

Social Science Methodology Conference

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The use and development of optimal matching analysis

Session Organisers

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Optimal matching is rapidly becoming a popular tool for identifying the resemblance between pairs of sequences in empirical research. The application has great utility for those interested in creating groups of individuals with similar trajectories over time or identifying ideal types of patterns to describe aspects of the life course. This session aims to present a range of applications of optimal matching analysis in social science research. Authors will be expected to provide an overview of the underlying methodology, their use of software and the potential of their findings for making sense of clusters of individuals based on the resemblance of sequence data. We particularly welcome applications that illuminate how the validity of optimal matching results can be tested and/or improved. In addition, we invite papers using, or reflecting on, sequence analytic procedures that present alternatives to optimal matching; in such papers, we would encourage a discussion of the respective merits and drawbacks of both optimal matching and its alternatives.

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