## Causal Fairness Analysis (Causal Inference II - Lecture 6)

Elias Bareinboim Drago Plecko



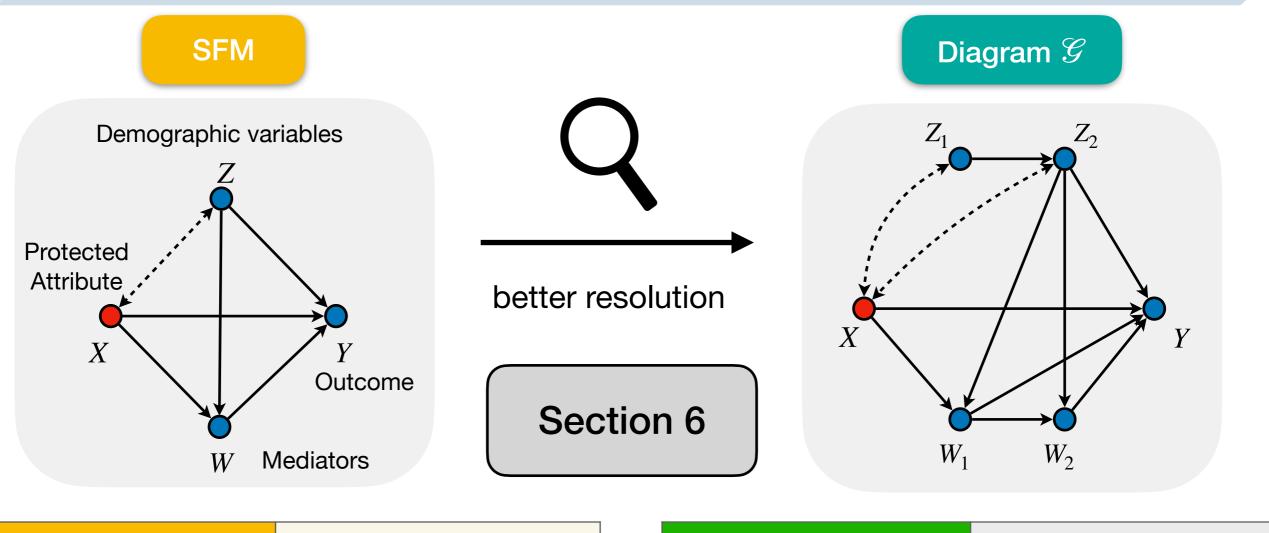
Columbia University Computer Science



#### **Reference:**

D. Plecko, E. Bareinboim. Causal Fairness Analysis. TR R-90, CausalAl Lab, Columbia University. <u>https://causalai.net/r90.pdf</u>

# Moving beyond SFM



Measures	direct, indirect, spurious
<b>Business Necessity</b>	$\{\{\emptyset\}, \{Z\}, \{W\}, \{Z, W\}\}$
Fair Prediction	Causal IF

Measures	variable <b>specific</b>
<b>Business Necessity</b>	any $V' \subseteq V$
Fair Prediction	fairadapt

# Motivating Example

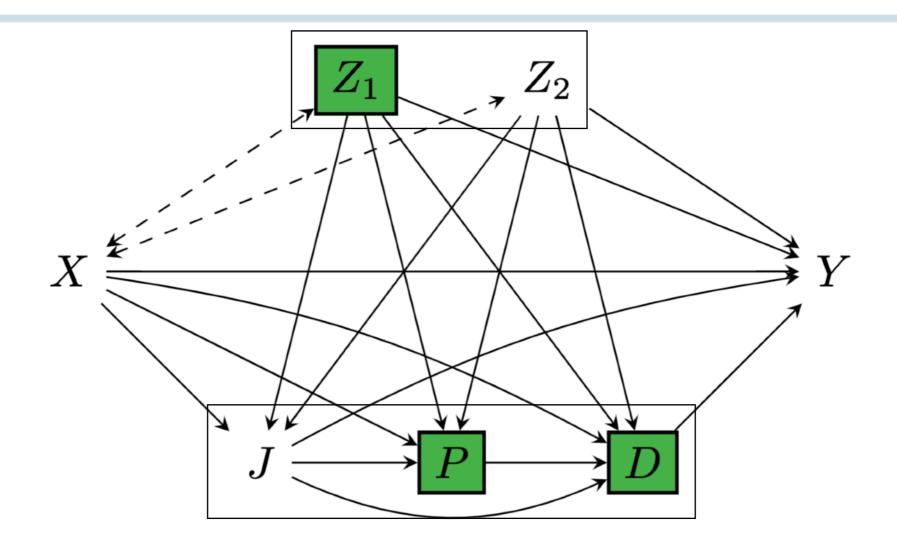
**Example (COMPAS Business Necessity).** Courts at Broward County, Florida, predict the risk of re-offending within 2 years, based on demographic information Z ( $Z_1$  for gender,  $Z_2$  for age), race X ( $x_0$  denoting Majority,  $x_1$  Minority), juvenile offense counts J, prior offense count P, and degree of charge D. A causal analysis using the Fairness Cookbook by ProPublica revealed that:

Ctf-IE<sub>x<sub>1</sub>,x<sub>0</sub></sub>(y | x<sub>1</sub>) = 
$$-5.7\% \pm 0.5\%$$
,  
Ctf-SE<sub>x<sub>1</sub>,x<sub>0</sub></sub>(y) =  $-4.0\% \pm 0.9\%$ ,

After the court hearing, the judge ruled that using the attributes age ( $Z_2$ ), prior count (P), and charge degree (D) were not discriminatory, but using the attributes juvenile count (J) and gender ( $Z_1$ ) was.

How can the ProPublica extend their findings based on this decision?

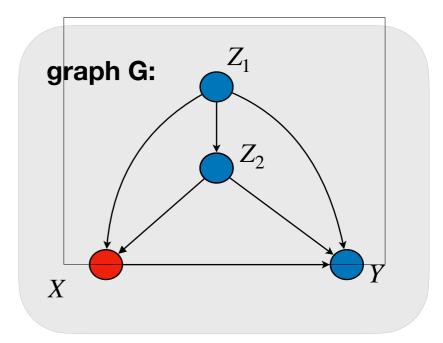
## Motivating Example



 $\mathsf{Ctf}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{SE}_{x_1,x_0}(y) = \underbrace{\mathsf{Ctf}}_{x_1,x_0}(y) + \underbrace{\mathsf{Ctf}}_{x_1,x_0}(y), \\ \underbrace{\mathsf{Ctf}}_{gender} \underbrace{\mathsf{Ctf}}_{age} \underbrace{\mathsf{Ctf$ 

# **Refining Spurious Effects**

- We start by refining the spurious effect notion  $Exp-SE_{x}(y)$
- What is our target in terms of Structural Fairness?

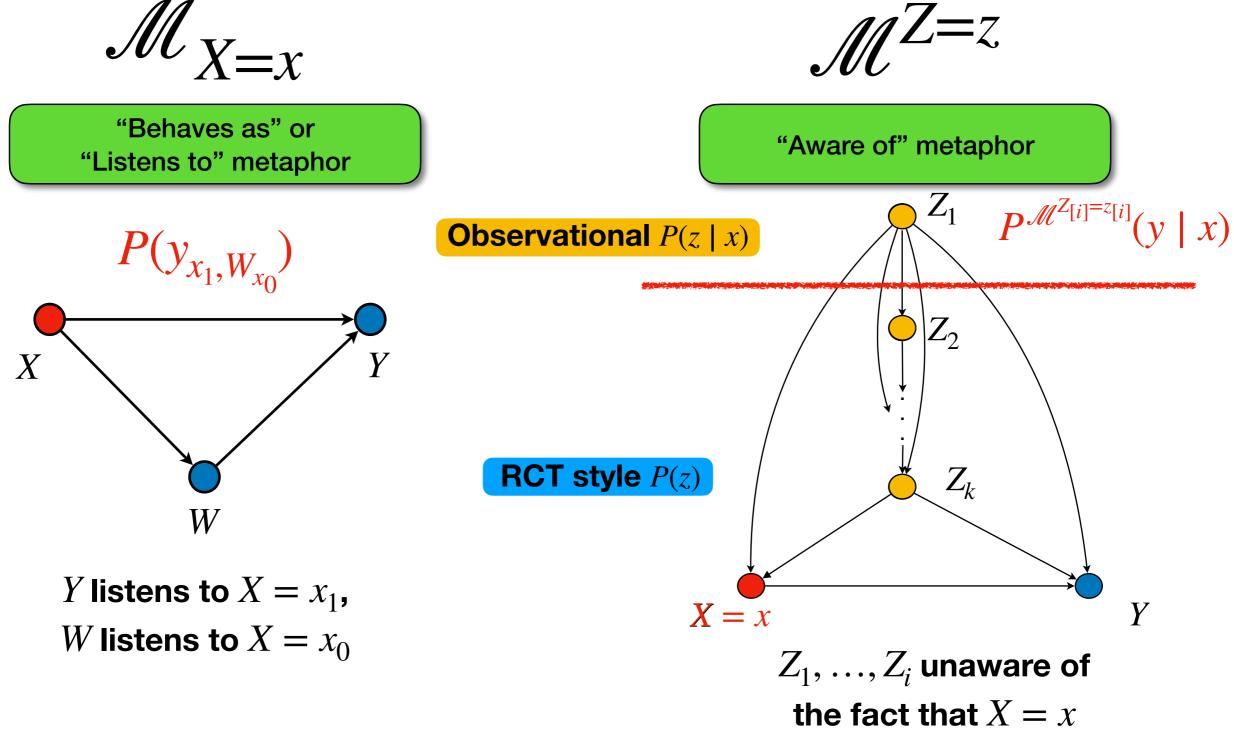


Str-SE-BN<sub>X</sub>(Y) = 1(an<sup>ex</sup>(Y)  $\cap$  an<sup>ex</sup>(X)  $\cap$   $U_{BN}^C = \emptyset$ ).

• How can we get a decomposition

 $\mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}(y) = \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{Z_{1}}(y) + \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{Z_{2}}(y)$ ?

## New Primitive: Intuition



#### **Basic Idea: Integrated Submodel**

**Definition.** Let  $\mathcal{M}$  be an SCM. Let  $Z' \subseteq Z$  be a subset of the exogenous variables. Define by  $\mathcal{M}^{Z'}$  the following SCM

$$\mathcal{M}^{Z'=z'} = \sum_{z} P^{\mathcal{M}}(Z'=z') \mathcal{M}_{Z'=z'}.$$

That is, in  $\mathcal{M}^{Z'}$  the variables Z' are sampled from the observational distribution of the SCM, after which the submodel  $\mathcal{M}_{Z'=z'}$  is used to obtain all other observables  $V \setminus Z'$ .

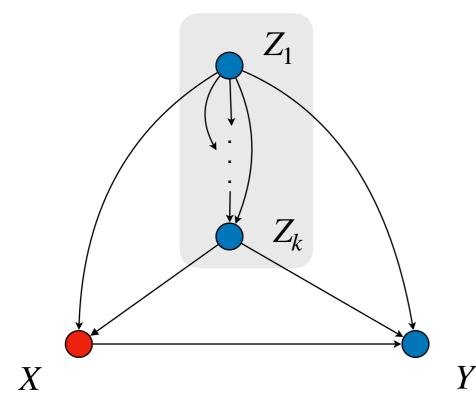
Y

X

like in a randomized control trial

#### **Basic Idea: Integrated Submodel**





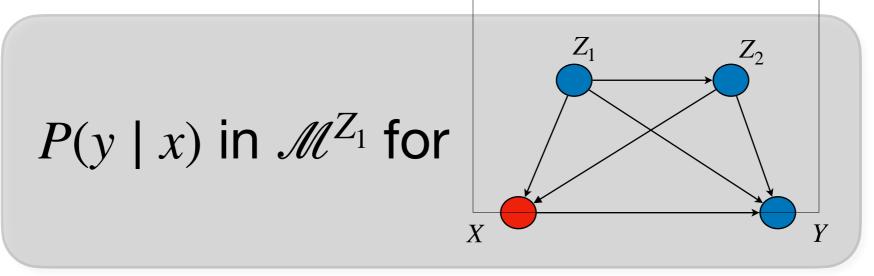
 $Z \operatorname{empty} \Longrightarrow X, Y \operatorname{associated} \operatorname{as}$ in the observational P(V)

Z neither empty nor full  $\implies$ X, Y associated by some, but not all Us

all of  $Z \Longrightarrow X$ , Y independent like in a randomized control trial

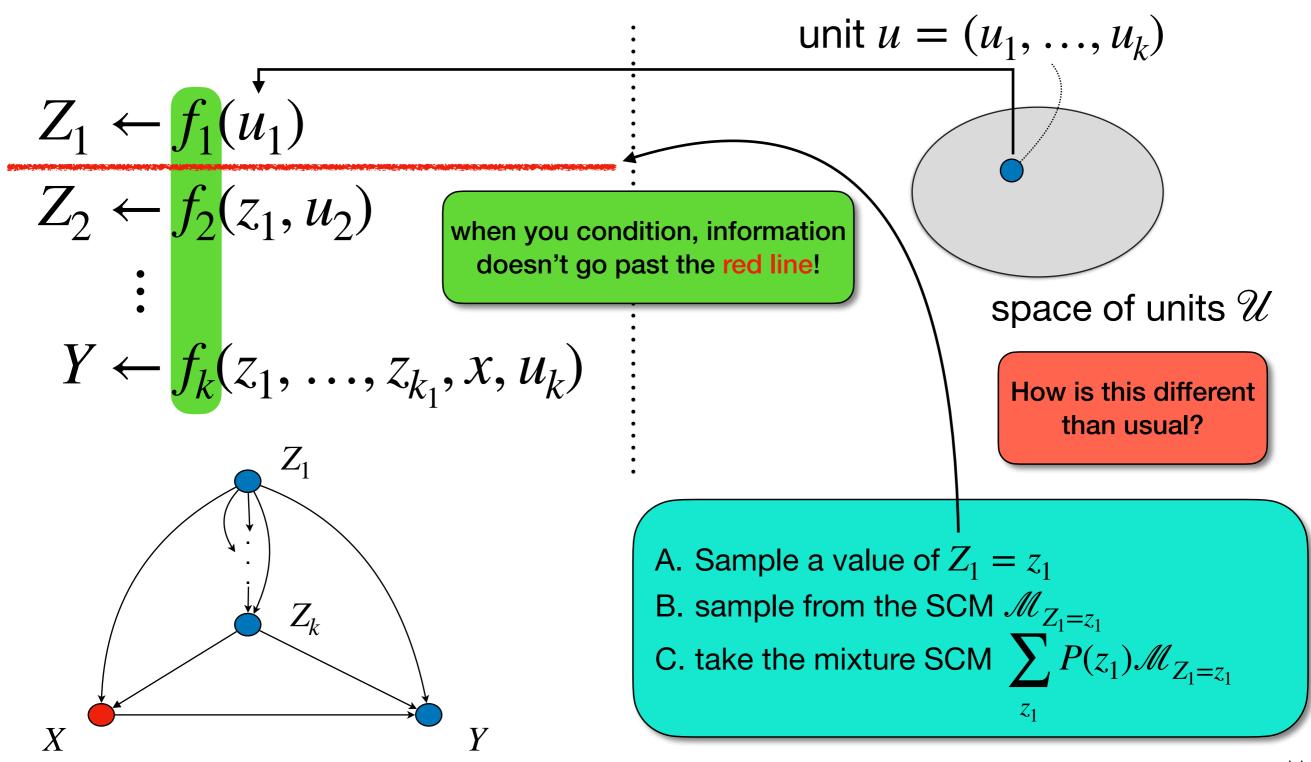
## I-Submodel: Example

How are conditional probabilities computed?



$$P^{\mathcal{M}^{Z_{1}}}(y \mid x) = \sum_{z_{1}} P^{\mathcal{M}}(z_{1}) P^{\mathcal{M}}(y \mid x, do(z_{1}))$$
  
=  $\sum_{z_{1}} P^{\mathcal{M}}(z_{1}) P^{\mathcal{M}}(y \mid x, z_{1})$  (2nd rule of do-calculus)  
=  $\sum_{z_{1}, z_{2}} P^{\mathcal{M}}(z_{1}) P^{\mathcal{M}}(z_{2} \mid z_{1}, x) P^{\mathcal{M}}(y \mid x, z_{1}, z_{2})$  [D]

#### Sampling-Evaluation Loop's Perspective



## **Spurious Decomposition**

**Theorem.** Let  $U_1, \ldots, U_k$  be the subset of exogenous variables that lie on top of a spurious trek between X and Y. Let  $Z_{[i]}$  denote the variables  $Z_1, \ldots, Z_i$  ( $Z_{[0]}$  denotes the empty set  $\emptyset$ ). Then, using the term

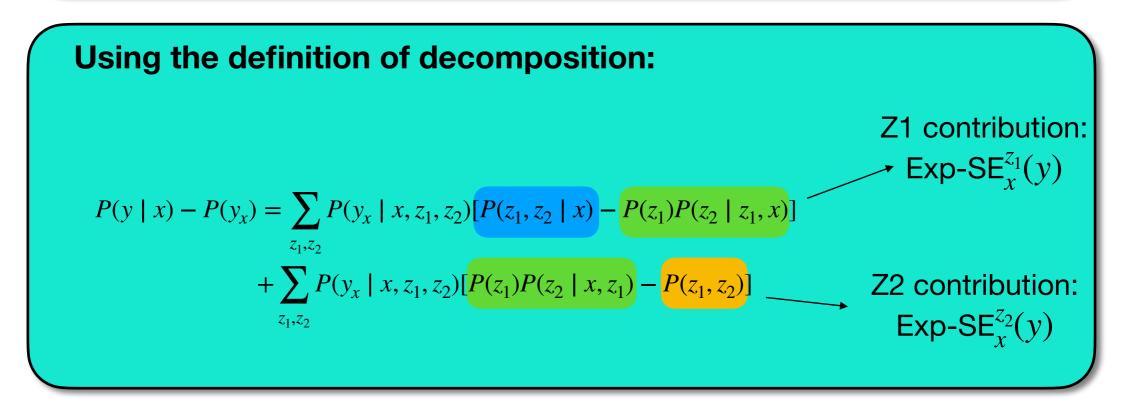
$$\mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{A,B}(y) = P^{\mathscr{M}^{A}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{B}}(y \mid x),$$

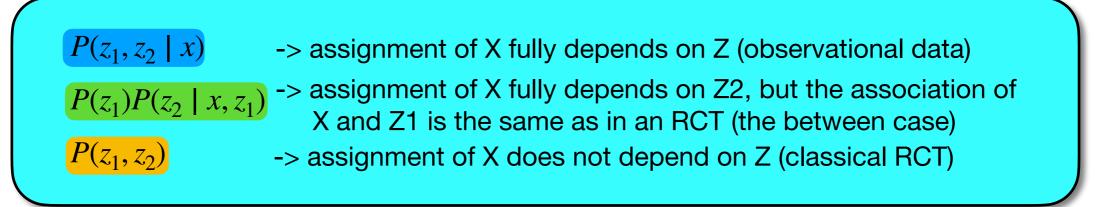
we can decompose the experimental spurious effect as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}(y) &= P(y \mid x) - P(y_{x}) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{Z_{[i]}, Z_{[i+1]}}(y) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} P^{\mathscr{M}^{Z_{[i]}}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{Z_{[i+1]}}}(y \mid x) \,. \end{aligned}$$

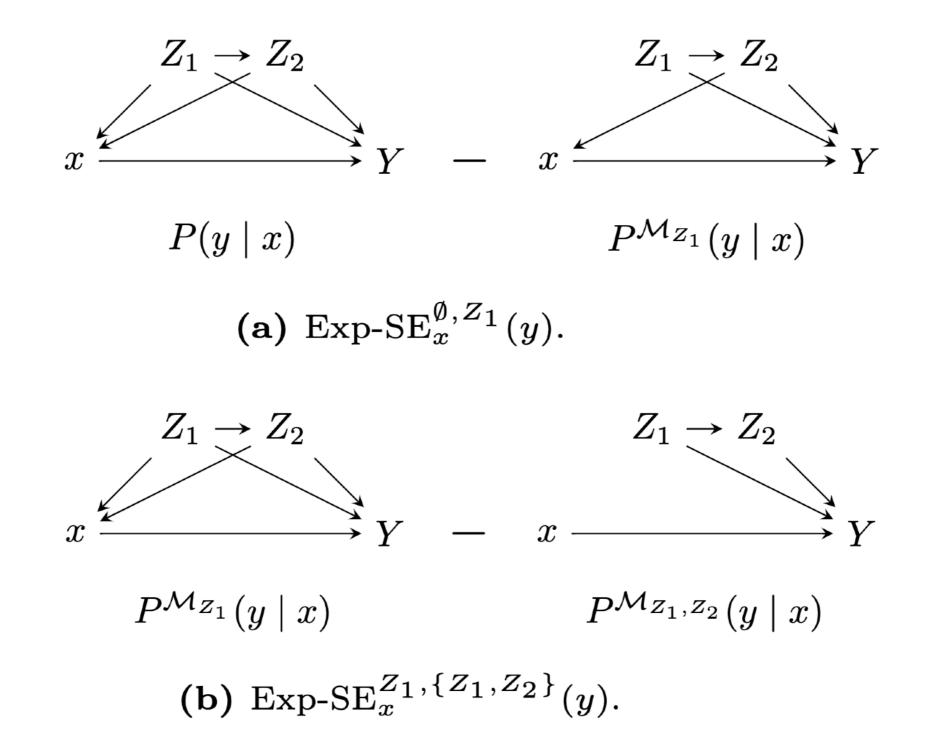
# **Decomposing** $Exp-SE_{\chi}(y)$

Target quantity to decompose:  $Exp-SE_x(y) = P(y \mid x) - P(y_x)$ 



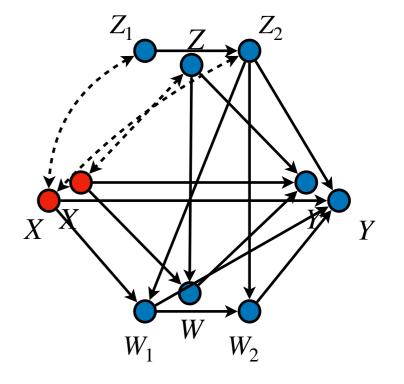


# **Decomposing Exp-SE**<sub> $\chi$ </sub>(y)



### **Towards latent decompositions**

- We managed to decompose the spurious effect by attributing the variations to observable  $Z_1, \ldots, Z_k$ .
- When expanding the SFM, however, we might have bidirected confounding arrows - can we extend our approach?
- What is the best starting point?



Look at attribution of variations to  $U_1, \ldots, U_k$  in the Markovian case

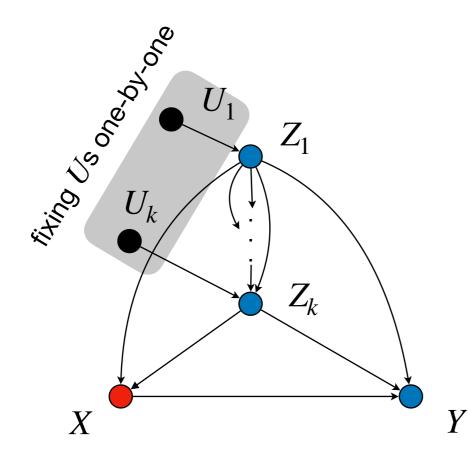
#### **Exogenous Integrated Submodel**

**Definition.** Let  $\mathcal{M}$  be an SCM. Let  $U_Z \subseteq U$  be a subset of the exogenous variables. Define by  $\mathcal{M}^{U_Z}$  the following SCM

$$\mathcal{M}^{U_Z} = \sum_{u_Z} P^{\mathcal{M}}(U_Z = u_Z) \mathcal{M}_{U_Z = u_Z}.$$

That is, in  $\mathcal{M}^{U_Z}$  the exogenous variables  $U_Z$  are determined from the distribution P(U) of the SCM, after which the submodel  $\mathcal{M}_{U_Z=u_Z}$  is used to obtain the all the observables V.

#### **Exogenous Integrated Submodel**



 $U_Z \text{ empty} \Longrightarrow X, Y \text{ associated}$ as in the observational P(V)

 $U_Z$  neither empty nor full  $\Longrightarrow$ X, Y associated by some, but

 $U_Z$  of all  $Z \Longrightarrow X, Y$ independent like in a randomized control trial

# Spurious Decomposition (Exogenous)

**Theorem.** Let  $U_1, \ldots, U_k$  be the subset of exogenous variables that lie on top of a spurious trek between *X* and *Y*. Let  $U_{[i]}$  denote the variables  $U_1, \ldots, U_i$  ( $U_{[0]}$  denotes the empty set  $\emptyset$ ). Then, using the term

$$\mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{A,B}(y) = P^{\mathscr{M}^{A}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{B}}(y \mid x),$$

we can decompose the experimental spurious effect as follows:

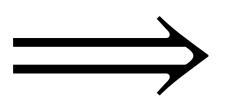
$$\begin{aligned} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}(y) &= P(y \mid x) - P(y_{x}) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{U_{[i]}, U_{[i+1]}}(y) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} P^{\mathscr{M}^{U_{[i]}}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{U_{[i+1]}}}(y \mid x) \,. \end{aligned}$$

#### Spurious Decomposition Equivalence

Theorem. Let  $Z_1, \ldots, Z_k$  be the confounders between variables X and Y, sorted in any valid topological ordering. Denote the exogenous variables corresponding to  $Z_1, \ldots, Z_k$  as  $U_1, \ldots, U_k$ , respectively. Let  $Z_{[i]} = \{Z_1, \ldots, Z_i\}$  and  $U_{[i]} = \{U_1, \ldots, U_i\}$ . It then holds that

$$P^{\mathcal{M}^{\mathbb{Z}[i]}}(V) = P^{\mathcal{M}^{\mathbb{U}[i]}}(V),$$

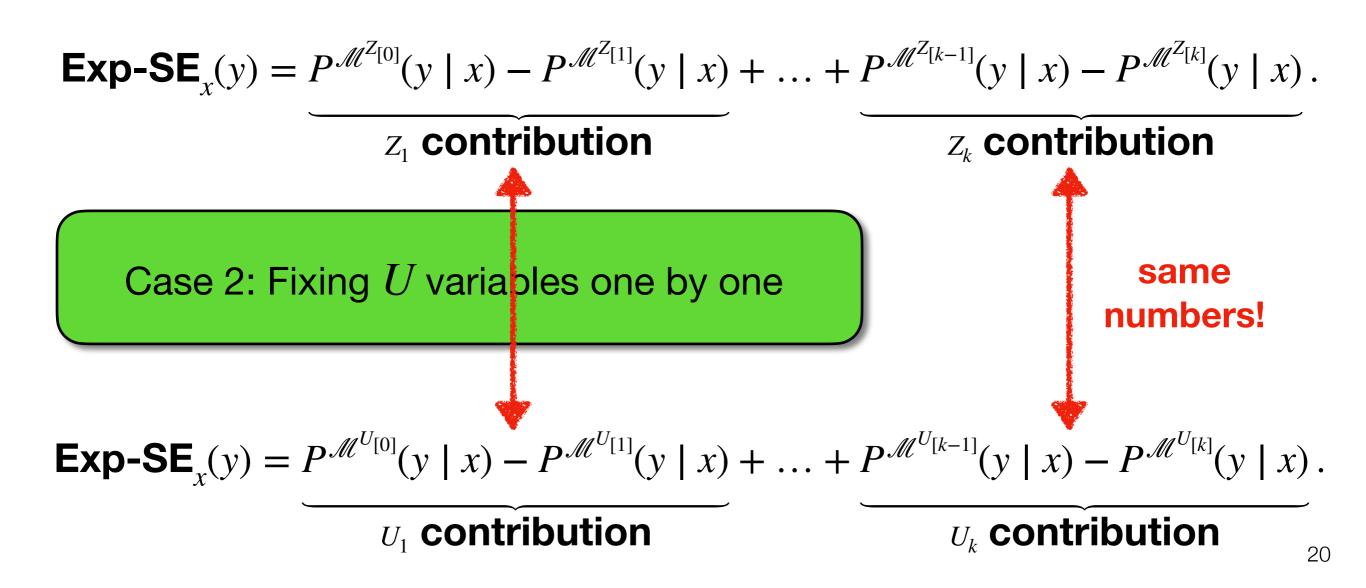
that is, the induced distributions over the observables V for the integrated submodel  $\mathcal{M}^{Z_{[i]}}$  and the exogenous integrated submodel  $\mathcal{M}^{U_{[i]}}$  are equal.



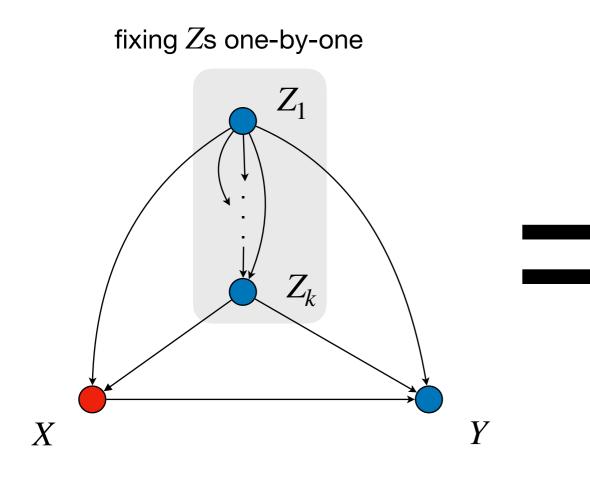
we have an attribution with respect to latents that is equivalent (in Markovian, topological order case)

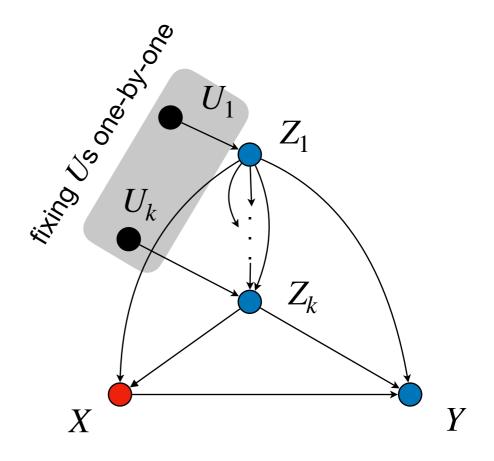
#### Spurious Decomposition Equivalence

Case 1: Fixing Z variables one by one



#### Spurious Decomposition Equivalence



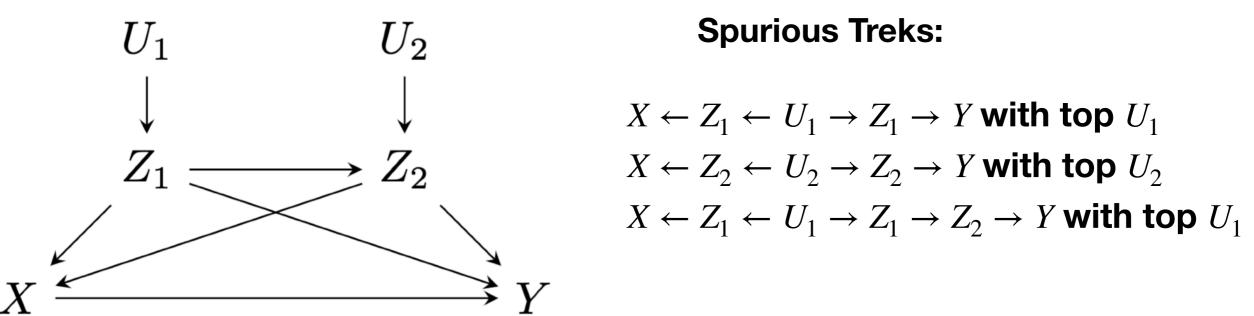


Can we use the same latent attribution approach to extend to Semi-Markovian models? Note that we have a primitive that can attribute variations to the latent Us!

## Semi-Markovian Models: Treks

**Definition.** Let  $\mathscr{G}$  be the causal diagram of a Semi-Markovian model. A trek  $\tau$  from X to Y is an ordered pair of causal paths  $(g_l, g_r)$  with a common exogenous source  $U_i \in U$ . That is,  $g_l$  is a causal path  $U_i \to \ldots \to X$  and  $g_r$  is a causal path  $U_i \to \ldots \to Y$ .

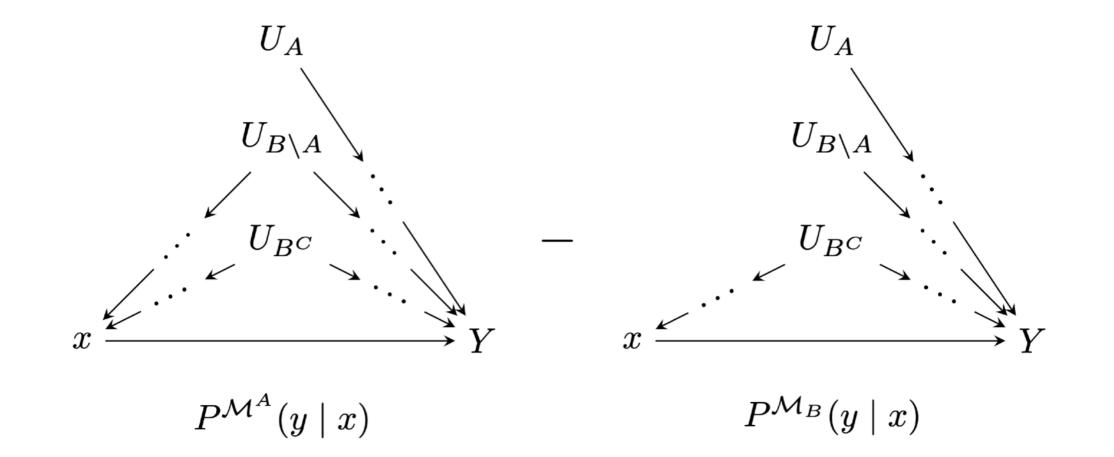
The common source  $U_i$  is called the top of the trek (ToT), denoted top $(g_l, g_r)$ . A trek is called spurious if  $g_r$  is a causal path from  $U_i$  to Y, i.e., not intercepted by X.



#### **Exogenous Set-Specific Effects**

**Definition.** Let  $U_{sToT} \subseteq U$  be the set of trek tops. Suppose  $A \subseteq B \subseteq U_{sToT}$ . The exogenous experimental spurious effect is defined as

$$\mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{A,B}(y) = P^{\mathscr{M}^{A}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{B}}(y \mid x).$$



#### Admissibility with respect to Structural Fairness Measures

Lemma. Let  $U_{BN} \subseteq U$  be a subset of the exogenous confounders of X, Y that fall under business necessity. Let  $U_{BN}^C$  denote the exogenous ancestors of X that do not fall under business necessity, that is  $U_{BN}^C = \operatorname{an}^{e_X}(X) \setminus U_{BN}$ . Then the measures  $\operatorname{Exp-SE}_x^{\emptyset, U_{BN}^C}(y)$ ,  $\operatorname{Exp-SE}_x^{U_{BN}, U}(y)$  are admissible with respect to the structural criterion  $\operatorname{Str-SE}(U_{BN})_X(Y)$ , that is

$$(\mathsf{Str}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{SE}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{BN}_X(Y) = 0) \implies (\mathsf{Exp}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{SE}_x^{\emptyset,U_{BN}^C}(y) = 0)$$
$$(\mathsf{Str}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{SE}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{BN}_X(Y) = 0) \implies (\mathsf{Exp}\mathsf{-}\mathsf{SE}_x^{U_{BN},U}(y) = 0).$$

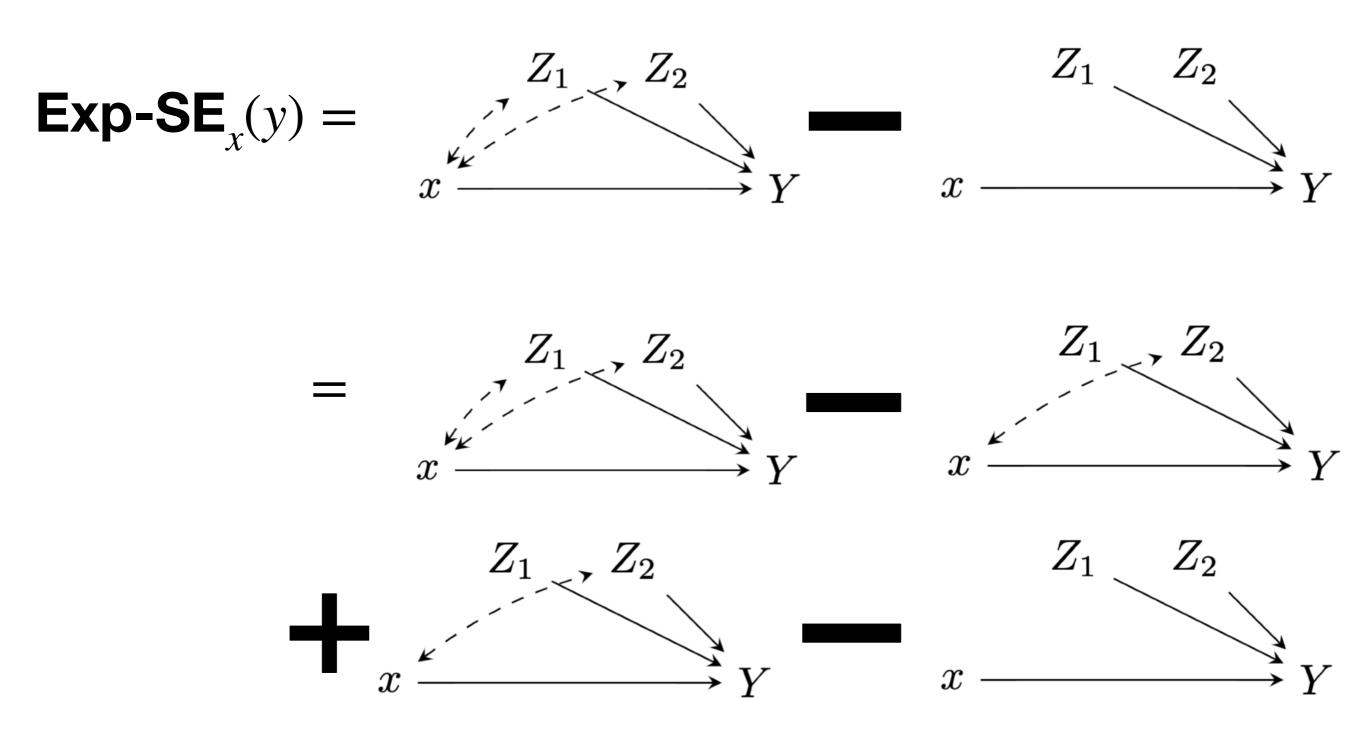
Since they are admissible, we will be able to add them to the Fairness Map (TBD)

#### Semi-Markovian Spurious Decomposition

**Theorem.** Let  $U_1, \ldots, U_k$  be the subset of exogenous variables that lie on top of a spurious trek between *X* and *Y*. Let  $U_{[i]}$  denote the variables  $U_1, \ldots, U_i$  ( $U_{[0]}$  denotes the empty set  $\emptyset$ ). The experimental spurious effect can be decomposed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}(y) &= P(y \mid x) - P(y_{x}) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} \mathsf{Exp-SE}_{x}^{U_{[i]}, U_{[i+1]}}(y) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} P^{\mathscr{M}^{U_{[i]}}}(y \mid x) - P^{\mathscr{M}^{U_{[i+1]}}}(y \mid x) \end{aligned}$$

#### Semi-Markovian Spurious Decomposition



## Identification of Spurious

**Definition (Anchor Set).** 

$$\mathsf{AS}(U_1, \dots, U_l) = \bigcup_{i=1}^l \mathsf{ch}(U_i) \backslash X.$$
 observables  
"touched" by  $U$ 

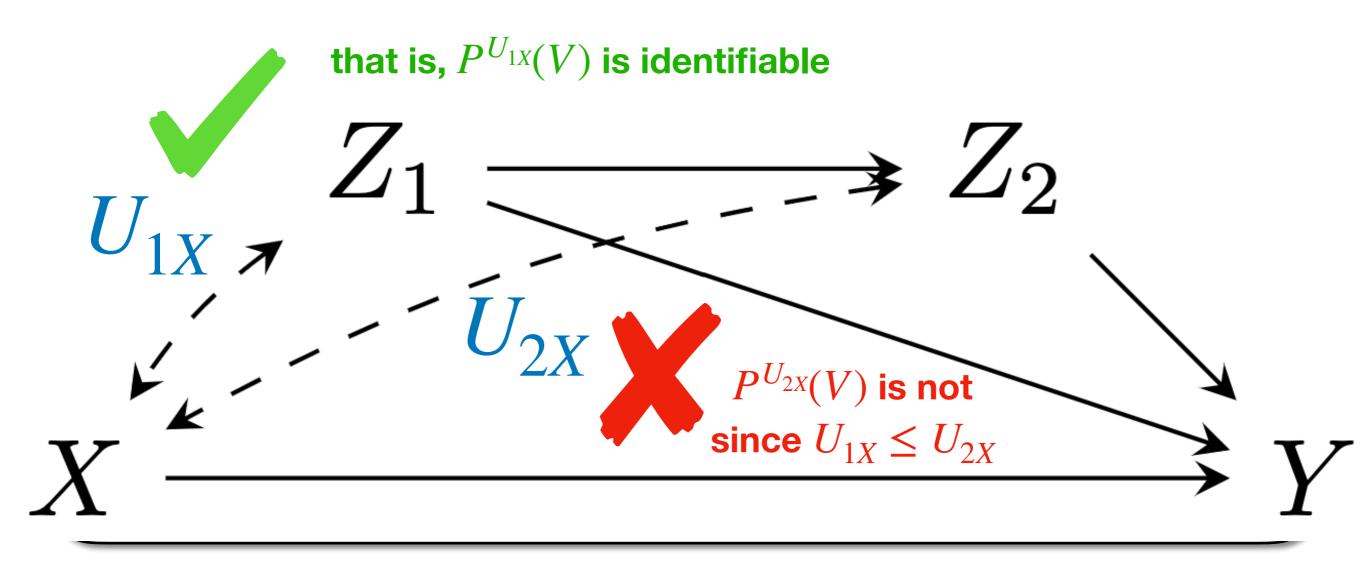
**Definition (Precedence Relation).** 

 $U_i$  topologically before  $U_i$ 

$$U_i \stackrel{_{PR}}{\leq} U_j \iff \mathsf{AS}(U_j) \cap \{\mathsf{AS}(U_i) \cup \mathsf{an}(\mathsf{AS}(U_i))\} \neq \emptyset.$$

Theorem (ID of Spurious Effects).  $P^{\mathcal{M}^A}(y \mid x)$  is identifiable from observational data P(V) if the following hold:

(i)  $Y \notin AS(A)$  *Y* not touched (ii)  $AS(A) \cap AS(U_{sToT} \setminus A) = \emptyset$  touched observables disjoint (iii) there is no  $U_j \in U_{sToT} \setminus A$  such that  $\exists U_i \in A$  for which  $U_j \stackrel{PR}{\leq} U_i$ . no precedence between set elements



Theorem (ID of Spurious Effects).  $P^{\mathcal{M}^A}(y \mid x)$  is identifiable from observational data P(V) if the following hold:

(i)  $Y \notin AS(A)$  *Y* not touched (ii)  $AS(A) \cap AS(U_{sToT} \setminus A) = \emptyset$  touched observables disjoint (iii) there is no  $U_j \in U_{sToT} \setminus A$  such that  $\exists U_i \in A$  for which  $U_j \stackrel{PR}{\leq} U_i$ . no precedence between set elements

## *x*-specific spurious?

• Target: Ctf-SE<sub>$$x_0,x_1$$</sub>(y) =  $P(y_{x_0} | x_1) - P(y | x_0)$ 

**Definition (Exogenous** *x***-specific Integrated Submodel).** Define by  $\mathcal{M}_x^{U_Z}$  the following SCM:

$$\mathcal{M}_x^{U_Z} = \sum_{u_Z} P^{\mathcal{M}}(U_Z = u_Z \mid X = x) \mathcal{M}_{U_Z = u_Z}.$$

**Definition (Exogenous** *x***-specific spurious).** 

Ctf-SE<sup>A,B</sup><sub>x\_0,x\_1</sub>(y) = 
$$P^{\mathscr{M}^A_{x_1}}(y \mid x_0) - P^{\mathscr{M}^B_{x_1}}(y \mid x_0)$$
.

**Theorem (***x***-specific exogenous spurious decomposition).** 

$$\mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_0,x_1}(y) = \sum_{i=0}^{m-1} \mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_0,x_1}^{U_{[i]},U_{[i+1]}}(y)$$

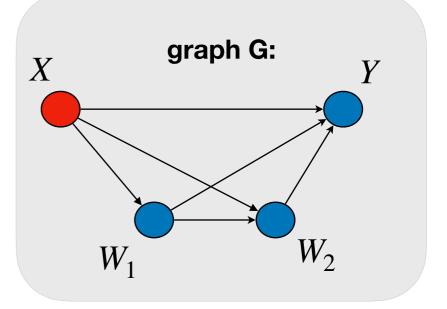
# **Refining Indirect Effects**

- Target: refine the quantity  $NIE_{x_0,x_1}(y)$
- What is our target in terms of Structural Fairness?

Str-IE-BN<sub>X</sub>(Y) = 1(an(Y) 
$$\cap$$
 ch(X)  $\cap$  W<sup>C</sup><sub>BN</sub> = Ø).

• How can we get a decomposition

$$\mathsf{NIE}_{x_0,x_1}(y) = \mathsf{NIE}_{x_0,x_1}^{W_1}(y) + \mathsf{NIE}_{x_0,x_1}^{W_2}(y) ?$$



## Set-specific indirect

**Definition (Set-specific indirect effect).** Let  $W_A$ ,  $W_B$  be nested subsets of the mediators W, so that  $W_A \subseteq W_B$ . Let  $W_{A^C}$  and  $W_{B^C}$  denote the complements of  $W_A, W_B$  in W. We then define the E-specific indirect effect with respect to sets  $W_A, W_B$  as  $E - \mathsf{IE}_{x_0, x_1}^{W_A, W_B}(y) = P(y_{x_0, (W_B)_{x_1}, (W_BC)_{x_0}})$  $P(y_{x_0,(W_A)_{x_1},(W_AC)_{x_0}})$ EE).  $x_0$  $x_0$  $x_1$  $x_1$  $W_{B \setminus A}$  $W_A \longrightarrow W_{B \setminus A} \longrightarrow W_{B^C}$  $W_{BC}$  $W_A \longrightarrow$ 

#### Admissibility with respect to Structural Measures

Lemma. Let  $W_{BN} \subseteq W$  be a subset of the mediators that fall under business necessity. Then the measure E-IE $_{x_0,x_1}^{\emptyset,W_{BN}^C}(y)$  is admissible with respect to the structural criterion Str-IE $(W_{BN})_X(Y)$ , that is

$$(\mathsf{Str-IE-BN}_X(Y) = 0) \implies (E - \mathsf{IE}_{x_0, x_1}^{\emptyset, W_{BN}^C}(y) = 0),$$
$$(\mathsf{Str-IE-BN}_X(Y) = 0) \implies (E - \mathsf{IE}_{x_0, x_1}^{W_{BN}, W}(y) = 0).$$

Since they are admissible, we will be able to add them to the Fairness Map (TBC)

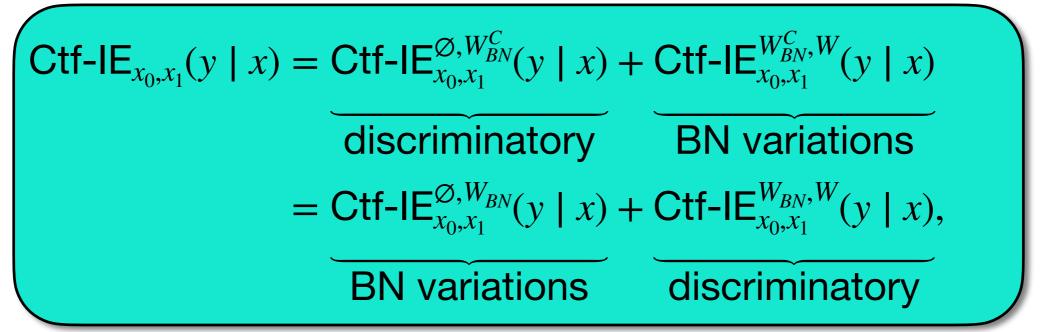
## **Decomposition of Indirect**

**Theorem.** Let  $W_1, \ldots, W_k$  denote the set of mediators, sorted in a topological order. Define  $W_{[i]}$  as the set  $\{W_1, \ldots, W_i\}$  and  $W_{-[i]}$  as  $\{W_{i+1}, \ldots, W_k\}$ . The *E*-specific indirect effect can then be decomposed as

$$\begin{split} E^{-lE_{x_0,x_1}}(y) &= P(y_{x_0,W_{x_1}} \mid E) - P(y_{x_0} \mid E) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} E^{-lE_{x_0,x_1}^{W_{[i]},W_{[i+1]}}}(y) \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^{k-1} P(y_{x_0,(W_{[i+1]})_{x_1},(W_{-[i+1]})_{x_0}} \mid E) - P(y_{x_0,(W_{[i]})_{x_1},(W_{-[i]})_{x_0}} \mid E) \,. \end{split}$$

# Lack of symmetry

 A lack of symmetry arises because we can consider either a x<sub>0</sub> → x<sub>1</sub>, or x<sub>1</sub> → x<sub>0</sub> transition, and similarly for the BN transition.
As a consequence, note that:



and analogously for Ctf-IE<sub> $x_1,x_0$ </sub>( $y \mid x$ ), and also for the spurious.

- How can we fix this problem?
- $\implies$  Take an average over the transitions!

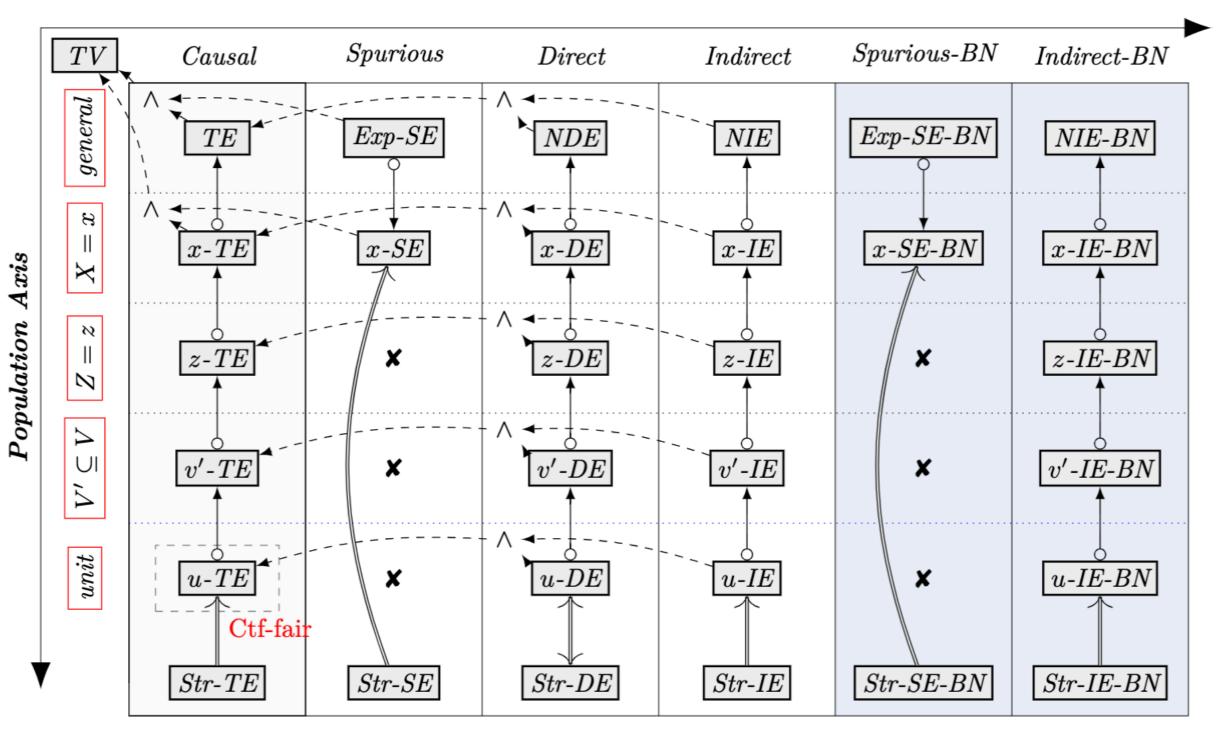
# Lack of symmetry

**Definition.** Define the *x*-specific indirect and spurious measures under business necessity as

$$x-\mathsf{IE}^{\text{sym-BN}}(y \mid x) = \frac{1}{4} \left( \mathsf{Ctf-IE}_{x_{1},x_{0}}^{\emptyset,W_{BN}^{C}}(y \mid x) + \mathsf{Ctf-IE}_{x_{1},x_{0}}^{W_{BN},W}(y \mid x) - \mathsf{Ctf-IE}_{x_{0},x_{1}}^{W_{BN},W}(y \mid x) \right)$$
$$\mathsf{Ctf-IE}_{x_{0},x_{1}}^{\emptyset,W_{BN}^{C}}(y \mid x) - \mathsf{Ctf-IE}_{x_{0},x_{1}}^{W_{BN},W}(y \mid x) \right)$$
$$x-\mathsf{SE}^{\text{sym-BN}}(y) = \frac{1}{4} \left( \mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_{1},x_{0}}^{\emptyset,U_{BN}^{C}}(y) + \mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_{1},x_{0}}^{U_{BN},U}(y) - \mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_{0},x_{1}}^{U_{BN},U}(y) - \mathsf{Ctf-SE}_{x_{0},x_{1}}^{U_{BN},U}(y) \right).$$

## **Extended Fairness Map**

Mechanisms Axis



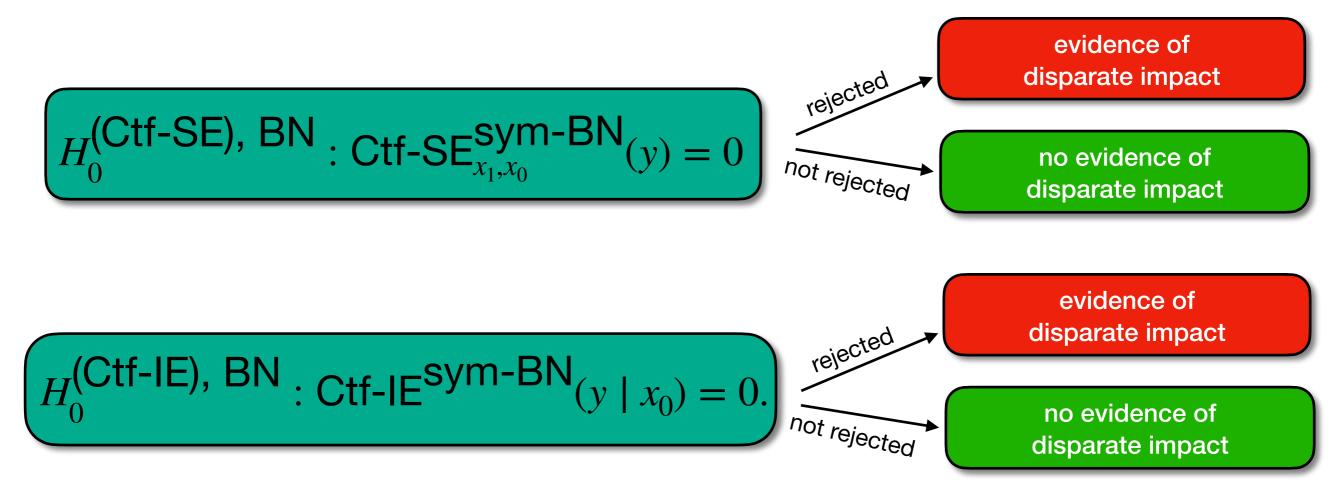
### Task 1 (Extended)

### **Extended Fairness Cookbook**

1) Obtain data on past decisions  $\mathcal{D}$ .

2) Determine the (possibly simplified) causal diagram  $\mathscr{G}$  (w.r.t. underlying  $\mathscr{M}^*$ ).

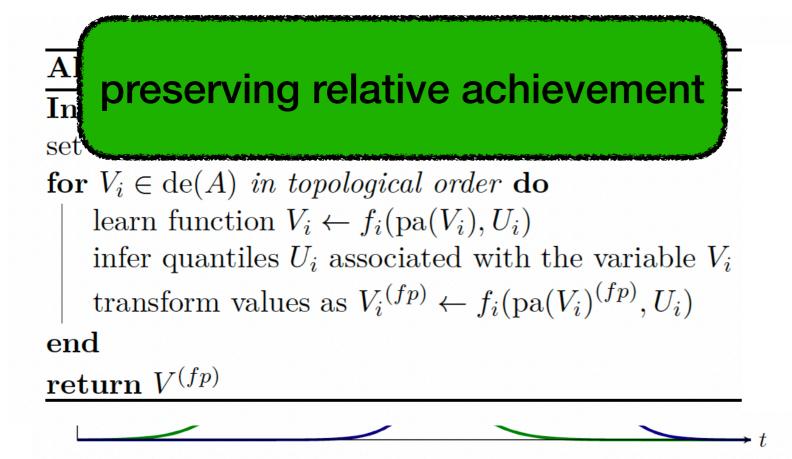
- 3) Determine the **Business Necessity** (BN) set (now arbitrary!).
- 4) Test the following two hypotheses:

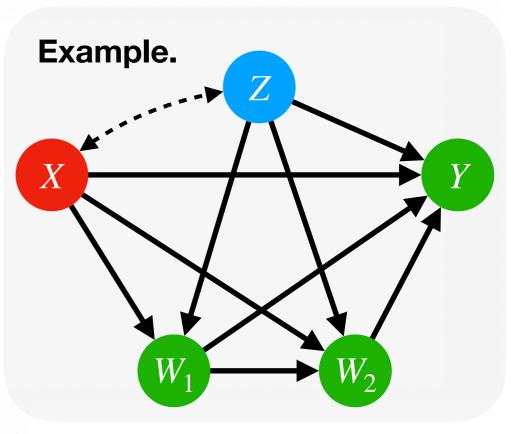


### Task 2 (Extended)

### Fairadapt: Sequential Optimal Transport Plecko & Meinshausen, JMLR 2020

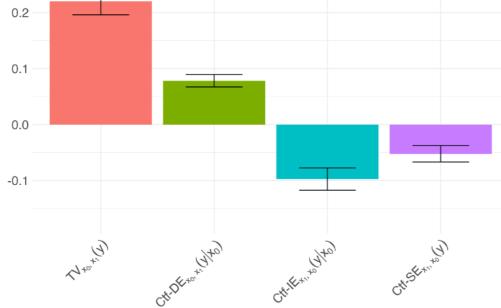
- joint optimal transport induces a dependency of W on Y, therefore *breaking the causal structure*
- instead, we perform the Optimal Transport sequentially

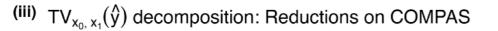


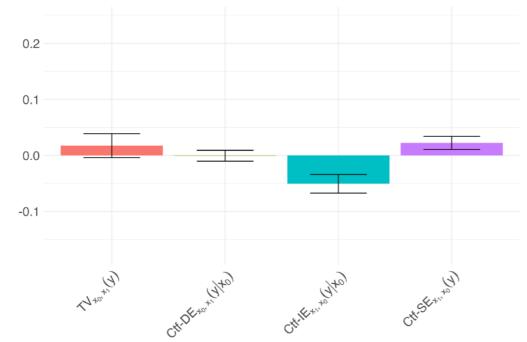


# Recap: Fair Prediction Theorem on COMPAS

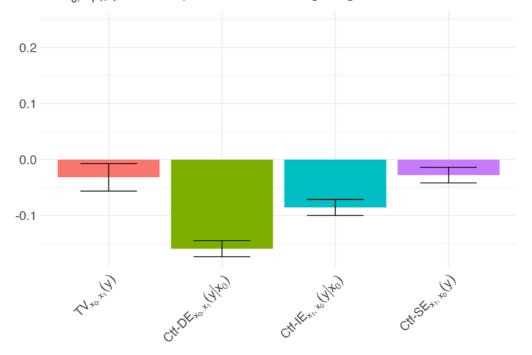




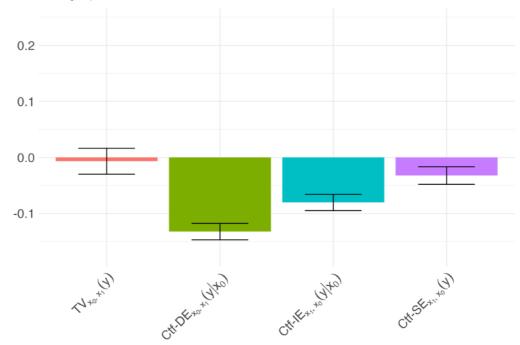




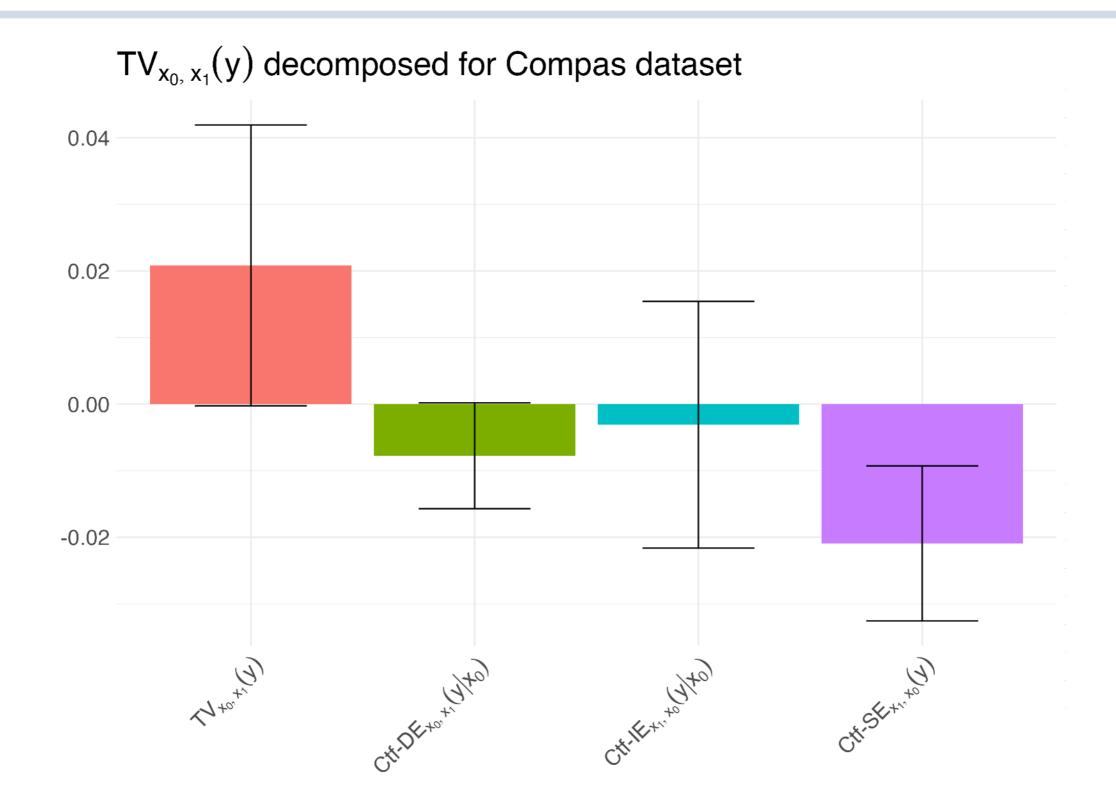
(ii)  $TV_{x_0, x_1}(\overset{\Lambda}{y})$  decomposition: Reweighing on COMPAS



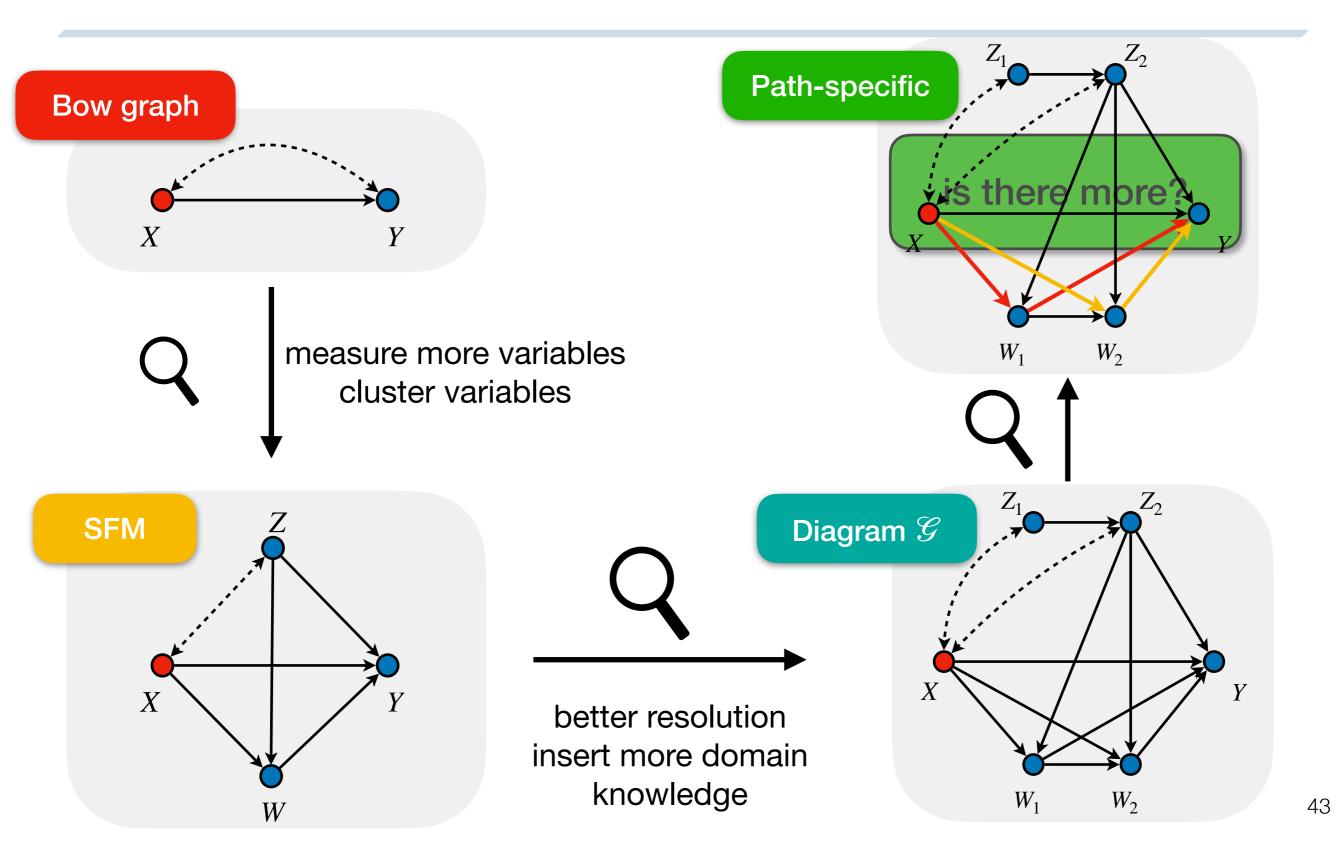
(iv)  $TV_{x_0, x_1}(\hat{y})$  decomposition: Reject-option on COMPAS



### Fairadapt: Result on COMPAS



# **Complexity Cascade**



Foundations of Causal Inference

**Fairness Examples & the SFM** 

#### **FPCFA**

Legal Doctrines of Discrimination Structural Fairness Criteria / Doctrines

#### **Decomposing Variations**

Admissibility & Power

#### **Explainability Plane**

#### TV family of measures

#### **Power in practice**

#### **Unit-level measures**

Towards *x*, *z*, *v*-specific

TV family as contrasts

**Fairness Map** 

Decomposability, Admissibility and Power in the Map

**Corollaries of Fairness Map** 

**Identification & Estimation** 

Understanding previous literature through the Map

Counterfactual Fairness Individual Fairness Predictive Parity

#### **Task 1: Bias Quantification**

#### **Fairness Cookbook**

#### **Quantification over time**

#### Quantification with $Y, \hat{Y}$

#### **Task 2: Fair Prediction**

Biased Reality -> Biased Data -> Biased Future?

Pre-, In-, Post- processing

#### **Fair Prediction Theorem**

#### **Task 3: Fair Decision-Making**

Chaining Predictions to Decisions Fails

**Different types of utility** 

#### **Outcome Control Task**

#### Principal Fairness & Benefit Fairness

**Canonical Types** 

**Decomposing the Gap** 

Task 3 fully blown version

#### **Beyond the SFM**

Decomposing spurious effects: Integrated Submodels

Integrated Submodels for Semi-Markovian models

#### Identifiability

#### Decomposing Indirect Effects

Admissibility with respect to Structural Fairness

#### **Extended Fairness Map**

#### **Fair Data Adaptation**