

ECS289F Progress report

— Opinion Dynamics with reluctant agents —

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May 20, 2014

This document reports on the recent progress we have made for the course project in the two weeks after the project proposal's submission. The goal of this project is to consider a new aspect for the DeGroot's model by considering an opinion dynamic model where a subset of agents are *reluctant* to update their opinion.

Let us first recap on the system model. We consider an undirected graph $G = (V, E)$ with $|V| = n$. Each agent $i \in V$ holds an initial opinion $\mathbf{w}_i^{(0)} \in \mathbb{R}^L$. At time k , the agents exchange their beliefs with the others to compute:

$$\hat{\mathbf{w}}_i^{(k)} = \sum_{j \in \mathcal{N}_i} P_{ij}^{(k)} \mathbf{w}_j^{(k-1)}, \quad (1)$$

where $0 \leq P_{ij}^{(k)} \leq 1$ models the trust agent i has on agent j at time k . Importantly, we assume $\sum_{j=1}^{|V|} P_{ij}^{(k)} = 1$ and $\sum_{i=1}^{|V|} P_{ij}^{(k)} = 1$. Notice that the matrix $\mathbf{P}^{(k)}$ is time-variant.

The vector $\hat{\mathbf{w}}_i^{(k)}$ is the opinion that agent i is supposed to hold at time k . In DeGroot's model, the agents are updating instantly such that $\mathbf{w}_i^{(k)} = \hat{\mathbf{w}}_i^{(k)}$. In this case, it is known that $\mathbf{w}_i^{(k)}$ converges to the average of $\{\mathbf{w}_i^{(0)}\}$ asymptotically, i.e., achieving the 'wisdom of the crowd', under some mild assumptions. However, in our model, some agents are reluctant such that they don't update *immediately*. Instead, $\mathbf{w}_i^{(k)}$ is updated by:

$$\mathbf{w}_i^{(k)} = \frac{c_i^{(k)}}{\tau_i} \hat{\mathbf{w}}_i^{(k)} + \frac{\tau_i - c_i^{(k)}}{\tau_i} \bar{\mathbf{w}}_i^{(k-c_i^{(k)})}, \quad i \in V_r,$$

where $V_r \subseteq V$ is the set of reluctant agents and

$$c_i^{(k)} = \begin{cases} 1 & , \text{ if } P_{ij}^{(k)} \neq 0, \text{ for some } j \in V \text{ (agent } i \text{ talked at time } k). \\ \min\{c_i^{(k-1)} + 1, \tau_i\} & , \text{ otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

is a counter variable and $\tau_i \in \mathbb{Z}$ is the adaptation rate of i . In other words, the reluctant agent will slowly adapt to the new opinion in τ_i time steps. Notice that the 'normal' agents are special case of this with $\tau_i = 1$.

1 (Preliminary) Convergence Analysis

In this section, we perform a convergence analysis for the proposed opinion dynamics model based on []. The main result is that we have proved that the opinions will converge to a (biased) consensus with high probability. As a preliminary observation, we found that the converged opinion will be biased towards the initial opinions of the reluctant agent in expectation.

We found that our proposed model can be analyzed under the framework of [], which studied a delayed consensus model. In the analysis, the main idea is to consider an augmented system with a few extra nodes proportional to the maximum delay allowed in the system. As the augmented system is delay-free, it can subsequently be analyzed using the available tools.

Let us apply the above approach to our model. We consider a directed graph $G' = (V', E')$ where V' contains all the nodes from V together with a few augmented node, defined as follows.

2 (Preliminary) Simulation Studies