

From proselytism to secularization

*the social conditions of
Optimal Matching Analysis diffusion*

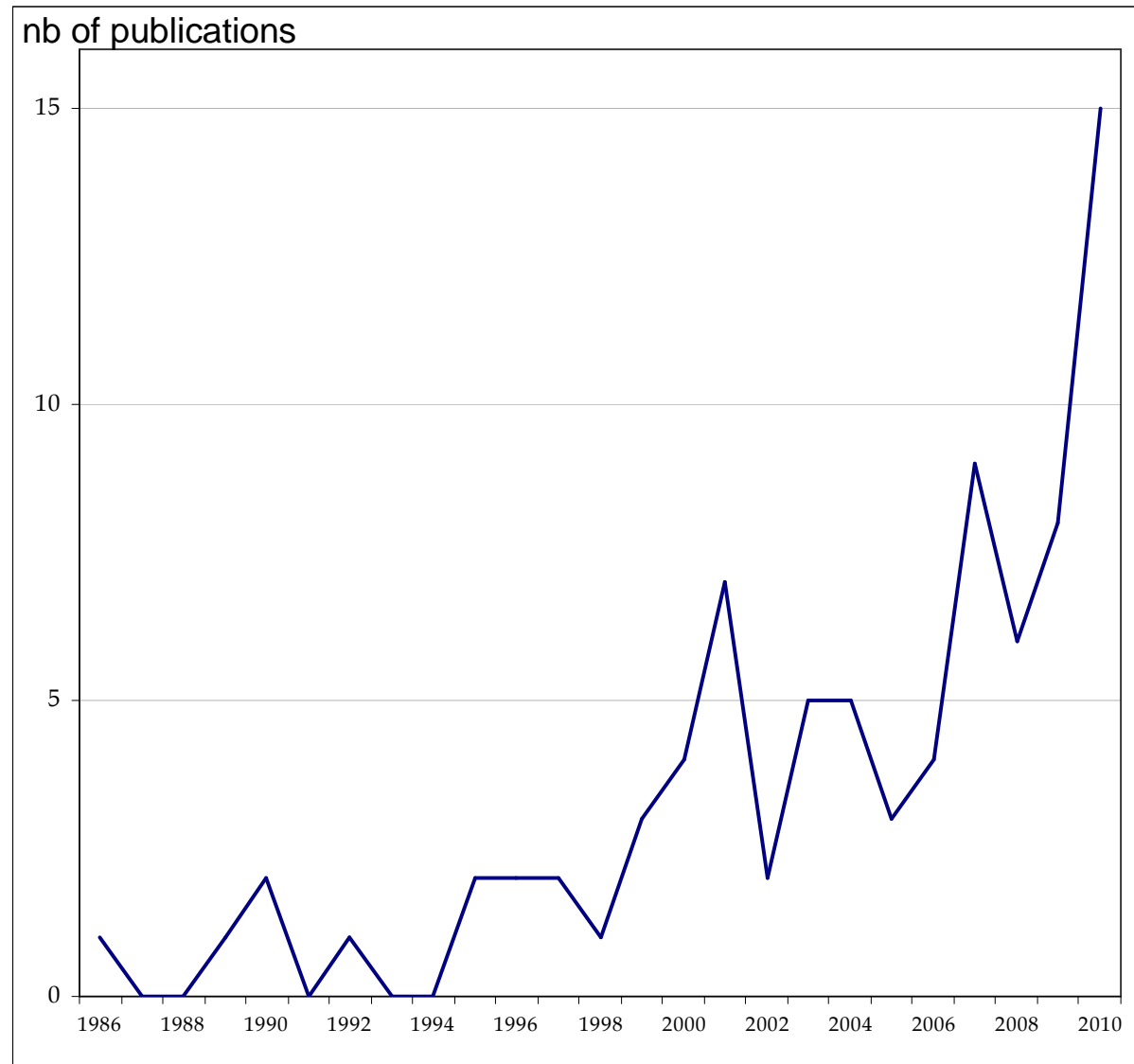
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OMA diffusion



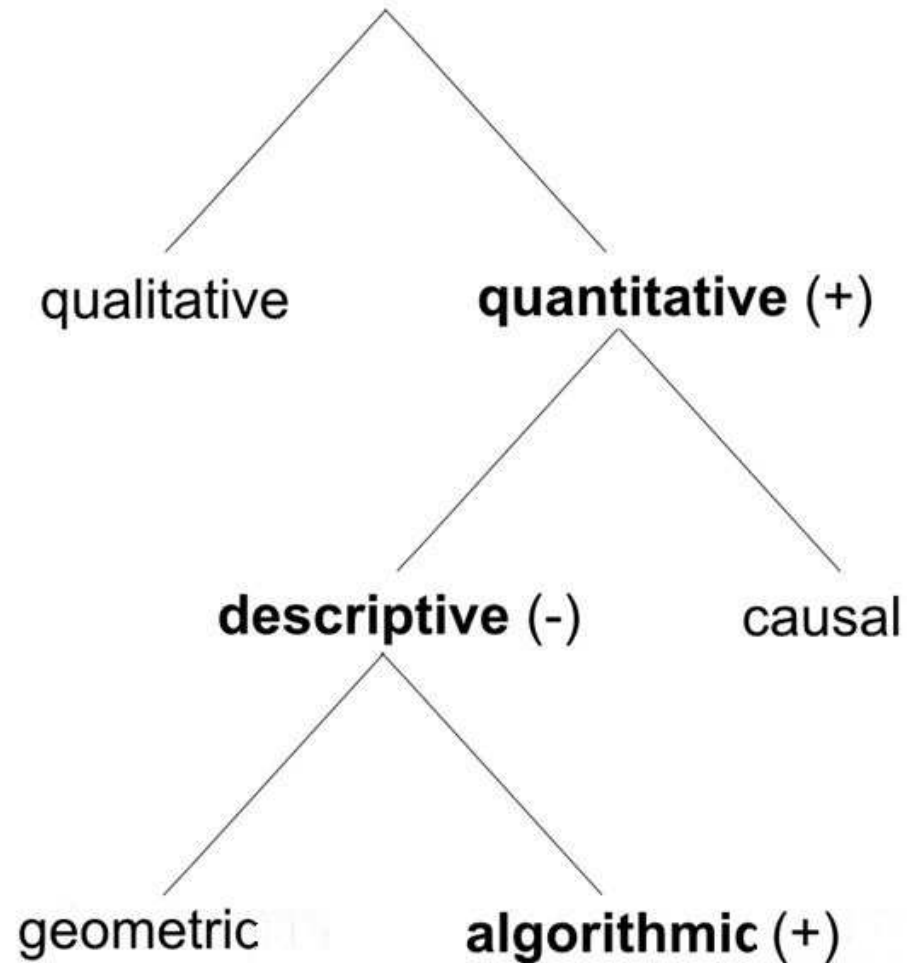
OMA diffusion

- *1986-2000* : "proselytism"
ie use of OMA directly linked to Abbott
- *2000-now* : "secularization"
ie autonomization from Abbott, by a growing set of scholars

OMA in Abbott's career

- Criticism of "general linear reality"
sequence analysis as a "narrative positivism"
- **Position** in the academic field:
capital of scientific authority and power
- Tendency to **subversion**
"methodological moves"

« Fractal » of methods



A favorable agenda

- Drying up of the "variable paradigm"
- Life course and career studies...
... and then capillary action
- A third generation of data
- "Generational paradigm"
OMA users are newcomers in the field

The social group(s) of OMA users

- A unique and comprehensive "social circle"
 - *Abbott always mentioned*
 - *"OM-friendly" journals*
 - *An informal leadership*
- Some "invisible colleges"
 - *Closed seminars*
 - *Open conferences*
 - *Acknowledgements*

Computer programs

1. Ad-hoc softwares

2. TDA

3. Stata

4. TraMineR package in R

A turning point ?

- 2000's **special issue** in « *Sociological Methods & Research* »
- A review by Abbott & Tsay, 2 (heavily) **critical papers** by Levine and Wu, a reply by Abbott
- A symbolic **legitimation** ?

So now ?

- OMA **legitimate** in the methodological toolkit for social science scholar
- Still an **uncertain future** :
 - *few "blockbuster" applications*
 - *only individual trajectories*
 - *Abbott's theoretical background seldom mentioned*
 - *asymmetric porosity → misuse ?*
 - *standardization ?*

*«It seems to me that this comes
perilously close to using OMA as a
sausage machine »*

(Chan, 1999)