

Causal Models

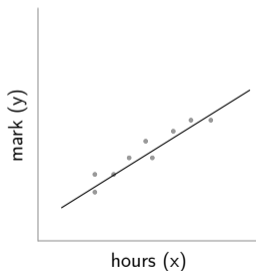
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Example to have a mind

- ▶ consider writing down a mathematical model for causal situations
- ▶ here's an example to consider: firing squad
 - ▶ there is a court, which may order the execution of a prisoner
 - ▶ if the court orders the captain signals
 - ▶ if the the captain signals two separate rifleman will fire killing the prisoner
- ▶ how could we evaluate statements like:
 - ▶ "if the prisoner is dead, then even if one rifeman withheld, the prisoner would be dead"
 - ▶ the key word of counterfactuals: "would"

A second example to keep in mind: why regression models are not causal

- ▶ a second example: hours studied and grades
 - ▶ students study a number of hours for an exam, x
 - ▶ students take an exam and receives a mark, y
- ▶ regression does not distinguish between $y \approx f(x)$ or $x \approx g(y)$ (but you could estimate g)



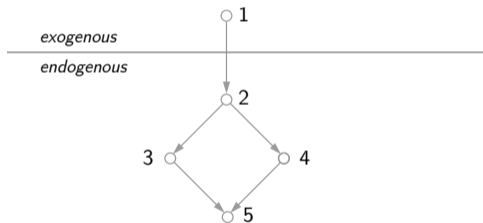
Basic Concepts

Typed Graph

- ▶ let (V, E) a graph and let $\{A_v\}_{v \in V}$ a collection of sets
 - ▶ call $(V, E, \{A_v\})$ a *typed graph*
 - ▶ for vertex $v \in V$, call A_v the *domain* of v
 - ▶ for subset of vertices $U \subset V$, denote product of domains (w.r.t. fixed order) by $A_U = \prod_{u \in U} A_u$
- ▶ if (V, E) is directed
 - ▶ call $\{u \in V \mid (u, v) \in E\}$ the *parents* of v ; denote the parents of v by P_v
 - ▶ call $v \in V$ *exogenous* if P_v is empty, otherwise call v *endogenous*

Example: (Directed) Typed Graph

- ▶ example with $V = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ and $E = \{(1, 2), (2, 3), (2, 4), (3, 5), (4, 5)\}$



- ▶ and boolean domains $A_v = \{0, 1\}$ for each $v = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$

Graphical Variable Model

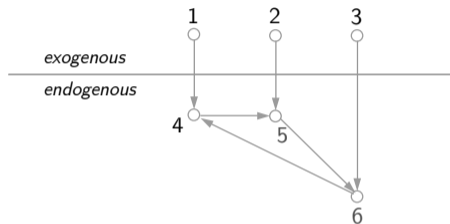
- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\})$ a typed directed graph
- ▶ let X a subset of the domain of exogenous vertices
- ▶ let $f_v : A_{P_v} \rightarrow A_v$ for each endogenous vertex
- ▶ call $(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{f_v\})$ a *graphical variable model*
 - ▶ call elements of V *variables*
 - ▶ call elements of X *circumstances*
 - ▶ call f_v the *dynamics* for variable v

Interpretation: Graphical Variable Model

- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{f_v\})$ a graphical variable model
- ▶ interpretation: a system of equations defined by relations in $\{f_v\}$ and structure in E
 - ▶ denote the product domain of the endogenous variables by Y
 - ▶ let $F : X \times Y \rightarrow Y$ such that $F_v(x, y) = F_v(z) = f_v(z_{P_v})$
- ▶ for fixed x , call solutions y of $F(x, y) = y$ the *outcomes*
 - ▶ may be none, one or many solutions
 - ▶ corresponds to root finding of $G(y; x) = F(x, y) - y$
 - ▶ leads to question: when will we know there will be one unique outcome?

Example: Graphical Variable Model

- ▶ example with $V = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$ and $E = \{(1, 4), (2, 5), (3, 6), (4, 5), (5, 6), (6, 4)\}$



- ▶ real domains $A_v = \mathbf{R}$ for each $v = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6$
- ▶ dynamics $f_4(x_1, y_3) = x_1 + a_{13}y_3$, $f_5(x_2, y_1) = x_2 + a_{21}y_1$, and $f_6(x_3, y_2) = x_3 + a_{32}y_2$
- ▶ outcomes are solutions, for fixed x , of

$$F(x, y) = x + \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & a_{13} \\ a_{21} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & a_{32} & 0 \end{bmatrix} y = y$$

Causal Model

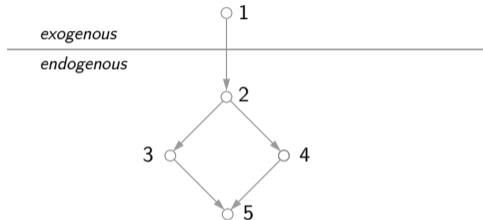
- ▶ motivation: if (V, E) of graphical variable model is acyclic, then
 - ▶ there exists a unique solution to system of equations for fixed exogenous values
 - ▶ computational implication: topologically sort graph, set exogenous variables and evaluate f_v
- ▶ definition: call $(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{A_v\})$ with (V, E) acyclic a *causal graphical variable model*
 - ▶ call it a *causal model* for short
 - ▶ call $f : X \rightarrow Y$, *outcome map*, denoting the product domain of the exogenous variables by Y
 - ▶ call $f(x)$ the *outcome* of circumstance x
 - ▶ call graph of f the *possibilities*; denote the graph of f by Γ_f

Interpretation: Causal Model

- ▶ given a set of (endogenous) variables to model and (exogenous) variables external to model
- ▶ given specified values for these exogenous variables (circumstances)
- ▶ use the model to determine the values for endogenous variables (outcomes)
- ▶ computationally: topologically sort the graph, then evaluate the f_v

Example: Causal Model

- ▶ same typed graph as before, with circumstances $X = \{0, 1\}$ for vertex 1



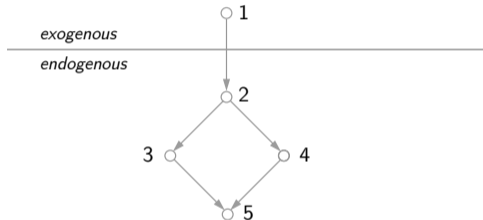
- ▶ specify dynamics functions for each of the vertices
 - ▶ $f_2, f_3, f_4 \equiv \text{id}$ (the identity function)
 - ▶ $f_5(a, b) = a \vee b$ (the logical or function)
- ▶ use circumstances and dynamics to find set of possibilities $\{(0, 0, 0, 0, 0), (1, 1, 1, 1, 1)\}$

Evidence, Intervention, and Counterfactual Model

- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{f_v\})$ with outcome map $f : X \rightarrow Y$
 - ▶ let U a set of endogenous vertices and $\{\phi_u : A_{P_u} \rightarrow A_u\}_{u \in U}$, call $(U, \{\phi_u\})$ an *intervention*
 - ▶ let $W \subset V$ and $w \in A_W$, call (U, w) *evidence*
- ▶ define a *counterfactual* causal model $(G, X', \{f'_v\})$ for evidence (E, e) and an intervention $(U, \{\phi_u\})$
 - ▶ $X' = \{z_{V_x} \mid z \in \Gamma_f \text{ and } z_E = e\}$;
 - ▶ interpretation: only include circumstances consistent with the evidence
 - ▶ $f'_v = \phi_v$ if $v \in U$ and $f'_v = f_v$ otherwise
 - ▶ interpretation: change dynamics of variables in U , do not change structure E

Example: Counterfactual Model

- ▶ causal model as before, with circumstances $X = \{0, 1\}$ for vertex 1,
 - ▶ and dynamics $f_2, f_3, f_4 \equiv \text{id}$ and $f_5(a, b) = a \vee b$

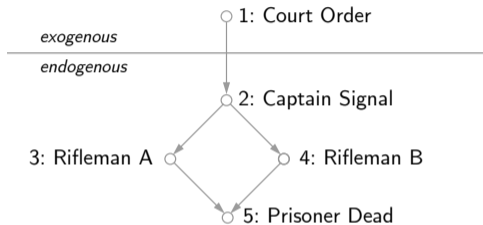


- ▶ use evidence $(\{5\}, (0))$ and intervention $(\{3\}, \{\phi_3 \equiv 1\})$
 - ▶ only circumstance consistent with evidence is (0)
 - ▶ intervention fixes variable 3 at value 1
- ▶ using "new" dynamics we find only possibility of counterfactual model is $(0, 0, 1, 0, 1)$

Example: Firing Squad

Example: Firing Squad Interpretation

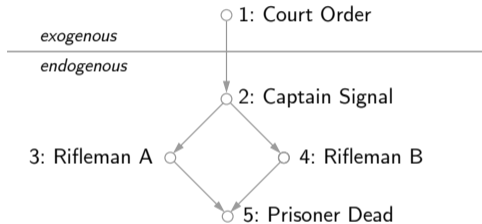
- ▶ causal model as before; attach firing squad interpretation



- ▶ each boolean variable corresponds to indicator of the action or event
- ▶ in english, "if the court orders, the captain signals and the rifleman (A and B) fire, killing the prisoner"
- ▶ two possibilities: $\{(0, 0, 0, 0, 0), (1, 1, 1, 1, 1)\}$
 - ▶ circumstance (0): court withholds, captain withholds, riflemen withhold, prisoner lives
 - ▶ circumstance (1): court orders, captain signals, riflemen shoot, prisoner dies

Example: Prediction

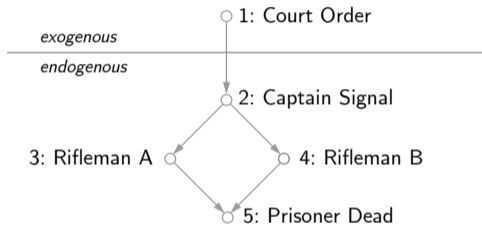
- ▶ same causal model, with outcome map f



- ▶ for all $z \in \Gamma_f$, $\neg z_3 \implies \neg z_5$
 - ▶ in english, "if rifleman *A* did not shoot, then the prisoner is alive"
 - ▶ example of *prediction*, as in all orders of V , $3 \prec 5$

Example: Abduction

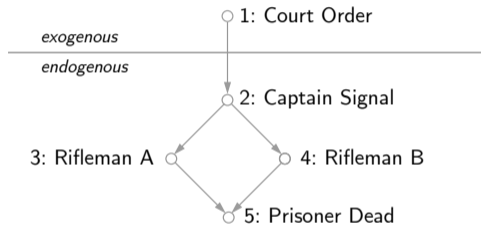
- ▶ same causal model, with outcome map f



- ▶ for all $z \in \Gamma_f$, $\neg z_5 \implies \neg z_2$
 - ▶ in english, "if the prisoner is alive, then the captain did not signal"
 - ▶ example of *abduction*, as in all orders of V , $5 \prec 2$

Example: Transduction

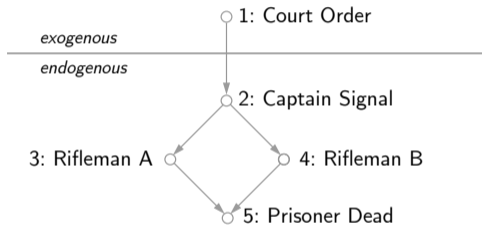
- ▶ same causal model, with outcome map f



- ▶ for all $z \in \Gamma_f$, $z_3 \implies z_4$
 - ▶ in english, "if rifleman A shot, then rifleman B shot"
 - ▶ example of *transduction*, as there exists an order in which $3 \prec 4$ and one in which $3 \succ 4$

Example: Intervention

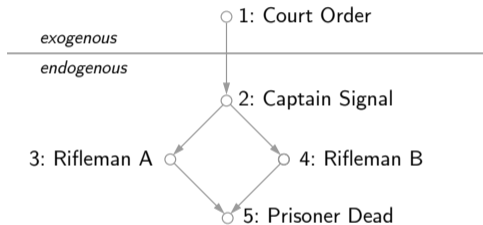
- ▶ *intervention* causal model, with outcome map g ; intervention $(\{3\}, \{\phi_3 \equiv 1\})$,



- ▶ for all $z \in \Gamma_g$, $\neg z_2 \implies \neg z_4 \wedge z_5$
 - ▶ in english, "if the captain withholds, but rifleman *A* shoots, then rifleman *B* withholds and the prisoner dies"
 - ▶ example of an *action* modifying the model, as normally rifleman *A* follows the captain

Example: Counterfactual

- ▶ *counterfactual* causal model with outcome map g ; evidence $(\{5\}, (1))$, intervention $(\{3\}, \{\phi_3 \equiv 0\})$



- ▶ for all $z \in \Gamma_g, z_5$
 - ▶ in english, "if the prisoner is dead, then even if rifleman *A* withheld, the prisoner would be dead"
 - ▶ example of a *counterfactual*, as rifleman *A* did not in fact withhold

Parameters & Probabilities

Parameterized Graphical Variable Model

- ▶ let Θ a set
- ▶ let $\{(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})\}_{\theta \in \Theta}$ a family of graphical variable models
- ▶ call $(V, E, \{A_v\}, X, \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})$ a *parameterized graphical variable model*
 - ▶ call θ the *parameters*

Probabilistic Graphical Variable Model

- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\})$ a typed graph
- ▶ let X a subset of the product domain of exogenous variables and \mathcal{X} a σ -algebra on X
- ▶ let Y the product domain of endogenous variables and \mathcal{Y} a σ -algebra on Y
- ▶ let $\mathbf{P}_X : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow [0, 1]$ a probability measure on (X, \mathcal{X})
- ▶ let $f_v : A_{P_v} \rightarrow A_v$ measurable for v endogenous
- ▶ call $(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X, \{f_v\})$ a *probabilistic graphical variable model*
 - ▶ call \mathbf{P}_X the *exogenous distribution*
 - ▶ denote the measure $\mathbf{P}_X \circ f$ by \mathbf{P}_Y ; call it the *endogenous distribution*
 - ▶ let $(\Gamma_f, \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Y})$ the product measurable space with induced measure \mathbf{P} ; call \mathbf{P} the *model distribution*
- ▶ interpretation: identify each vertex with a random variable

Parameterized Probabilistic Causal Model

- ▶ let Θ a set
- ▶ let $\{(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})\}_{\theta \in \Theta}$ a family of probabilistic causal models
- ▶ call $(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})$ *parameterized probabilistic causal model*
 - ▶ call θ the *parameters*
 - ▶ denote the model distribution by \mathbf{P}_θ , indicating the dependence on the parameters

Notions akin to Causation

Influence

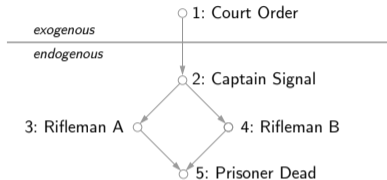
- ▶ let $f : X \rightarrow Y$ the outcome map of a causal model and x a circumstance
 - ▶ let $v \in V$, and $U \subset V$ with $v \notin U$
 - ▶ let $(\{U\}, \{\phi_u\})$ an intervention inducing outcome map g
 - ▶ denote $(x, f(x))$ by z and $(x, g(x))$ by \check{z}
- ▶ if there exists an intervention on U such that $z_v \neq \check{z}_v$, we say U *influences* v in circumstance x
 - ▶ additionally, we say U influences v if it influences v in at least one circumstance
- ▶ **proposition:** if $\{u\}$ influences v , then u is an ancestor of v
 - ▶ a simple necessary condition on structure for influence
 - ▶ **corollary:** if variable v is exogenous then it has no influencers
- ▶ **proposition:** if U influences v and $U \subset W$, then W influences v

Responsibility

- ▶ let $f : X \rightarrow Y$ the outcome map of a causal model and x a circumstance
 - ▶ let $v \in V$ boolean (i.e., $A_v = \{0, 1\}$), $U \subset V$ with $v \notin U$ and $z_v = 1$
- ▶ if U influences v in x we say U is *responsible* for s in x
 - ▶ influence requires changing the value of z_v , which in this case has only two options
 - ▶ interpretation: intervening on U could have *prevented* v in circumstance x
- ▶ **proposition:** if U responsible and $U \subset W$, then W is responsible
 - ▶ interpretation: any set containing a responsible set is responsible
- ▶ if there exists $Q \subset U$, $Q \neq U$ such that Q is responsible, we call U *reducible*
 - ▶ if U is not reducible we call it *irreducible*

Influence & Responsibility Example: Firing Squad

- ▶ consider $v = z_5$ and circumstance (1); in this circumstance z_5 is 1



- ▶ any subset of $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ influence 5; in this circumstance, responsibility is more limited
- ▶ both $\{1\}$ (court) and $\{2\}$ (captain) are responsible; both irreducible
- ▶ neither $\{3\}$ (rifleman A) nor $\{4\}$ (rifleman B) is responsible
 - ▶ however, $\{3, 4\}$ (set of rifleman A and B) is responsible for the prisoner's death; final irreducible set
- ▶ this example disproves the following "chain-of-responsibility" proposition:
 - ▶ if $\{u\}$ is responsible for v , \exists path $((u, v_1), (v_1, v_2), \dots, (v_p, v))$ with $\{v_i\}$ is responsible for v for $i = 1, \dots, p$

Multiple Responsible Sets

Problem of Multiple Responsible Sets

- ▶ let s a boolean variable in a causal model taking value 1 in circumstance x
- ▶ problem: there are generally several responsible $U \subset V$ for s in x
 - ▶ simple issues:
 - ▶ can have multiple responsible sets of the same cardinality
 - ▶ can have multiple different interventions corresponding to each responsible set
 - ▶ subtle issues:
 - ▶ U and W have same cardinality, but variables in W pre-empt those in U
 - ▶ $U \subset W$ and $U \neq W$ but the intervention certifying W 's responsibility is "more reasonable"
- ▶ does concept of reducibility go far enough?
 - ▶ prior example $\{2, 3, 4\}$ has irreducible responsible subsets $\{2\}$ and $\{3, 4\}$

Naive Solution of Multiple Responsible Sets

- ▶ let $h : \mathcal{I} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$, where \mathcal{I} denotes the set of interventions, and define the order \preceq on \mathcal{I} by

$$(U, \{\phi_u\}) \preceq (\tilde{U}, \{\phi_{\tilde{u}}\}) \text{ if and only if } h((U, \{\phi_u\})) \leq h((\tilde{U}, \{\phi_{\tilde{u}}\})).$$

- ▶ example: cardinality ordering

- ▶ fix $r : A_V \rightarrow [0, 1)$ and define $h((U, \{\phi_u\})) = |U| + r(z)$

- ▶ where $z = (x, g(x))$ and g is outcome map corresponding to intervention

- ▶ if $|U| \leq |\tilde{U}|$, then $(U, \{\phi_u\}) \preceq (\tilde{U}, \{\phi_{\tilde{u}}\})$

- ▶ interpretation: order by cardinality first, then by rating r

- ▶ example: distance to evidence

- ▶ let (E, e) evidence and (A_E, d) a metric space, define $h((U, \{\phi_u\})) = d(e, z_E)$

- ▶ example: likelihood ordering

- ▶ fix P a distribution on A_v and define $h((U, \{\phi_u\})) = -\log(P(z))$

- ▶ where $z = (x, g(x))$ and g is outcome map corresponding to intervention

- ▶ interpretation: order by likelihood of possibility induced by intervention

Minimal Responsible Set: Problem

- ▶ define "minimal" responsible sets U as solutions of

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize } h((U, \{\phi_u\})) \\ & \text{subject to } z_v = 0 \\ & \quad z = (x, g(x)) \\ & \quad g \text{ is outcome map for } (U, \{\phi_u\}) \\ & \quad U \subset V - \{v\} \text{ and } \phi_u : A_{P_u} \rightarrow A_u \end{aligned}$$

with decision variable $(U, \{\phi_u\})$

- ▶ interpretation: find the "smallest" intervention preventing $z_v = 1$ in circumstance x
- ▶ the equality constraint $z_v = 0$ certifies that U is responsible for v in x
- ▶ challenging: $O(2^{|V|})$ possible responsible sets, ϕ_u need not live in finite dimensional space

Minimal Responsible Set: Simplification

- ▶ **proposition:** w.l.o.g. can consider constant interventions $\phi_u \equiv c_u$ for $c_u \in A_u$
- ▶ can write equivalent problem

$$\text{minimize } h((U, \{\phi_u\}))$$

$$\text{subject to } z_v = 0$$

$$z = (x, g(x))$$

$$g \text{ is outcome map for } (U, \{\phi_u \equiv c_u\})$$

$$U \subset V - \{v\} \text{ and } c_u \in A_u$$

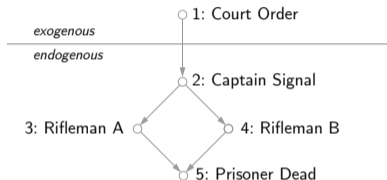
- ▶ interpretation of decision variables: choose intervention points U and values $\{c_u\}$

Parents Mediate Responsibility

- ▶ **motivation:** want to use a local property about responsibility to make a global statement
- ▶ **proposition:** if P_s is not a responsible set for s , then there is no responsible set for s in $V - \{s\}$
 - ▶ in fact, a refinement holds: if $\bar{A}Q \subset P_s$ responsible, then $\bar{A}R \subset V - \{s\}$
- ▶ interpretation: if the parents are not responsible, then no one is responsible
- ▶ intuition: all responsibility has to go through the parents
- ▶ contrapositive: if there exists $R \subset V - \{s\}$ responsible for s , then $\exists Q \subset P_s$ responsible for s

Firing Squad Example: Parents Mediate Responsibility

- ▶ consider $v = z_5$ and circumstance (1); in this circumstance z_5 is 1



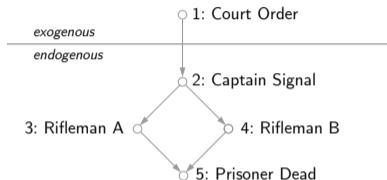
- ▶ we saw that $\{1\}$ and $\{2\}$ are responsible
- ▶ proposition tells us that $\{3, 4\}$ is responsible
- ▶ if (not true here) no intervention on $\{3, 4\}$ would change z_5 , no intervention on $\{1\}$ and $\{2\}$ would

Derivative Responsibility

- ▶ suppose U is a responsible set for boolean variable s
 - ▶ partition U into U_x and U_n
 - ▶ denote set $W = \{v \in V \mid v \in P_u \text{ for } u \in U_n\}$
- ▶ if $U_x \cup W$ is responsible for s then we call U *derivative*
- ▶ if U is not derivative, then we call it *original*
- ▶ **proposition:** if $U \subset V_x$ is responsible for s , then U is original
 - ▶ interpretation: an exogenous intervention is always original
- ▶ existence of responsible set equivalent to responsibility of the parent set
 - ▶ originality of parent set allows us to ignore rest of graph

Firing Squad Example: Derivative Responsibility

- ▶ consider $v = z_5$ and circumstance (1); in this circumstance z_5 is 1



- ▶ we saw that $\{1\}$, $\{2\}$, and $\{3, 4\}$ are responsible
- ▶ only the set $\{1\}$ is original (obvious: it only contains exogenous variables)
- ▶ the sets $\{2\}$ and $\{3, 4\}$ are derivative
 - ▶ $\{3, 4\}$ can be derived from intervening on $\{2\}$
 - ▶ $\{2\}$ can be derived from intervening on $\{1\}$

Structural Equation Models

Structural Equation Model

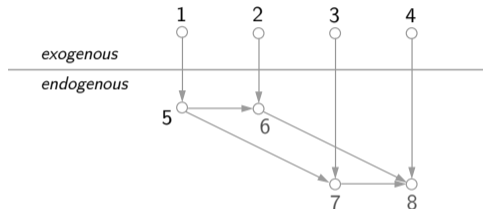
- ▶ a *structural equation model (SEM)* is a probabilistic causal model
- ▶ it has p mutually independent exogenous variables, each with one child
 - ▶ *i.e.*, there is one exogenous variable corresponding to each endogenous variable
- ▶ call these p exogenous variables the *noise* variables
- ▶ call subgraph (U, F) where U is the set of endogenous vertices and $F := \{(u, v) \in E \mid u, v \in U\}$ *endogenous subgraph*

(Linear) Additive Structural Equation Model (with Gaussian Errors)

- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X, \{f_v\})$ a SEM, denote the endogenous parents of v by \bar{P}_v
- ▶ if $f_v(z_{\bar{P}_v}, \varepsilon_v) = \sum_{u \in \bar{P}_v} f_{(u,v)}(z_u) + \varepsilon_v$, we call it an *additive structural equation model*
 - ▶ if the exogenous distribution of an additive SEM is Gaussian we call it an *additive SEM with Gaussian errors*
 - ▶ if the dynamics of an additive SEM are linear, *i.e.*, $f_{(u,v)}(\mathbf{a}) = \theta_{(u,v)} \mathbf{a}$, we call it a *linear additive SEM*
- ▶ if both the exogenous distribution is Gaussian and the dynamics linear, we call it a *linear gaussian SEM*

Example: linear Gaussian structural equation model

- ▶ let $V = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8\}$ and $E = \{(1, 2), (2, 6), (3, 7), (4, 8), (5, 6), (5, 7), (6, 8), (7, 8)\}$



- ▶ let \mathbf{P}_X be $N(0, 1)$ and dynamics

- ▶ $f_5(\varepsilon_1) = \varepsilon_1$
- ▶ $f_6(\gamma_1, \varepsilon_2) = \theta_1 \gamma_1 + \varepsilon_2$
- ▶ $f_7(\gamma_2, \varepsilon_3) = \theta_2 \gamma_2 + \varepsilon_3$
- ▶ $f_8(\gamma_2, \gamma_3, \varepsilon_4) = \theta_3 \gamma_2 + \theta_4 \gamma_3 + \varepsilon_4$

Structure Learning

Structure Learning

- ▶ frequently called "causal inference" or "causal discovery"
- ▶ let $\{(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})\}_{\theta \in \Theta}$ a family of probabilistic causal models
- ▶ **question:** how to go from \mathbf{P} to (θ, E) in class of parameterized causal models
- ▶ wait: assumes access to \mathbf{P} ?!
 - ▶ often results are given with this assumption
 - ▶ to go from data to structure, first go from data to \mathbf{P}

Structures & Representation

- ▶ let V a set (of vertices)
- ▶ call the set $\mathcal{E} = \{E \in V \times V \mid (V, E) \text{ directed, acyclic}\}$ the *structures* on V
- ▶ let $\{((V, E), \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})\}_{\theta \in \Theta}$ a family of probabilistic causal models
 - ▶ for $\theta \in \Theta$, $E \in \mathcal{E}$, denote the model distribution of $((V, E), \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})$ by \mathbf{P}_θ
 - ▶ likewise for θ, E' , denote the model distribution by \mathbf{P}'_θ
- ▶ if $(E, \theta) \in \mathcal{E} \times \Theta$ has model distribution \mathbf{P}_θ we that (E, θ) *represents* \mathbf{P}

Faithfulness

- ▶ let $(V, E, \{A_v\}, \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})$ with model distribution \mathbf{P}_θ
- ▶ then the model class is *faithful* if there does not exist E', θ' such that $\mathbf{P}_{\theta'} = \mathbf{P}_\theta$
- ▶ interpretation: once we have fixed a structure then no edges "disappear" by choice of θ
- ▶ examples of faithfulness failing exist even for linear gaussian models

Minimality

- ▶ define a relation on \mathcal{E} where $E \preceq E'$ if for all $\theta \in \Theta$ there exists $\theta' \in \Theta$ such that $\mathbf{P}_\theta = \mathbf{P}'_{\theta'}$
- ▶ interpretation: E precedes E' if every distribution representable by E is representable by E'
- ▶ if $E \in \mathcal{E}$ and there does not exist $E' \neq E$ with $E' \preceq E$ then we call E *minimal*
- ▶ interpretation: choose the simplest structure representing E
 - ▶ simplest means representing the fewest possible distributions

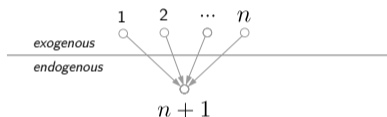
Minimal Representing Structure

- ▶ let $\{((V, E), \mathbf{P}_X(\cdot; \theta), \{f_v(\cdot; \theta)\})\}_{\theta \in \Theta}$ a family of probabilistic causal models
- ▶ let \mathbf{P} a distribution on $(\Gamma_f, \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Y})$
- ▶ call the set $\mathcal{R}(\mathbf{P}) = \{E \in \mathcal{E} \mid \exists \theta \in \Theta \text{ so that } (E, \theta) \text{ represents } \mathbf{P}\}$ the *representing* structures
- ▶ if $E \in \mathcal{R}(\mathbf{P})$ is minimal we call it the *minimal representing structure*

Bounded Linear Example

Bounded Linear Example

- ▶ parameters of model: positive integer n and vector $\alpha \in \mathbf{R}^n$
- ▶ typed graph $V = \{1, \dots, n + 1\}$ and $E = \{(1, n + 1), (2, n + 1), \dots, (n, n + 1)\}$

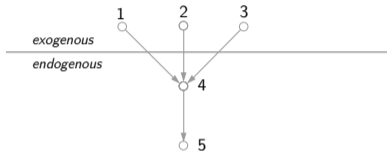


and domains $A_i = [0, 1]$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$ and $A_{n+1} = [1, n]$

- ▶ circumstances $X = [0, 1]^n$
- ▶ dynamics $f_{n+1}(x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) = \sum_i \alpha_i x_i$
- ▶ $\{i\}$ influences $n + 1$ if $\alpha_i \neq 0$

Bounded Linear Example: All Responsible

- ▶ consider $n = 3$ and $\alpha = 1$ basic bounded linear model with one additional boolean node (5)

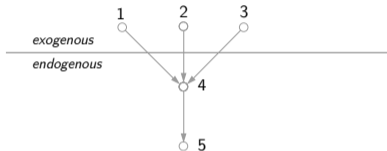


so the dynamics are $f_4(a, b, c) = a + b + c$ (sum) and $f_5(a) = 1$ if $a \geq \tau$ (indicator of threshold)

- ▶ consider circumstance $(1, 1, 1)$ and $\tau = 2.5$
 - ▶ any subset of $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ is responsible for 5
 - ▶ intuitively, $\{1\}$, $\{2\}$ and $\{3\}$ are each individually responsible
 - ▶ weird artifact of model: $\{4\}$ is responsible
 - ▶ could have defined dynamics of 5 directly as $f_5(a, b, c) = 1$ if $a + b + c \geq \tau$

Bounded Linear Example: One Responsible

- ▶ consider $n = 3$ and $\alpha = 1$ basic bounded linear model with one additional boolean node (5)

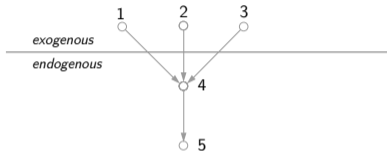


so the dynamics are $f_4(a, b, c) = a + b + c$ (sum) and $f_5(a) = 1$ if $a \geq \tau$ (indicator of threshold)

- ▶ consider circumstance $(1.0, 0.1, 0.1)$ and $\tau = 0.5$
 - ▶ again, $\{4\}$ is de facto responsible
 - ▶ but now only $\{1\}$ is responsible, not $\{2\}$ or $\{3\}$
 - ▶ justification for 2 and 3 not responsible: $1 + \xi + .1 \geq 0.5$ for all $\xi \geq 0$

Bounded Linear Example: Two Responsible

- ▶ consider $n = 3$ and $\alpha = 1$ basic bounded linear model with one additional boolean node (5)



so the dynamics are $f_4(a, b, c) = a + b + c$ (sum) and $f_5(a) = 1$ if $a \geq \tau$ (indicator of threshold)

- ▶ consider circumstance $(1, 1, 1)$ and $\tau = 1.5$
 - ▶ again, $\{4\}$ is de facto responsible
 - ▶ now, none of $\{1\}$ $\{2\}$ or $\{3\}$ are responsible
 - ▶ justification for no individual responsibility: $1 + 1 + \xi \geq 1.5$ for all $\xi \geq 0$
 - ▶ however, the sets $\{1, 2\}$, $\{2, 3\}$ and $\{1, 3\}$ are each responsible