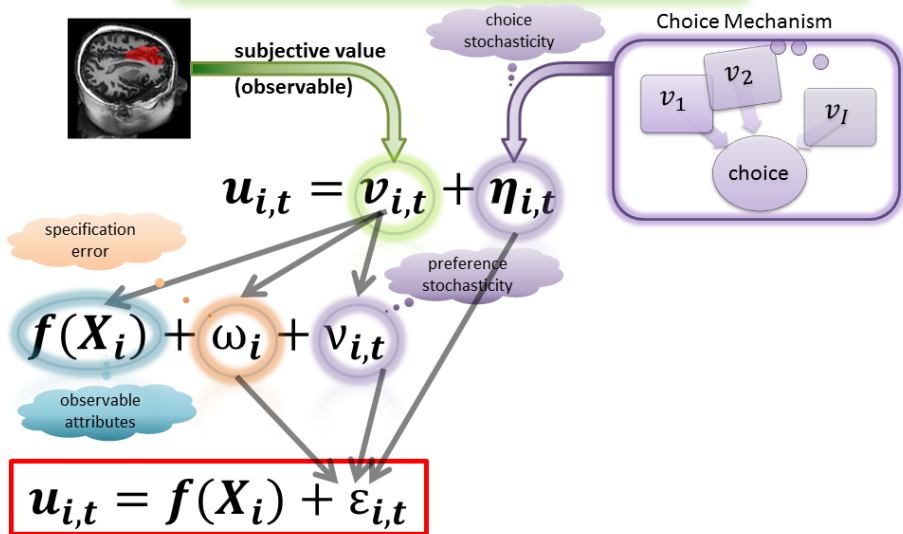
Ryan Webb (2013):
Drift Diffusion implies Random Utility

Note: subjective value can be measured even in the absence of the choice set

Neural Random Utility Model

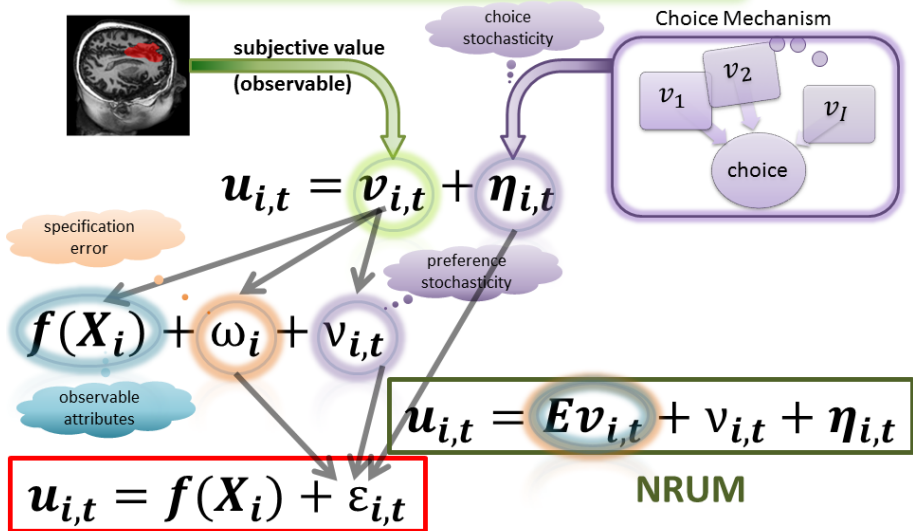


Neural Random Utility Model



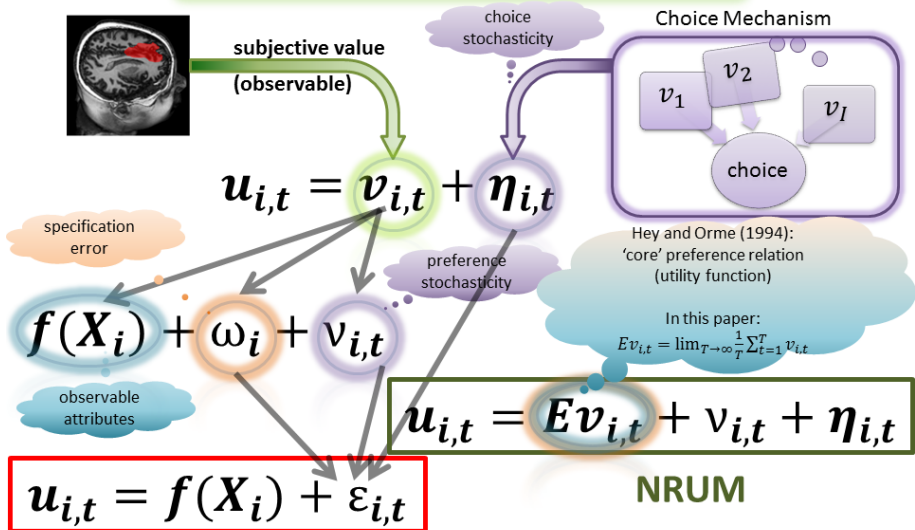
RUM

Neural Random Utility Model



RUM

Neural Random Utility Model



RUM

- $u_{i,t} = v_{i,t} + \eta_{i,t}$
- DM chooses i vs. j on trial t if $u_{i,t} > u_{j,t}$ (consider only binary choices) $\Rightarrow y_{ij,t} = \mathbf{1}(u_{i,t} > u_{j,t})$
- $P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid v_{i,t}, v_{j,t}] = P[\tilde{v}_{ij,t} > \tilde{\eta}_{ji,t} \mid v_{i,t}, v_{j,t}]$, where $\tilde{v}_{ij,t} \equiv v_{i,t} - v_{j,t}$, $\tilde{\eta}_{ji,t} \equiv \eta_{j,t} - \eta_{i,t}$
- assume⁴ $\tilde{\eta}_{ji,t} \sim \text{iid } \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\tilde{\eta}}^2) \leftarrow \boxed{\text{A1}}$

$$\Rightarrow P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid v_{i,t}, v_{j,t}] = \Phi\left(\frac{\tilde{v}_{ij,t}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}}}\right)$$

- assume $\mathbf{v}_t = (v_{1,t}, \dots, v_{l,t})$ is independent over trials $\leftarrow \boxed{\text{A2}}$

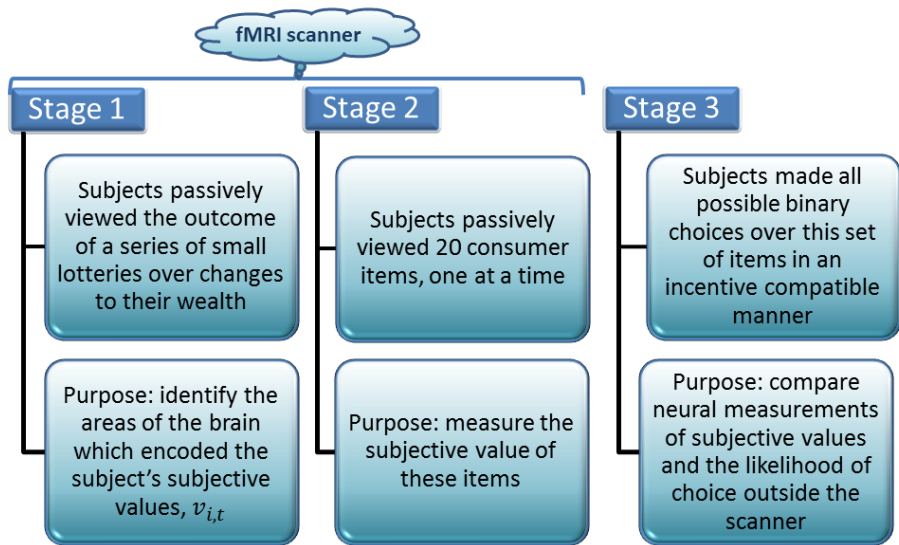
- $\nu_{i,t} \equiv v_{i,t} - \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}]$ (mean over trials)

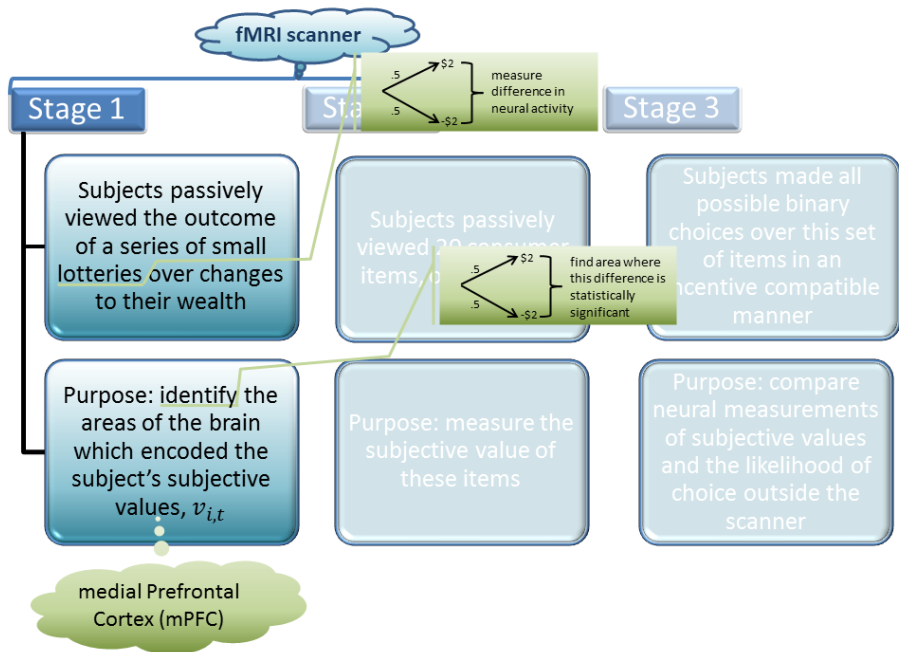
$$\Rightarrow P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]] = P[\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}] > \tilde{v}_{ij,t} + \tilde{\eta}_{ji,t} \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]]$$

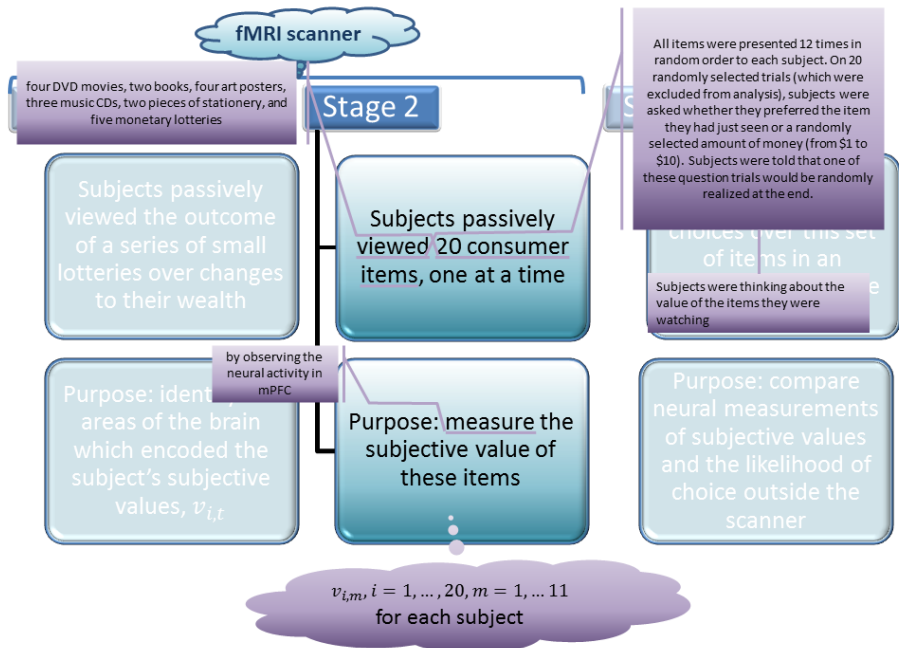
- assume $\tilde{v}_{ij,t} \equiv \nu_{i,t} - \nu_{j,t} \sim \text{iid } \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\tilde{\nu}}^2) \leftarrow \boxed{\text{A3}}$

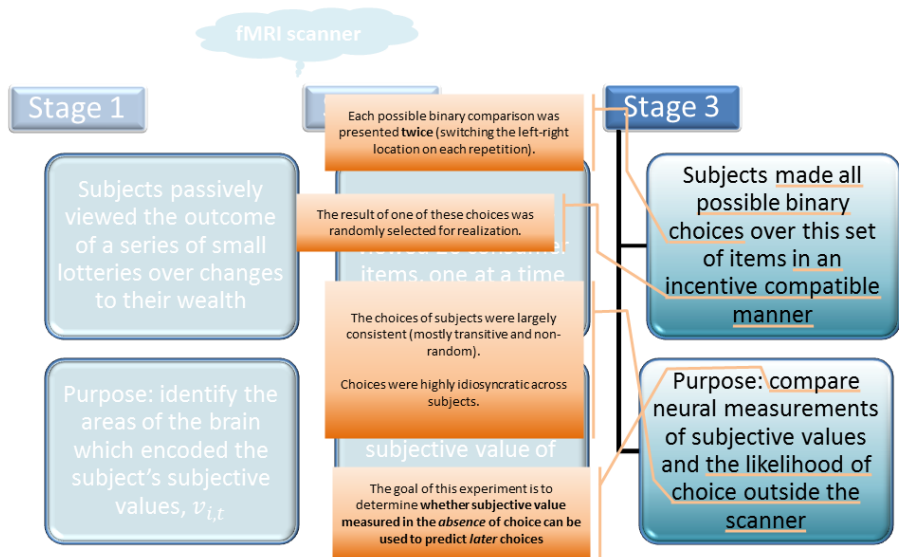
$$\Rightarrow P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]] = \Phi\left(\frac{\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}]}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{\nu}}}\right), \text{ where } \sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{\nu}}^2 = \sigma_{\tilde{\eta}}^2 + \sigma_{\tilde{\nu}}^2$$

⁴Item-pair independence follows from the binary choice setup: realizations for different item-pairs must occur on different trials



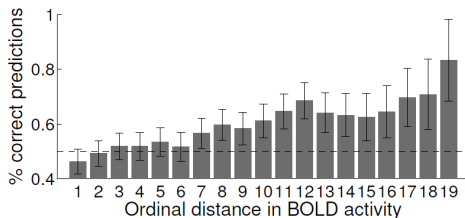






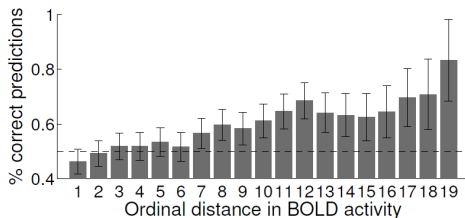
- Stage 2 $\rightarrow v_{im}, i = 1, \dots, 20, m = 1, \dots, 11$ for each subject
- \rightarrow rank $\bar{v}_i = \frac{1}{11} \sum_{m=1}^{11} v_{im}$ to order the items
- Compare to Stage 3: **prediction rate is $59 \pm 1\%$** (i.e., in $59 \pm 1\%$ of trials subjects chose according to this ordering) \rightarrow **not much!**

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- Can do better!
 - **segregate prediction accuracy according to the rank-distance in neural activity between two items**



\Rightarrow ordering of subjective values can predict choice outcomes

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\Rightarrow ordering of subjective values can predict choice outcomes

Q: Is subjective value a cardinal quantity? \Rightarrow NRUM

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid v_{i,t}, v_{j,t}] = \Phi\left(\frac{\tilde{v}_{ij,t}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}}}\right) \quad \text{vs}$$

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]] = \Phi\left(\frac{\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}]}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{v}}}\right)$$

Do not observe $v_{i,t}$ on the trial t in which choice was made

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Do not observe $v_{i,t}$ on the trial t in which choice was made

To get $\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}]$:

Blood-Oxygenation Level Dependent (BOLD) signal

$$B_{i,m} = a + \gamma v_{i,m} + \mu_{i,m}, \quad \mu_{i,m} \sim \text{iid } \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\mu}^2)$$

measurement error

$$\bar{B}_i = a + \gamma \bar{v}_i + \bar{\mu}_i \quad (\text{average over } m)$$

$$\tilde{\tilde{B}}_{ij} = \gamma \tilde{\tilde{v}}_{ij} + \tilde{\tilde{\mu}}_{ij} \quad (\text{take difference})$$

Note: Orderings of $B_{i,m}$ and $v_{i,m}$ coincide

Ignoring Measurement Error

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]] = \Phi\left(\frac{\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}]}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{v}}}\right)$$

$$\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}] : \quad \tilde{\tilde{B}}_{ij} = \gamma \tilde{v}_{ij} + \tilde{\mu}_{ij}$$

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \tilde{\tilde{B}}_{ij}] = \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{v}}} \tilde{\tilde{B}}_{ij}\right)$$

Probit model:

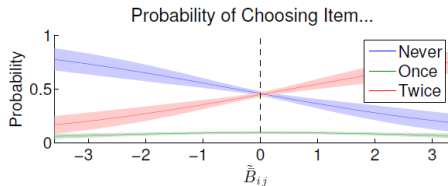
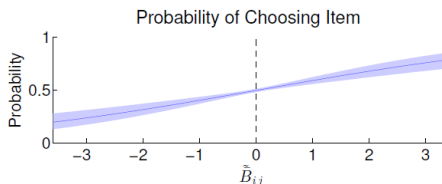
$$P(y_{ij,t} = 1) = \Phi\left(c + \frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{v}}} \tilde{\tilde{B}}_{ij}\right)$$

Coefficient	No Constant	Constant
$\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{v}+\tilde{\eta}}}$	0.24 (0.10)	0.24 (0.10)
c		-0.01 (0.08)

$$y_{ij} = \begin{cases} 0, & y_{ij,1} = y_{ij,2} = 0 \\ 1, & y_{ij,1} + y_{ij,2} = 1 \\ 2, & y_{ij,1} = y_{ij,2} = 1 \end{cases} \quad \begin{aligned} P(y_{ij} = 0) &= \left(1 - \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}} \tilde{B}_{ij}\right)\right)^2 \\ P(y_{ij} = 1) &= 2 \left(1 - \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}} \tilde{B}_{ij}\right)\right) \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}} \tilde{B}_{ij}\right) \\ P(y_{ij} = 2) &= \Phi^2\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}} \tilde{B}_{ij}\right) \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow P(y_{ij} = 0) < P(y_{ij} = 2) < P(y_{ij} = 1) \quad \text{for small positive } \tilde{B}_{ij}$$

Data: too few *once* choices when \tilde{B}_{ij} is small (ordered Probit model)



\Rightarrow need to account for measurement error: $\tilde{B}_{ij} = \gamma \tilde{v}_{ij} + \tilde{\mu}_{ij}$

Intuition: small \tilde{v}_{ij} for which *once* is most likely might correspond to large \tilde{B}_{ij} due to measurement error

Accounting for Measurement Error

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \mathbb{E}[v_{i,t}], \mathbb{E}[v_{j,t}]] = \Phi\left(\frac{\mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}]}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{v}}}\right) \quad \mathbb{E}[\tilde{v}_{ij,t}] : \tilde{B}_{ij} = \gamma \tilde{v}_{ij} + \tilde{\mu}_{ij}$$

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij}] = \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}(\tilde{B}_{ij} - \tilde{\mu}_{ij})}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{v}}}\right)$$

$$\mu_{i,m} \sim \text{iid } \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma_{\mu}^2) \Rightarrow \tilde{\mu}_{ij} \sim \mathcal{N}\left(0, \sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}^2 \equiv \frac{2}{11} \sigma_{\mu}^2\right)$$

Random-effects Probit model:

$$P[y_{ij,1}, y_{ij,2} \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}] = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{e^{-\tilde{\mu}_{ij}^2/2\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}^2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}} \left[\prod_{t=1}^2 P[y_{ij,t} \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij}] \right] d\tilde{\mu}_{ij}$$

Accounting for Measurement Error

Random-effects Probit model:

$$P[y_{ij,1}, y_{ij,2} \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}] = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \frac{e^{-\tilde{\mu}_{ij}^2 / 2\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}^2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}} \left[\prod_{t=1}^2 P[y_{ij,t} \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij}] \right] d\tilde{\mu}_{ij}$$

$$P[y_{ij,t} = 1 \mid \tilde{B}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij}] = \Phi\left(\frac{\gamma^{-1}(\tilde{B}_{ij} - \tilde{\mu}_{ij})}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}}\right)$$

Caveats:

① \tilde{B}_{ij} and $\tilde{\mu}_{ij}$ are not independent: $\text{Cov}(\tilde{B}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij}) = 2\text{Var}[\tilde{\mu}_i] = \frac{2}{11}\sigma_{\mu}^2$

⇒ RE Probit estimate of $\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu}}}$ will be biased towards zero

② $\tilde{\mu}_{ij}$ are not independent over choice pairs: $\text{Cov}(\tilde{\mu}_{ij}, \tilde{\mu}_{ij'}) = \text{Var}[\tilde{\mu}_i]$

⇒ RE Probit estimate of standard errors will be biased towards zero

⇒ use multi-way clustering techniques (Cameron et al., 2011)

Coefficient	Probit		RE Probit	
	No Constant	Constant	No Constant	Constant
$\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{\nu}}}$	0.24 (0.10)	0.24 (0.10)	1.16 (0.52)	1.16 (0.51)
c		-0.01 (0.08)		-0.06 (0.37)
$\frac{\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}^2}{\gamma^2 \sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{\nu}}^2}$			22.36 (3.49)	22.36 (3.50)

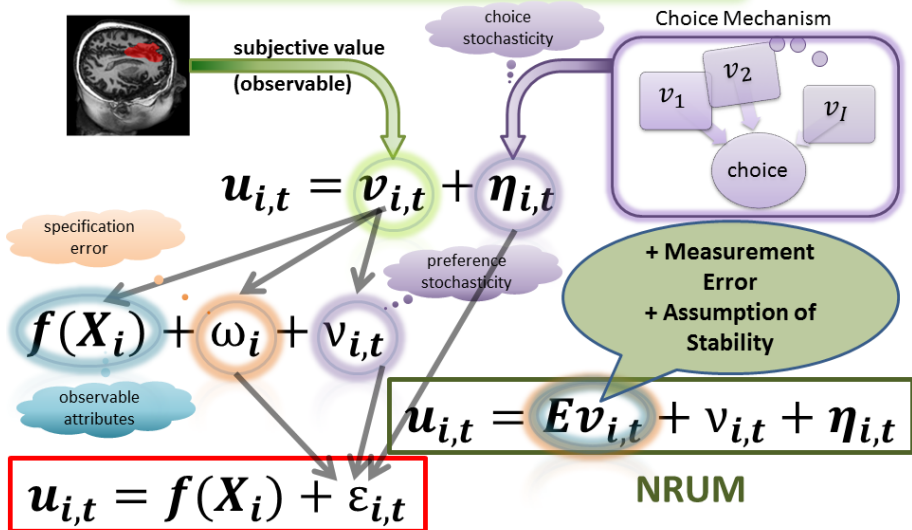
Subject specific RE Probit

Coeff	Est.	Std. Err.	P-Val	Coeff	Est.	Std. Err.	P-Val
c_1	0.03	1.14	0.98	γ_1^{-1}	-1.17	1.07	0.27
c_2	-0.15	1.25	0.91	γ_2^{-1}	0.66	2.89	0.82
c_3	-0.07	1.27	0.95	γ_3^{-1}	-3.25	2.36	0.17
c_4	-0.34	1.17	0.77	γ_4^{-1}	10.14	2.90	0.00
c_5	0.08	1.22	0.95	γ_5^{-1}	1.39	0.57	0.02
c_6	-0.07	1.22	0.95	γ_6^{-1}	-3.23	2.50	0.20
c_7	-0.14	1.30	0.91	γ_7^{-1}	2.78	3.30	0.40
c_8	0.41	1.22	0.73	γ_8^{-1}	10.39	3.53	0.00
c_9	-0.18	1.18	0.88	γ_9^{-1}	4.98	2.38	0.04
c_{10}	0.69	1.24	0.58	γ_{10}^{-1}	5.01	1.39	0.00
c_{11}	0.07	1.23	0.95	γ_{11}^{-1}	2.61	3.18	0.41
c_{12}	-0.44	1.14	0.70	γ_{12}^{-1}	13.04	3.80	0.00
$\sigma_{\tilde{\mu}}^2$	20.49	3.46					

Note: $\sigma_{\tilde{\eta}+\tilde{\nu}} = 1$

- significant reduction of observations
- six γ_s^{-1} are significant and positive / six γ_s^{-1} are not significantly different from zero

Neural Random Utility Model



RUM

- The prediction based on NRUM:

- Simulate $y_{s,ij,1}^*$, $y_{s,ij,2}^*$ using

$$P \left[y_{s,ij,t} = 1 \mid \tilde{B}_{s,ij} \right] = \Phi \left(\frac{\gamma_s^{-1}}{\sigma_{\tilde{\eta} + \tilde{\nu},s}} \tilde{B}_{s,ij} \right)$$

subject RE Probit estimate

- If $y_{s,ij,1}^* + y_{s,ij,2}^* = y_{s,ij,1} + y_{s,ij,2}$, then *success*
- Compare to the prediction at chance:
 - Data: the frequency of $y_{s,ij,1} + y_{s,ij,2} = 0$ is 46%, $y_{s,ij,1} + y_{s,ij,2} = 1$ is 9%, $y_{s,ij,1} + y_{s,ij,2} = 2$ is 45%
 - Percent of correct predictions: $\frac{1}{4} \times 46 + \frac{1}{2} \times 9 + \frac{1}{4} \times 45 \approx 27\%$
- Compare to RUM:

$$P[y_{s,ij,t} = 1 \mid X_i, X_j] = \Phi((X_i - X_j)\beta_s)$$

'Amazon star' rating & price

	BOLD			Amazon*		Price		A+P*	P+B	A+P+B*
	RE $\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\eta+\phi}} = 10$			RE		RE		RE	RE	RE
	Pop	Sub	Pop	Pop	Sub	Pop	Sub	Sub	Sub	Sub
chance	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
pop	31	43	46	47	46	53	52	52	57	60
sub ₁	29	36	36	55	60	60	63	62	62	62
sub ₂	30	28	47	38	26	54	55	27	55	47
sub ₃	24	49	29	33	35	46	40	44	51	45
sub ₄	32	53	53	46	45	62	66	56	71	65
sub ₅	45	48	59	65	72	54	54	79	57	77
sub ₆	26	40	35	65	70	59	61	71	64	75
sub ₇	28	33	45	44	39	41	29	65	33	50
sub ₈	30	49	49	47	45	50	47	45	56	70
sub ₉	35	50	53	41	35	59	62	47	64	59
sub ₁₀	33	47	51	48	48	45	42	48	52	54
sub ₁₁	30	33	41	43	33	57	59	46	60	46
sub ₁₂	32	51	49	42	37	48	47	38	56	62

Table IV: Choice prediction rates (%) resulting from 1000 simulated samples generated by our estimates. Prediction rates are calculated for both (Pop)ulation and (Sub)ject-based estimates, and prediction rates are shown for the (pop)ulation as a whole and for each (sub)ject. Prediction rates are also calculated using both (A)mazon and (P)rice observables, (P)rice and the (B)OLD measure, and all three predictors. *Amazon ratings were not available for the five lotteries, so choice pairs with the lotteries were excluded for these sets of predictions.

	BOLD			Amazon*		Price		A+P*	P+B	A+P+B*
	RE		$\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\eta+\psi}} = 10$	RE		RE		RE	RE	RE
	Pop	Sub	Pop	Pop	Sub	Pop	Sub	Sub	Sub	Sub
chance	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
pop	31	43	46	47	46	53	52	52	57	60
sub ₁	29	36	36	55	60	60	63	62	62	62
sub ₂	30	28	47	38	26	54	55	27	55	47
sub ₃	24	49	29	33	35	46	40	44	51	45
sub ₄	32	53	53	46	45	62	66	5		65
	45	48	59	65	72					77
	26	40	35	65	70					75
	28	33	45	44	39					50
sub ₈	30	49	49	47	45					70
sub ₉	35	50	52	41	35	53	57	4	64	59
sub ₁₀	33			48	48	45	42	4	52	54
sub ₁₁	30			43	33	57	59			46
sub ₁₂	32			42	37	48	46			62

biased estimate

calibrated estimate

Evidence of stability of $Ev_{i,t}$ in this choice experiment

no context effects

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	BOLD			Amazon*		Price		A+P*	P+B	A+P+B*
	RE		$\frac{\gamma^{-1}}{\sigma_{\eta+\nu}} = 10$	RE		RE		RE	RE	RE
	Pop	Sub	Pop	Pop	Sub	Pop	Sub	Sub	Sub	Sub
chance	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
pop	31	43	46	47	46	53	52	52	57	60
sub ₁	29	36	36	55	60	60	63	62	62	62
sub ₂	30	28	47	38	26	54	55	27	55	47
sub ₃	24	49	29	35	35	46	40	44	51	45
sub ₄	32	53	53	46	45	49	49	56	71	65
sub ₅	45	48						79	57	77
sub ₆	26	40							64	75
sub ₇	28	37							33	50
sub ₈	30	49							57	70
sub ₉	35	50						47	64	59
sub ₁₀	33	47					42	48	52	54
sub ₁₁	30	33	41	43	33	57	59	46	60	46
sub ₁₂	32	51	49	42	37	48				

NRUM just matches the performance of a coarse behavioral model

Neural value measure can add predictive power to behavioral model

Table IV: Choice prediction rates (%) results for the 12 samples generated by our estimates. Prediction rates are calculated for (Pop)ulation and (Sub)ject-based estimates, and prediction rates for the (pop)ulation as a whole and for each (sub)ject. Prediction rates are also calculated using both (A)mazon and (P)rice observables, (P)rice and the (B)OLD measure, and all three predictors. *Amazon ratings were not available for the five lotteries, so choice pairs with the lotteries were excluded for these sets of predictions.

Main Contribution:

- ① An econometric framework for relating neural measurements to choice prediction, the Neural Random Utility Model, was introduced.
- ② The comparison of the predictive power of NRUM with established techniques was done based on data from a laboratory experiment:
 - the measured neural activity cardinally encodes valuations and predict choice behavior
 - accounting for measurement error and combining neural data with standard observables improves predictive performance