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The Role of New Forms of Data in Small Area Estimation of Social Indicators: Methodological Challenges and Applications

Small area estimation (SAE) addresses the challenge of producing reliable estimates for domains where direct estimates are unreliable or unavailable. While SAE traditionally relied on surveys, censuses, and administrative registers, today it increasingly incorporates new data sources such as satellite imagery, mobile phone records, social media, digital platforms, linked administrative data, and machine learning-derived variables. These data may serve both as auxiliary information and as outcome variables. This presentation discusses how SAE is adapting to these developments, focusing on methodological challenges, empirical applications using new outcome data, and the integration of emerging data sources as auxiliary information within SAE models.