

Measuring Cultural Relatedness Using Multiple Seriation Ordering Algorithms

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Abstract Seriation is a long-standing archaeological method for relative dating that has proven effective in probing regional-scale patterns of inheritance, social networks, and cultural contact in their full spatiotemporal context. The orderings produced by seriation are produced by the continuity of class distributions and unimodality of class frequencies, properties that are related to social learning and transmission models studied by evolutionary archaeologists. Linking seriation to social learning and transmission enables one to consider ordering principles beyond the classic unimodal curve. Unimodality is a highly visible property that can be used to probe and measure the relationships between assemblages, and it was especially useful when seriation was accomplished with simple algorithms and manual effort. With modern algorithms and computing power, multiple ordering principles can be employed to better understand the spatiotemporal relations between assemblages. Ultimately, the expansion of seriation to additional ordering algorithms allows us an ability to more thoroughly explore underlying models of cultural contact, social networks, and modes of social learning. In this paper, we review our progress to date in extending seriation to multiple ordering algorithms, with examples from Eastern North America and Oceania.

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1 Introduction

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2 The Seriation Method

$$p(i, j) = \frac{1}{F} \sum_{f=1}^F \delta_{\sigma_f(i)\sigma_f(j)} \quad (1)$$

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3 Experiments

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4 Results

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5 Discussion

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6 Acknowledgements

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