A Framework for Optimal Investment Strategies for Competing Camps in a Social Network
Swapnil Dhamal, Walid Ben-Ameur, Tijani Chahed, Eitan Altman

To cite this version:

HAL Id: hal-01712293
https://inria.hal.science/hal-01712293
Submitted on 19 Feb 2018

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.
A Framework for Optimal Investment Strategies for Competing Camps in a Social Network

Swapnil Dhamal¹  Walid Ben-Ameur¹  Tijani Chahed¹  Eitan Altman²

¹Samovar, Télécom SudParis, CNRS, Université Paris-Saclay, France.
{dhamal_s, valid.benameur, tijani.chahed}@telecom-sudparis.eu
²INRIA Sophia Antipolis - Méditerranée, France, eitan.altman@inria.fr

Keywords: Social networks, opinion dynamics, common coupled constraints, decision under uncertainty, multiple phases.

Opinion dynamics is a natural and well-known phenomenon in a system of cognitive agents, and is a well-studied topic across several disciplines. We study the problem of optimally investing in nodes of a social network in a competitive setting, wherein two camps attempt to maximize adoption of their opinions by the population. This problem is highly relevant to applications such as elections, viral marketing, propagation of ideas or behaviors, etc. In particular, we propose an extension of the popular DeGroot-Friedkin model [1], show its convergence, and hence formulate the problem as a zero-sum game, where the players are the two camps and their strategies are the amounts to be invested on each node of the social network.

We consider several settings, namely, when the influence of a camp on a node is a concave function of its investment on that node, when one of the camps has uncertain information about the values of the model parameters, and when a camp aims at maximizing competitor’s investment required to drive the average opinion in its favor. We also study this game under common coupled constraints concerning the combined investment of the camps on each node, and analytically derive the optimal investment strategies of both the camps. The introduction of common coupled constraints results in maxmin value to be greater than or equal to the minmax value, an opposite inequality to the case of general functions, as also deduced in [2]; this can be perceived as a consequence of the first mover advantage in our game.

We further study the possibility of campaigning in multiple phases, where the final opinion of a node in a phase acts as its initial bias for the next phase. We show that the utility functions of the two camps involve what can be interpreted as a multiphase version of Katz centrality [3]. Focusing on opinion dynamics in two phases, we analyze their optimal investment strategies and derive the extent of loss that a camp would incur if it acted myopically. We then look at the setting in which a camp’s influence on a node depends on the node’s initial bias, for which we present a polynomial time algorithm for optimally splitting the budget between the two phases.

We conduct a simulation study on real-world social networks for all the considered settings.

References