

The Interplay between Sparsity and Big Data in Systems Theory

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Goal: Find a low order, stable model

Motivation 2: distributed sensing & control



EHM sensors



Motivation 3: decision making





How do we make (provably) correct decisions in a "data deluged" environments? (a hidden hybrid SysId problem)



• Claim 1: These problems are (NP!) hard



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- Claim 2: These problems can be solved in polynomial time



- Claim 1: These problems are (NP!) hard
- Claim 2: These problems can be solved in polynomial time

Both can't be right, can they?



- Claim 1: These problems are generically NP-hard
- Claim 2: Many of these problems can be solved in polynomial time



- Q: What makes a problem easy?
- A: Convexity?



- Q: What makes a problem easy?
- A: Convexity? Not Necessarily!

Optimization over co-Positive matrices is NP-hard



- Q: What makes a problem easy?
- A: Convexity + Self-Concordance?



- Q: What makes a problem easy?
- A: Convexity + Self-Concordance? Not Necessarily!



Horizon	ADMM (secs)	SDP solver(secs)
280	1071.8	4177.0
350	1828.0	12686.9
420	2657.7	out of memory

In (convex) SysId Big Data may be as low as 10²



- Q: What makes a problem hard?
- A: Lack of Convexity?



- Q: What makes a problem hard?
- A: Lack of Convexity? Not Necessarily!

$$\min \sum \mathbf{c_i x_i x_{i+1} \ subject \ to \ x_i} = \pm 1$$

Non-convex but solving for 100000 variables takes 50 secs on a Mac



- Q: What makes a problem hard/easy?
- A: Structure
 - Self Similarity
 - Sparsity
- Both observed in many practical problems
 - Often they induces "good" convexity
 - Exploited in Machine Learning for "static" problems

Hard or Easy?



• Challenge

- Separate easy/hard problems
- Understand where does the complexity come from
- Use this understanding to design "easy" problems

Main point of this talk: These issues are related to the sparsity structure of the problem





$$p^* = \min_{x} \mathbf{x}' \mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{o}} \mathbf{x} \ s.t. \ \mathbf{x}' \mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{i}} \mathbf{x} \le 0 \ i = 1, ..n$$

$$p^* = \min_{x} \mathbf{Trace}(\mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{o}} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x}') \ s.t. \mathbf{Trace}(\mathbf{Q}_{\mathbf{i}} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x}') \le 0 \ i = 1, ..n$$

 $p_{SDP} = \min_{x} \operatorname{Trace}(\mathbf{Q_oX}) \ s.t.\operatorname{Trace}(\mathbf{Q_iX}) \leq 0, \ \mathbf{X} \succeq 0$

Clearly $p_{\rm SDP} \leq p^* \text{ and } p_{\rm SDP} = p^* \; \; \text{if rank(X)=1}$





$$p^* = \min_{x} \mathbf{x}' \mathbf{Q_o x} \ s.t. \ \mathbf{x}' \mathbf{Q_i x} \le 0 \ i = 1, ..n$$

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Clearly $p_{\rm SDP} \leq p^* \text{ and } p_{\rm SDP} = p^* \text{ if rank(X)=1}$

Q: Can we get this for (almost) free?

Exploiting sparsity in QCQP



- Complexity related to the topology of a graph:
 - Each vertex corresponds to a variable
 - There is an edge (i,j) if there are terms involving $x_i x_j$



Exploiting sparsity in QCQP





• If the graph is a tree, then the SDP relaxation is exact

J. Lavaei, 2014

Exploiting sparsity in QCQP





- If the graph is a tree, then the **SOCP** relaxation is exact
- Example: $\min \sum c_i x_i x_{i+1}$ subject to $x_i = \pm 1$

Solving for 100,000 variables takes 50 secs on a Mac Structure and Sparsity Matter



• Many problems have a sparse structure (running intersection)

$$\min_{x} p_1(x) + p_2(x) + \dots p_m(x) \quad s.t.$$

$$f_1(x^{\alpha}) \le 0$$

$$\vdots$$

$$f_m(x^{\alpha}) \le 0$$

where each $p_i(.)$, $f_i(.)$ depends only on a subset of variables such that

$$P_{1}$$

$$f_{1}$$

$$X_{1}, X_{2}, \dots X_{k}, \dots X_{d}, X_{d+1}, \dots X_{d+k}, \dots \dots X_{n-d+1}, X_{n}$$



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$$P_{1}$$

$$f_{1}$$

$$X_{1}, X_{2}, .., X_{k}, .., X_{d}, X_{d+1}, ..., X_{d+k}, ..., X_{n-d+1}, X_{n}$$



Many problems have a sparse structure (running intersection)

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$$\vdots$$

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where each $p_i(.)$, $f_i(.)$ depends only on a subset of variables such that

$$P_{1} P_{2}$$

$$f_{1} f_{2}$$

$$X_{1}, X_{2}, X_{k}, X_{d}, X_{d+1}, X_{d+k}, \dots, X_{n-d+1}, X_{n}$$



Running intersection is related to cliques in the (chordal completion of the) csp graph





Running intersection is related to cliques in the (chordal completion of the) csp graph



Size of the running intersection is given by the tree width



Running intersection is related to cliques in the (chordal completion of the) csp graph



Complexity dominated by the size of the clique, not the size of the problem

Connecting Information, Sparsity & Dynamics



Where should we pay attention?:





Features (edges, regions, etc.) are important.

Where should we pay attention?:





Dynamics are important too!.



Sparse signal recovery:

• Strong prior:

Signal has a sparse representation

$$f = \sum c_i \psi_i$$

only a few $c_i \neq 0$

• Signal Recovery:

- "sparsify" the coefficients

 $min \| [c_1, \dots, c_n] \|_o$ subject to : $f(x_i) = y_i$





Sparse signal recovery:

- Strong prior:
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Sparse information extraction

• Strong prior:

 Actionable information is generated by low complexity dynamical systems.

Information extraction:

"sparsify" the dynamics

 $\min_{\mathbf{y}} \{ \mathbf{rank}[\mathbf{M}(\mathbf{y})] + \lambda \| \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{y}) \|_o \}$

- Where M(.), E(.) are affine in y

Example: Solving "Temporal Puzzles"





Example: Solving "Temporal Puzzles"



D is a suitably chosen dynamic dictionary

Example: Solving "Temporal Puzzles"







Information Extraction as an ID problem


Information extraction as an Id problem:





- Model data streams as outputs of switched systems
- "Interesting" events

 Model invariant(s) changes
- An identification/model (in)validation problem.



SARX Id problem:

• Given:

- Bounds on noise ($||η||_{∞} \le ε$), sub-system order (n_o)
- Input/output data (u,y)
- Number of sub-models

• Find:

- A piecewise affine model such that:









• Given N points in Rⁿ, fit them to hyperplanes

• "Chicken and egg" problem

- Do not known the point "labels"
- Do not know the hyperplanes.

Reformulation:





$$\mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t - \sum_{i=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_i(\sigma_1) \mathbf{y}_{t-i} - \sum_{i=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_i(\sigma_1) \mathbf{u}_{t-i} = 0$$

$$\mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t - \sum_{i=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_i(\sigma_2) \mathbf{y}_{t-i} - \sum_{i=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_i(\sigma_2) \mathbf{u}_{t-i} = 0$$

A hidden QCQP problem

QCQP reformulation:





$$\mathbf{s}_{1,t}(\mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t - \sum_{i=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_i(\boldsymbol{\sigma}_1)\mathbf{y}_{t-i} - \sum_{i=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_i(\boldsymbol{\sigma}_1)\mathbf{u}_{t-i}) = 0$$

and

$$\mathbf{s_{2,t}}(\mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t - \sum_{i=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_i(\boldsymbol{\sigma}_2)\mathbf{y}_{t-i} - \sum_{i=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_i(\boldsymbol{\sigma}_2)\mathbf{u}_{t-i}) = 0$$

Subject to: $s_{i,t} = s_{i,t}^2$, and $\sum_i s_{i,t} = 1$ $s \in \{0,1\}$







$$\begin{cases} |s_{i,j}\mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{x}_{j}| \leq \epsilon s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ s_{i,j}^{2} = s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \sum_{i=1}^{N_{s}} s_{i,j} = 1, \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{r}_{i} = 1, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{1}(1) \geq \mathbf{r}_{2}(1) \geq \cdots \geq \mathbf{r}_{N_{s}}(1) \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

\mathbf{x}_j is an inlier in \mathcal{S}_i if $s_{ij} = 1$



$$\begin{cases} |s_{i,j}\mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{x}_{j}| \leq \epsilon s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ s_{i,j}^{2} = s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \sum_{i=1}^{N_{s}} s_{i,j} = 1, \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{r}_{i} = 1, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{1}(1) \geq \mathbf{r}_{2}(1) \geq \cdots \geq \mathbf{r}_{N_{s}}(1) \geq 0 \end{cases}$$

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 $s_{ij} \in \{0,1\}$



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 \mathbf{x}_j is an inlier in \mathcal{S}_i if $s_{ij} = 1$

 $s_{ij} \in \{0,1\}$

each sample is assigned to one subspace



$$\begin{cases} |s_{i,j}\mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{x}_{j}| \leq \epsilon s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ s_{i,j}^{2} = s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \sum_{i=1}^{N_{s}} s_{i,j} = 1, \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{r}_{i} = 1, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{1}(1) \geq \mathbf{r}_{2}(1) \geq \cdots \geq \mathbf{r}_{N_{s}}(1) \geq \end{cases}$$

0

 \mathbf{x}_j is an inlier in \mathcal{S}_i if $s_{ij} = 1$

 $s_{ij} \in \{0,1\}$

each sample is assigned to one subspace

Solvable using SoS / Moments techniques

Hidden Sparse Structure:







Hidden Sparse Structure:





Original problem: Scales as $O((N_p N_s)^6)$ $\begin{cases} P_{0}: \begin{cases} \mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{r}_{i} = 1, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ \mathbf{r}_{1}(1) \geq \mathbf{r}_{2}(1) \geq \cdots \geq \mathbf{r}_{N_{s}}(1) \geq 0 \\ \end{cases} \\ \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}}: P_{j}: \begin{cases} |s_{i,j}\mathbf{r}_{i}^{T}\mathbf{x}_{j}| \leq \epsilon s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ s_{i,j}^{2} = s_{i,j}, \forall_{i=1}^{N_{s}} \\ \Sigma_{i=1}^{N_{s}} s_{i,j} = 1 \end{cases} \end{cases} \end{cases}$

Reduced problem: Scales as $O(N_p(N_s)^6)$

$$\begin{split} \operatorname{Tr}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}_{k,0}\mathbf{M}_{0}) &\leq 0, \forall_{k=1}^{K_{0}} \\ \mathbf{M}_{0} \succeq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{M}_{0}(1,1) = 1 \\ \operatorname{rank}(\mathbf{M}_{0}) &= 1 \\ \forall_{j=1}^{N_{p}} : \begin{cases} \operatorname{Tr}(\bar{\mathbf{Q}}_{k,j}\mathbf{M}_{j}) \leq 0, \forall_{k=1}^{K_{j}} \\ \mathbf{M}_{j} \succeq \mathbf{0}, \mathbf{M}_{j}(1,1) = 1 \\ \mathbf{M}_{j}(1:nN_{s}+1,1:nN_{s}+1) = \mathbf{M}_{0} \end{cases} \end{split}$$

Linear in the number of data points





Caveat: still need to deal with a rank constraint

Example: Human Activity Analysis







WALK BEND WALK

(In)Validating SARX Models



Model (In)validation of SARX Systems





$$\begin{array}{rcl} \mathbf{y}_t &=& \sum_{k=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{y}_{t-k} + \sum_{k=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{u}_{t-k} + \mathbf{f}(\sigma_t) \\ \tilde{\mathbf{y}}_t &=& \mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t \end{array}$$

- A bound on the noise $(||\eta||_{\infty} \leq \epsilon)$ —
- Experimental Input/Output Data $\{\mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{\tilde{y}}_t\}_{t=t_o}^T$
- **Determine:**

Given:

whether there exist noise and switching sequences _ consistent with a priori information and experimental data

Model (In)validation of SARX Systems





- A nominal switched model of the form:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{y}_t &= \sum_{k=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{y}_{t-k} + \sum_{k=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{u}_{t-k} + \mathbf{f}(\sigma_t) \\ \tilde{\mathbf{y}}_t &= \mathbf{y}_t + \boldsymbol{\eta}_t \end{aligned}$$

- A bound on the noise $(||\eta||_{\infty} \leq \epsilon)$
- Experimental Input/Output Data $\{\mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{ ilde{y}}_t\}_{t=t_0}^T$
- Determine:
 - whether there exist noise and switching sequences consistent with a priori information and experimenta data

Reduces to SDP via Putinar's Positivstellensatz

Model (In)validation of SARX Systems





$$egin{array}{rcl} \mathbf{y}_t &=& \sum_{k=1}^{n_a} \mathbf{A}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{y}_{t-k} + \sum_{k=1}^{n_c} \mathbf{C}_k(\sigma_t) \mathbf{u}_{t-k} + \mathbf{f}(\sigma_t) \\ ilde{\mathbf{y}}_t &=& \mathbf{y}_t + oldsymbol{\eta}_t \end{array}$$

- A bound on the noise $(||\eta||_{\infty} \leq \epsilon)$ —
- Experimental Input/Output Data $\{\mathbf{u}_t, \mathbf{\tilde{y}}_t\}_{t=t_o}^T$
- **Determine:**

Given:

whether there exist noise and switching sequences consistent with a priori information and experimenta data

Reduces to SDP via Putinar's Positivstellensatz

Guaranteed convergence for the n=T relaxation

(In)validation Certificates:



• The model is invalid if and only if

$$d^* \doteq \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \min_{\mathbf{s}, \eta} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^{n_s} e_{i,t}^2 \\ \text{subject to:} \\ \mathbf{s}_{\mathbf{i}, \mathbf{t}}(\mathbf{g}_{i,t} + \mathbf{h}_{i,t} \boldsymbol{\eta}_{t-n_a:t}) = \mathbf{e}_{i,t} \\ \sum_i s_{i,t} = 1 \\ s_{i,t}^2 = 1 \\ \|\boldsymbol{\eta}\|_{\infty} \le \epsilon \end{array} \right\} > 0$$





Hidden sparse structure similar to the Id case

Complexity dominated by the order of the model



- A priori switched model: walking and waiting, 4% noise
- Test sequences of hybrid behavior:



Not Invalidated

Invalidated

Invalidated

Adding topological constraints:





The model is invalid if and only if

$$\begin{cases} \min_{\mathbf{s},\boldsymbol{\eta}} \sum_{t=1}^{T} \sum_{i=1}^{n_s} e_{i,t}^2 \\ \text{subject to:} \\ \mathbf{s}_{\mathbf{i},\mathbf{t}} (\mathbf{g}_{i,t} + \mathbf{h}_{i,t} \boldsymbol{\eta}_{t-n_a:t}) = \mathbf{e}_{i,t} \\ \sum_{i,s} s_{i,t} = 1 \\ s_{i,t}^2 = 1 \\ \|\boldsymbol{\eta}\|_{\infty} \leq \epsilon \end{cases} > 0$$

plus additional linear constraints:

$$\underbrace{f_{i}, i \in I}_{I, J \subseteq \mathbf{N}_{t}} \underbrace{f_{j}, j \in J}_{I, J \subseteq \mathbf{N}_{t}} \underbrace{f_{j}, j \in J}_{I, J \subseteq \mathbf{N}_{t}} \underbrace{s_{i,t} + s_{j,t+1}}_{I, t+1} \leq 1, \forall i \in I, \forall j \in J$$

These destroy sparsity patterns!

Example: Activity Monitoring



A Priori information







Not Invalidated (d=-3e-8)



Invalidated (d=0.175)

Identifying Sparse Dynamical Networks



Who is in the same team? Who reacts to whom? Each time series becomes a **node** in a graph

Each edge is a dynamical system

$$x_i(t) = \sum_{j=1, j \neq i}^{P} \sum_{n=k}^{N} (a_{ji}(n)x_j(t-n)) + u_i(t) + \eta_i(t)$$

$$= a_1 W_1 + a_2 +$$







• Find block sparse solutions to:

$$\mathbf{x} = [\mathbf{X}, \mathbf{I}] [\mathbf{a}^t \mathbf{u}^t]^t + \eta$$

Efficient solutions using atomic norm minimization

•Atoms are the time series at other nodes

Projection free Frank-Wolfe algorithm



$$\min_{\mathbf{z}} \quad f(\mathbf{z}) \\ \text{s.t.} \quad \|\mathbf{z}\|_{\mathcal{A}} \le \tau$$

Frank-Wolfe Algorithm

1: Initialize: for arbitrary $\mathbf{a}_0 \in \mathcal{A}$ 2: for $k = 0, 1, 2, \cdots$ do 3: $\mathbf{a} \leftarrow \arg\min_{\mathbf{a} \in \mathcal{A}} \langle \partial f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)}), \mathbf{a} \rangle$ 4: $\alpha_k \leftarrow \arg\min_{\alpha \in [0,1]} f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)} + \alpha[\tau \mathbf{a} - \mathbf{z}^{(k)}])$ 5: $\mathbf{z}^{(k+1)} \leftarrow \mathbf{z}^{(k)} + \alpha_k[\tau \mathbf{a} - \mathbf{z}^{(k)}]$

6: end for

Converges as O(1/n)

$\min_{\mathbf{z}}$	$\ \mathbf{z} - \mathbf{x}_j\ _2$	
s.t.	$\ \mathbf{z}\ _{s\mathcal{A}} \le \tau$	



$\min_{\mathbf{z}}$	$f(\mathbf{z})$	$\min_{\mathbf{z}}$	$\ \mathbf{z} - \mathbf{x}_j\ _2$
s.t.	$\ \mathbf{z}\ _{\mathcal{A}} \leq au$	s.t.	$\ \mathbf{z}\ _{s\mathcal{A}} \leq \tau$

Frank-Wolfe Algorithm

6: end for

1: Initialize: for arbitrary $\mathbf{a}_0 \in \mathcal{A}$ 2: for $k = 0, 1, 2, \cdots$ do 3: $\mathbf{a} \leftarrow \arg\min_{\mathbf{a} \in \mathcal{A}} \langle \partial f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)}), \mathbf{a} \rangle$ 4: $\alpha_k \leftarrow \arg\min_{\alpha \in [0,1]} f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)} + \alpha[\tau \mathbf{a} - \mathbf{z}^{(k)}])$ 5: $\mathbf{z}^{(k+1)} \leftarrow \mathbf{z}^{(k)} + \alpha_k[\tau \mathbf{a} - \mathbf{z}^{(k)}]$ $L \leftarrow \arg \max_{l} \{ \| [\partial f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)})]^{T} \mathbf{A}_{l} \|_{1} \}$ $\mathbf{c} \leftarrow -\operatorname{sign}([\partial f(\mathbf{z}^{(k)})]^{T} \mathbf{A}_{L})$ $\mathbf{a} \leftarrow \mathcal{A}_{L} \mathbf{c}$





6: end for





6: end for

Closed form solutions to each step

Example





Interactions between human agents



More examples:

Tracking by detection





Reduces to an assignment problem with "dynamics- induced" weights



Crowd photography sequencing






- Semi-supervised SysId
- Wiener systems identification
- Identification with outliers
- Identification of PWA systems
- (In)validation of PWA systems
- Sparse network Id.
- Optimal sensor placement
- Controller design subject to sparsity constraints

All of these are known to be NP-hard, yet often solvable in polynomial time using sparsity based convex relaxations

What is Big Data?







Computational complexity is related to data interconnectivity, not data size!!









Computational complexity is related to data interconnectivity, not data size!!



Related to max clique size of an underlying graph



Sparsity can provide a way around the curse of dimensionality

- Challenge: how to build in and exploit the "right" sparsity
 - Graphs with small tree width (network design)
 - Low order models
- Submodularity also helps
 - what other properties can we exploit?
- An interesting connection between several communities:
 - Control, semi-algebraic optimization, machine learning,....



csn

Sparsity can provide a way around the curse of dimension?

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 - *foraic optimization, machine learning,....* Control, sem interested.



- Many promising advances towards making SoS/Moments practical:
 - ADMM, Frank-Wolfe, Factorizations
- Empirical experience: force M to be rank 1

In many practical problems (e.g. subspace clustering) forcing a small matrix (much smaller than the running intersection) to have rank 1 guarantees rank(M)=1

- New developments covered elsewhere in this workshop
 - Ahmadi & Hall: DSoS and SDSoS
 - Lasserre: Krivine+Putinar P-satz (LP+fixed size SDC)
- Getting there, but more work needed. Keep tuned for more

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- Workshop organizers
- Funding agencies (AFOSR, DHS, NSF)

More information as http://robustsystems.coe.neu.edu

