

Measures of centrality

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2023–2024 | @pocsvox

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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
1 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References



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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
2 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

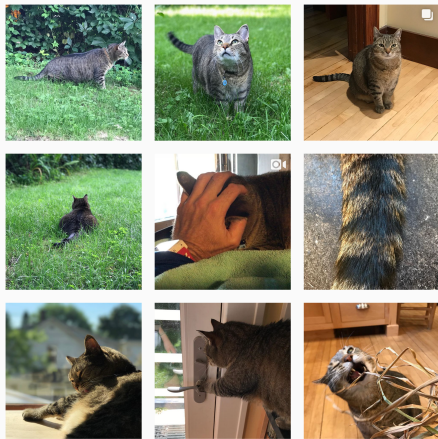
Hubs and Authorities



Nutshell

References

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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
3 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References



Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
4 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

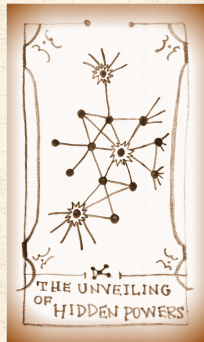
Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References



How big is my node?

 **Basic question:** how 'important' are specific nodes and edges in a network?

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
6 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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 An important node or edge might:

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References


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 So how do we quantify such a slippery concept as importance?


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 So how do we quantify such a slippery concept as importance?

 We generate ad hoc, reasonable measures, and examine their utility ...

Centrality

 One possible reflection of importance is **centrality**.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
7 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Centrality



Background

Centrality measures

- Degree centrality
- Closeness centrality
- Betweenness
- Eigenvalue centrality
- Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

-  One possible reflection of importance is **centrality**.
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- Idea of centrality comes from social networks literature^[7].

Background

Centrality measures

- Degree centrality
- Closeness centrality
- Betweenness
- Eigenvalue centrality
- Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Centrality





Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality
Closeness centrality
Betweenness
Eigenvalue centrality
Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

-  One possible reflection of importance is **centrality**.
-  Presumption is that nodes or edges that are (in some sense) in the middle of a network are important for the network's function.
-  Idea of centrality comes from social networks literature ^[7].
-  Many flavors of centrality ...
 1. Many are topological and quasi-dynamical;
 2. Some are based on dynamics (e.g., traffic).

Centrality


Background


Centrality measures


Degree centrality
Closeness centrality
Betweenness
Eigenvalue centrality
Hubs and Authorities


Nutshell

References


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 We will define and examine a few ...

Centrality

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality


Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities


Nutshell

References


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 (Later: see centrality useful in identifying communities in networks.)

Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
8 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities


Nutshell


References

Degree centrality


 Naively estimate importance by **node degree**. [7]


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 **Doh:** doesn't take in any non-local information.

Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
10 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality
Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality
Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Closeness centrality



Idea: Nodes are more central if they can reach other nodes 'easily.'

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
11 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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 **Idea:** Nodes are more central if they can reach other nodes 'easily.'

 Measure average shortest path from a node to all other nodes.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
11 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness




Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell




References

Closeness centrality


-  **Idea:** Nodes are more central if they can reach other nodes 'easily.'
-  Measure average shortest path from a node to all other nodes.
-  Define **Closeness Centrality** for node i as

$$\frac{N - 1}{\sum_{j, j \neq i} (\text{shortest distance from } i \text{ to } j)}.$$




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-  Unclear what the exact values of this measure tells us because of its ad-hocness.
-  General problem with simple centrality measures: what do they exactly mean?
-  Perhaps, at least, we obtain an ordering of nodes in terms of 'importance.'

Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
**Measures of
centrality**
12 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Betweenness centrality



Betweenness centrality is based on coherence of shortest paths in a network.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
13 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness



Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities




Nutshell

References





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-  Note: Exclude shortest paths between i and other nodes.
-  Note: works for weighted and unweighted networks.



Consider a network with N nodes and m edges (possibly weighted).

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
14 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality


Betweenness



Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities



Nutshell



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1. $O(mN)$ for unweighted graphs;
2. and $O(mN + N^2 \log N)$ for weighted graphs.

Shortest path between node i and all others:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
15 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Shortest path between node i and all others:



Consider unweighted networks.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
15 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Shortest path between node i and all others:

 Consider unweighted networks.

 Use **breadth-first search**:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
15 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Shortest path between node i and all others:



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Use **breadth-first search**:

1. Start at node i , giving it a distance $d = 0$ from itself.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
15 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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Use **breadth-first search**:

1. Start at node i , giving it a distance $d = 0$ from itself.
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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
15 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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Record which nodes link to which nodes moving out from i (former are 'predecessors' with respect to i 's shortest path structure).

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Newman's Betweenness algorithm: ^[4]

1. Set all nodes to have a value $c_{ij} = 0, j = 1, \dots$
(c for count).

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
17 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
17 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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5. Travel **back towards i** from each starting node j , along shortest path(s), adding 1 to every value of $c_{i\ell}$ at each node ℓ along the way.

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2. Select one node i and find **shortest paths** to all other $N - 1$ nodes using breadth-first search.
3. Record # equal shortest paths reaching each node.
4. Move through nodes according to their distance from i , starting with the furthest.
5. Travel **back towards i from each starting node j** , along shortest path(s), adding 1 to every value of $c_{i\ell}$ at each node ℓ along the way.
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8. Repeat steps 2–8 for every node i and obtain **betweenness** as $B_j = \sum_{i=1}^N c_{ij}$.

Newman's Betweenness algorithm: [4]



For a **pure tree network**, c_{ij} is the number of nodes beyond j from i 's vantage point.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
18 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities




Nutshell

References

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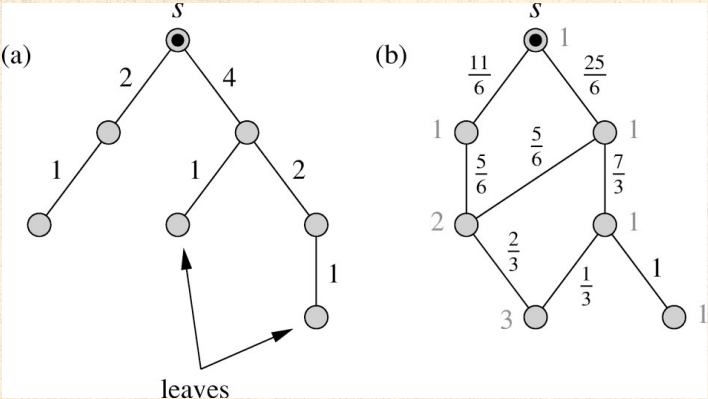
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 - j indexes edges,
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- For both algorithms, computation time grows as

$$O(mN).$$

Newman's Betweenness algorithm: [4]



Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
Measures of centrality
20 of 33

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Important nodes have important friends:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
21 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Important nodes have important friends:



Define x_i as the 'importance' of node i .

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality

21 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Important nodes have important friends:

 Define x_i as the 'importance' of node i .

 Idea: x_i depends (somehow) on x_j
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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality

21 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness




Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

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- Note: Lots of despair over size of the largest eigenvalue. ^[7] Lose sight of original assumption's non-physicality.

Important nodes have important friends:



So: solve $\mathbf{A}^T \vec{x} = \lambda \vec{x}$.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
22 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Important nodes have important friends:

 So: solve $\mathbf{A}^T \vec{x} = \lambda \vec{x}$.

 But which eigenvalue and eigenvector?

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
22 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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 We, the people, would like:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
22 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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We, the people, would like:

1. A unique solution.

Important nodes have important friends:



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But which eigenvalue and eigenvector?



We, the people, would like:

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8. Ordering of \vec{x} entries to be robust to reasonable modifications of linear assumption

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- We rummage around in bag of tricks and pull out the Perron-Frobenius theorem ...

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Perron-Frobenius theorem: ↗ If an $N \times N$ matrix A has non-negative entries then:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
23 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Perron-Frobenius theorem: ↗ If an $N \times N$ matrix A has non-negative entries then:

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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
23 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

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6. Note: Proof is relatively short for symmetric matrices that are strictly positive ^[6] and just non-negative ^[3].

Other Perron-Frobenius aspects:



Assuming our network is irreducible , meaning there is only one component, is reasonable:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
24 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness



Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

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The PoCverse
Measures of
centrality
24 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness




Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities





Nutshell

References






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-  (Another term: **Primitive** graphs and matrices.)

Outline

Background

Centrality measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
25 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Hubs and Authorities



Generalize eigenvalue centrality to allow nodes to have two attributes:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
26 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Hubs and Authorities



Generalize eigenvalue centrality to allow nodes to have two attributes:

1. **Authority**: how much knowledge, information, etc., held by a node on a topic.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
26 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References


Hubs and Authorities




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 Known as the HITS algorithm  (Hyperlink-Induced Topics Search).

Hubs and Authorities



Give each node two scores:

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
27 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Hubs and Authorities



Give each node two scores:

1. x_i = **authority score** for node i

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
27 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Hubs and Authorities



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The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
27 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell

References

Hubs and Authorities



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New story I: a good authority is linked to by good hubs.

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Means x_i should **increase** as $\sum_{j=1}^N a_{ji} y_j$ **increases**.



Note: indices are ji meaning j has a directed link to i .

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New story I: a good authority is linked to by good hubs.



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Linearity assumption:

$$\vec{x} \propto A^T \vec{y} \text{ and } \vec{y} \propto A \vec{x}$$

Hubs and Authorities

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
28 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality


Betweenness

Eigenvalue centrality

Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell


References

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$$\vec{x} = c_1 A^T \vec{y} \text{ and } \vec{y} = c_2 A \vec{x}$$


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 **It's all good:** we have the heart of singular value decomposition before us ...

We can do this:

 $A^T A$ is symmetric.

The PoCSverse
Measures of
centrality
29 of 33

Background

Centrality
measures

Degree centrality

Closeness centrality

Betweenness


Eigenvalue centrality


Hubs and Authorities

Nutshell




References

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-  Perron-Frobenius tells us that only the dominant eigenvalue's eigenvector can be chosen to have non-negative entries.
-  So: linear assumption leads to a solvable system.
-  What would be very good: find networks where we have independent measures of node 'importance' and see how importance is actually distributed.

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-  Focus on nodes rather than groups or modules is a homo narrativus constraint.
-  Possible that better approaches will be developed.

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