

Package ‘palsr’

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Type Package

Title Projected Actor Locations for Spatial Interaction Modeling

Version 0.1.0

Description Implements the Projected Actor Locations (PALS) method for spatial modeling of dyadic interactions between geographically mobile actors, as described in Kim, Liu and Desmarais (2023) <[doi:10.1017/psrm.2022.6](https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2022.6)>. PALS applies exponential-smoothing weights to the spatiotemporal histories of a focal actor and its interaction partners (“alters”) to project the location of future interactions. The package provides projection, maximum-similarity parameter estimation by minimizing great-circle (Haversine) prediction error, nonparametric bootstrap with multiple-imputation (Rubin's Rules) pooling, dyadic distance covariate construction, visualization, and a simulated example dataset of subnational conflict.

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bootstrap_pals	<i>Nonparametric bootstrap for PALS estimates and projections</i>
----------------	---

Description

Quantifies uncertainty in PALS parameter estimates and in projected actor locations by resampling events with replacement and re-estimating the model on each bootstrap replicate, following Kim, Liu and Desmarais (2023). Each replicate yields a parameter vector and (optionally) a set of Projected Actor Locations; the collection of replicate PAL sets can be treated as multiple imputations and pooled with Rubin's Rules (see [pool_rubin\(\)](#)).

Usage

```
bootstrap_pals(
  events,
  R = 50,
  model = c("four", "one"),
  predict_time = NULL,
  actors = NULL,
  seed = NULL,
  ...
)
```

Arguments

events	A pal_events object.
R	Number of bootstrap replicates (default 50; the paper uses 10).
model	"four" or "one" (passed to estimate_pals).
predict_time	Optional Date (or vector of Dates). When supplied, every replicate also projects all actors at these times, so the spread of projected coordinates across replicates is available for confidence regions and pooling.
actors	For projection, which actors to project (default: all in events).
seed	Optional integer seed; replicate <i>r</i> uses <code>seed + r</code> so the whole run is reproducible.
...	Further arguments passed to estimate_pals (e.g. <code>aggregate</code> , <code>alter_weight</code> , <code>method</code> , <code>control</code>).

Details

Resampling is over rows of events (the nonparametric event bootstrap). Duplicated events are kept as ordinary repeated events. Replicates whose optimizer fails to converge are retained but flagged via the convergence column of estimates.

Value

An object of class `pals_boot` with components:

`estimates` An R-row data.frame of replicate parameter estimates.

`estimate` The point estimate on the full sample (an [estimate_pals](#) fit).

`projections` If `predict_time` was given, a data.frame of projected lon/lat for every actor-time-replicate combination; otherwise NULL.

`R`, `model`, `call` Bookkeeping.

Methods: [print\(\)](#), [summary\(\)](#) (bootstrap SEs / percentile intervals), and [coef\(\)](#) (the full-sample point estimate).

See Also

[estimate_pals\(\)](#), [pool_rubin\(\)](#).

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 8, n_events = 200, seed = 1)
bt <- bootstrap_pals(ev, R = 10, model = "one", seed = 1)
summary(bt)
```

estimate_pals

*Estimate PALS parameters***Description**

Estimates the PALS smoothing parameters by minimizing the mean great-circle (Haversine) distance between observed event locations and the locations predicted from each event's preceding history ("marching forward": every prediction uses only events strictly earlier than the event being predicted).

Usage

```
estimate_pals(
  events,
  fit_events = NULL,
  model = c("four", "one"),
  start = NULL,
  method = NULL,
  aggregate = c("mean", "sum"),
  alter_weight = c("normalized", "legacy"),
  eps = 0.01,
  radius = 6371.0088,
  cutoff = c("day", "month", "year"),
  control = list()
)
```

Arguments

events	A pal_events object providing the actor histories.
fit_events	Optional data.frame of target events to fit against (needs actor1, actor2, time, lon, lat). Defaults to all of events; events with no usable history contribute nothing and are ignored.
model	"four" (full: focal + alter histories, estimates alpha, beta, gamma, eta) or "one" (focal-only; estimates alpha, with pi = 0).
start	Optional numeric starting vector on the optimizer's scale (c(gamma, eta, log_alpha, log_beta) for the four-parameter model, log_alpha for the one-parameter model). Sensible defaults are used if NULL.
method	Optimizer method passed to stats::optim ("Nelder-Mead" for the four-parameter model, "Brent" for the one-parameter model by default).
aggregate	"mean" (default) or "sum" of per-event distances.
alter_weight, eps, cutoff	See project_pal .
radius	Sphere radius for the Haversine objective (km).
control	A list of control parameters for stats::optim .

Value

An object of class `pals_fit` with components `params` (estimated `pals_params`), `model`, `objective` (minimized mean/sum distance), `n_used` (events contributing), `convergence`, `optim` (raw optimizer output), `events`, `settings`, and `call`. Methods: `print()`, `summary()`, `coef()`, `predict()`, `plot()`.

See Also

`project_pals()`, `predict_event_locations()`, `bootstrap_pals()`.

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 10, n_events = 300, seed = 1)
fit <- estimate_pals(ev, model = "one")
fit
coef(fit)
```

haversine	<i>Great-circle (Haversine) distance</i>
-----------	--

Description

Vectorized great-circle distance between longitude/latitude points. Arguments are recycled to a common length, so any may be length 1.

Usage

```
haversine(lon1, lat1, lon2, lat2, radius = 6371.0088)
```

Arguments

`lon1`, `lat1`, `lon2`, `lat2`
 Numeric vectors of coordinates in decimal degrees.

`radius`
 Sphere radius in the desired output units. Defaults to the mean Earth radius, 6371.0088 km, so distances are returned in kilometres.

Value

A numeric vector of distances. NA in any coordinate gives NA.

Examples

```
haversine(0, 0, 0, 1)           # ~111 km per degree of latitude
haversine(7.4, 9.1, 8.5, 12.0) # Abuja-ish to Kano-ish
```

`nigeria_acled`*Subnational conflict events in Nigeria*

Description

Real dyadic conflict events in Nigeria, bundled from the replication archive for the authors' study, Kim, Liu and Desmarais (2023). Each row is a recorded interaction between two actors at a known date and location; this is the data on which the PALS method was developed and validated.

Usage

`nigeria_acled`

Format

A `pal_events` object (a `data.frame` subclass) with 1,549 rows and 5 columns:

actor1 Character name of the first actor in the dyad.

actor2 Character name of the second actor in the dyad.

time Date of the event.

lon Event longitude (decimal degrees).

lat Event latitude (decimal degrees).

Details

These data are part of the publicly available replication materials for that study and can be downloaded directly from the Harvard Dataverse at [doi:10.7910/DVN/NLWWPE](https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/NLWWPE).

Source

Public replication archive for Kim, Liu and Desmarais (2023), Harvard Dataverse, [doi:10.7910/DVN/NLWWPE](https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/NLWWPE).

References

Kim, S., Liu, H., and Desmarais, B. A. (2023). Spatial modeling of dyadic geopolitical interactions between moving actors. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 11(3), 633-644. [doi:10.1017/psrm.2022.6](https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2022.6)

Examples

```
data(nigeria_acled)
nigeria_acled

fit <- estimate_pals(nigeria_acled, model = "one")
coef(fit)
```

nigeria_sim	<i>Simulated subnational conflict events (Nigeria-like)</i>
-------------	---

Description

A deterministic, seeded simulation of dyadic interaction events among 25 mobile actors over 2000-2016, with the qualitative spatiotemporal structure that the PALS method targets: actors drift slowly through space and interact preferentially with nearby actors. It is produced by `simulate_conflict_events()` and is used in the package examples, tests, and vignette so that they run without any external dependency. It complements `nigeria_acled`, the bundled real-data example.

Usage

```
nigeria_sim
```

Format

A `pal_events` object (a `data.frame` subclass) with 1500 rows and 5 columns:

actor1 Character id of the first actor in the dyad.

actor2 Character id of the second actor in the dyad.

time Date of the event.

lon Event longitude (decimal degrees).

lat Event latitude (decimal degrees).

Source

Generated by `data-raw/nigeria_sim.R` via `simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 25, n_events = 1500, years = 2000:2016, seed = 20230101)`.

Examples

```
data(nigeria_sim)
nigeria_sim

fit <- estimate_pals(nigeria_sim, model = "one")
coef(fit)
```

pals_params

Create a PALS parameter set

Description

A lightweight container for the four PALS smoothing parameters. Use it to project actor locations with known parameters (e.g. values reported in a paper), without estimating them from data.

Usage

```
pals_params(alpha, beta = 0, gamma = 0, eta = 0, model = c("four", "one"))
```

Arguments

alpha	Time-decay of the focal actor's own event history (≥ 0). Larger values down-weight older events more steeply.
beta	Time-decay of the alters' event histories (≥ 0). Ignored in the one-parameter model.
gamma	Intercept of the logistic mixing weight π . Higher values place more weight on the alters' average location. Ignored in the one-parameter model.
eta	Slope of the logistic mixing weight on the event-count ratio. Ignored in the one-parameter model.
model	Either "four" (full model: focal + alter histories) or "one" (focal-only; $\pi = 0$, so only alpha is used).

Details

The mixing weight is $\pi = \text{plogis}(\gamma + \eta v)$, where $v = (n_i/n_k)^{1/\sqrt{n_k}}$ compares the number of focal events (n_i) with the number of alter events (n_k). The projected location is $(1 - \pi)$ times the recency-weighted mean of the focal actor's own past event locations plus π times the recency-weighted mean of its alters' locations. See [project_pals\(\)](#) and the package vignette.

Value

An object of class `pals_params`.

Examples

```
p <- pals_params(alpha = 0.9, beta = 0.2, gamma = -10, eta = -10)
p
pals_params(alpha = 0.9, model = "one")
```

pal_distance	<i>Dyadic distance between Projected Actor Locations</i>
--------------	--

Description

Builds the dyadic distance covariate used to model interaction likelihood: the Haversine distance between the two actors' Projected Actor Locations.

Usage

```
pal_distance(
  events,
  dyads,
  params,
  transform = c("none", "log"),
  offset = 0.01,
  alter_weight = c("normalized", "legacy"),
  eps = 0.01,
  cutoff = c("day", "month", "year")
)
```

Arguments

events	A pal_events object.
dyads	A data.frame with columns actor1, actor2, time.
params	A pals_params or fitted estimate_pals object.
transform	"none" (default) returns distance in km; "log" returns log(distance + offset), as used for interstate-conflict-style specifications.
offset	Offset added before logging (default 0.01).
alter_weight, eps, cutoff	See project_pal .

Value

dyads augmented with pal_distance (and, for transform = "log", pal_log_distance).

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 8, n_events = 200, seed = 1)
fit <- estimate_pals(ev, model = "one")
dy <- data.frame(actor1 = "G01", actor2 = "G02",
                 time = as.Date("2012-12-01"))
pal_distance(ev, dy, fit)
```

pal_events	<i>Construct a validated dyadic-event table</i>
------------	---

Description

pal_events() builds the core data object used throughout **palsr**: a table of dyadic interaction events, each involving two actors at a known time and location. Projected Actor Locations are computed from these histories.

Usage

```
pal_events(
  data,
  actor1 = "actor1",
  actor2 = "actor2",
  time = "time",
  lon = "lon",
  lat = "lat",
  drop_self = TRUE
)
```

Arguments

data	A data.frame with one row per dyadic event.
actor1, actor2	Column names (length-1 character) identifying the two actors involved in each event. The pair is treated as unordered.
time	Column name of the event time. Must be a Date, or coercible to one via as.Date() .
lon, lat	Column names of the event longitude and latitude, in decimal degrees.
drop_self	Logical; drop events whose two actors are identical (default TRUE).

Details

Longitudes must lie in $[-180, 180]$ and latitudes in $[-90, 90]$. Rows with missing actor, time, or coordinate values are dropped with a message.

Value

An object of class pal_events (a data.frame subclass) with canonical columns actor1, actor2, time, lon, lat, sorted by time.

Examples

```
df <- data.frame(
  from = c("A", "A", "B"),
  to   = c("B", "C", "C"),
  when = as.Date(c("2001-01-01", "2001-06-01", "2002-01-01")),
```

```

x = c(7.1, 8.0, 7.5),
y = c(9.0, 9.4, 10.1)
)
ev <- pal_events(df, actor1 = "from", actor2 = "to",
                time = "when", lon = "x", lat = "y")
ev

```

pool_rubin

*Pool estimates across imputations with Rubin's Rules***Description**

Combines per-imputation point estimates and variances of a scalar quantity into a single pooled estimate with a variance that accounts for both within- and between-imputation uncertainty (Rubin, 1987). Use it to pool estimands computed on each bootstrap/imputation replicate of `bootstrap_pals()` — for example a regression coefficient from a dyadic model fit on each replicate's PAL distances.

Usage

```
pool_rubin(estimates, variances, df = FALSE, dfcom = Inf)
```

Arguments

estimates	Numeric vector of per-imputation point estimates Q_j .
variances	Numeric vector of per-imputation variances U_j (the squared standard errors), the same length as estimates.
df	Logical; if TRUE, also return the Barnard-Rubin adjusted degrees of freedom and a corresponding two-sided p-value for $H_0: Q = \emptyset$. Default FALSE reproduces the source code's normal-based pooling.
dfcom	Complete-data degrees of freedom, used only when <code>df = TRUE</code> (default Inf, the large-sample limit).

Details

With m imputations,

$$\bar{Q} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_j Q_j, \quad \bar{U} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_j U_j, \quad B = \frac{1}{m-1} \sum_j (Q_j - \bar{Q})^2,$$

and total variance $T = \bar{U} + (1 + 1/m)B$. The fraction of missing information is $(1 + 1/m)B/T$. When `df = TRUE`, the Barnard-Rubin (1999) small-sample degrees of freedom are used.

Value

A one-row data frame with the pooled estimate `qbar`, within-imputation variance `ubar`, between-imputation variance `b`, total variance `t`, standard error `se`, fraction of missing information `fmi`, and (if `df = TRUE`) `df` and `p.value`.

References

- Rubin, D. B. (1987). *Multiple Imputation for Nonresponse in Surveys*. Wiley.
- Barnard, J. and Rubin, D. B. (1999). Small-sample degrees of freedom with multiple imputation. *Biometrika*, 86(4), 948-955.

See Also

[bootstrap_pals\(\)](#).

Examples

```
# Five imputations of a coefficient and its variance.
q <- c(1.10, 0.95, 1.20, 1.05, 0.98)
u <- c(0.04, 0.05, 0.045, 0.038, 0.052)
pool_rubin(q, u)
pool_rubin(q, u, df = TRUE, dfcom = 100)
```

predict.pals_fit *Project locations from a fitted PALS model*

Description

Project locations from a fitted PALS model

Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'pals_fit'
predict(
  object,
  newdata = NULL,
  predict_time = NULL,
  type = c("pal", "event"),
  actors = NULL,
  ...
)
```

Arguments

object	A <code>pals_fit</code> from estimate_pals .
newdata	Optional pal_events (for type = "pal") or target data.frame with actor1, actor2, time (for type = "event"). Defaults to the fitted events.
predict_time	For type = "pal", a Date (or vector) at which to project.
type	"pal" projects per-actor locations; "event" predicts dyadic event locations (mean of the two actors' PALS).
actors	For type = "pal", which actors to project (default: all).
...	Unused.

Value

A data.frame of projections (see [project_pals / predict_event_locations](#)).

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 8, n_events = 200, seed = 1)
fit <- estimate_pals(ev, model = "one")
predict(fit, predict_time = as.Date("2013-12-01"), type = "pal")[1:5, ]
```

predict_event_locations

Predict dyadic event locations

Description

For each dyadic target (a pair of actors at a time), predicts the interaction location as the mean of the two actors' Projected Actor Locations. Optionally scores the prediction against an observed location.

Usage

```
predict_event_locations(
  events,
  targets,
  params,
  alter_weight = c("normalized", "legacy"),
  eps = 0.01,
  cutoff = c("day", "month", "year")
)
```

Arguments

events A [pal_events](#) object supplying the histories.

targets A data.frame with columns actor1, actor2, time, and optionally lon/lat giving the observed event location (for error scoring).

params A [pals_params](#) or fitted [estimate_pals](#) object.

alter_weight, eps, cutoff See [project_pal](#).

Value

targets augmented with pred_lon, pred_lat, and (if observed lon/lat were supplied) error_km, the Haversine distance between predicted and observed locations. Predictions are NA when both actors lack usable history.

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 10, n_events = 300, seed = 1)
fit <- estimate_pals(ev, model = "one")
tg <- ev[ev$time > as.Date("2012-01-01"), ]
head(predict_event_locations(ev, tg, fit))
```

project_pal

Project the location of a single actor

Description

Computes the Projected Actor Location (PAL) for one actor at one or more prediction times, given a parameter set.

Usage

```
project_pal(
  events,
  actor,
  predict_time,
  params,
  alter_weight = c("normalized", "legacy"),
  eps = 0.01,
  cutoff = c("day", "month", "year")
)
```

Arguments

events	A pal_events object.
actor	The focal actor id (length-1 character).
predict_time	A Date (or vector of Dates) at which to project. Only events strictly earlier than each prediction time are used.
params	A pals_params object or a fitted estimate_pals object.
alter_weight	"normalized" (default) uses the paper's normalized alter weights; "legacy" reproduces the original replication code (an un-normalized sum of alter coordinates). See DECISIONS.md.
eps	Numerical offset inside each age weight (default 0.01).
cutoff	History granularity: "day" (default) uses events strictly before predict_time; "month" uses events before the 1st of that month; "year" uses events before Jan 1 of that year (the source's Dec-1 yearly convention). Ages are always measured from predict_time.

Value

A data.frame with one row per prediction time and columns actor, time, lon, lat, n_focal, n_alter, has_history. lon/lat are NA when the actor has no prior events.

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 8, n_events = 200, seed = 1)
p <- pals_params(alpha = 0.9, model = "one")
project_pal(ev, actor = "G01", predict_time = as.Date("2010-12-01"), params = p)
```

project_pals

Project locations for multiple actors

Description

Computes Projected Actor Locations for a set of actors at one or more prediction times (an actor-by-time grid).

Usage

```
project_pals(
  events,
  actors = NULL,
  predict_time,
  params,
  alter_weight = c("normalized", "legacy"),
  eps = 0.01,
  cutoff = c("day", "month", "year")
)
```

Arguments

events	A pal_events object.
actors	Character vector of actor ids. Defaults to all actors in events.
predict_time	A Date or vector of Dates.
params	A pals_params object or a fitted estimate_pals object.
alter_weight	"normalized" (default) uses the paper's normalized alter weights; "legacy" reproduces the original replication code (an un-normalized sum of alter coordinates). See DECISIONS.md.
eps	Numerical offset inside each age weight (default 0.01).
cutoff	History granularity: "day" (default) uses events strictly before predict_time; "month" uses events before the 1st of that month; "year" uses events before Jan 1 of that year (the source's Dec-1 yearly convention). Ages are always measured from predict_time.

Value

A data.frame with columns actor, time, lon, lat, n_focal, n_alter, has_history (one row per actor-time combination).

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 10, n_events = 300, seed = 1)
p <- pals_params(alpha = 0.9, beta = 0.2, gamma = -10, eta = -10)
pal <- project_pals(ev, predict_time = as.Date("2010-12-01"), params = p)
head(pal)
```

```
simulate_conflict_events
```

Simulate dyadic conflict events between moving actors

Description

Generates a synthetic dataset of dyadic interaction events with the qualitative structure PALS is designed for: a set of armed-group-like actors, each following a slowly drifting spatial trajectory, that interact preferentially with nearby actors. Useful for examples, tests, and the package vignette. The geographic frame approximates Nigeria, echoing the application in Kim, Liu and Desmarais (2023).

Usage

```
simulate_conflict_events(
  n_actors = 30,
  n_events = 2000,
  years = 2000:2016,
  drift = 0.18,
  jitter = 0.25,
  decay = 2,
  bbox = c(2.7, 14.7, 4, 13.9),
  seed = NULL
)
```

Arguments

<code>n_actors</code>	Number of actors (default 30).
<code>n_events</code>	Number of dyadic events (default 2000).
<code>years</code>	Integer vector of years to span (default 2000:2016).
<code>drift</code>	Standard deviation (decimal degrees per year) of each actor's directional drift; larger values make actors more mobile (default 0.18).
<code>jitter</code>	Standard deviation (decimal degrees) of event-location noise around the midpoint of the two actors' current locations (default 0.25).
<code>decay</code>	Spatial interaction scale (degrees): partners are chosen with probability proportional to $\exp(-\text{distance} / \text{decay})$, so nearby actors interact more (default 2).
<code>bbox</code>	Bounding box $c(\text{lon_min}, \text{lon_max}, \text{lat_min}, \text{lat_max})$ for actor home locations (default approximately Nigeria).
<code>seed</code>	Optional integer seed for reproducibility.

Value

A [pal_events](#) object with columns actor1, actor2, time, lon, lat.

Examples

```
ev <- simulate_conflict_events(n_actors = 12, n_events = 400, seed = 42)
ev
summary(ev)
```

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