# Exploiting network topology in brain-scale multi-area model simulations

Melissa Lober[1,2*], Markus Diesmann[1,3], Susanne Kunkel[4]

[1] Institute of Neuroscience and Medicine (INM-6), Institute for Advanced Simulation (IAS-6) and JARA Brain Institute I (INM-10), Jülich Research Centre, Jülich, Germany

[2] RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany

[3] Department of Physics, Faculty 1, & Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy, and Psychosomatics, Medical School, RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany

[4] Neuromorphic Software Ecosystems (PGI-15), Jülich Research Centre, Jülich, Germany

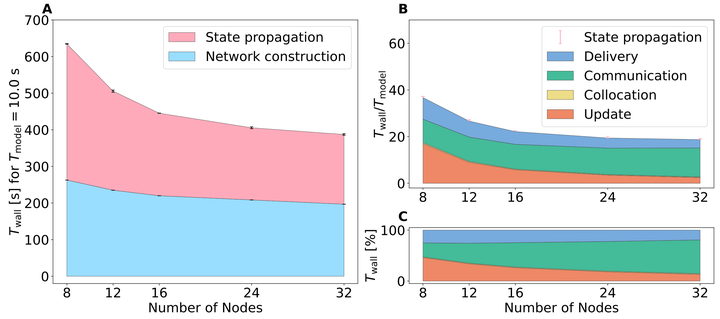
* m.lober@fz-juelich.de

## Motivation

- continuous improvement of CPU-based simulation techniques create challenging benchmarking targets for neuromorphic platforms
  - neuronal simulations on conventional hardware still maintain higher flexibility at potentially lower cost compared to novel dedicated hardware [1]
- spike communication is the bottleneck in simulations of brain-scale networks [2]
- e.g. the multi-area model of macaque visual cortex [3]
  - 32 interconnected areas modelled as microcircuits [4]
  - realistic connectivity
  - single neuron resolution

⇒ structure-aware neuron distribution scheme combined with optimized spike-communication framework to speed up neuronal simulations

### Simulation phases of the multi-area model




Strong-scaling benchmark of macaque multi-area model performed with NEST v3.6 on Jülich Supercomputer JURECA.

## Outlook

- benchmarking of networks with inhomogeneous activity or size
- benchmarking state of the art models (e.g. model of macaque visual cortex [3])

### References

[1] Kurth AC, Senk J, Terhorst D, Finnerty J, Diesmann M (2022) Sub-realtime simulation of a neuronal network of natural density. Neuromorphic Computing and Engineering, 2:021001. doi: 10.1088/2634-4386/ac55fc

[2] Albers J, Pronold J, Kurth AC, Vennemo SB, Haghighi Mood K, Patronis A, Terhorst D, Jordan J, Kunkel S, Tetzlaff T, Diesmann M and Senk J (2022) A Modular Workflow for Performance Benchmarking of Neuronal Network Simulations. Front. Neuroinform. 16:837549. doi: 10.3389/fninf.2022.837549

[3] Schmidt M, Bakker R, Hilgetag CC, Diesmann M and van Albada SJ (2018) Multi-scale account of the network structure of macaque visual cortex. Brain Structure and Function, 223: 1409 https://doi.org/10.1007/s00429-017-1554-4

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[5] Gewaltig M-O and Diesmann M (2007) NEST (Neural Simulation Tool) Scholarpedia 2(4):1430

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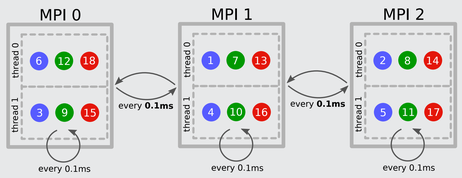
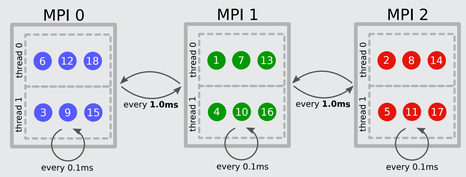
## Algorithm

### Conventional neuron distribution scheme




- uniform occupation of compute nodes: "round-robin"
- neurons of the same area are spread out on the hardware
- communication between compute nodes every smallest delay of e.g. $0.1$ ms

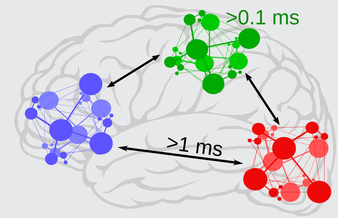
### Structure-aware neuron distribution scheme




- one/few compute nodes per area
- two communication pathways
  - within an area: short delays (e.g. $0.1$ ms)
  - between areas: long delays (e.g. $1.0$ ms)

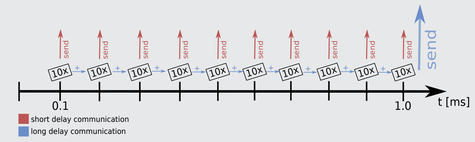
⇒ faster communication within areas

⇒ fewer communication between areas




### Example: structure-aware approach

- 10.000 neurons per area; $10$ spikes/s

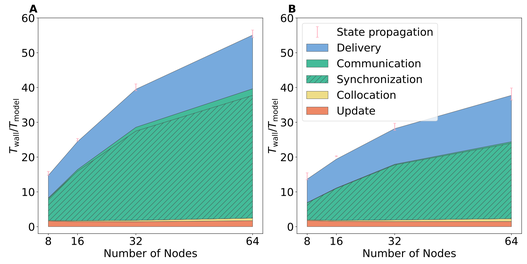



## Results

### Setup

- neuronal simulator tool NEST [5,6]
- benchmarking model
  - similar to macaque multi-area model in connectivity and work load
  - easily scalable while retaining constant activity levels
  - $\approx 130.000$ neurons per area
  - $\approx$ $3000$ inter- and intra-area connections per neuron, respectively
  - average spike rate of $2.5$ spike/s
- Jülich Supercomputer JURECA
  - 2 MPI processes per compute node, 64 threads each
  - 1 area per MPI process
- communication phase
  - synchronization between all compute nodes (only long-range communication)
  - spike data exchange (both short-range and long-range communication)

### Weak-scaling experiment

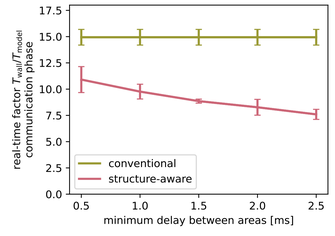



**A** Conventional round-robin neuron distribution with single communication pathway.

**B** Structure-aware neuron distribution with separate communication pathways for short- and long-range connections

- significant speed up of spike communication
- speed of other simulation phases is maintained
- benefit lies in reduced time spent on compute node synchronization
- promising scaling behavior for large number of areas and compute nodes

### Delay dependence




- delay distr. within an area drawn from normal distribution $\mathcal{N}(1.25, 0.625)$
- delay distr. between areas drawn from normal distribution $\mathcal{N}(5.00, 2.50)$
- lower cutoff of inter-area delay distribution defines inter-node communication frequency in structure-aware approach

⇒ benefit of implementation increases with decreasing amount of inter-area communication