

Week 3 Response: *Morgan & Winship 2015, Ch. 3*

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I will call this reading response a combined response to the Morgan & Winship and the Pearl reading, although I chose to highlight the former because the Pearl reading was considerably more painful to work through (with all due respect to the comprehensiveness and utility of the theory). As we worked through most of this material last week in class, nothing in these readings was terribly surprising. One of the things that has continued to bother me, though, is our discussion of how to extend the causal graphs to the framework of plate diagrams. I'm not sure I understand the inclusion of the error term in the plates and the parameterization outside the plates of the errors (I think it was θ). Was *theta* just a marker for some kind of assumed error distribution across the sample (Gaussian under OLS assumptions, etc.)?

When I took graphical models a couple years ago, I think I compartmentalized the material in a totally separate part of my brain from all the econometrics I've studied. This material is forcing me to integrate the frameworks, which is difficult, but a very good exercise.