CHAPTER

Task 1 -- Gathering causal mapping data

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> At Causal Map we are relatively agnostic about data collection. We are most interested in causal evidence and beliefs derived from different sources.

See also:

- Task 1 -- Gathering narrative data
- Intro to data collection with Qualia

You can also create consensus causal maps directly

Consensus versus multi-source data collection

Some methods related to causal mapping and even some forms of causal mapping itself are not interested in individuals' different causal perspectives: they are primarily aimed at reaching a consensus, expert map straight off without first recording individual viewpoints and attempting to combine them.

TODO

You can also create consensus causal maps directly

You have a causal map with lots of links from an intervention to a final outcome. It's a really impressive chain.

Then a stakeholder comes along and draws a direct link from intervention to outcome, saying "these trainings are great, they caused the law to get changed!"

You can also create consensus causal maps directly, and in these cases these cheeky direct links are often ignored or curated out of the way. When coding individual sources, and source X says `A --> B --> C` and then and source Y says `A --> C` it is very tempting to recode source X as if they were really saying `A --> B --> C`.

For example when source X says

> Thanks to the training, our skills increased and so we were able to manage the outreach work better

.... and source Y only says

> Thanks to the training we were able to manage the outreach work better

... it is very tempting to add the intermediate factor to source Y's story too *even if they did not actually mention it*. If you're going to do that, you should document when and how this is allowed and why.

Causal backchaining

We have often processed data gathered specifically for evaluation purposes using "causal backchaining". But we often process secondary data which was not specifically intended for causal coding.

Changes and states

When gathering primary data, the way in which questions are asked influences the meaning of the maps and their links. For example, in the QuIP, (Copestake et al., 2019b) respondents are asked to identify causes of changes, then causes of the causes and so on. This means that most of the factors are already as *changes in something*, such as ‘an improved harvest’ or ‘reduced hunger’). This has implications for how positive and negative statements are combined, as discussed later.

