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Social networks and the micro-macro link

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Chair
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Abstract

What network selection mechanisms generate unique network structures and topologies? What are the implications of those selection mechanisms for individuals nested in social networks? Although the emergent phenomena problem animates much social networks research, testing the effects of micro-level outcomes on macro level structures has proven difficult. This presentation introduces recent statistical developments for testing micro-macro network relationships within the "MEMS" (micro effect on macro structure) framework. It introduces the elements of the framework, interpretation, assumptions, and extensions to mediation analysis. Next, it discusses several research applications that apply the framework to understand efficiency and embeddedness in illegal "dark web" drug markets, use of force in American policing networks, and the micro foundations of political segregation in U.S. Congress. Findings from the empirical examples demonstrate that untangling micro-macro relationships often requires attention to countervailing mechanisms and intervening variables that can complicate explanations for the micro foundations of some macro level network characteristics.

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