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Topic 16: Graphical Network Inference

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Key points:

Disclaimer: *The note is built on Prof. Jinchi Lv's lectures of the course at USC, DSO 607, High-Dimensional Statistics and Big Data Problems.*

16.1 Motivation

Consider a classic question: For n observations of dimension p, how can we capture the statistical relationships between the variables of interest? Consider the example of the multivariate Gaussian distribution:

Example 16.1.1: Multivariate Gaussian Distribution

Suppose we have n observations of dimension p, $\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$. let $\mathbf{S}$ be the empirical covariance matrix. Then the probability density

$$f(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{(2\pi)^{p/2}\det(\boldsymbol{\Sigma})^{1/2}} \exp\left\{-\frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{x}-\boldsymbol{\mu})'\boldsymbol{\Sigma}^{-1}(\mathbf{x}-\boldsymbol{\mu})\right\}$$

define the **inverse covariance matrix** or **precision matrix** as $\boldsymbol{\Omega} = \boldsymbol{\Sigma}^{-1}$, then we have

$$f_{\mu,\boldsymbol{\Omega}} = \exp\left\{\boldsymbol{\mu}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}\boldsymbol{x} - \left\langle \boldsymbol{\Omega}, \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{x}\mathbf{x}' \right\rangle - \frac{p}{2}\log(2\pi) + \frac{1}{2}\log\det(\boldsymbol{\Omega}) - \frac{1}{2}\boldsymbol{\mu}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}\boldsymbol{\mu}\right\}$$

where $\langle \mathbf{A}, \mathbf{B} \rangle = \operatorname{tr}(\mathbf{A}\mathbf{B})$.

In this example, we know that **every** multivariate Gaussian distribution can be represented by a pairwise **Gaussian Markov Random Field (GMRF)**, which an **undirected graph** $G = (V, E)$

- representing the collection of variables $\mathbf{x}$ by a vertex set $\mathcal{V} = \{1, \cdots, p\}$
- encoding correlations between variables by a set of edges $\mathcal{E} = \{(i,j) \in \mathcal{V} \mid i =\neq j, \Omega_{ij} \neq 0\}$

For simplicity, we normalize $\boldsymbol{\mu} = \mathbf{0}$. If we draw n i.i.d. samples $\mathbf{x}_1, \cdots, \mathbf{x}_n \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$, then the log-likelihood is

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L}(\boldsymbol{\Omega}) &= \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\log f(\mathbf{x}_i) = \frac{1}{2}\log\det(\boldsymbol{\Omega}) - \frac{1}{2n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\mathbf{x}_1'\boldsymbol{\Theta}\mathbf{x}_i \\ &= \frac{1}{2}\log\det(\boldsymbol{\Omega}) - \frac{1}{2}\left\langle \Omega, \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\mathbf{x}_i'\mathbf{x}_i' \right\rangle\end{aligned}$$

What's the goal? We want to estimate a **sparse** graph structure given $n \ll p$ i.i.d. observations. But what does sparsity means in this context? A sparse graph is **equivalent** to a sparse precision matrix: the precision

matrix should have many 0s.

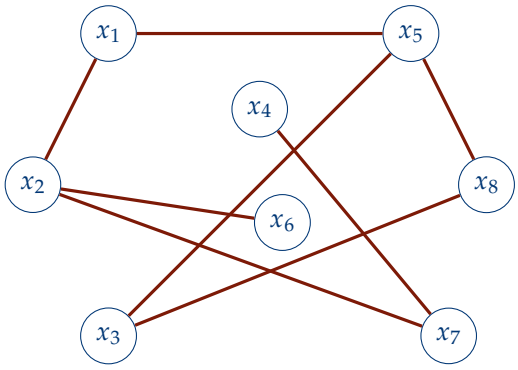
Sparse precision matrix for the Gaussian vector mentioned above $\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Sigma})$, we have $\forall u, v$

$$x_u \perp x_v \mid \mathbf{x}_{\mathcal{V}\setminus\{u,v\}} \Leftrightarrow \Omega_{u,v} = 0$$

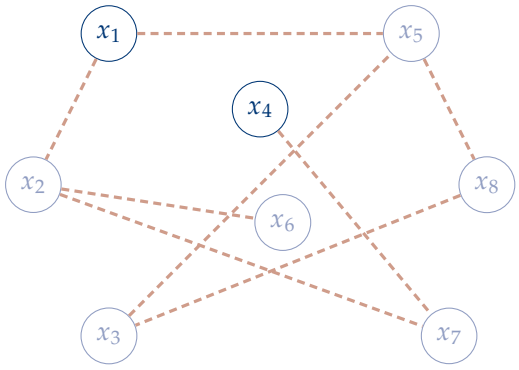
that is, sparsity of the precision matrix is equivalent to **conditional independence**[1]. Consider a graph, where x_1 and x_4 are only connected through other nodes, that is x_1 and x_4 are conditional independent, then we can have the precision matrix be something like:

$$\mathbf{\Theta} = \begin{bmatrix} * & * & 0 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ * & * & 0 & 0 & 0 & * & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & * & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * & 0 \\ * & 0 & * & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * \\ 0 & * & 0 & 0 & 0 & * & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & * & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & * & 0 & * & 0 & 0 & * \end{bmatrix}$$

where 0 captures precisely the conditional independence.



x_1 **and** x_4 **are** ***connected***



x_1 **and** x_4 **are** ***NOT connected*****, conditionally**

Intuitively, a sparse graph is much simpler, which is why conditional independence is desired. So how to achieve sparsity? We can again use a L-1 regularization when maximizing the log-likelihood $\mathcal{L}(\mathbf{\Omega})$. Denote the sample covariance matrix as $\mathbf{S} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} \mathbf{x}_i \mathbf{x}_i'$, then the problem becomes the so-called **Graphical Lasso**

$$\max_{\mathbf{\Omega} \succeq \mathbf{0}} \log\det(\mathbf{\Omega}) - \operatorname{tr}(\mathbf{S\Omega}) - \rho \|\mathbf{\Omega}\|_1$$

which is equivalent to

$$\min_{\mathbf{\Omega} \succeq \mathbf{0}} -\log\det(\mathbf{\Omega}) + \operatorname{tr}(\mathbf{S\Omega}) + \rho \|\mathbf{\Omega}\|_1$$

16.2 Graphical Lasso

The graphical lasso method is developed by (Friedman et al., 2008). For the optimization problem

$$\min_{\mathbf{\Omega} \succeq \mathbf{0}} -\log\det(\mathbf{\Omega}) + \operatorname{tr}(\mathbf{S\Omega}) + \rho \|\mathbf{\Omega}\|_1 \tag{16.1}$$

[1] Meanwhile, for independence: $\Sigma_{u,v} = 0 \Leftrightarrow x_u \perp x_v$

The first-order optimality condition gives

$$\mathbf{0} \in \boldsymbol{\Omega}^{-1} - \mathbf{S} - \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma}$$

where $\boldsymbol{\Gamma}$ is a matrix of component-wise signs of $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$

$$\boldsymbol{\Gamma} = \partial \|\boldsymbol{\Omega}\|_1 \Rightarrow \gamma_{jk} \begin{cases} = \text{sign}(\omega_{jk}), & \omega_{jk} \neq 0 \\ \in [-1, 1], & \omega_{jk} = 0 \end{cases}$$

since in a graph, we always have that, following the global stationarity conditions, $\omega_{jj} > 0$, which implies that

$$w_{ii} = s_{ii} + \lambda \qquad\qquad i = 1, \cdots, p \tag{16.2}$$

where we denote a working version of $\boldsymbol{\Omega}^{-1}$ as $\mathbf{W}$.

The idea is to repeatedly cycle through all columns-rows and in each step optimize only a single column-row. Consider the following partition where all matrices are partitioned into one column/row versus the rest

$$\boldsymbol{\Omega} = \begin{pmatrix} \boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11} & \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12} \\ \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}' & \omega_{22} \end{pmatrix} \qquad \mathbf{S} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{S}_{11} & \mathbf{s}_{12} \\ \mathbf{s}_{12}' & s_{22} \end{pmatrix} \qquad \mathbf{W} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{W}_{11} & \mathbf{w}_{12} \\ \mathbf{w}_{12}' & w_{22} \end{pmatrix} \qquad \boldsymbol{\Gamma} = \begin{pmatrix} \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_{11} & \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} \\ \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12}' & \gamma_{22} \end{pmatrix}$$

apply this partition to the optimality condition, get

$$\boldsymbol{\Omega}^{-1} = \mathbf{S} - \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma}$$
$$\begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{W}_{11} & \mathbf{w}_{12} \\ \mathbf{w}_{12}' & w_{22} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{S}_{11} & \mathbf{s}_{12} \\ \mathbf{s}_{12}' & s_{22} \end{pmatrix} + \lambda \begin{pmatrix} \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_{11} & \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} \\ \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12}' & \gamma_{22} \end{pmatrix}$$

where $\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}$ is $(p-1) \times (p-1)$, $\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}$ is $(p-1) \times 1$, ω_{22} is a scalar.

Consider a **blockwise** step: suppose we fix all but the last row/column, then using properties of inverses of block-partitioned matrices, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{W}_{11} & \mathbf{w}_{12} \\ \mathbf{w}_{12}' & w_{22} \end{pmatrix} &= \begin{pmatrix} \left(\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11} - \frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'}{\omega_{22}}\right)^{-1} & -\mathbf{W}_{11}\frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22}} \\ & \frac{1}{\omega_{22}} - \frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\mathbf{W}_{11}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22}^2} \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} \boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} + \frac{\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}}{\omega_{22} - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}} & -\frac{\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22} - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}} \\ & \frac{1}{\omega_{22} - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}} \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

then, by the partitioned optimality condition, we have[2]:

$$\mathbf{0} = -\mathbf{w}_{12} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} = \mathbf{W}_{11}\frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22}} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} \tag{16.3}$$

$$\mathbf{0} = \frac{\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22} - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}'\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} = w_{22}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} \tag{16.4}$$

The graphic Lasso algorithm them solves Eq.16.3 for $\boldsymbol{\beta} = \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}/\omega_{12}$, that is

$$\mathbf{W}_{11}\boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} = \mathbf{0}$$

[2]For Eq.16.4, by Eq.16.2, we know that $w_{22} = s_{22} + \lambda$, which is fixed.

where $\gamma_{12} \in \text{sign}(\beta)$ since $\omega_{22} > 0$, which is essentially solving:

$$\min_{\beta \in \mathbb{R}^{p-1}} \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \beta' \mathbf{W}_{11} \beta + \beta' \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \left\| \beta \right\|_1 \right\}$$

and $\mathbf{W}_{11} > 0$ is assumed to be fixed.

This problem is analogous to a lasso regression problem of the **last variable** on **the rest**, but the cross-product matrix $\mathbf{S}_{11}$ is replaced by its **current estimation** $\mathbf{W}_{11}$. It is relatively easier to solve using elementwise coordinate descent, then

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbf{w}_{12} = -\mathbf{W}_{11} \frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22}} && \Rightarrow \hat{\mathbf{w}}_{12} = -\mathbf{W}_{11} \hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}} && \text{Step 1} \\
&w_{22} = \frac{1}{\omega_{22}} - \frac{\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}' \mathbf{W}_{11} \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22}^2} && \Rightarrow \frac{1}{\hat{\omega}_{22}} = w_{22} - \hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}' \hat{\mathbf{w}}_{12} && \text{Step 2} \\
&\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12} = -\mathbf{W}_{11}^{-1} \mathbf{w}_{12} \omega_{22} && \Rightarrow \hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}_{12} = -\mathbf{W}_{11}^{-1} \hat{\mathbf{w}}_{12} \hat{\omega}_{22} && \text{Step 3}
\end{aligned}$$

notice that after solving for $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ and updating $\mathbf{w}_{12}$ in Step 1, the graphic Lasso procedure can move onto the next block, that is, only Step 1 is used in the loop, Step 2 and 3 can be done at the end. The algorithm can be summarized as:

Algorithm 16.2.1: Graphical Lasso algorithm

1 Initialize $\mathbf{W} = \mathbf{S} + \lambda \mathbf{I}$

- Cycle around the columns repeatedly, performing the following steps till convergence:
  - a rearrange the rows/columns so that the target column is **the last** (implicitly)
  - b solve the lasso problem, starting the solution from the previous round for this column
  - c update the row/column (***off-diagonal***) of the covariance using $\hat{\mathbf{w}}_{12}$
  - d save $\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}$ for this column in the matrix $\mathbf{B}$

3 after convergence, for every row/column, compute the diagonal entries $\hat{\omega}_{jj}$, and covert the $\mathbf{B}$ matrix to $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$

16.3 What Is GLasso Solving?

Again, consider the optimization problem

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\Omega} \geq \mathbf{0}} -\log\det(\boldsymbol{\Omega}) + \text{tr}(\mathbf{S}\boldsymbol{\Omega}) + \rho \left\| \boldsymbol{\Omega} \right\|_1$$

and its stationarity condition

$$\mathbf{0} = \boldsymbol{\Omega}^{-1} - \mathbf{S} - \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma}$$

rewrite the stationarity condition

$$\mathbf{0} = \boldsymbol{\Omega}^{-1} - \mathbf{S} - \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma} = \boldsymbol{\Omega} - (\mathbf{S} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma})^{-1}$$

since $\boldsymbol{\Gamma} = \text{sign}(\boldsymbol{\Omega})$, write $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\Gamma}} = \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma}$, we have $\left\| \tilde{\boldsymbol{\Gamma}} \right\|_\infty \leq \lambda$. Denote the element-wise absolute value matrix of $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$ as $\text{abs}(\boldsymbol{\Omega})$, then let $\tilde{\boldsymbol{\Gamma}} = \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma}$, $\mathbf{P} = \text{abs}(\boldsymbol{\Omega})$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{0} &= \boldsymbol{\Omega} - (\mathbf{S} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\Gamma})^{-1} \\
&= \mathbf{P} \circ \text{sign}(\tilde{\boldsymbol{\Gamma}}) - (\mathbf{S} + \tilde{\boldsymbol{\Gamma}})^{-1}
\end{aligned}$$

and mechanically, we also have

$$\mathbf{P} \circ \left(\text{abs}(\tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}}) - \lambda \mathbf{1}_p \mathbf{1}_p' \right) = \mathbf{0}$$
$$\left\| \tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}} \right\|_\infty \leq \lambda$$

together, these are just hte KKT optimality condition for the following box-constrained SDP

$$\max_{\tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}}: \left\| \tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}} \right\|_\infty \leq \lambda} g(\tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}}) \coloneqq \log\det(\mathbf{S} + \tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}}) + p \tag{16.5}$$

with the transformation $\mathbf{S} + \tilde{\mathbf{\Gamma}} = \mathbf{\Omega}^{-1}$. Essentially, this is the dual problem of the initial optimization problem, both of them are solved by the GLasso algorithm.

Issues of GLasso method :

- the non-monotonic behavior of Glasso in minimizing $f(\mathbf{\Omega})$
  - $\boldsymbol{\theta}_{12}$ is entangled in $\mathbf{W}_{11}$, which is ***incorrectly*** treated as a constant
  - after updating $\boldsymbol{\theta}_{12}$, the entire (working) covariance matrix $\mathbf{W}$ changes, but Glasso algorithm only updates $\mathbf{w}_{12}$ and $\mathbf{w}_{12}'$
- high dimesnionality problems
  - not computationally efficient when p is ultra-large
  - $\mathbf{\Sigma}^{-1}$ doesn't exist when $p > n$
  - method is not scalable

Next, we address these issues by introducing some modifications.

16.4 Graphical Lasso: Modifications

16.4.1 Primal GLasso

Consider the optimality condition in Eq.16.4:

$$\mathbf{0} = \frac{\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}}{\omega_{22} - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}' \mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12} = w_{22} \mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12} + \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \boldsymbol{\gamma}_{12}$$

Here, the dependence of the covariance submatrix $\mathbf{W}_{11}$ on $\mathbf{\Omega}_{12}$ is **explicit**. Let $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12} w_{22}$ with fixed $w_{22} \geq 0$[3], then this optimality condition is essentially solving

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\alpha} \in \mathbb{R}^{p-1}} \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \boldsymbol{\alpha}' \mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} \boldsymbol{\alpha} + \boldsymbol{\alpha}' \mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda \left\| \boldsymbol{\alpha} \right\|_1 \right\}$$

the minimizer of this problem $\hat{\boldsymbol{\alpha}}$ can then be used to derive the estimation for $\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}$:

$$\hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}_{12} = \frac{\hat{\boldsymbol{\alpha}}}{w_{22}}$$

, then we can update ω_{22} as before via

$$\hat{\omega}_{22} = \frac{1}{w_{22}} + \hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}_{12}' \mathbf{\Theta}_{11}^{-1} \hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}_{12}$$

[3] $w_{22} = 1/(\omega_2 2 - \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}' \mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} \boldsymbol{\omega}_{12})$

with $w_{22} = s_{22} + \lambda$. Another problem is how to obtain $\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}$: as the iterations proceed, maintain $\mathbf{W} = \mathbf{\Omega}^{-1}$, and $\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}$ can be derived from

$$\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} = \mathbf{W}_{11} - \frac{\mathbf{w}_{12}\mathbf{w}_{12}'}{w_{22}}$$

once $\boldsymbol{\omega}_{12}$ is updated, the ***entire*** working covariance matrix $\mathbf{W}$ is updated using $\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}$. This procedure, the so-called primal graphical lasso, can be represented in the following algorithm:

Algorithm 16.4.1: P-GLasso Algorithm

1 Initialize $\mathbf{W} = \text{diag}(\mathbf{S}) + \lambda\mathbf{I}$ and $\mathbf{\Omega} = \mathbf{W}^{-1}$
2 Cycle around the columns repeatedly, performing the following steps till convergence:
   a rearrange the rows/columns so that the target column is the last (implicitly)
   b compute $\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}$ using $\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1} = \mathbf{W}_{11} - \frac{\mathbf{w}_{12}\mathbf{w}_{12}'}{w_{22}}$
   c solve $\min_{\boldsymbol{\alpha}\in\mathbb{R}^{p-1}} \left\{\frac{1}{2}\boldsymbol{\alpha}'\mathbf{\Omega}_{11}^{-1}\boldsymbol{\alpha} + \boldsymbol{\alpha}'\mathbf{s}_{12} + \lambda\|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_1\right\}$ for $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$, using as warm starts the solution from the previous round of row/column updates. Then update $\hat{\boldsymbol{\omega}}_{12} = \hat{\boldsymbol{\alpha}}/w_{22}$ and $\hat{\omega}_{22}$
   d update $\mathbf{\Omega}$ and $\mathbf{W}$, ensuring that $\mathbf{\Omega}\mathbf{W} = \mathbf{I}_p$
3 output the solution: precision matrix $\mathbf{\Omega}$ and its exact inverse, covariance matrix $\mathbf{W}$

16.4.2 Innovated Scalable Efficient Estimation

Now, we try to tackle the high-dimesnionality issues: $\mathbf{\Sigma}^{-1}$ does **not** exist when $p > n$. Again,

$$\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{\Sigma})$$

consider a linear transformation where $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} = \mathbf{\Omega}\mathbf{x}$ ($\mathbf{\Omega}$ is still the precision matrix $\mathbf{\Sigma}^{-1}$), and

$$\text{cov}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}) = \mathbf{\Omega}\text{cov}(\mathbf{x})\mathbf{\Omega} = \mathbf{\Omega}\mathbf{\Sigma}\mathbf{\Omega} = \mathbf{\Omega}$$

But $\mathbf{\Omega}$ is unknown and to be estimated. To get around this, we **break** the long vector $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$ into small sub-vectors and then estimate each one.

Notation for subsets $A, B \subset \{1, \cdots, p\}$, let $\mathbf{x}_A$ denote a sub-vector of $\mathbf{x}$ formed by its components with indices in A, and the sub-(precision)-matrix is $\mathbf{\Omega}_{A,B} = (\omega_{jk})_{j\in A, k\in B}$, $\mathbf{\Omega}_A := \mathbf{\Omega}_{A,A}$ for simplicity. Then define

$$\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_A = \mathbf{\Omega}_A\boldsymbol{\eta}_A$$

where $\boldsymbol{\eta}_A = \mathbf{x}_A + \mathbf{\Omega}_A^{-1}\mathbf{\Omega}_{A,A^C}\mathbf{x}_{A^C}$, and $A^C := \{1, \cdots, p\} \setminus A$. With this definition, we have the following proposition:

Proposition 16.4.2: Conditional Distribution of Sub-vectors

Conditional distribution $\mathbf{x}_A \mid \mathbf{x}_B \sim \mathcal{N}\left(\boldsymbol{\mu}_{A|B}, \mathbf{\Sigma}_{A|B}\right)$, where

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_{A|B} = \boldsymbol{\mu}_A + \mathbf{\Sigma}_{A,B}\mathbf{\Sigma}_B^{-1}\left(\mathbf{x}_B - \boldsymbol{\mu}_B\right)$$
$$\mathbf{\Sigma}_{A|B} = \mathbf{\Sigma}_A - \mathbf{\Sigma}_{A,B}\mathbf{\Sigma}_B^{-1}\mathbf{\Sigma}_{B,A}$$

and when $\mathbf{x}_B = \mathbf{x}_{A^C}$, we have

$$\mathbf{x}_A \mid \mathbf{x}_{A^C} \sim \mathcal{N}\left(-\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A^{-1}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{A,A^C}\mathbf{x}_{A^C}, \boldsymbol{\Omega}_A^{-1}\right)$$

Prop.16.4.2 gives a multivariate linear regression model:

$$\mathbf{x}_A = \mathbf{C}_A'\mathbf{x}_{A^C} + \boldsymbol{\eta}_A$$

where $\mathbf{C}_A = -\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{A^C,A}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A^{-1}$ is the coefficient matrix, and $\boldsymbol{\eta}_A$ is model errors with Gaussian distribution $\mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \boldsymbol{\Omega}_A^{-1})$. Then we can have the following algorithm to solve this problem:

Algorithm 16.4.3: ISEE Algorithm

1 Let $(A_l)_{l=1}^L$ be a partition of index set $\{1, \cdots, p\}$, s.t. $\bigcup_{l=1}^L A_l = \{1, \cdots, p\}$
2 estimate $\boldsymbol{\eta}_{A_l}$ and then obtain estimated $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{A_l}$
3 stack all estimated sub-vectors $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{A_l}$ together to obtain $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$

ISEE algorithm breaks large-scale precision estimation into **small-scale linear regression problems**, each of which is computationally efficient and effective.

Estimation for the $n \times p$ data matrix $\mathbf{X} = (\mathbf{x}_1, \cdots, \mathbf{x}_n)'$, we construct the linear transformation

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = (\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1, \cdots, \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_n) = \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\Omega}$$

then the multivariate linear regression model by matrix notation is

$$\mathbf{X}_A = \mathbf{X}_{A^C}\mathbf{C}_A + \mathbf{E}_A$$

and the corresponding sub-matrix $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_A$ can be written as

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_A = (\mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\Omega})_A = \mathbf{X}_A\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A + \mathbf{X}_{A^C}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{A^C,A} = \left(\mathbf{X}_A + \mathbf{X}_{A^C}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_{A^C,A}\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A^{-1}\right)\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A = \mathbf{E}_A\boldsymbol{\Omega}_A$$

Sparsity is achieved bia scaled Lasso: for each node j in index set A,

$$\mathbf{X}_j = \mathbf{A}^{\mathbf{C}}\boldsymbol{\beta}_j + \mathbf{E}_j$$

where $\boldsymbol{\beta}_j$ is the column of $\mathbf{C}_A$ corresponds to node j. The estimation is then done in the following steps:

- run the PLS

$$\left(\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_j, \hat{\theta}_j^{1/2}\right) = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}\in\mathbf{R}^{p-|A|}, \sigma\geq 0}\left\{\frac{\left\|\mathbf{X}_j - \mathbf{X}_{A^C}\boldsymbol{\beta}\right\|_2^2}{2n\sigma} + \frac{\sigma}{2} + \lambda\left\|\boldsymbol{\beta}_*\right\|_1\right\}$$

  where $\boldsymbol{\beta}_*$ is component-wise product of $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ and $\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}\left\|\mathbf{X}_k\right\|_2\right)_{k\in A^C}$, and the penalizing factor is $\lambda = C\left(\frac{2\log p}{n}\right)$.
- after obtaining $\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_j$, get the estimation of the (partitioned) precision matrix $\hat{\boldsymbol{\Omega}}_A$

$$\hat{\Omega}_A = \left(\frac{1}{n}\hat{\mathbf{E}}_A'\hat{\mathbf{E}}_A\right)^{-1}$$

  where $\hat{\mathbf{E}}_j = \mathbf{X}_j - \mathbf{X}_{A^C}\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}}_j$, $\hat{\mathbf{E}}_A = \left(\hat{\mathbf{E}}_j\right)_{j\in A}$

- for the whole partition $(A_l)_{l=1}^L$, we have $\hat{\mathbf{X}} = (\hat{\mathbf{X}}_{A_l})_{1\le l\le L}$ where $\hat{\mathbf{X}}_{A_l} = \hat{\mathbf{E}}_{A_l}\hat{\mathbf{\Omega}}_{A_l}$, then the initital estiation of the whole precision matrix is $\hat{\Omega}_{ISEE,ini} = \frac{1}{n}\hat{\mathbf{X}}'\hat{\mathbf{X}}$
- next, introduce a threshold $\tau \ge 0$, define

$$\hat{\mathbf{\Omega}}_{ISEE,g} = T_\tau\left(\hat{\mathbf{\Omega}}_{ISEE,ini}\right)$$

where $T_\tau(\mathbf{B}) = \left(b_{jk}\mathbf{1}_{|b_{jk}|\ge\tau}\right)$ for matrix $\mathbf{B} = \left(b_{jk}\right)$, then estimate the structure $\mathbf{E}$ as $\hat{\mathbf{E}}_{ISEE} = \text{supp}\left(\hat{\mathbf{\Omega}}_{ISEE,g}\right)$

References

Jerome Friedman, Trevor Hastie, and Robert Tibshirani. Sparse inverse covariance estimation with the graphical lasso. *Biostatistics*, 9(3):432–441, 2008.