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Chapter 1

Interpolation Methods

In this section we take a closer look at several interpolation methods, which will be used to interpolate and smooth the NDVI timeseries.

First, we give an brief overview in table 1.1.

Second, we introduce and discuss each method.

Then, we try to extract the main ingrediendts of each method to forge our own one.

Finally, using leave-one-out cross validation we tune the parameters (where necessary) and get a first idea of the perfomance of each method.

1.1 Methods - Description

Setting

We are given data in the form of (x_i, Y_i) for $i = 1, \dots, n$. Assume that it can be represented by

$$Y_i = m(x_i) + \varepsilon_i,$$

where ε_i is some noise and $m : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ being some (non-parametric regression) function. If we assume that $\varepsilon_1, \dots, \varepsilon_n$ i.i.d. with $\mathbb{E}[\varepsilon_i] = 0$ then

$$m(x) = \mathbb{E}[Y | x]$$

Different assumptions on m will lead to the following methods:

1.1.1 Kernel Regression

As described previously, we would like to estimate

$$\mathbb{E}[Y | X = x] = \int_{\mathbb{R}} y f_{Y|X}(y | x) dy = \frac{\int_{\mathbb{R}} y f_{X,Y}(x, y) dy}{f_X(x)}, \quad (1.1.1.1)$$

where $f_{Y|X}, f_{X,Y}, f_X$ denote the conditional, joint and marginal densities. This can be done with a kernel K :

$$\hat{f}_X(x) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n K\left(\frac{x-x_i}{h}\right)}{nh}, \hat{f}_{X,Y}(x, y) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n K\left(\frac{x-x_i}{h}\right) K\left(\frac{y-Y_i}{h}\right)}{nh^2}$$

	assumptions	pros	cons	weights	bounded
Savitzky-Golay filter	– high frequencies are noise (low-pass filter) – equidistant points – local polynomials	– computationally very fast	– cannot deal natively with missing data (need some interpolation)	no	mostly
SG NDVI	+ – upper envelope – vegetation cannot grow faster than some slope	– biological knowledge	– bad “upper envelope” since weights are not used for the estimation itself	(no)	mostly
Loess	– local polynomial with points closer to the estimated point are more important	– flexible – generalization of SG – weighting function makes intuitive sense	– computationally expensive	yes	mostly
Smoothing Splines	– 2cd derivative of function is integrable	– intuitive meaning of penalty – general assumptions – flexible shape	– unbounded	yes	no
B-Splines (Smoothed)	– function can be approximated by a linear combination of B-splines basis functions	– general assumption – flexible shape	– unbounded – no intuitive meaning for smoothing		no
(Gaussian) Kernel Smoothing		– simple – general assumptions	– bandwidth: fails if there are big data-gaps	yes	yes
Double-Logistic	– function first increases then decreases – ndvi has a minimal value	– good for evergreen plants (if snow masks ndvi) – upper envelope	– parameter estimation can go seriously wrong – strange behaviour for long data-gaps	yes	mostly
Universal Kriging	– function is a realization of a stationary gaussian process	– informative parameters – flexible	– regression to the mean – assumptions clearly not met	yes	mostly

Table 1.1: A short summary of the studied interpolation methods

By plugging the above into equation 1.1.1.1 we arrive at the *Nadaraya-Watson* kernel estimator:

$$\hat{m}(x) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n K((x - x_i)/h) Y_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n K((x - x_i)/h)}$$

Pros	Cons
— flexible due to different possible kernels	— if the $x \mapsto K(x)$ is not continuous, \hat{m} isn't either
— can be assigned degrees of freedom (trace of the hat-matrix)	— choice of bandwidth, especially if x_i are not equidistant.
— estimation of the noise variance $\hat{\sigma}_\varepsilon^2$ (XXX c.f. CompStat 3.2.2)	

30 **Examples:** Normal, Box For local bandwidth selection see Brockmann et al. (1993)
 31 XXX

32 1.1.2 Savitzky-Golay Filter (SG Filter)

The *Savitzky-Golay Filter*, introduced in Savitzky and Golay (Savitzky and Golay) is a technique in signal processing and can be used to filter out high frequencies (low-pass filter) as argued in Schafer (Schafer). Furthermore, it also can be used for smoothing by filtering high frequency noise while keeping the low frequency signal. First we choose a window size m . Then, for each point $j \in \{m, m+1, \dots, n-m\}$ we fit a polynomial of degree k by:

$$\hat{y}_j = \min_{p \in P_k} \sum_{i=-m}^m (p(x_{j+i}) - y_{j+i})^2,$$

33 where P_k denotes the Polynomials of degree k over \mathbb{R} .

For equidistant points this can efficiently be calculated by

$$\hat{y}_j = \sum_{i=-m}^m c_i y_{j+i},$$

34 where the c_i are only dependent on the m and k and are tabulated in the original paper.

35 Adaptation to the NDVI

36 In a rather famous paper Chen, Jönsson, Tamura, Gu, Matsushita, and Eklundh (Chen
 37 et al.) a “robust” method based on the Savitzky-Golay has been used. The method is
 38 based on the assumption that due to atmospheric effects the observed NDVI tends to be
 39 underestimated and that it cannot increase too quickly¹.

40 Algorithm:

- 41 i.) Remove points which are labeled as cloudy
- 42 ii.) Remove points which would indicate an increase greater than 0.4 within 20 days
- 43 iii.) Linearly interpolate to obtain an equidistant time series X^0
- 44 iv.) Apply the Savitzky-Golay Filter to obtain a new time series X^1

¹The latter is argued by the biological impossibility of such fast vegetation changes

45 v.) Update X^1 by applying again a Savitzky-Golay Filter. Repeat this until $w^T|X^1 - X^0|$
 46 stops decreasing, where w is a weight vector with $w_i = \min\left(1, 1 - \frac{X_i^1 - X_i^0}{\max_i \|X_i^1 - X_i^0\|}\right)$.
 47 This reduces the penalty introduced by outliers² and by repeating this step we ap-
 48 proach the “upper NDVI envelope”.

Pros	Cons
— Popular technique in signal processing	— No natural way of how to estimate points which are not in the data.
— Efficient calculation for equidistant points	— Not generalizable to other spectral indices.
— Upper envelope matches intuition for the NDVI. Therefore, it is robust against outliers with small values.	— Linear interpolation to account for missing data might be not appropriate.
	— No smooth interpolation between two measurements.

49 Extension: Spatial-Temporal-Savitzky-Golay Filter

50 One notable adaptation of the Savitzky-Golay is the presented by [Cao, Chen, Shen, Chen,](#)
 51 [Zhou, Wang, and Yang \(Cao et al.\)](#). The key difference is the additional assumption of the
 52 cloud cover being discontinuous and that we can improve by looking at adjacent pixels³.
 53 Because we are working with rather high resolution satellite data, and we need the variance
 54 in the predictors we will waive this extension.

55 1.1.3 Robust Locally Weighted Regression (Robust LOESS)

56 Introduced by : [Cleveland \(Cleveland\)](#) implemented here [Cappellari, McDermid, Alatalo,](#)
 57 [Blitz, Bois, Bournaud, Bureau, Crocker, Davies, Davis, de Zeeuw, Duc, Emsellem, Khoch-](#)
 58 [far, Krajnović, Kuntschner, Morganti, Naab, Oosterloo, Sarzi, Scott, Serra, Weijmans,](#)
 59 [and Young \(Cappellari et al.\)](#)

60 The Locally Weighted Regression (LOESS) can be understood as a generalization of the
 61 Savitzky-Golay Filter (c.f. sec. 1.1.2).

Given a proportion $\alpha \in (0, 1]$, we estimate each y_i separately by fitting a polynomial of order d by weighted least squares. The weights are usually defined by

$$w_i(x_j) = \begin{cases} \left(1 - \left(\frac{x_j}{h_i}\right)^2\right)^2, & \text{for } |x_j| < h_i, \\ 0, & \text{for } |x_j| \geq h_i \end{cases},$$

62 where h_i is the minimal distance such that $\lceil \alpha n \rceil$ observations are in the ball $B_{h_i}(x_i)$. So
 63 for each y_i we only consider a proportion α of the observations.

Pros	Cons
— 1	— 1
— 2	— 2

How does the Robust LOESS differ from the SG Filter?

1.1.4 Double Logistic

The Double Logistic smoothing as described in [Beck, Atzberger, Høgda, Johansen, and Skidmore](#) ([Beck et al.](#)) heavily relies on shape assumptions of the fitted curve (i.e. the NDVI time series).

Assumptions:

- There is a minimum NDVI level Y_{\min} in the winter (e.g. due to evergreen plants), which might be masked by snow. This can be estimated beforehand, taking into several years into account.
- The growth cycle can be divided into an increase and a decrease period where the time series follows a logistic function. The maximum increase (or decrease) is observed at t_0 (or t_1) with a slope of d_0 (or d_1).

The equation of the double-logistic fit is given by:

$$Y(t) = Y_{\min} + (Y_{\max} - Y_{\min}) \left(\frac{1}{1 + e^{-d_0(t-t_0)}} + \frac{1}{1 + e^{-d_1(t-t_1)}} - 1 \right)$$

Where the five free parameters: Y_{\max} , d_0 , d_1 , t_0 , t_1 are initially estimated by least squares. Such fit can be seen in figure [1.1](#).

Similar as for the Savitzky-Golay Filter (c.f. section [1.1.2](#)) we reestimate (only once) the parameters by giving less weight to the overestimated observations and more weight to the underestimated observations⁴.

Pros	Cons
— Incorporates subject specific knowledge in the case of evergreen plants covered by snow.	— Strong shape assumptions on the NDVI curve.
— Optimized parameters have an intuitive meaning.	— Parameter optimization might go wrong. This can be mitigated to some extend to provide bounds for the paramters
	— Strange behaviour in regions with little observations. (cf. figure 1.1)

²Here we call a point i an outlier if $X_i^0 < X_i^1$.

³Here, we say that a pixel is adjacent if it is the same pixel but from a different year (keeping the same day of the year) or (if not enough of such temporal-adjacent pixel are found) it is spatially adjacent

⁴For the details on the weights we refer to [Beck, Atzberger, Høgda, Johansen, and Skidmore](#) ([Beck et al.](#))

1.1.5 Fourier Approximation

Similar as in section 1.1.4 we fit a parametric curve to the data by least squares. Here we take the second order fourier series:

$$\text{NDVI}(t) = \sum_{j=0}^2 a_j \times \cos(j \times \Phi_t) + b_j \times \sin(j \times \Phi_t)$$

where $\Phi = 2\pi \times (t - 1)/n$.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumption of periodicity can be helpful if we are modelling multiyear grow cycles Flexible curve shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bad behaviour in regions with little data (cf. figure 1.1) Hard to interpret estimated parameters Parameter estimation can go wrong. Introducing bounds can help.

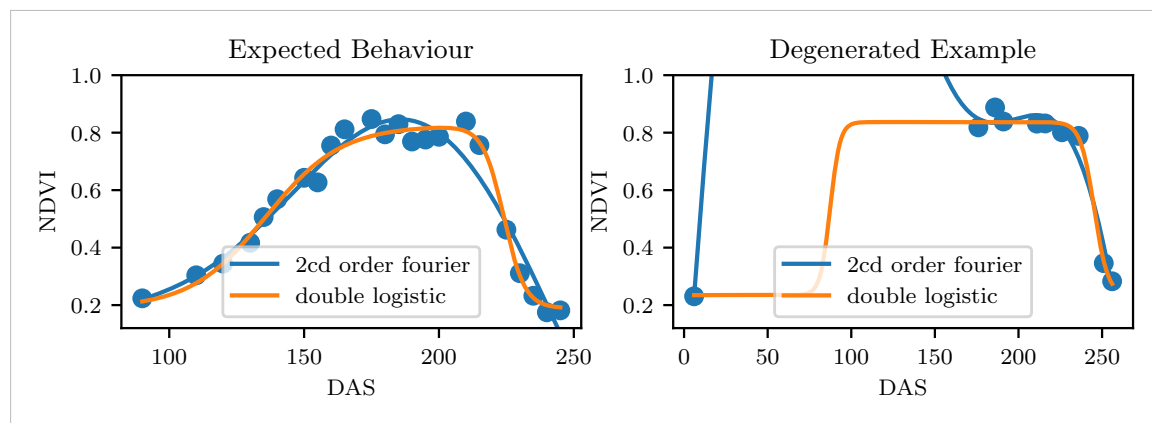


Figure 1.1: Here we observe the nice fitting possibilities of the two parametric methods but notice also some misbehaviour

1.1.6 B-splines

from [Lyche and Morken](#) ([Lyche and Morken](#))

$$S(x) = \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} c_j B_{j,k;t}(x)$$

$$B_{i,0}(x) = 1, \text{ if } t_i \leq x < t_{i+1}, \text{ otherwise } 0$$

$$B_{i,k}(x) = \frac{x-t_i}{t_{i+k}-t_i} B_{i,k-1}(x) + \frac{t_{i+k+1}-x}{t_{i+k+1}-t_{i+1}} B_{i+1,k-1}(x)$$

****Smoothing:**** We can relax the constrain that we have to perfectly interpolate. Thus we use the minimum number of knots⁵ such that: $\sum_{i=1}^n (w(y_i - \hat{y}_i))^2 \leq s$

⁵SciPy uses FITPACK and DFITPACK, the documentation suggests that smoothness is achieved by reducing the number knots used

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — can be assigned degrees of freedom — extendable to "smooth" version — performs also well if points are not equidistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — smoothing process does not translate well to a interpretation (unlike smoothing splines) — choice of smoothing parameter s

87 1.1.7 Natural Smoothing Splines

Let \mathcal{F} be the Sobolev space (the space of functions of which the second derivative is integrable). Then the unique⁶ minimizer

$$\hat{m} := \arg \min_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \sum_{i=1}^n (Y_i - f(x_i))^2 + \lambda \int f''(x)^2 dx$$

88 is a natural⁷ cubic spline (i.e. a piecewise cubic polynomial function). The objective
 89 function has an intuitive meaning, as to avoid lateral acceleration it is desirable to move
 90 the steering wheel as little as possible, when driving a car.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — can be assigned degrees of freedom (trace of the hat-matrix) — efficient estimation (closed form solution) — intuitive penalty (we don't want the function to be too "wobbly" — change slopes) — performs also well if points are not equidistant — fixes the Runge's phenomenon (fluctuation of high degree polynomial interpolation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — choose λ

91 1.1.8 Whittaker Smoother

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1 — 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 1 — 2

92 1.1.9 Kriging

93 Kriging was developed in geostatistics to deal with autocorrelation of the response variable
 94 at nearby points. By applying the notion that two spectral indices which are (timewise)
 95 close should also take similar values we justify the application of Kriging. In the end we
 96 would like to fit a smooth Gaussian process to the data. For this subsection we will follow
 97 [Diggle and Ribeiro \(dig\)](#).

⁶Strictly speaking it is only unique for $\lambda > 0$

⁷It is called natural since it is affine outside the data range ($\forall x \notin [x_1, x_n] : \hat{m}''(x) = 0$)

Definitions and Assumptions

A *Gaussian Process* $\{S(t) : t \in \mathbb{R}\}$ is a stochastic process if $(S(t_1), \dots, S(t_k))$ has a multivariate Gaussian distribution for every collection of times t_1, \dots, t_k . S can be fully characterized by the mean $\mu(t) := E[S(t)]$ and its covariance function $\gamma(t, t') = \text{Cov}(S(t), S(t'))$

Assumption: We will assume the Gaussian process to be stationary. That is for $\mu(t)$ to be constant in t and $\gamma(t, t')$ to depend only on $h = t - t'$. Thus, we will write in the following only $\gamma(h)$.⁸

We also define the variogram of a Gaussian process as

$$V(h) := \text{Var}(S(t) - S(t+h)) = \frac{1}{2} \text{Var}(S(t) - S(t+h)) = (\gamma(0))^2 (1 - \text{corr}(S(t), S(t+h)))$$

And decide to use a gaussian Variogram defined by

$$V(h) = p \cdot \left(1 - e^{-\frac{h^2}{(\frac{4}{3}r)^2}} \right) + n,$$

where h is the distance, n is the nugget, r is the range and p is the partial sill visualized in figure 1.2.⁹

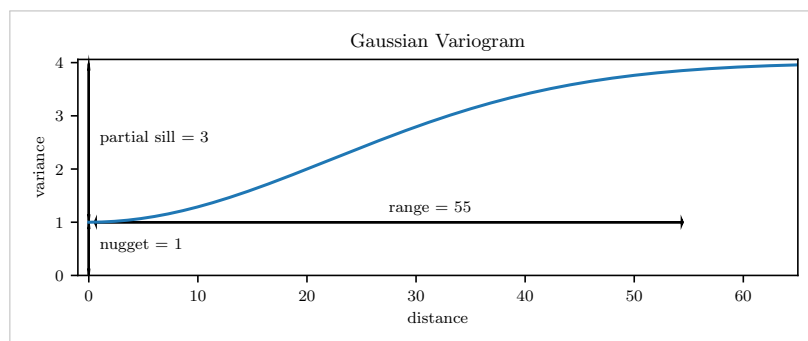


Figure 1.2: Gaussian Variogram with nugget=1, partial sill=3, range=55

Pros	Cons
— It is a well-studied method	— Regression to the mean
— Parameters have an intuitive meaning	— Assumption of constant mean and constant variance is clearly violated. Thus, the NVI is not a stationary process.
— Flexible covariance structure	— Skewness of errors is not taken into account.

1.1.10 Other Methods to study:

From introduction of [Chen, Jönsson, Tamura, Gu, Matsushita, and Eklundh \(Chen et al.\)](#):
 (1) threshold- based methods, such as the best index slope extraction algorithm (BISE)

⁸Note that the process is also *isotropic* (i.e. $\gamma(h) = \gamma(\|h\|)$) since we are in a one-dimensional setting and the covariance is symmetric.

⁹Strictly speaking we use a scaled version of the variogram. Thus only the ratio of p/n matters.

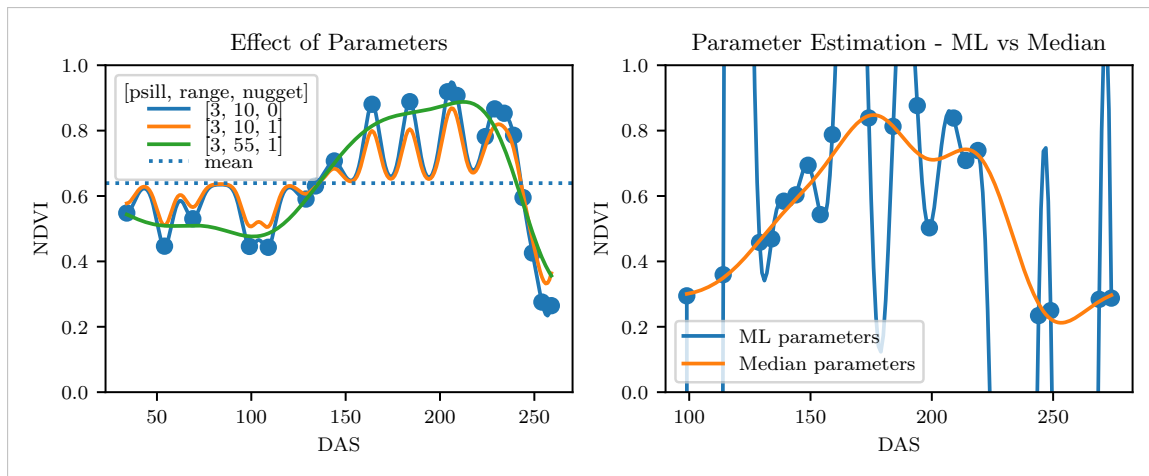


Figure 1.3: On the left we see how the interpolation change if we increase the nugget and the range parameter. On the right we compare two kriging interpolations where one takes parameters by numerically maximizing the (which results in a very small nugget) and the other takes the median of many such numerical optimizations.

110 (Viomy et al., 1992); (2) Fourier-based fitting methods (Cihlar, 1996; Roerink et al., 2000;
 111 Sellers et al., 1994); and (3) asymmetric function fitting methods such as the asymmetric
 112 Gaussian function fitting approach (Jonsson Eklundh, 2002) and the weighted least-squares
 113 linear regression approach (Swets et al., 1999).

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139 **Appendix A**

140 **Hi Mom**