

# On Iterative and Conditional Computation for Visual Representation Learning

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"Learning from experience how to perform a given task that has to be automatized by a machine."



## Supervised Learning

$${\mathcal X}$$
 Input set  ${\mathcal Y}$  Output set

$$ho$$
 (unknown) probability on  $\mathcal{X} imes \mathcal{Y}$ 

$$\ell:\mathcal{Y}:\mathcal{Y}\mapsto\mathbb{R}$$
 Loss function

$$f: \mathcal{X} \mapsto \mathcal{Y}$$
 (candidate) input-output predictor

Classification 
$$\mathcal{Y} = \{1, \dots, K\}$$

Regression 
$$\mathcal{Y} \subseteq \mathbb{R}$$

Goal: minimise Expected Risk

$$\mathcal{R}(f,\rho) = \mathbb{E}_{\rho} \ \ell(f(x),y)$$





In practice, ho is **unknown** and it can be only accessed via finite samples  $\mathcal{D} = \{(x_i, y_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ 

Learning Algorithm

$$\mathcal{A}: \mathcal{D} \mapsto f$$

#### Hyper-parameters

Learning rate Dropout, # iterations ...

$$\mathcal{A}(\underline{\lambda}; \underline{\mathcal{D}}) = \underset{f \in \mathcal{H}}{\operatorname{argmin}} \ \underline{\mathcal{R}(f, \mathcal{D})} + \underline{\Omega_{\lambda}(f)}$$

#### Hypothesis/Inductive Bias

Linear functions
Radial basis functions
Neural Networks ...

Empirical Risk 
$$\mathcal{R}(f,\mathcal{D}) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \ell\left(f\left(x_{i}\right), y_{i}\right) + \text{Regulariser term e.g. } \Omega_{\lambda}(f) = \lambda \|f\|^{2}$$



## Modern Machine Learning success

#### **AlexNet**

 $\mathcal{D}$ : ImageNet (1.2M images)

Input set: 224 x 224 images

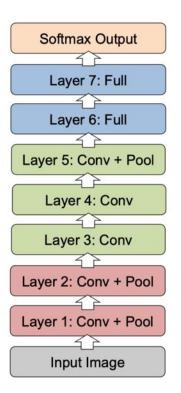
Output: 1000 classes

$$\underset{\omega}{\operatorname{argmin}} \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \ell \left( f \left( x_i; \omega \right), y_i \right) + \lambda \Omega(\omega)$$

 $f(x_i;\omega) \stackrel{\mbox{differentiable, non-linear}}{\mbox{parameterized by $\omega$. 8 layers Neural Network.}}$ 

$$\ell\left(f\left(x_{i};\omega
ight),y_{i}
ight)$$
 cross-entropy loss

 $\Omega_{\lambda}(f)$  L2 regularization, early stopping, dropout





## Example: image classification

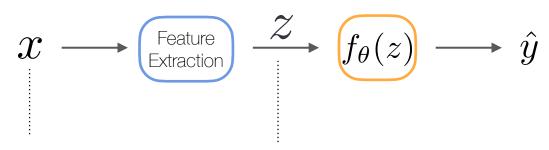
Input set 
$$\mathcal{X} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{h \times w \times c}$$

Output set  $\mathcal{Y} = \{1, \dots, K\}$ 

class of candidate predictors  $f_{ heta}$ 

Learned

- Fixed



- High dimensional
- raw input

$$z \in \mathbb{R}^d$$

- $z \in \mathbb{R}^d$  Compact representation designed to have nice properties



## Example: image classification

Input set 
$$\mathcal{X} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{h \times w \times c}$$

Output set  $\mathcal{Y} = \{1, \dots, K\}$ 



class of candidate predictors  $f_{ heta},g_{\phi}$ 

- Learned
- Fixed

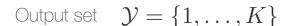
$$x \longrightarrow g_{\phi}(x) \xrightarrow{z} f_{\theta}(z) \longrightarrow \hat{y}$$

$$z \in \mathbb{R}^{d}$$



#### Example: image classification

Input set 
$$\mathcal{X} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{h \times w \times c}$$



class of candidate predictors  $f_{ heta}, g_{\phi}$ 



- Fixed



Head (actually solving the task)

$$x \longrightarrow g_{\phi}(x) \xrightarrow{z} f_{\theta}(z) \longrightarrow g$$

Representations learning via Neural Networks uses back-propagation and gradient descent



#### **Motivations**

- 1) Theoretical understanding of modern neural architectures
  - Adaptive and Iterative Inference: ResNets as dynamical systems
- 2) Representations Learning for new data modalities
  - Omputer Vision with Asynchronous Event-based data
- 3) Learning from Limited Labels
  - → Adaptive Representations for One-Shot Video Object Segmentation



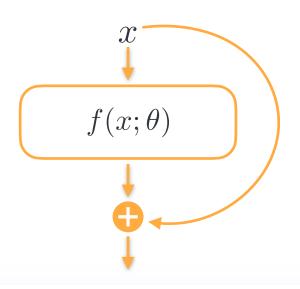
## Adaptive and Iterative Inference

ResNets as dynamical systems



## Residual and Highway Networks

Redesign neural networks to make
them easier to optimize
even for very large depths
(solving the vanishing
gradient problem)



"Shortcut or skip connection"

The gradient can skip layers of computation to assign credit to initial units.

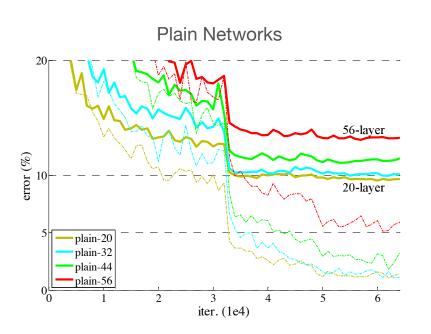
$$y = x + f(x; \theta)$$

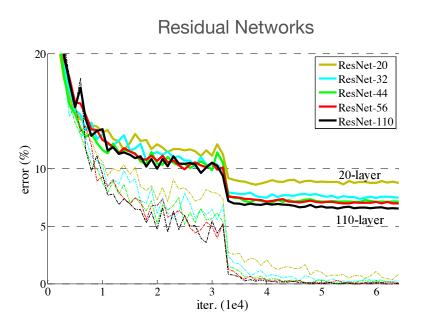
$$y = x \cdot C(x; \theta_C) + f(x; \theta) \cdot T(x; \theta_T)$$
Carry gate Transform gate

He et al. (2015) Srivastava et al. (2015)



## Residual and Highway Networks





He et al. (2015)



## Additive Compositional Layers

Most of the successfully trained very deep architectures share a core building block to compute a vector representation at layer k+1, parametrised by  $\theta(k)$ :

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + f(x(k), \theta(k))$$

Previous Representation

Additive Non-Linear Transformation

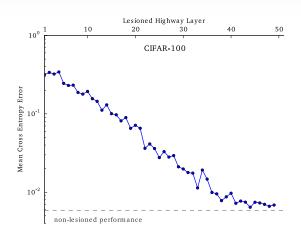
**Inductive bias:** Iterative inference and features refinement

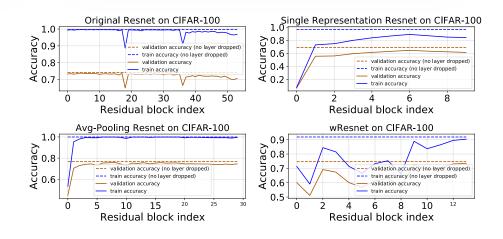


## Iterative inference in ResNets and Highway Networks

Lower residual blocks learn hierarchical representations (each block discovers a different representation) Higher residual blocks learn to perform iterative inference and feature refinement.

(keep the semantics of the representation of the previous layer)







#### ResNets as ODEs discretizations

#### Continuous nonlinear ODE

#### Forward Euler discretization

$$\dot{x} = f(x(t); \Theta)$$



$$x(k+1) = x(k) + h f(x(k); \Theta)$$

ResNets = forward Euler discretization of  $\dot{x} = f(x(t); \Theta)$  with step size h = 1

Assuming shared weights

$$\theta(k) \equiv \Theta \ \forall \ 1 \le k \le K$$

$$\lim_{h \to 0} \frac{x(k+1) - x(k)}{h} = f(x(k); \Theta)$$





#### Deep Networks as ODEs discretizations

#### **Analysis view**

**Study properties** of existing architectures (e.g., ResNet, PolyNet, FractalNet and RevNet) by interpreting them as different **numerical discretizations of ODEs**, (e.g. Backward Euler (implicit) method or Runge-Kutta method)

#### Synthesis view

Design new architectures from different ODEs and discretizations.

Lu et al. (2018)





#### Control Theory for Representation Learning

ResNets can be considered discretized dynamical systems that perform iterative inference.

The system (network) should have a **stable behaviour** such that the forward propagation of the state **does not fluctuate**.

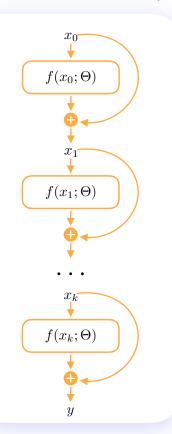
If we unroll the system to infinity, it should **converge to an attractor.** 

Use Control Theory to study ResNets in terms of stability of their underlined dynamical system.





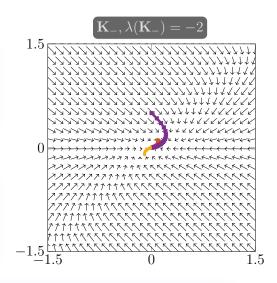
#### (Autonomous) Stable ResNet



$$x(k+1) = x(k) + f(x(k); \Theta)$$
 Assuming shared weights (time invariant system) 
$$\theta(k) \equiv \Theta \ \, \forall \, 1 \leq k \leq K$$

ResNet are autonomous systems.

Input is connected only to the first layer, acting as **initial condition**  $x_0$ .



Enforcing stability in autonomous systems:

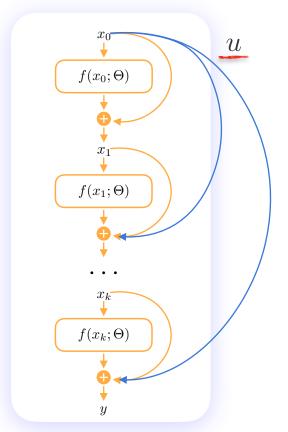
output / information → 0 for all inputs (or trivial solution)

This is useless for Machine Learning applications!





#### NAIS-Net: Non Autonomous IO-Stable ResNet



Use input skip connections to define Non-Autonomous Systems.

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + f(x(k), \underline{u}; \Theta)$$
 Assuming shared weights 
$$\theta(k) \equiv \Theta \ \, \forall \, 1 \leq k \leq K$$

Output trajectories are conditioned on the input and converge to input-dependent attractors.





#### NAIS-Net block stability

NAIS-Net Fully-Connected block

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + h\sigma(Ax(k) + Bu + b)$$

hidden state matrix input transfer matrix

**Linearization:** state-transfer Jacobian for layer *k* 

$$J(x(k), u) = \frac{\partial x(k+1)}{\partial x(k)} = I + h \frac{\partial \sigma(\Delta x(k))}{\partial \Delta x(k)} A$$

Residual Jacobian

Stability Condition (from Lyapunov indirect method)

$$\bar{\rho} := \sup_{(x,u) \in \mathcal{P}} \frac{\rho(J(x,u)) < 1}{\text{spectral radius}}$$

where J exists (the nonlinearity  $\sigma$  is not saturated)





### Algorithms for Input-Output stability

#### Algorithm 1 Fully Connected Reprojection

**Input:** 
$$R \in \mathbb{R}^{\tilde{n} \times n}$$
,  $\tilde{n} \leq n$ ,  $\delta = 1 - 2\epsilon$ ,  $\epsilon \in (0, 0.5)$ .

if 
$$||R^T R||_F > \delta$$
 then

$$\tilde{R} \leftarrow \sqrt{\delta} \frac{R}{\sqrt{\|R^T R\|_F}}$$

else

$$\tilde{R} \leftarrow R$$

end if

Output:  $\tilde{R}$ 

Proposed reprojection algorithms can be used with any gradient-based optimization method to constrain the parameters in the stability region.

#### Algorithm 2 CNN Reprojection

Input:  $\delta \in \mathbb{R}^{N_C}$ ,  $C \in \mathbb{R}^{n_X \times n_X \times N_C \times N_C}$ , and  $0 < \epsilon < \eta < 1$ .

for each feature map c do

$$ilde{\delta}_c \leftarrow \max \bigg( \min \big( \delta_c, 1 - \eta \big), -1 + \eta \bigg)$$

$$\tilde{C}^{c}_{i_{\text{centre}}} \leftarrow -1 - \tilde{\delta}_{c}$$

if 
$$\sum_{j 
eq i_{
m centre}} \left| C_j^c 
ight| > 1 - \epsilon - | ilde{\delta}_c|$$
 then

$$ilde{C}^c_j \leftarrow \left(1 - \epsilon - | ilde{\delta}_c|
ight) rac{C^c_j}{\sum_{j 
eq i_{ ext{centre}}} \left|C^c_j
ight|}$$

end if

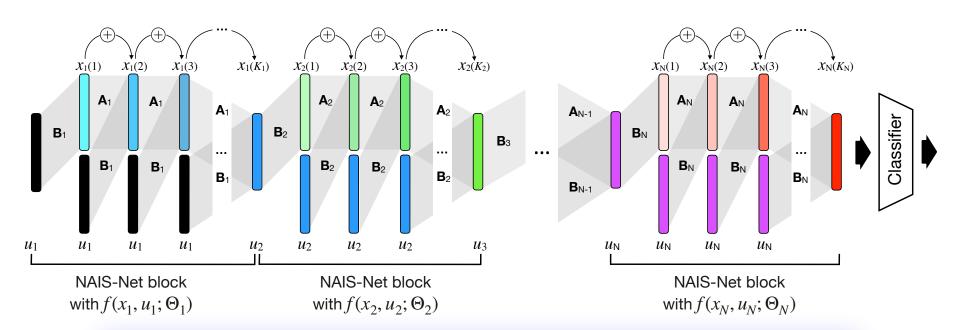
end for

Output:  $\delta$ , C





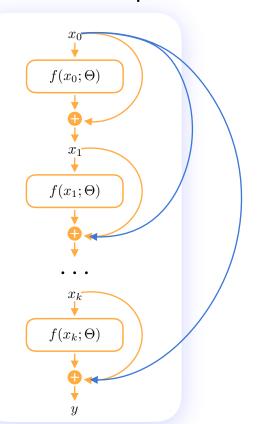
#### Non-Autonomous Input-Output Stable Architecture



NAIS-Net is a **cascade** of **stable time-invariant non-autonomous** dynamical systems. The skip connections from the input  $u_i$  to all layers in block i make the process non-autonomous.



#### Pattern-dependent processing depth



Each NAIS-Net block represents an iterative process that models the trajectories of the input in a different latent space

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + f(x(k), u; \Theta)$$
 Assuming shared weights 
$$\theta(k) \equiv \Theta \ \, \forall \, 1 \leq k \leq K$$

Thanks to stability and shared weights  $\Theta_i$  NAIS-Net blocks can be unrolled until convergence to input-dependent attractors.

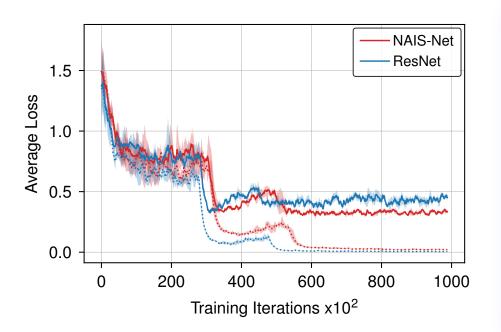
We can then define stopping criteria to have a variable number of processing stages  $K_i$  conditioned on the input.

$$||x(k+1) - x(k)||_2 < \epsilon$$





## Generalization gap on CIFAR-10



#### NAIS-Net input-output stability advantages:

- trajectories are bounded with respect to noise perturbations increasing robustness and invariance to input perturbations.
- NAIS-Net is less prone to overfitting than a classic ResNet, reducing the generalization gap
- No need of batchnorm, because the forward pass is already well behaved. (we need it only when the input dimensionality changes)





### Pattern-dependent processing depth

Final number of layers (depth)



NAIS-Net adapts processing depth systematically according to the characteristics of the data. The depth of the network can be considered as an additional degree of freedom of the model.





### Pattern-dependent processing depth

Final number of layers (depth)



NAIS-Net adapts processing depth systematically according to the characteristics of the data. The depth of the network can be considered as an additional degree of freedom of the model.



# Representations Learning for new data modalities

Computer Vision with Asynchronous Event-based data





#### **Event-Based Camera vs Standard Camera**

Hanme Kim

**Robot Vision Group** Imperial College London

e = (x, y, t, p)

Pixel Location

Timestamp

Polarity: {-1, +1}

Bio-inspired vision sensors that emulate the functioning of biological retinas.

#### Smart pixels



All independent from each other



Only transmit information due to brightness changes in the scene

Advantages over conventional cameras:

- High dynamic range
- Reduced information redundancy
- No motion blur
- Microseconds temporal resolution





#### New data, new challenges

Sparse data → Efficient computation

Asynchronous data → Time integration

$$e = (x, y, t, p)$$

Existing representations do not scale to complex computer vision tasks because:

- X hand-crafted or based on heuristics.
- X and/or disregard spatial correlation.
- x and/or disregard order of arrival

## **Q** Motivation



#### New data, new challenges

Sparse data → Efficient computation

Asynchronous data → Time integration

$$e = (x, y, t, p)$$

Existing representations do not scale to complex computer vision tasks because:

- X hand-crafted or based on heuristics.
- X and/or disregard spatial correlation.
- x and/or disregard order of arrival

#### **Goal:** Learn representations from raw events.

Combine the advantages of event cameras and those of frame-based architectures.

#### **Desiderata**

- handle sparse data and retain the advantages of asynchronous computation.
- or preserve spatial information.
- end-to-end training with state-of-the-art computer vision systems.



## Representations for event-based data

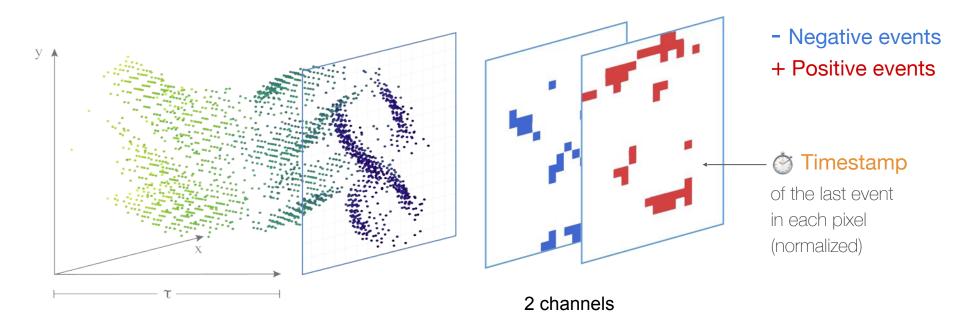


Standard RGB Camera

Event-based Camera
Handcrafted event encoding

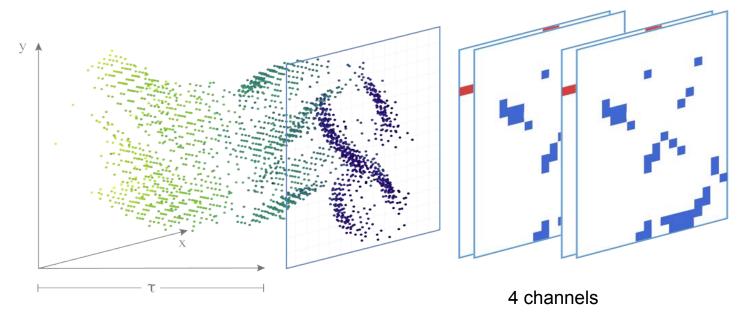


## Event Representations - Simple Surfaces





## Event Representations - Simple Surfaces



- Negative events
- + Positive events

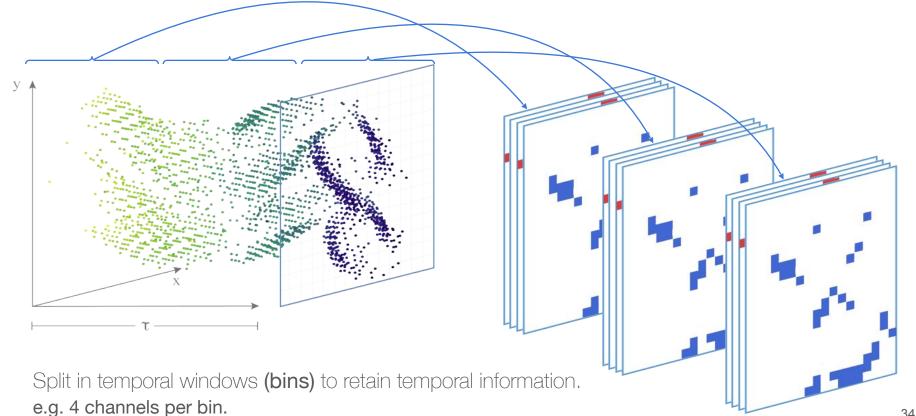
Timestamp

of the last event in each pixel

# of events
received in each pixel

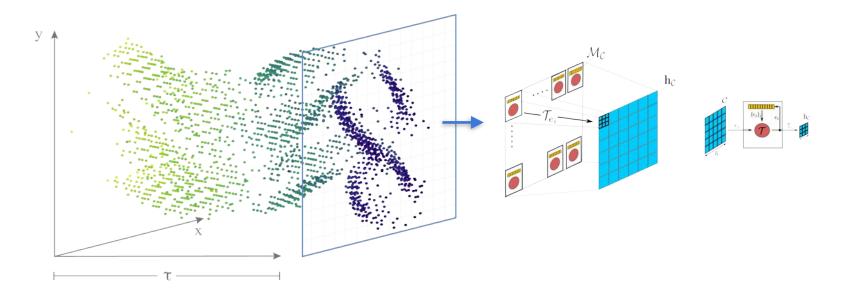


## Event Representations - Simple Surfaces





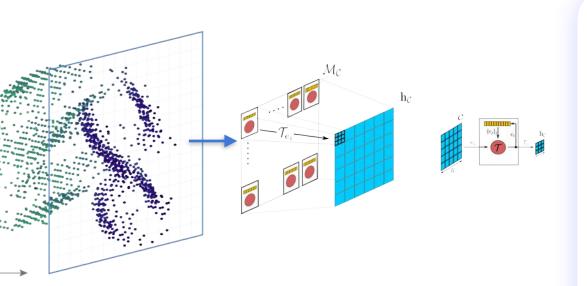
## Event Representations - HATS



Sironi et al. (2018) Lagorce et al. (2016)



#### Event Representations - HATS

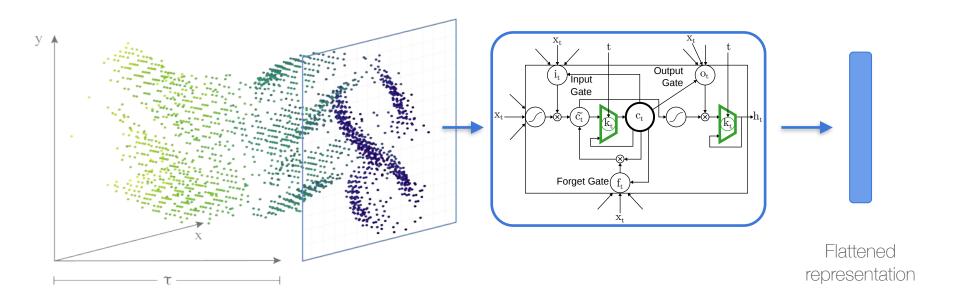


- Retain temporal information
- Event features leverage local spatial-temporal patterns
- Cannot be trained end-to-end and optimized for the task
- The exponential kernel is hand-crafted
- X The aggregation step is fixed

Sironi et al. (2018) Lagorce et al. (2016)

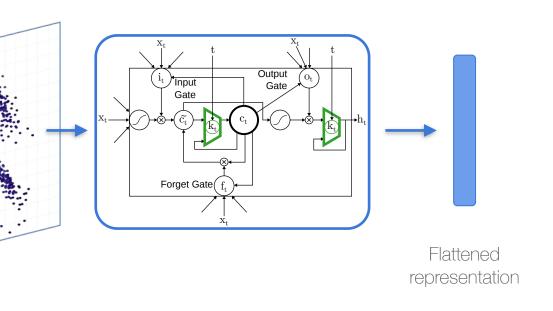


## Event Representations - PhasedLSTM



# POLITECNICO MILANO 1863

## Event Representations - PhasedLSTM

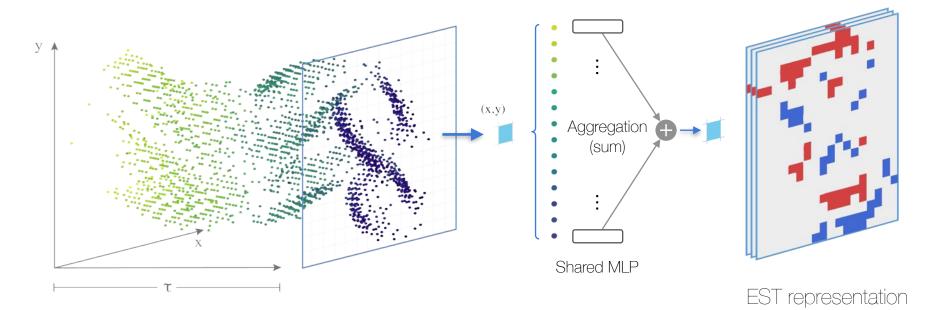


- Can be trained end-to-end and optimized for the task
- The aggregation step is learned
- ★ Spatial information is lost
- Does not scale to large frames and complex scenes

Neil et al. (2016)



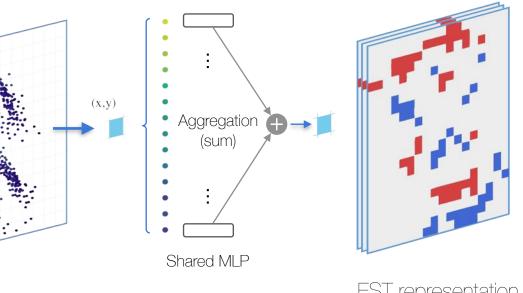
## Event Representations - EST



Daniel et al. (2019)

# **POLITECNICO** MILANO 1863

#### Event Representations - EST



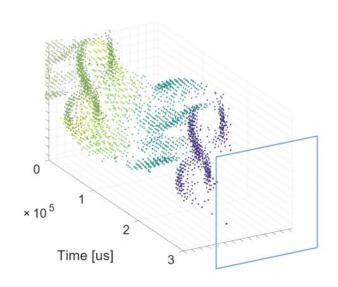
EST representation

- Generalize to multiple tasks
- Can be trained end to end and optimized for the task
- X Original event arrival order is lost
- Aggregation step is fixed

Daniel et al, 2019

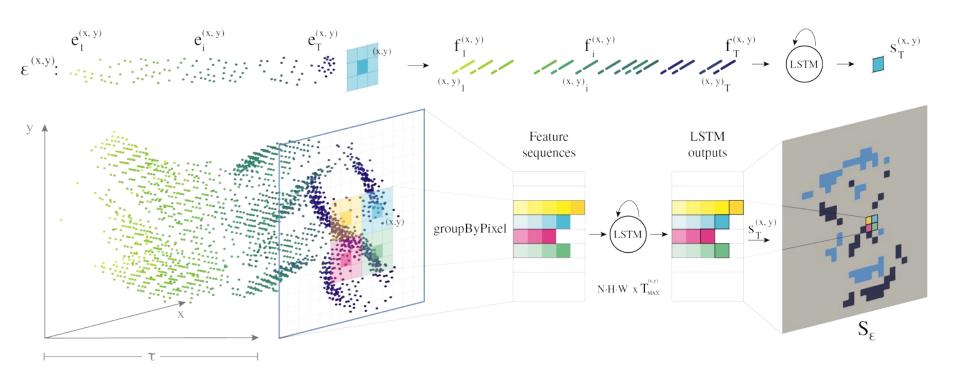


#### Matrix-LSTM: a Differentiable Recurrent Surface for Events



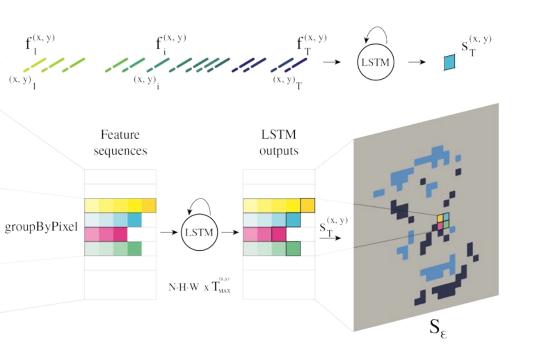


#### Matrix-LSTM: a Differentiable Recurrent Surface for Events





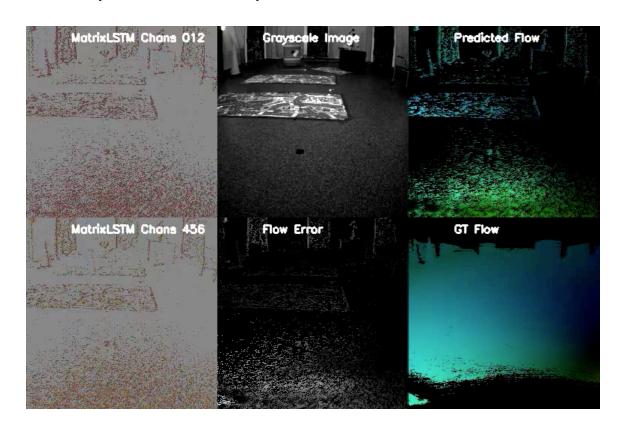
#### Matrix-LSTM: a Differentiable Recurrent Surface for Events



- Events are processed in sequence, reasoning on the previous event dynamics
- The event aggregation mechanism is learned through the LSTM gates (how, what and when)
- spatial information is preserved
- It generalizes to multiple tasks
- Can be trained end to end and optimized for the task



## MatrixLSTM: Optical flow prediction

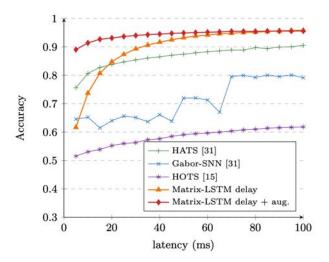




## Classification Experiments

Method	Classifier	Channels (bins)	N-Cars	N-Caltech101
H-First [24]	spike-based	-	56.1	0.54
HOTS [15]	histogram similarity	-	62.4	21.0
Gabor-SNN [31]	SVM	-	78.9	19.6
HATS [31]	SVM	-	90.2	64.2
	ResNet34–EST [10]	-	90.9	69.1
	ResNet18-Ev2Vid [26]	-	90.4	70.0
Ev2Vid [26]	ResNet18-Ev2Vid	3	91.0	86.6
Matrix-LSTM	ResNet18-Ev2Vid	3 (1)	$95.80 \pm 0.53$	$84.12 \pm 0.84$
(Ours)	ResNet34–Ev2Vid	3 (1)	$95.65 \pm 0.46$	$85.72 \pm 0.37$
EST [10]	ResNet34-EST	2 (9)	92.5	81.7
	ResNet34-EST	2(16)	92.3	83.7
Matrix-LSTM (Ours)	ResNet18-EST	16 (1)	$94.37 \pm 0.40$	$81.24 \pm 1.31$
	ResNet34–EST	16(1)	$94.31 \pm 0.43$	$78.98 \pm 0.54$
	ResNet18-EST	16(2)	$94.09 \pm 0.29$	$83.42 \pm 0.80$
	ResNet34-EST	16(2)	$94.31 \pm 0.44$	$80.45 \pm 0.55$
	ResNet18-EST	2 (16)	$92.58 \pm 0.68$	$84.31 \pm 0.59$
	ResNet34-EST	2(16)	$92.15 \pm 0.73$	$83.50 \pm 1.24$







# Learning from Limited Data

Adaptive Representations for One-Shot Video Object Segmentation



#### Video Object Segmentation

#### New setting, new challenges

- Segment given objects in the scene.

  At **test time**, the first frame annotation is available.
- ! No explicit semantic attached to the objects. Foreground/Background.
- Videos and objects in training set are different from test set!
- Generalize to new objects.



#### Remember the standard SL setting

- Fixed number of classes, same at training and test time.
- Generalize to new samples of observed objects.



#### **DAVIS Dataset**

#### **Additional Challenges from DAVIS**

Scarce data (only a few videos)

! Ego-motion and occlusions

Objects change shape, size and perspective during the video





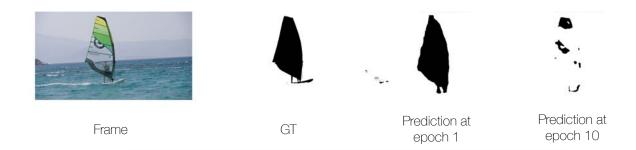




#### Supervised Learning Approach

Video Segmentation = Image Segmentation + Time Coherence

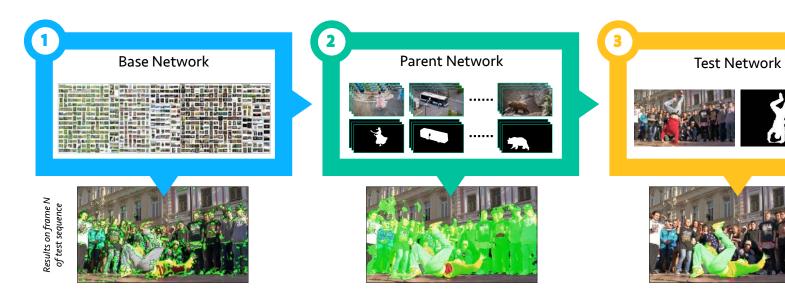
Modeling complex motion dynamics (RNNs) Modeling the concept of objectness (CNNs)



Complex models with naïve supervised learning approaches quickly overfits



## Fine-Tuning approach



Pre-trained on ImageNet

Trained on DAVIS training set

Fine-tuned on  $1^{st}$  frame of test each sequence

Caelles et al. (2017)



### Fine-Tuning approach

#### Fine-Tuning each video on single annotation

- Simple yet effective method
- X Not efficient: thousands of optimization steps per video
- Hyper-parameters of the test-time optimization are often excessively handcrafted and fail to generalize between datasets
- test-time optimization requires complicated augmentations to avoid overfitting





Fine-tuned on  $1^{st}$  frame of test each sequence

Caelles et al. (2017)



## Meta Learning approach

Meta Learning is an elegant framework that can be used to extract and re-use knowledge across collections of tasks.

Meta-dataset: collection of episodes (or tasks).

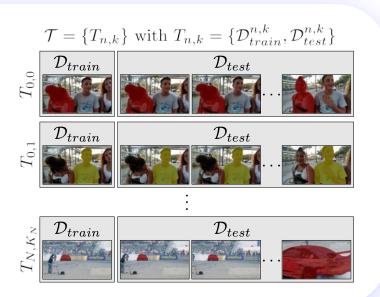
Each video object segmentation can be considered as an independent task.

#### Segmentation task:

- $\mathcal{D}_{train}$ : training set of a single example
- $\mathcal{D}_{test}$ : test set of next frames

**Goal:** generalize to other frames of the same video from a single annotation.

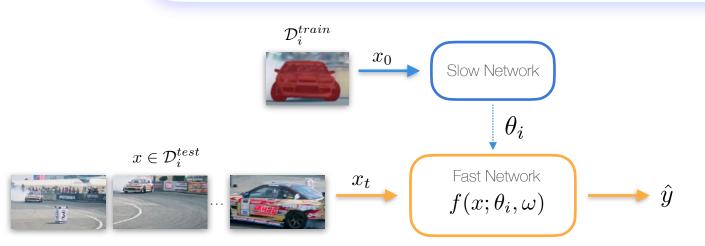
Train and test condition match.





#### Model-based Meta Learning

$$(\omega^*, \phi^*) = \underset{\omega}{\operatorname{argmin}} \sum_{\substack{\tau_i \sim p(\tau) \\ \{\mathcal{D}_i^{train}, \mathcal{D}_i^{val}\} \in \tau_i}} \sum_{\substack{(x, y) \in \mathcal{D}_i^{val} \\ \text{s.t. } \theta_i = g(\mathcal{D}_i^{train}; \phi)}} \mathcal{L}^{task}(f(x; \theta_i, \omega), y)$$



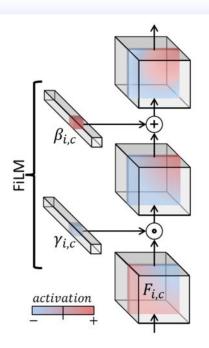


## FiLM: Conditioning Layer via Feature Modulation

Generating weights is unfeasible and prone to overfitting for large networks.

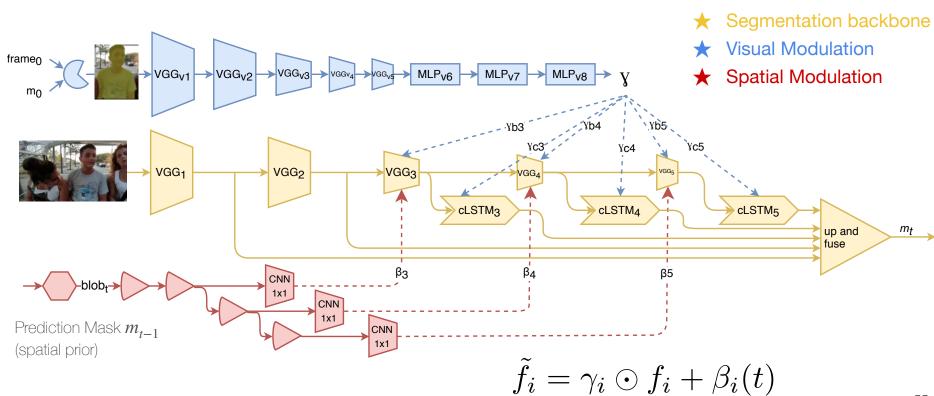
More efficient approach: adapt features representation by conditioning it with task specific affine transformations.

$$\tilde{f}_i = \gamma_i \odot f_i + \beta_i$$

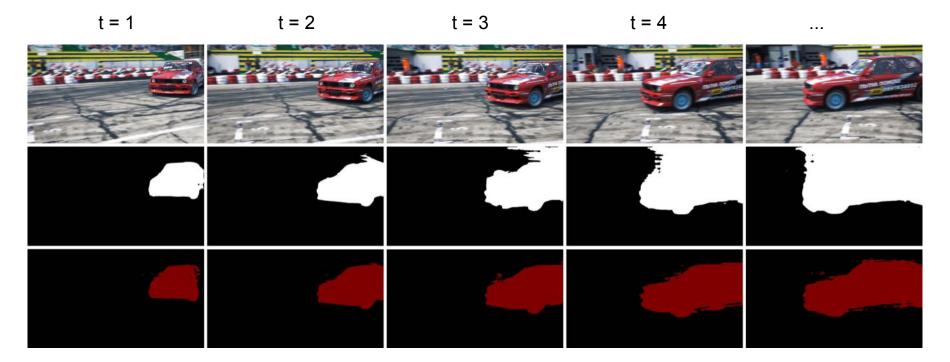


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### Spatio-temporal Features Modulation









t = 1 t = 2 t = 3 t = 4



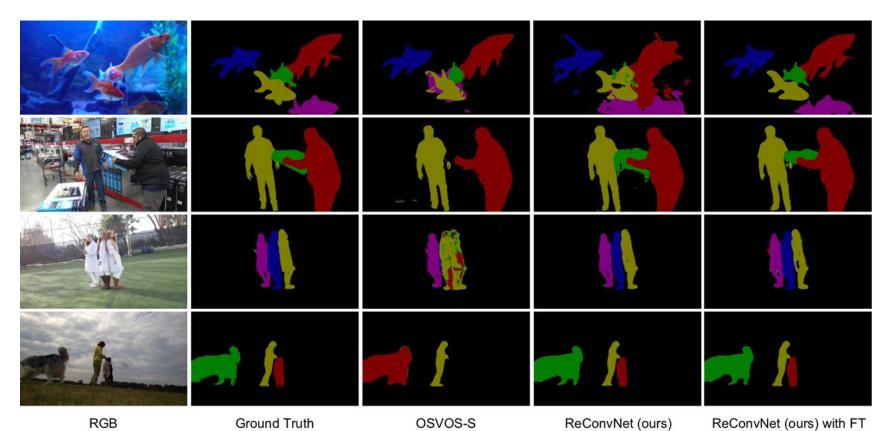
t = 1 t = 2 t = 4



t = 1 t = 2 t = 4



## Results on multi-objects segmentation





## Summary and Future Work



NAIS-Net: a new neural network with stability guarantees that can be used in safety critical applications. (Ciccone et al. NeurIPS 2018)





- Adversarial Robustness
- RL applications
- Flow-based generative models



#### Summary and Future Work



- NAIS-Net: a new neural network with stability guarantees that can be used in safety critical applications. (Ciccone et al. NeurIPS 2018)
- Matrix-LSTM: a new general purpose differentiable representation for event-based data that can be used as input for any computer vision task. (Cannici, Ciccone et al. ECCV 2020)

#### **6** Future work



- Adversarial Robustness
- RL applications
- Flow-based generative models

#### **★** Matrix-LSTM:

- Large scale benchmarks
- Prophesee Automotive Dataset
- New tasks: Object Detection, Depth estimation



#### Summary and Future Work

#### Contributions

- NAIS-Net: a new neural network with stability guarantees that can be used in safety critical applications. (Ciccone et al. NeurIPS 2018)
- Matrix-LSTM: a new general purpose differentiable representation for event-based data that can be used as input for any computer vision task. (Cannici, Ciccone et al. ECCV 2020)
- ReConvNet: an efficient method for Video Object Segmentation that can adapt its representation at test time to new objects with a single annotated frame. (Lattari\*, Ciccone\* et al CVPRW 2018)

#### **6** Future work



- Adversarial Robustness
- RL applications
- Flow-based generative models

#### **★** Matrix-LSTM:

- Large scale benchmarks
- Prophesee Automotive Dataset
- New tasks: Object Detection, Depth estimation

#### **★** ReConvNet:

- Improve Object localization and tracking
- Cross-domain One Shot Learning
- Gradient-based adaptation

















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# thank you!

Questions?