Vereniging voor Ordinatie en Classificatie

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VOC-home page: http://www.voc.ac

Spring Meeting of the VOC

April 17, 2009

Tilburg University, Warande building (room WZ-101)

09.45	Registration and Coffee
10.00	Geert Molenberghs: A latent-variable mixture model as a basis for sensitivity analysis in incomplete longitudinal data
10.45	Coffee & VOC annual member meeting
11.15	Gerrit Gort: Codominant scoring of AFLP: an application of normal mixture models
11.50	Andries van der Ark: A new reliability coefficient based on latent class analysis
12.30	Lunch
13.45	Carlos Hernandez: Timing and Speed of New Product Price Landings
14.20	Tomoki Tokuda: Bayesian mixture modelling with variable selection
14.55	Tea
15.15	Christian Hennig: Merging normal mixture components
16.00	Drinks

In this issue:

Registration details for the Spring Meeting:

Those who would like to participate are welcome and are kindly requested to register at the VOC website (http://www.voc.ac/html/registration.htm), or by sending an e-mail to meeting@voc.ac. Participation is free, lunch is available for 10 Euros and must be requested upon registration. Registration deadline: April 10th.

From the President

This year we have something to celebrate - it is exactly twenty years ago that the VOC was founded. In these twenty years, the organisation has worked hard to achieve its two main goals: to provide information and to promote communication between researchers in the field. The diversity of our membership and the lively discussions at our meetings show that the VOC forms a thriving community with a healthy outlook for the future. Our anniversary will be celebrated officially in our two-day autumn symposium, which this time will be held in Wageningen on November 12 and 13. You can find a preliminary programme elsewhere in this newsletter, but be sure to mark the date in your agenda!

First, however, there is the spring meeting, to be held on April 17. We are happy to acknowledge the University of Tilburg, and in particular Jeroen Vermunt, for providing the hospitality. The theme is "Mixture Modelling". This versatile class of techniques will be assessed from different angles by several speakers with very diverse backgrounds - it should be a very interesting day. Again, details of the programme can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, there is news from the board. After three years of loyal service, Laurence Frank has decided not to extend her position as treasurer in order to concentrate on other matters. On behalf of the other board members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the diligent work she has done for the VOC, and wish her all the best. At the spring meeting, the new treasurer will be "sworn in" - interested candidates can present themselves by contacting our secretary, Hugo Duivenvoorden, or myself.

I hope to see many of you on one of the coming meetings!

Ron Wehrens - chairman

Abstracts for the Spring Meeting

Geert Molenberghs (Universiteit Hasselt & Katholieke Universiteit Leuven): A latent-variable mixture model as a basis for sensitivity analysis in incomplete longitudinal data

Standard methodology used to analyze incomplete longitudinal data has been based for a long time on methods such as "last observation carried forward" (LOCF) and "complete case analysis" (CC). Since these are based on extremely strong assumptions (even the strong MCAR assumption does not suffice to guarantee an LOCF analysis is valid) and their validity can be called into question, there is a tendency to shift towards more generally valid methodology. In the so-called selection

model framework, under MAR, valid inference can be obtained through a likelihood-based or Bayesian analysis, including the linear, generalized linear, and non-linear mixed models, without the need for modelling the dropout process. In addition, weighted generalized estimating equations (WGEE) can be used under MNAR. As a consequence, incomplete longitudinal data, both of a Gaussian as well as of a non-Gaussian nature, can easily be analyzed under the MAR assumption, using standard statistical software tools. However, missingness not at random (MNAR) can never be entirely excluded, and one should therefore supplement an MAR analysis with a suitable chosen set of sensitivity analyses. Existing methods are based on local influence or the use of the pattern-mixture modelling framework. In this presentation, we propose a flexible class of models, based on a combination of latent variables and random effects that govern both the measurement and missingness processes. The method will be presented, estimation will be discussed, and its position within the family of sensitivity analysis tools considered.

Reference
Beunckens, C., Molenberghs, G., Verbeke, G., & Mallinckrodt, C. (2008). A latent-class mixture model for incomplete longitudinal Gaussian data. *Biometrics, 64,* 96-105.

Geert Molenberghs is Professor of Biostatistics at Universiteit Hasselt and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. He received the B.S. degree in mathematics (1988) and a Ph.D. in biostatistics (1993) from Universiteit Antwerpen. He published on surrogate markers in clinical trials, and on categorical, longitudinal, and incomplete data. He was Joint Editor of Applied Statistics (2001-2004) and Co-Editor of Biometrics (2007-2009). He was President of the International Biometric Society (2004-2005), received the Guy Medal in Bronze from the Royal Statistical Society and the Myrto Lefkopoulou award from the Harvard School of Public Health. Geert Molenberghs is founding director of the Center for Statistics. He is also the director of the Interuniversity Institute for Biostatistics and statistical Bioinformatics (I-BioStat). Together with Geert Verbeke, he authored several books on the use of linear mixed models for the analysis of longitudinal and incomplete data and taught numerous short and longer courses on the topic in universities as well as industry, in Europe, North America, Latin America, and Australia. Geert Molenberghs repeatedly received the American Statistical Association's Excellence in Continuing Education Award (2002, 2004, 2005, 2008). He is elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association and elected member of the International Statistical Institute.

Gerrit Gort (Wageningen University): Codominant scoring of AFLP: an application of normal mixture models

AFLP is a DNA fingerprinting technique frequently used in the plant sciences. AFLP results in an electrophoretic gel containing patterns of bands of different genotypes. In the presentation we will show AFLPs from 94 tomato genotypes, as studied in the Centre for BioSystems Genomics program. The bands represent DNA fragments. AFLP profiles are usually binary interpreted, that is, bands are scored as either present or absent. The gels, however, reveal more information if the intensities of the bands are scored. The intensity of a band can be used as a measure of the amount of DNA. In the case of diploid organisms, like tomato, 3 groups of genotypes are expected: genotypes with two copies of a DNA fragment (homozygous), with one copy (heterozygous), and no copies (homozygous absent). We fit normal mixture models using the EM-algorithm to the band intensities, allowing for 3 groups. The inference on zygosity of a genotype is called codominant scoring.

Gerrit Gort is assistant professor of Statistics at Biometris, Wageningen University. His main task is teaching statistics courses at the BSc and Msc level, like Introduction Statistics, Advanced Statistics, and Modern Statistics of the Life Statistics. He is furthermore involved in statistics courses for PhD students, like Linear Models, Generalized Linear Models, Mixed Models, and Bayesian Statistics, and in statistical consultancy for PhD studentes and staff of Wageningen University. Presently he is finalizing his PhD on statistical properties of AFLP.

L. Andries van der Ark (Tilburg University): A new reliability coefficient based on latent class analysis

We used the latent class model to estimate the reliability of test scores. Unlike well known reliability coefficients such as Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's lambda 2, the new reliability coefficient is not a lower bound to the reliability but an unbiased estimate of the reliability under the theoretical condition that the latent class model fits perfectly. In practice, a first problem is that only a limited number of latent classes can be estimated, and a second problem is that computation time increases rapidly with the number of latent classes. We studied the bias and computation time of the new coefficient under several conditions with respect to numbers of items and numbers of latent classes, and compared them with bias and computation of existing reliability coefficients. Tentative results indicate that the new coefficient has less bias than other reliability coefficients (alpha, lambda 2, MS statistic) even when a latent class model is used with a limited number of latent classes.

Andries van der Ark is associated professor at the Department of Methodology and Statistics, Tilburg University. His primary research interests include item response theory, latent class analysis, and missing data analysis.

Carlos Hernandes (Erasmus Research Institute of Management): Timing and Speed of New Product Price Landings

In this paper we examine how new products are priced over time. Specifically, we develop a model to describe the often-observed sharp decreases in prices. In the model we focus on the main features of this price decrease: the timing and the speed of the decrease. Many high-tech products, information goods and durable goods exhibit exactly one significant price cut some time after their launch. We call this price landing and we propose a model for prices that has the timing of price landings and their speed as main parameters. Prior literature suggests that price landings might be driven by sales, product line pricing, competitor's sales or simply by time. We propose a mixture specification to find out which of these explanations best describe the pricing patterns we observe in our data. The price landing will obviously differ across products, even if the same driving force applies to the products. We explicitly allow for heterogeneity in the timing and speed of the landings for each mixture component. To this end we develop a hierarchical mixture model. To our knowledge, an empirical study of price landings, like ours, is unavailable. We estimate our model using a rich dataset containing the sales and prices of 1195 newly released video games. In contrast with previous literature, our findings suggest that it is not product line pricing or sales but that it is mainly competition and time itself that best describes price landings. Finally, we find substantial heterogeneity in the timing and speed of landing across firms and product types.

Carlos Hernandez is PhD Candidate at ERIM (Erasmus Research Institute of Management). Prof. Philip Hans Franses and Dr. Dennis Fok supervise him and he is currently writing his thesis that focuses on marketing models for new products.

Tomoki Tokuda (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven): Bayesian mixture modelling with variable selection

A general problem in clustering high-dimensional data is that inclusion of irrelevant variables can mask the 'true' group structure. For an effective clustering of observations, some form of variable selection is therefore essential. In this presentation, I will discuss a Bayesian multivariate normal mixture method with variable selection for high-dimensional data, proposed by Tadesse, Sha and Vannuci (JASA, 2005). It is found that there are three drawbacks for this method. Firstly, the method is not scale-invariant (i.e., transforming the unit of one variable may influence the results); secondly, the results of the method are sensitive to the number of irrelevant variables; thirdly, the method may get trapped in a one-cluster solution. These drawbacks may considerably hamper the use of the method in practice. A way out of these drawbacks will be proposed together with simulation results. Furthermore, the performance will be compared with Steinley & Brusco's (Psychometrika,

2008) method, which is based on the k-means algorithm, combined with a so-called clusterability index for screening possible discriminating variables. In an earlier comparison, it outperforms various alternative clustering methods with variable selection.

Tomoki Tokuda is a Doctoral student in the department of psychology, KU Leuven. He received B.S. in Mathematics from Nagoya University in Japan and M.S. in Statistics in KU Leuven.

Christian Hennig (University College London): Merging normal mixture components

Normal mixture models are often used for cluster analysis. Usually, every component of the mixture is interpreted as a cluster. This, however, is often not appropriate. A mixture of two normal components can be unimodal and quite homogeneous. Particularly, mixtures of several normals can be needed to approximate homogeneous non-normal distributions. Even if there are non-normal subpopulations in the data, the normal mixture model is still a good tool for clustering because of its flexibility. This presentation is about methods to decide whether, after having fitted a normal mixture, several mixture components should be merged in order to be interpreted as a single cluster. Note that this cannot be formulated as a statistical estimation problem, because the likelihood and the general fitting quality of the model does not depend on whether single mixture components or sets of mixture components are interpreted as clusters. So any method depends on a specification of what the user wants to regard as a "cluster". There are at least two different cluster concepts, namely identifying clusters with modes (and therefore merging unimodal mixtures) and identifying clusters with clear patterns in the data (which for example means that scale mixtures, though unimodal, should not necessarily be merged). Furthermore, it has to be specified how strong a separation is required between different clusters. The methods proposed and compared in this presentation are all hierarchical. From an estimated mixture, pairs of components (and later pairs of already merged mixtures) are merged until members of a pair are separated enough in order to be interpreted as different clusters. This can be measured in many different ways. It can be checked whether mixtures are (approximately) unimodal using the ridgeline approach of Ray and Lindsay (2006) or the dip test (Tantrum, Murua & Stuetzle 2003). The misclassification probability between mixtures can be estimated by using estimated a posteriori probabilities, the Bhattacharyya distance or a modified version of the prediction strength (Tibshirani & Walther 2005).

Christian Hennig is lecturer at the Department of Statistical Science, University College London since 2005. He studied Mathematics at the University of Hamburg and Statistics at the University of Dortmund. He got his PhD in 1997 at the University of Hamburg for a thesis about linear regression clustering under the

supervision of Prof. Konrad Behnen. He worked as a university assistant at the University of Hamburg 1997-2001 and 2003-2005 and at the ETH Zuerich 2001-2003. He published on robust statistics, cluster analysis, mixture models, data visualisation, classification, philosophy of statistics, and applications of statistics in biogeography, astronomy, musicology, psychology, biology and chemistry. A current topic of interest is the exploration of the practical and philosophical implications of subjective decisions in statistics (particularly cluster analysis).

Publications

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Jaarverslag van de Secretaris over 2008

1. De VOC startte 2008 met 108 leden en eindigde met 106 leden. Er waren 5 opzeggingen, en 3 aanmeldingen.

2. Bestuur
Het bestuur van de VOC had in 2008 de volgende samenstelling:

Ron Wehrens	Voorzitter
Hugo Duivenvoorden	Secretaris
Laurence Frank	Penningmeester
Eva Ceulemans	Redacteur Nieuwsbrief
Michel van der Velden	Webmaster
Mark de Rooij	Lid

Het bestuur vergaderde vier maal, waarvan eenmaal telefonisch. De belangrijkste onderwerpen waren de Bijeenkomsten, en lopende zaken als de Nieuwsbrief en de website.

3. Activiteiten
In 2008 hadden we twee goed bezochte bijeenkomsten. De Voorjaarsbijeenkomst (18/4/08, Nederlands Forensisch Instituut, Den Haag) had als thema 'Statistical methods in criminology and law enforcement'. De sprekers van die dag waren achtereenvolgens: Colin Aitken (keynote; onderwerp: 'Evidence evaluation using the likelihood ratio'), Catrien Bijleveld (onderwerp: 'Some examples from criminological research'), Annabel Bolck (onderwerp: 'XTC-classification and evaluation'), Peter van der Heijden (onderwerp: 'Estimating the prevalence of rule transgression using data collected by randomised response'), Maarten Cruyff (onderwerp: 'Population size estimation using zero truncated Poisson models'), en Gert Jacobusse (onderwerp: 'Social network analysis').
De Najaarsbijeenkomst (28/11/08, 40 deelnemers, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam) had als thema: 'Propensity scores'. De sprekers waren Saskia le Cessie (onderwerp: 'Propensity scores: an introduction'), Fannie Cobben (onderwerp: 'Het gebruik van response propensities in survey'), Arjan Blokland (onderwerp: 'The (collateral) effects of imprisonment'), Edwin Martins (onderwerp: 'Preference for propensity scores when estimating an average treatment effect in case of a dichotomous outcome'), en Stef van Buuren (onderwerp: 'Pooling outcomes after quintile stratification').

4. Publiciteit
De Nieuwsbrief verscheen 2 maal. De Bijeenkomsten werden ook aangekondigd voor niet-leden, onder andere via de VVS site en via mailinglists (IOPS, Stoch-Ned, Bio-MVA).

Financieel overzicht over het jaar 2008

Exploitatie-overzicht in euro (Nederlands en Vlaams)

Inkomsten		

Contributies VOC

2006	40	
2007	100	
2008	520	
2009	20	
		680
Sponsoring BNVKI voor gezamenlijke VOC-BNVKI VJB2007		**300**
Rente spaarrekening ING (NL)		**13**
Totaal inkomsten		**993**

Uitgaven		

VOC - bijeenkomsten

voorjaar	972	
najaar	371	
		1343
IFCS bijdrage 2008-2009		**319**
VOC website		**119**
kosten boekreview		**50**
Kamer van Koophandel		**25**

Bank- en transactiekosten

Bankrekening ING (NL)	90	
Bankrekening Dexia (B)	37	
		127
Restitutie teveel betaalde deel combinatie CSNA-ADAC		**81**
Totaal uitgaven		**2064**

Balans per 31/12/2008		

Debet

saldo ING rekening (NL)	886	
saldo ING spaarrekening (NL)	2633	
saldo Dexia rekening (B)	2749	
		6268

Credit

Vooruitbetaalde contributie VOC 2009	20	
Eigen vermogen 2008		**6248**

Toelichting bij het financieel overzicht 2008

(1) Naar aanleiding van een opmerking tijdens de Algemene Ledenvergadering is de berekening van het eigen vermogen 2007 aangepast tot 5914 (totaal saldo op rekeningen 7339 minus vooruitbetaalde contributies 2008 1425).

(2) De VOC telde op 31/12/2008 106 leden. 28 leden hebben in 2008 de contributie voor 2008 betaald, 67 leden hadden reeds in 2007 de contributie voor 2008 betaald. Dit betekent dus dat in totaal 95 van de 106 leden de contributie voor 2008 hebben betaald.

(3) De BNVKI heeft aan de gezamenlijke VOC-BNVKI voorjaarsbijeenkomst in 2007 een bedrag van €300 bijgedragen. Dit bedrag werd in de balans van 2007 bij het eigen vermogen van 2007 opgenomen en telt dus niet mee voor het eigen vermogen van 2008.

(4) De jaarlijkse bijdrage aan de IFCS is in 2008 voldaan, maar betreft de periode 2008-2009.

(5) Als gevolg van de sterke koersdaling van de US dollar in 2008, is voor de leden die vooraf betaald hadden voor CSNA en/of ADAC abonnementen het teveel betaalde deel gerestitueerd.

(6) Op 31/12/2008 was het totale saldo op alle rekeningen gezamenlijk €6268, het jaar daarvoor was dit €7339.

(7) Een overzicht van de ontwikkeling van het eigen vermogen

> 2008 €6248
> 2007 €5914
> 2006 €6869
> 2005 €6057
> 2004 €5019
> 2003 €6795
> 2002 €6408
> 2001 €5898
> 2000 €5731
> 1999 €4871
> 1998 €5100

Notulen Ledenvergadering VOC 18 april 2008

Plaats: NFI Den Haag
Verslag: Ron Wehrens en Marieke Timmerman

1. Opening en ingekomen stukken.
De voorzitter opent de vergadering. Er zijn geen ingekomen stukken.

2. Notulen jaarvergadering 27-4-2007
De notulen worden aanvaard.

3. Jaarverslag van de secretaris
Het verslag wordt aanvaard.

4. Financieel verslag
De penningmeester geeft een korte toelichting op het financieel overzicht over het jaar 2007. De kascommissie, bestaand uit Cees Elzinga en Bart Jan van Os, heeft de boeken gecontroleerd en in orde gevonden; hierop wordt voorgesteld de penningmeester te dechargeren. Dat voorstel neemt de vergadering over. De nieuwe kascommissie bestaat uit Berrie Zielman en Paul Eilers.

5. Bestuurssamenstelling
Mark de Rooij en Marieke Timmerman treden regelementair af; Mark de Rooij stelt zich herverkiesbaar en wordt bij acclamatie gekozen – er is geen tegenkandidaat. Marieke Timmerman wordt hartelijk bedankt voor haar jaren van inspanning voor de VOC. Hugo Duivenvoorden heeft zich beschikbaar gesteld voor de functie van secretaris en wordt bij acclamatie gekozen.

6. Wvttk / rondvraag
Er komt niets ter tafel en er wordt geen gebruik gemaakt van de rondvraag, waarop de voorzitter de vergadering sluit.

Agenda voor de ledenvergadering van de VOC op 17 april 2009

1. Opening

2. Notulen Ledenvergadering 18 april 2008
Deze zijn elders in de Nieuwsbrief opgenomen.

3. Jaarverslag van de secretaris over 2008
Dit is elders in deze Nieuwsbrief opgenomen.

4. Financieel verslag
*   Jaarverslag van de penningmeester (zie deze Nieuwsbrief).
*   Verslag van de kascommissie (Berrie Zielman en Paul Eilers)
*   Benoeming van de nieuwe kascommissie.

5. Bestuurssamenstelling
Het bestuur bestaat nu uit de volgende leden (achter de functie staat de resterende duur van hun termijn):

Ron Wehrens	Voorzitter (1)
Hugo Duivenvoorden	Secretaris (2)
Eva Ceulemans	Redacteur Nieuwsbrief (1)
Mark de Rooij	Lid (2)
Michel van de Velden	Webmaster (0)
Laurence Frank	Penningmeester (0)

Van twee bestuursleden eindigt hun termijn: Michel van de Velden en Laurence Frank. Michel van de Velden heeft zich beschikbaar gesteld voor herbenoeming; Laurence Frank niet. Als nieuwe penningmeester wordt voorgedragen Berrie Zielman. Tegenkandidaten voor beide posities kunnen aangemeld worden tot 24 uur voor de ledenvergadering, bij de secretaris.

6. Wvttk/Rondvraag

7. Sluiting

Personalia

Recently, **Paul Eilers** has been appointed Full Professor at the Department of biostatistics, Erasmus Medical Centre.

In the Classification Society Distinguished Dissertation Award 2009 competition, **Georgi Nalbantov** obtained an honorable mention.

VOC Jubilee Meeting 2009
Everything is in Flux

The VOC celebrates its 20th anniversary with a Jubilee Meeting on November 12-13, 2009. The meeting promises an exciting programme of lectures by distinguished researchers. Typical for the rich variety of VOC interests, the theme 'Everything is in Flux' will be approached from different perspectives. The interesting program leaves room for social interaction.

The Meeting will take place in the beautifully located Wageningse Berg in Wageningen (www.hoteldewageningseberg.nl).

Program
Classification from a Philosophy of Science Perspective
The case of psychiatric disorders
Trudy Dehue (University of Groningen, www.rug.nl/staff/g.c.g.dehue/index)

Biological and Social Networks
Korbinian Strimmer (University of Leipzig, strimmerlab.org/korbinian.html)
Age Smilde (University of Amsterdam, www.bdagroup.nl/index.php/people)
Christian Steglich (University of Groningen, www.ppsw.rug.nl/~steglich/)

Biostatistics
Mark van der Laan (University of California, Berkeley, www.stat.berkeley.edu/~laan)
Marcel Reinders (Delft University of Technology, ict.ewi.tudelft.nl/~marcel/)
Cajo ter Braak (Wageningen University and Research Centre,
www.biometris.wur.nl/UK/Staff/Cajo+ter+Braak)
Ritsert Jansen (University of Groningen, gbic.biol.rug.nl/~rjansen)

Psychometrics
Iven van Mechelen (University of Leuven, ppw.kuleuven.be/okp/people/Iven_Van_Mechelen)
Ingmar Visser (University of Amsterdam, users.fmg.uva.nl/ivisser)
Han van der Maas (University of Amsterdam, users.fmg.uva.nl/hvandermaas)
Francis Tuerlinckx (University of Leuven, ppw.kuleuven.be/okp/people/Francis_Tuerlinckx)
Marian Hickendorff (Leiden University, www.ment.psychologie.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?c=53)

Fees and Registration
The meeting is open to both VOC-members and non-members. The meeting starts on Thursday November 12 at 11.00h, and will end on Friday November 13 around 15.00h. The fee includes lunches, dinner, refreshments during breaks and hotel accomodation (single room).

Early Bird Registration fees (registration before September 25th) are €200,- (VOC-members) and €240 (non-members, including membership for 2010). Late Registrants (after September 25th) pay an additional fee of €50.

For online registration please visit the VOC website (www.voc.ac) where also the latest information regarding schedule, abstracts, etcetera can be found.
For specific questions, please contact the VOC chair, Ron Wehrens (r.wehrens@science.ru.nl)

Route description

The Spring meeting will take place in room WZ-101 of the Warande building (indicated '*W*' on the map below) on the campus of Tilburg University.

By train
Local train
Visitors travelling *by stop-train* (from Eindhoven, Breda and 's-Hertogenbosch) can take the 'Tilburg West' NS train station which is just minutes walking from Tilburg University.
Intercity
Travellers *on fast / intercity trains* need to get off the train at 'Tilburg Centraal Station' (downtown) and can reach Tilburg University from there by cab approximately €15, bus (bus line 4), or a connecting stop-train to 'Tilburg West'.

By car
On the A58 / E312, take the exit Goirle Tilburg Turnhout (number 11). At the traffic lights, follow direction Tilburg. Keep left. At the next traffic lights, take a left turn to "Universiteit". Follow the "Universiteit" sign all the way to the University. There's a parking lot right at the entrance of the campus.

By bus
Tilburg University can be reached by taking bus number 4 and get off at the bus stop 'Universiteit'. You can also take bus number 2 or 3. You should get off at the bus stop at the corner of Prof. Cobbenhagenlaan and Hogeschoollaan.