

Investigating air quality in Amsterdam during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns

Presentation by **Marnix Hamelberg**
about his research internship at



Supervised by **Tom van Tilburg**

The research internship is part of the
Master's Geo-Information Science
curriculum at Wageningen University
& Research supervised by **Jan Clevers**



Relevant links:

Source code + report:

<https://github.com/MarnixHamelberg/geodan>

Blog: <https://www.cartoma.info/blog>

Introduction

Introduction | Keywords

Air quality

Open data

Predictions (machine learning)

Local scale

Road traffic / weather data

Variable importance

COVID-19 lockdowns

Preprocessing

Trend analysis

Differences?

Linear (long / short term)
correlations

New insights?

Introduction | Context

Air quality -> Air pollutants -> Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

Impacting **climate & health + Reflection of human behavior?**

Potential factors: **road traffic + weather -> their effects**

Open data available -> **Ground sensors (+ Satellites)**

Gain **new insights** -> Philosophy of *Geodan*

Local scale: **Amsterdam**

COVID-19 lockdowns -> Unique opportunity to understand
the **human influence**

Currently **limited research**

Introduction | Context

Air quality -> Air pollutants -> Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

Impacting **climate & health + Reflection of human behavior?**

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Local scale: **Amsterdam**

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the **human influence**

Currently **limited research**

Needs

- **Investigate** air quality & other factors on a local scale in relation to the COVID-19 lockdowns
- Demand for **additional use cases** and **derivatives** of available open data
- Applying **machine learning**

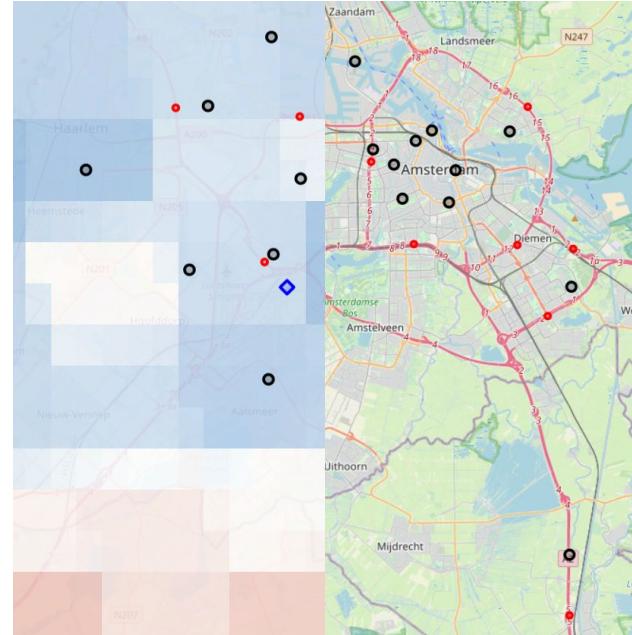
Introduction | Data

Variable of interest, i.e. response variable

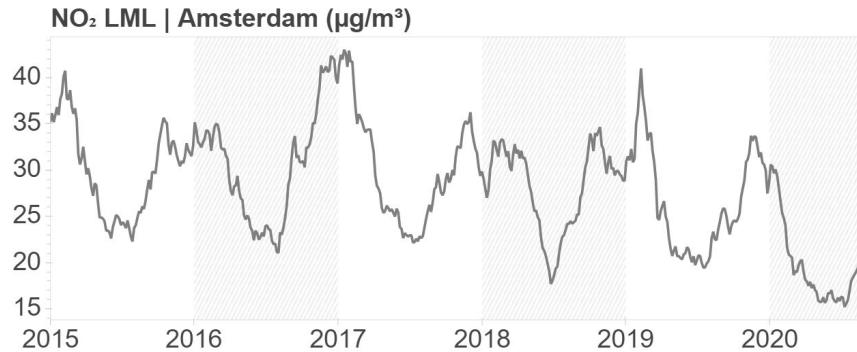
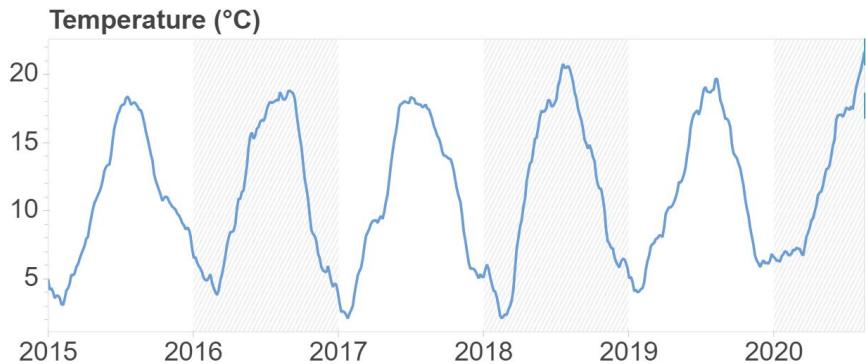
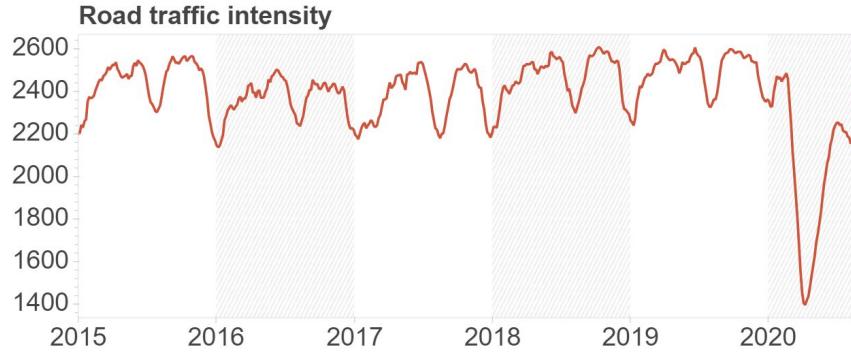
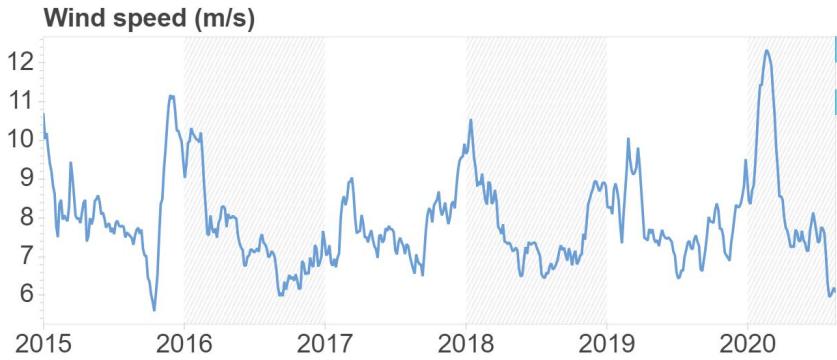
- **Landelijk Meetnet Luchtkwaliteit (LML)** -> NO₂ data

Factors that are (potentially) related to the variable of interest.
i.e. explanatory variables

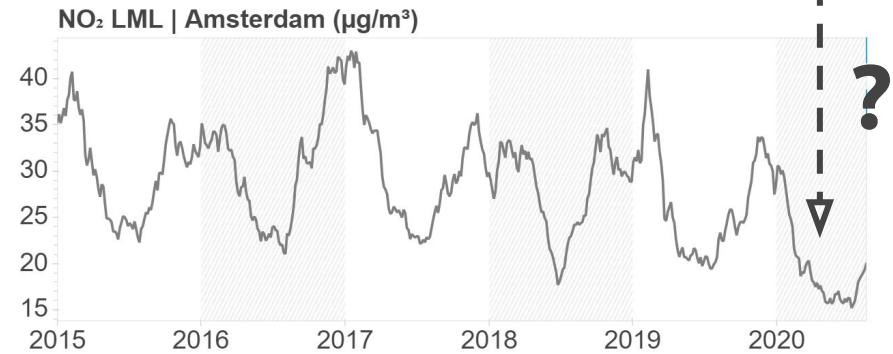
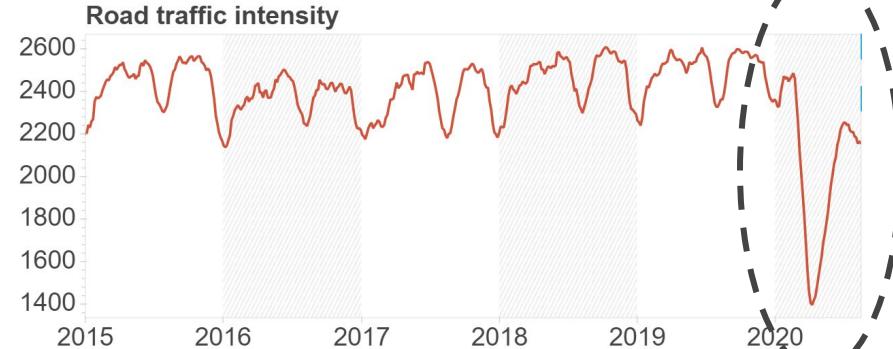
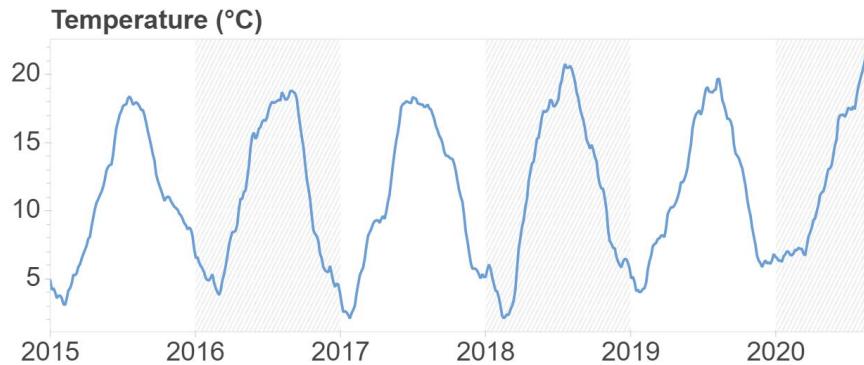
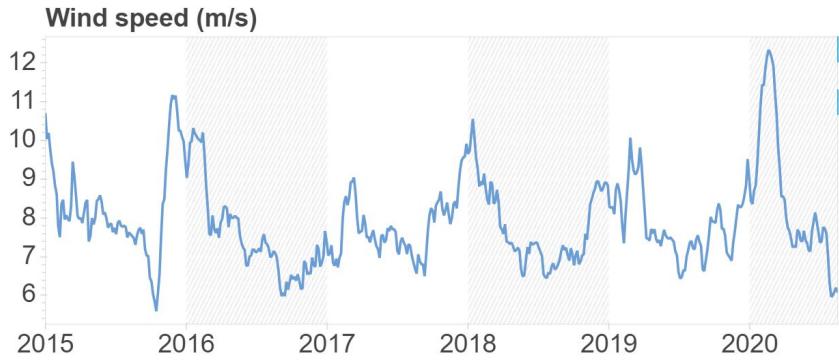
- **Sentinel-5 Precursor satellite (S5P)** -> NO₂ data
- **Nationale Databank Wegverkeersgegevens (NDW)** ->
Road traffic data
 - Road traffic intensity / speed
- **Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut (KNMI)** -> Weather data
 - Wind speed / direction, temperature, etc.



Introduction | Data preview



Introduction | Data preview



Introduction | Research questions / objectives

1) Preparation

- a) Align datasets -> Data **preprocessing**

2) Exploration

- a) Relation to NO2 -> **Linear relationships**

3) Prediction

- a) Predicting NO2 using **machine learning** -> **Prediction accuracy?**
- b) Variable **impact** on NO2 -> **Variable importance?**
- c) Effects **COVID-19 lockdowns?** -> Does 2020 data **disrupt** prediction accuracy and variable importance?
 - i) What can this tell us about the **human influence?**
- d) Satellite data **contribution** [extra]

4) Trend analysis

- a) **Changes** during COVID-19 lockdowns?
 - i) What more can this tell us about the human influence?

Methodology

Methodology | Preparation

Python coding environment -> **Jupyter** notebook

Geodan servers and **Google Earth Engine**

Literature research -> specifications

Preprocess steps

- **Load** 2015-2020 data -> aggregate on **hourly intervals**
- **Filter outliers** and **smoothen** data
- **Log transform** exponential NO2 data
- **Convert** to sine and cosine (thanks for the tip Brian!)

Methodology | Preparation

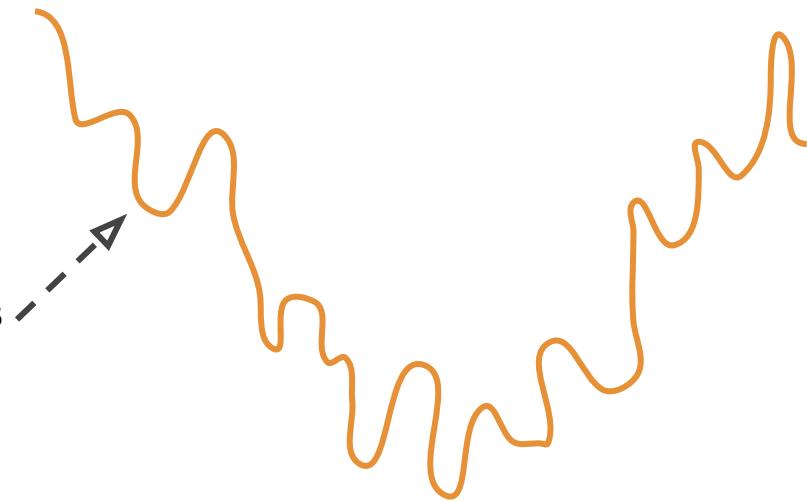
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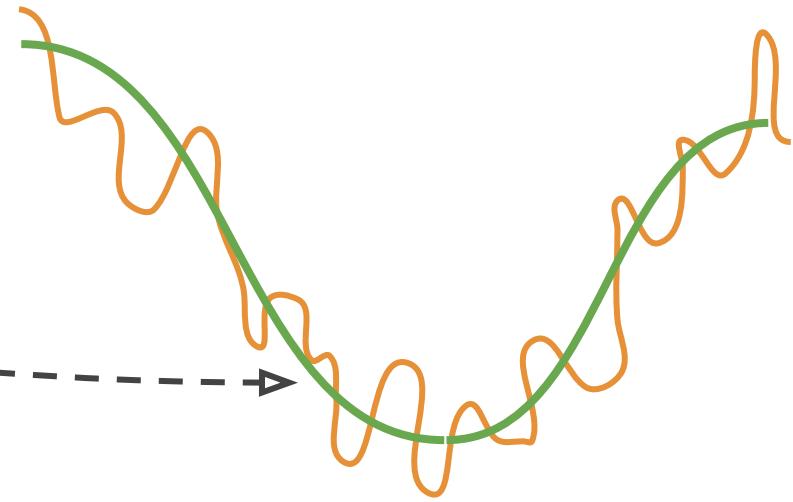
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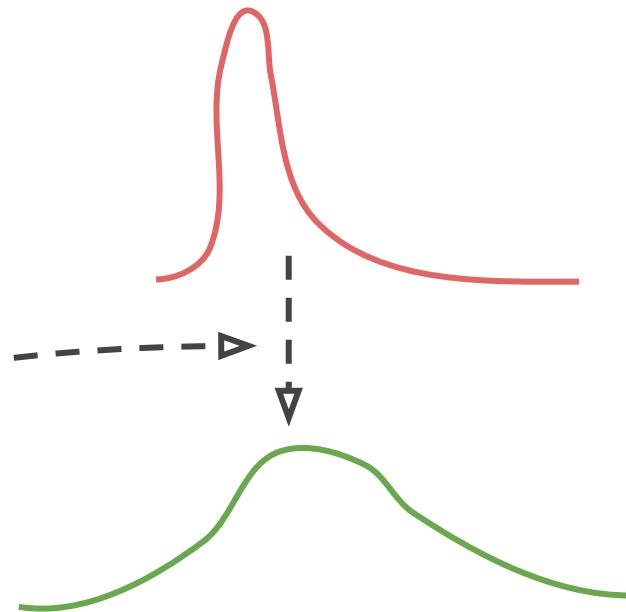
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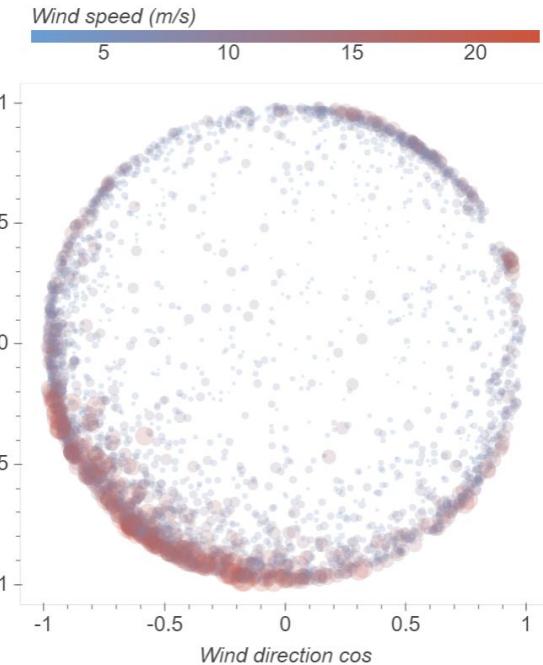
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Methodology | Investigation

Relationships

- **Linear correlations & explainable spread**

Predictions

- **Random forest regressor** machine learning model -> **predict** NO2 data
-> **cross validation** -> **prediction accuracy**
- **Variable importance** -> remove **redundant** variables
- Repeat: 2020 COVID-19 data is **excluded** & S5P data is **included**

Trend analysis

- Long term **seasonal trends** -> linear harmonic model
- Temporal overlap comparison

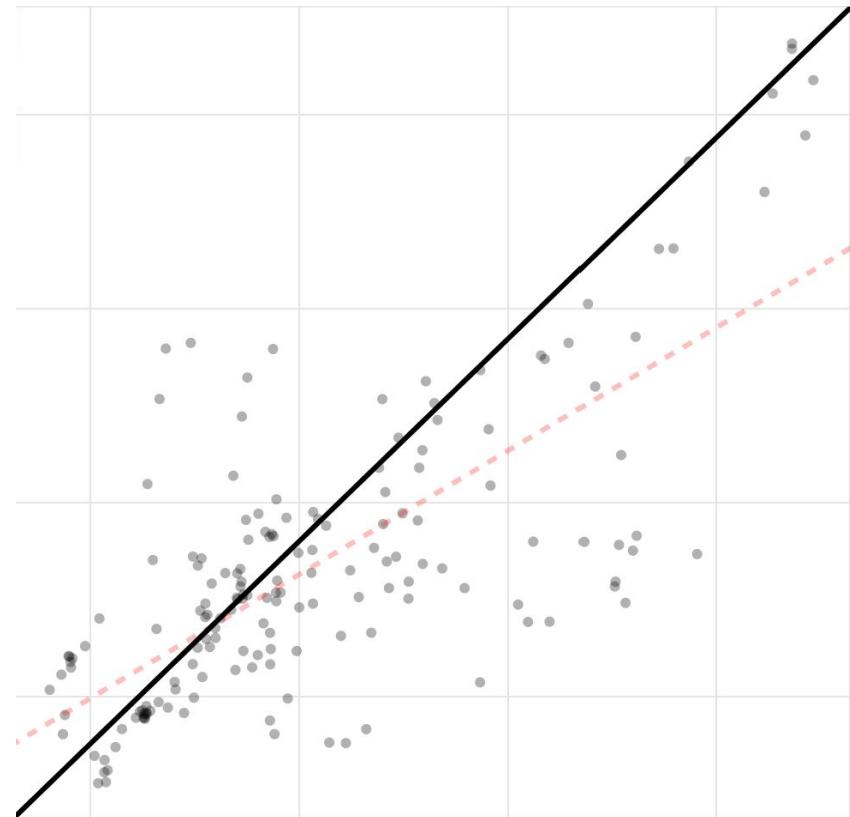
Methodology | Statistics

Pearson correlation coefficient: r

- Measures the **linear correlation** between two variables

Coefficient of determination: r^2

- Measures the proportion of the **spread** in the response variable (i.e. NO₂) that is predictable from the explanatory variable (i.e. road traffic/weather)



Methodology | Statistics

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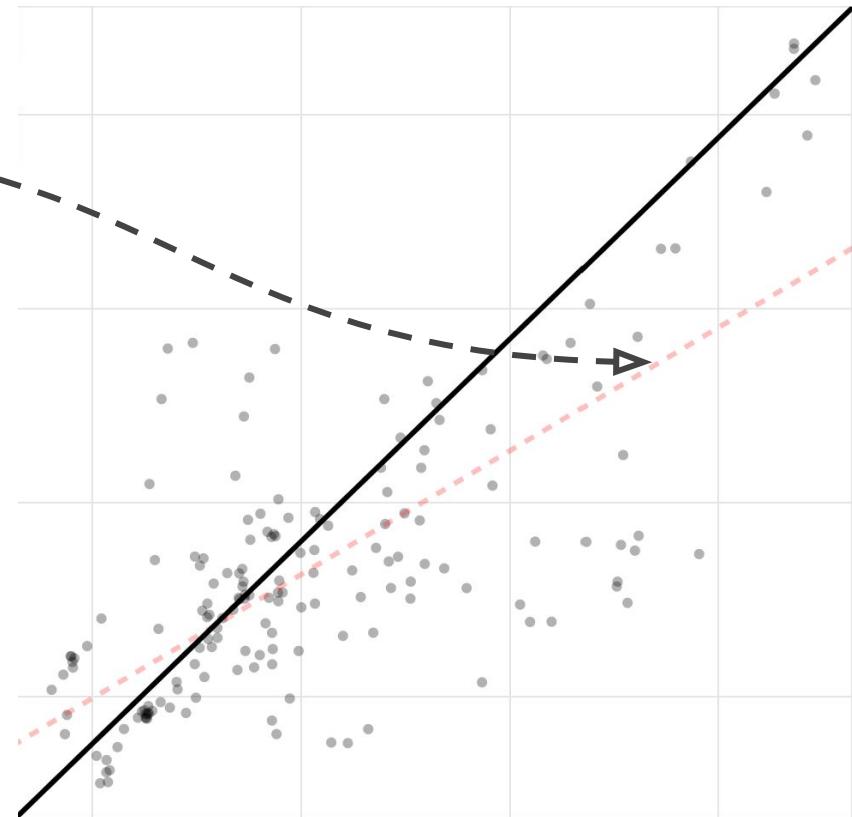
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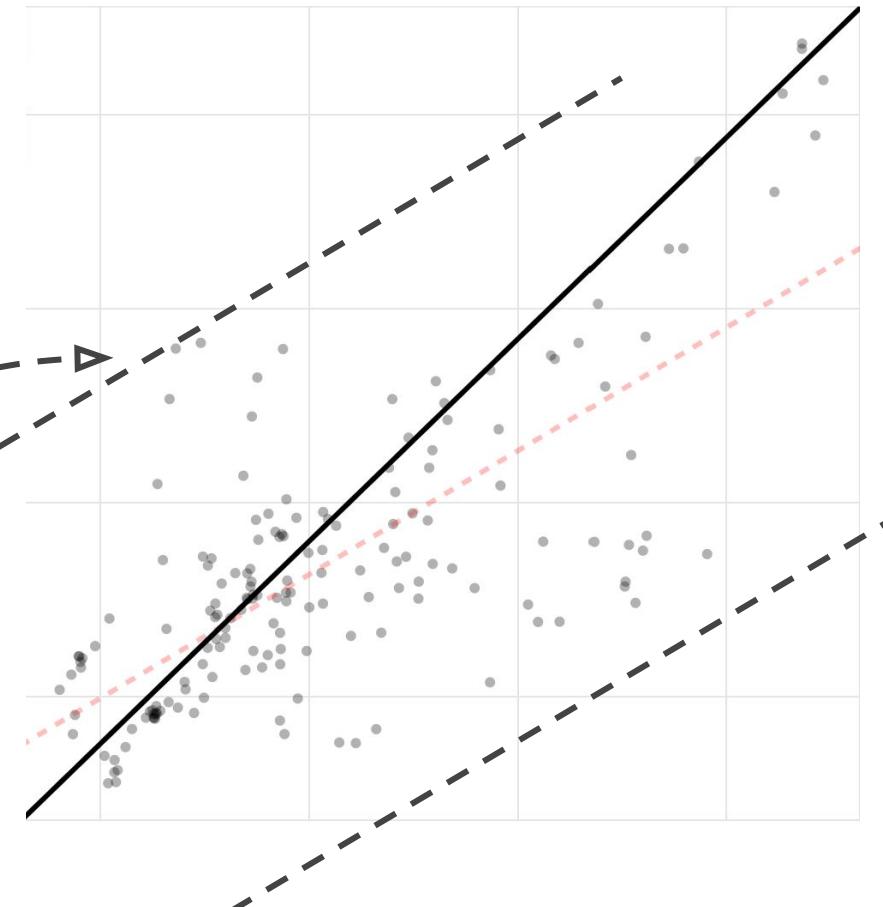
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Methodology | Investigation

Relationships

- Linear correlations & explainable spread

Predictions

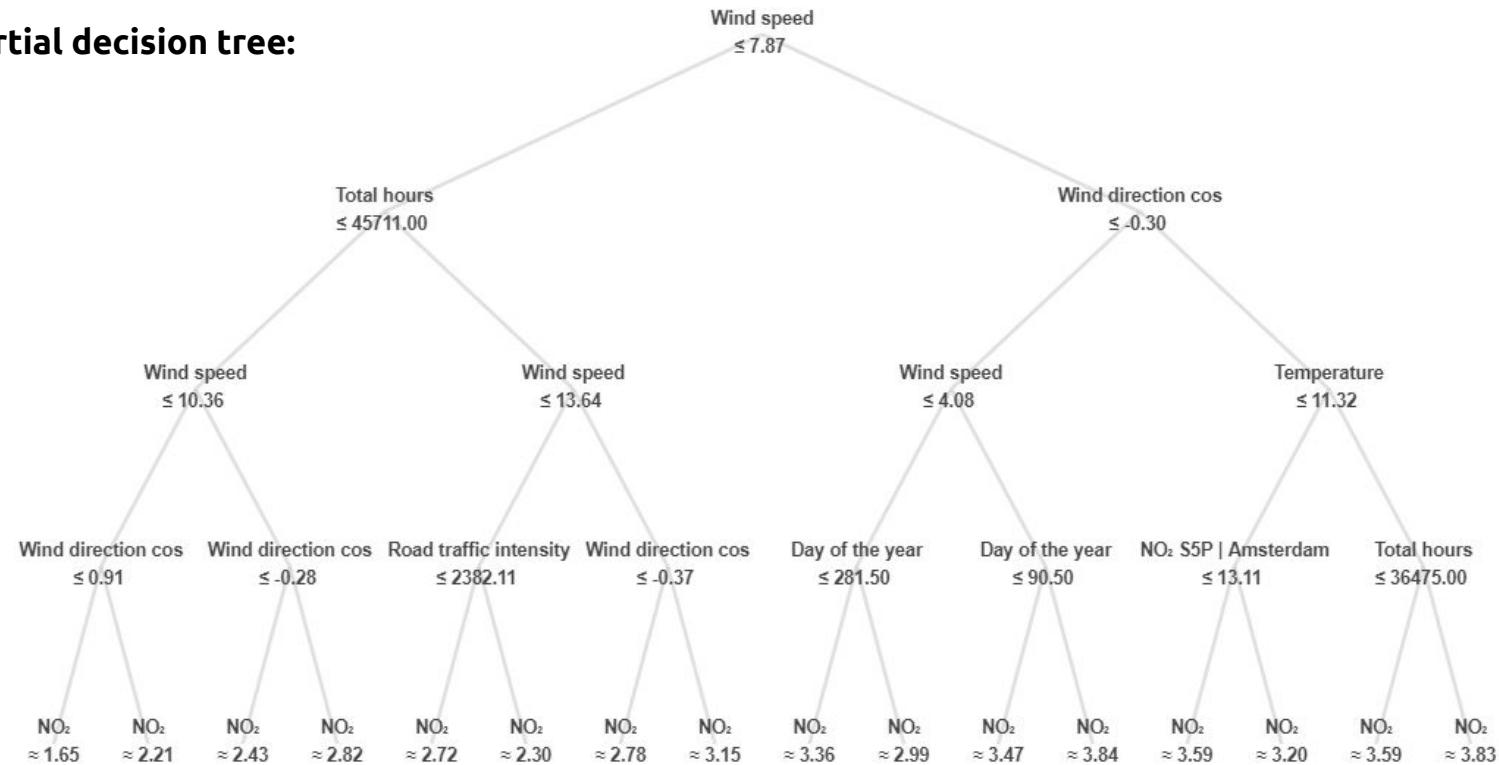
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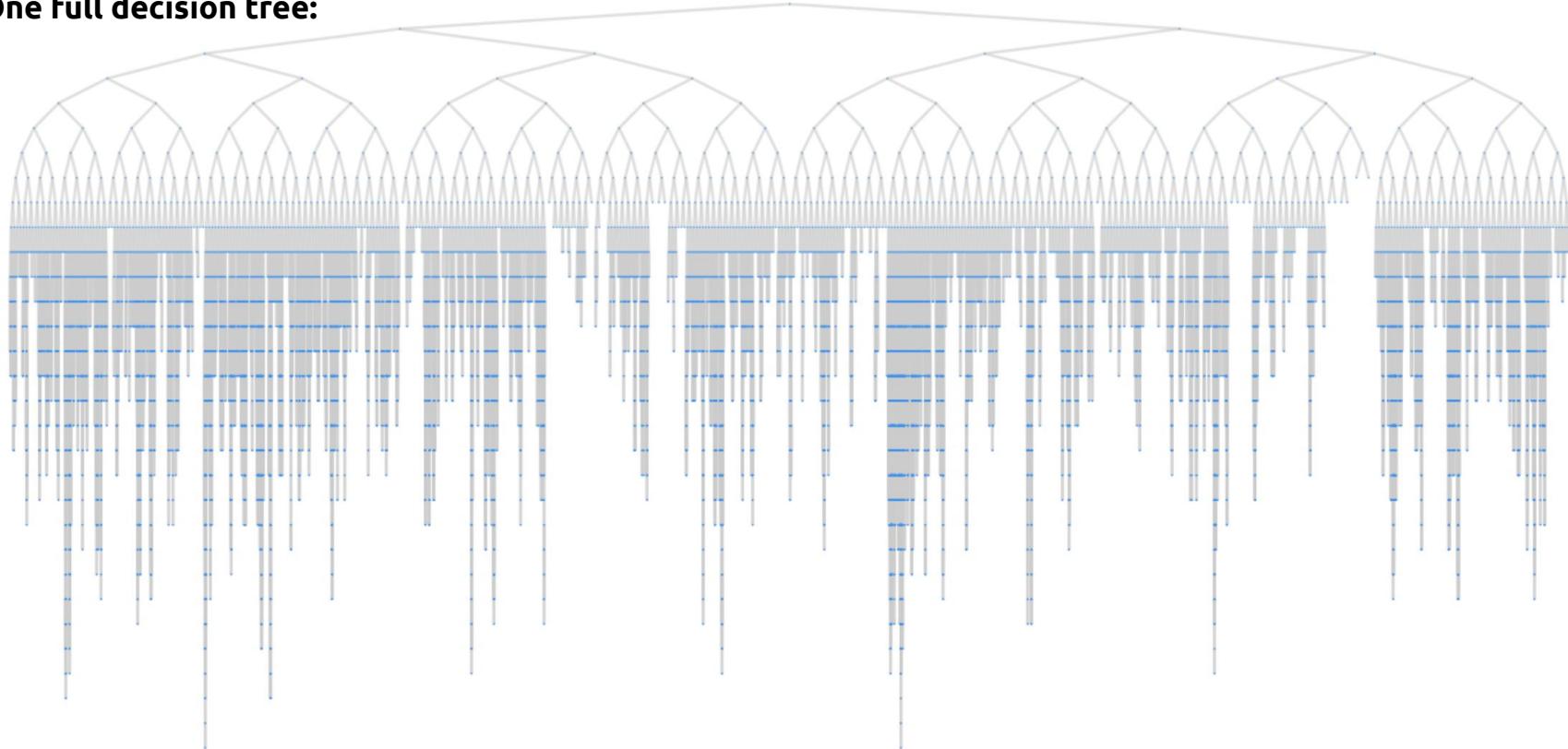
Methodology | Random forest regressor

One partial decision tree:



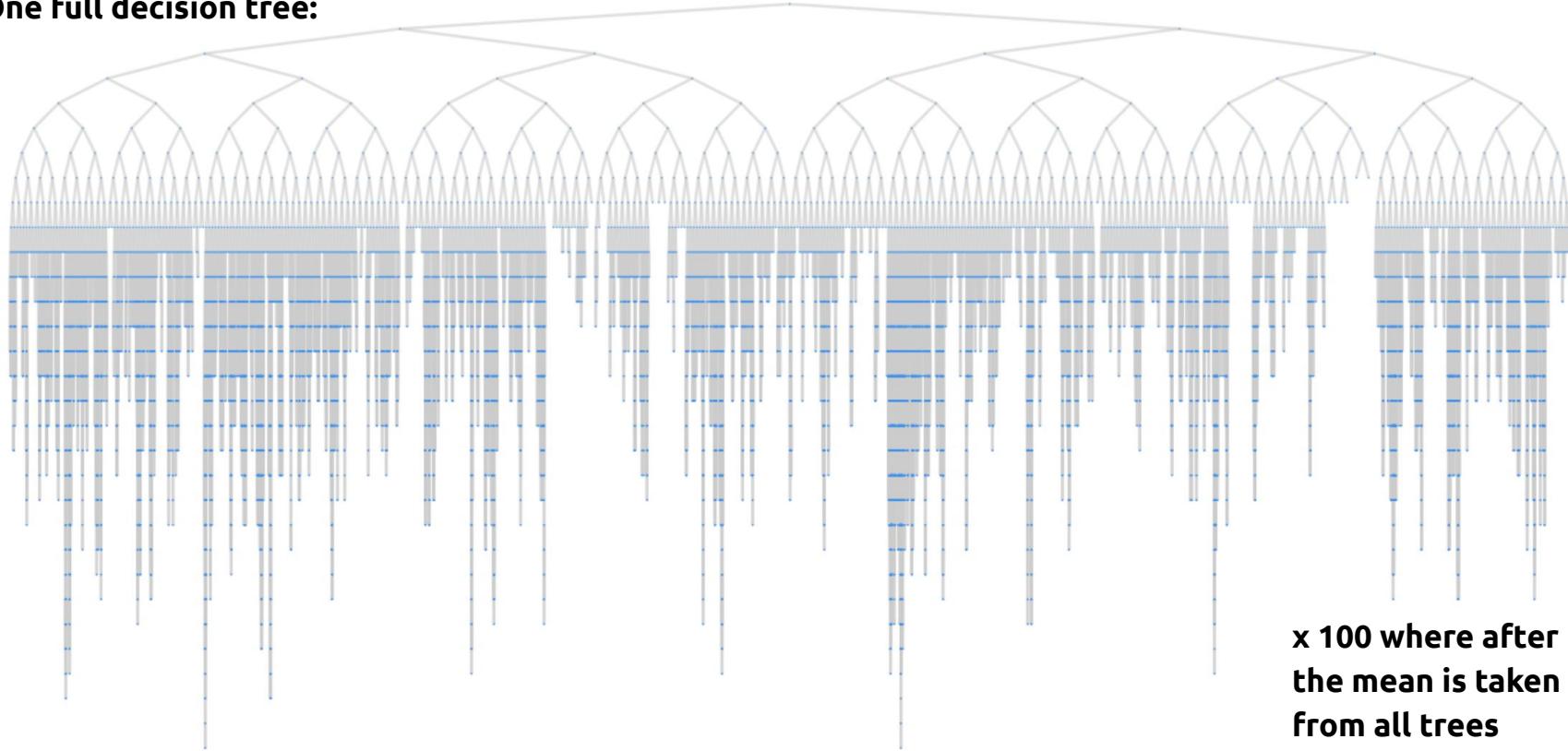
Methodology | Random forest regressor

One full decision tree:



Methodology | Random forest regressor

One full decision tree:



Methodology | Investigation

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Methodology | Cross validation



= Training data



= Testing data

Round 1



Round 2



Round 3



Round 4



Methodology | Cross validation



= Training data



= Testing data

Round 1



→ Accuracy 1

Round 2



→ Accuracy 2

Round 3



→ Accuracy 3

Round 4



→ Accuracy 4

Methodology | Cross validation

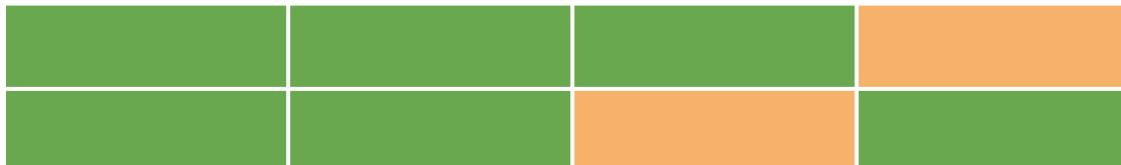


= Training data



= Testing data

Round 1



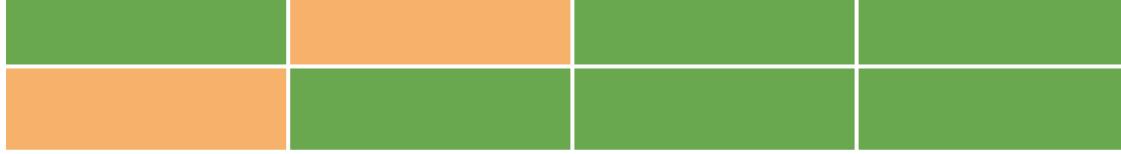
→ Accuracy 1

Round 2



→ Accuracy 2

Round 3



→ Accuracy 3

Round 4



→ Accuracy 4



Average
accuracy

Methodology | Investigation

Relationships

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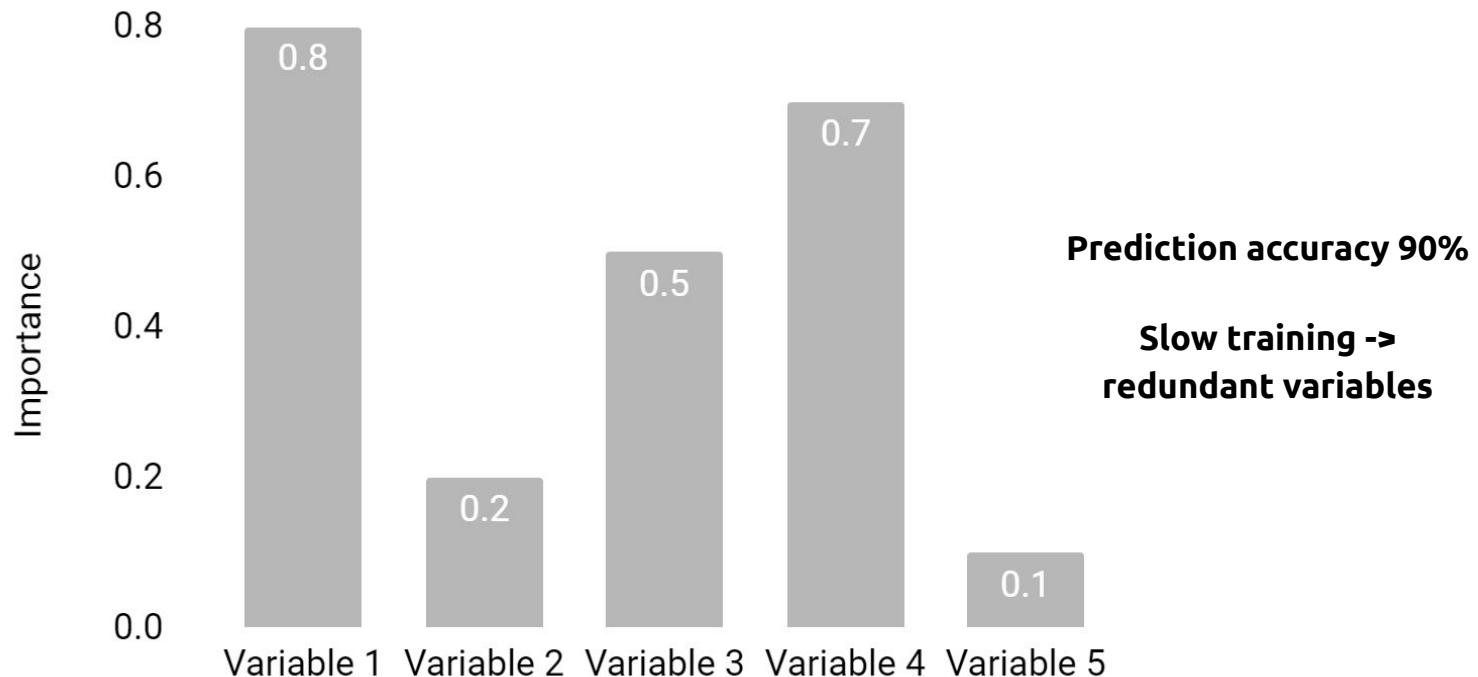
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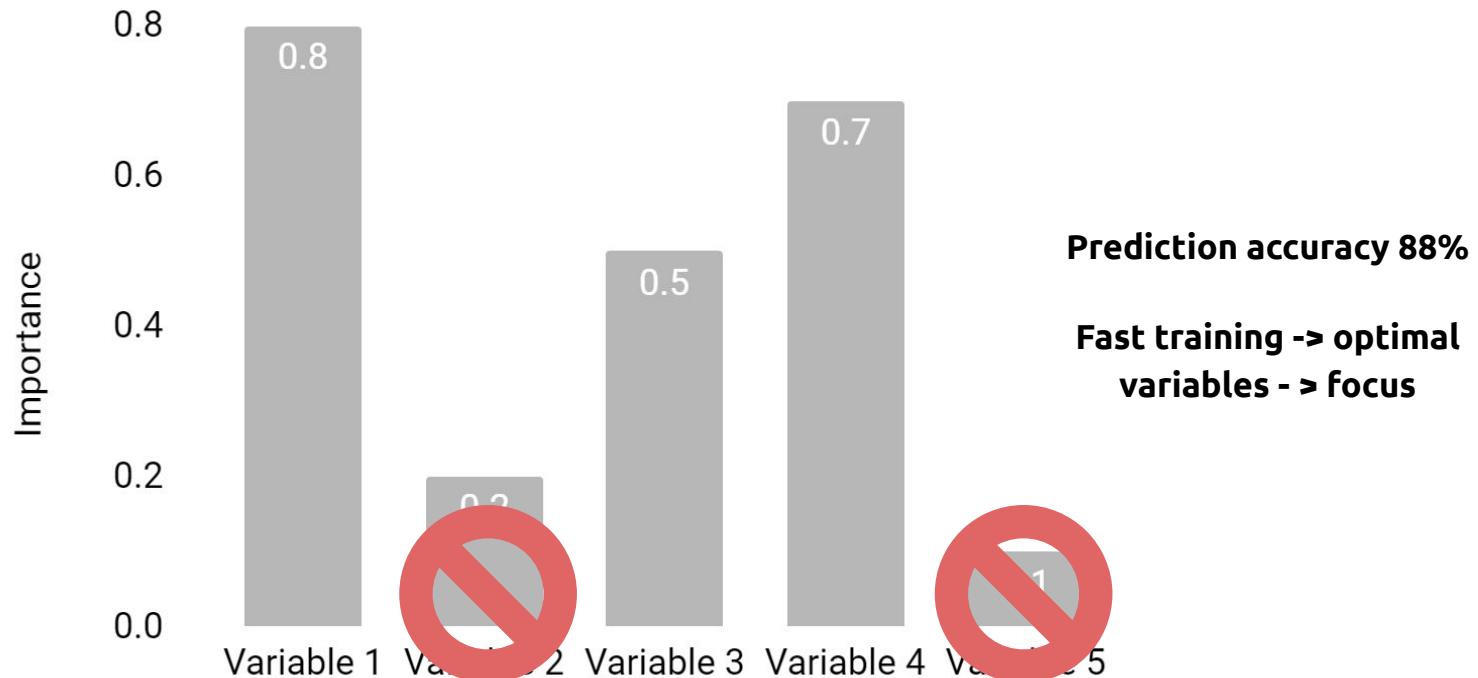
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Methodology | Variable Importance



Methodology | Variable Importance



Methodology | Investigation

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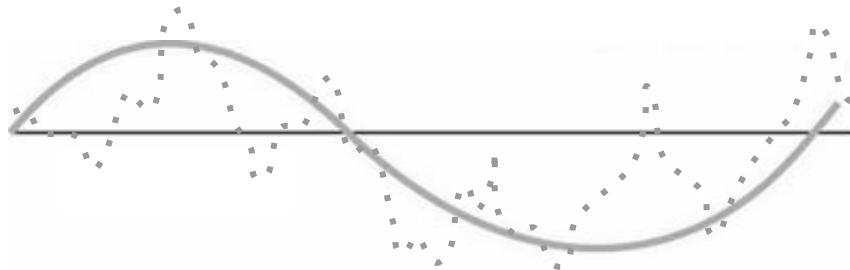
Methodology | Harmonic model

Raw data:



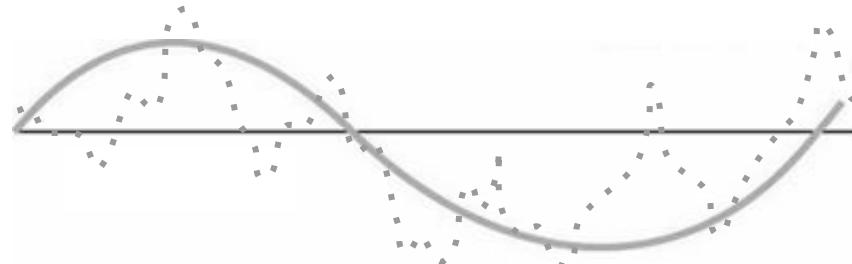
Methodology | Harmonic model

Yearly seasonal wave:

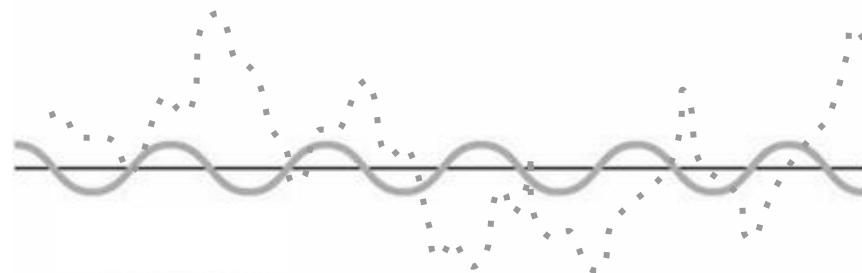


Methodology | Harmonic model

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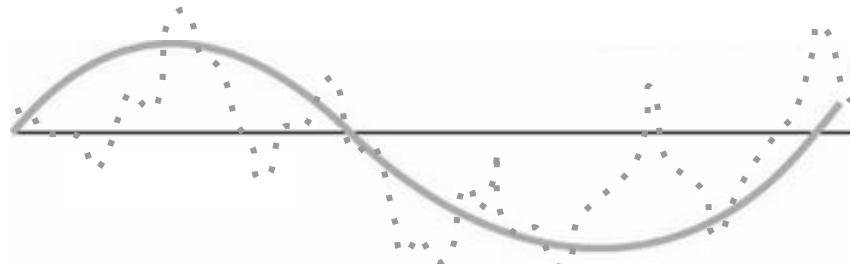


Quarterly seasonal wave:

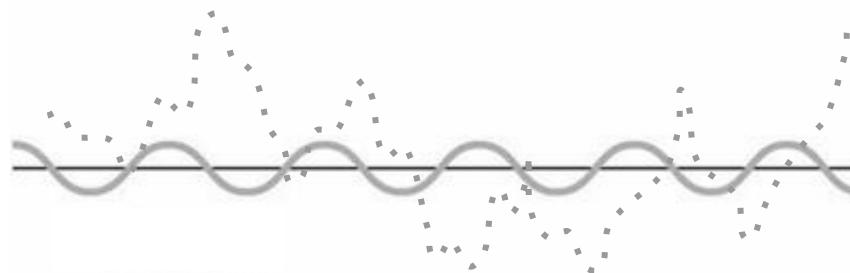


Methodology | Harmonic model

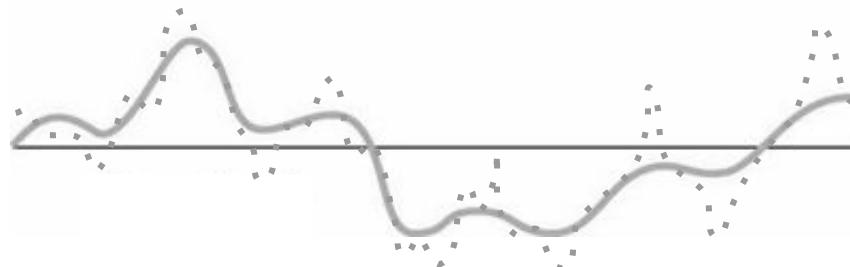
Yearly seasonal wave:



Quarterly seasonal wave:



Merged seasonal waves:



Methodology | Investigation

Relationships

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Trend analysis

- Long term seasonal trends -> linear harmonic model
- Temporal overlap comparison

Methodology | Overlap comparison

Year 1:

A jagged orange line representing the first methodology's performance over time. It starts at a high value, fluctuates, and then drops sharply before recovering and rising again towards the end of the year.

Year 2:

A jagged green line representing the second methodology's performance. It shows a significant dip in the middle of the year before recovering and reaching a peak.

Year 3:

A jagged blue line representing the third methodology's performance. It follows a similar pattern to Year 2, with a dip and subsequent recovery, though it appears slightly more stable than the others.

Methodology | Overlap comparison

Year 1:



Year 2:

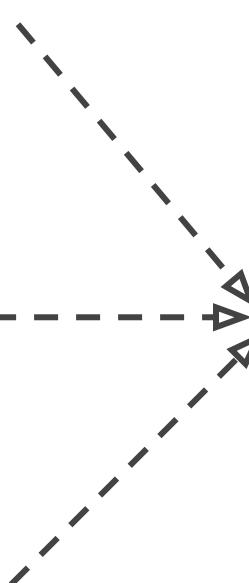


Year 3:



Methodology | Overlap comparison

Year 1:



Year 2:



Year 3:



Methodology | Overlap comparison

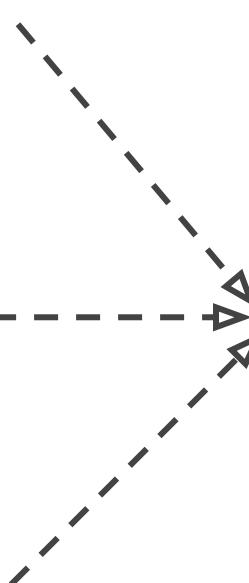
Year 1:



Year 2:

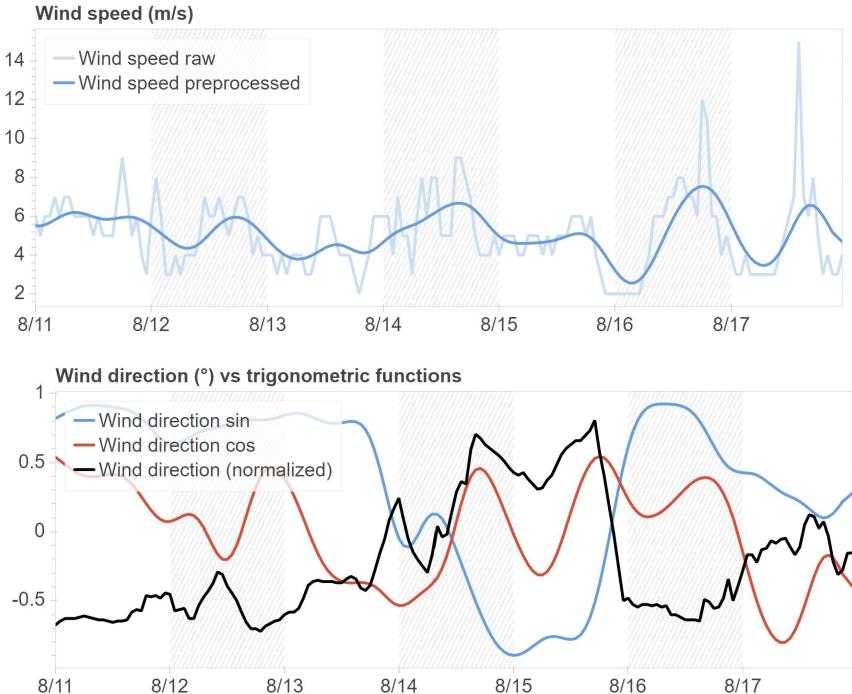
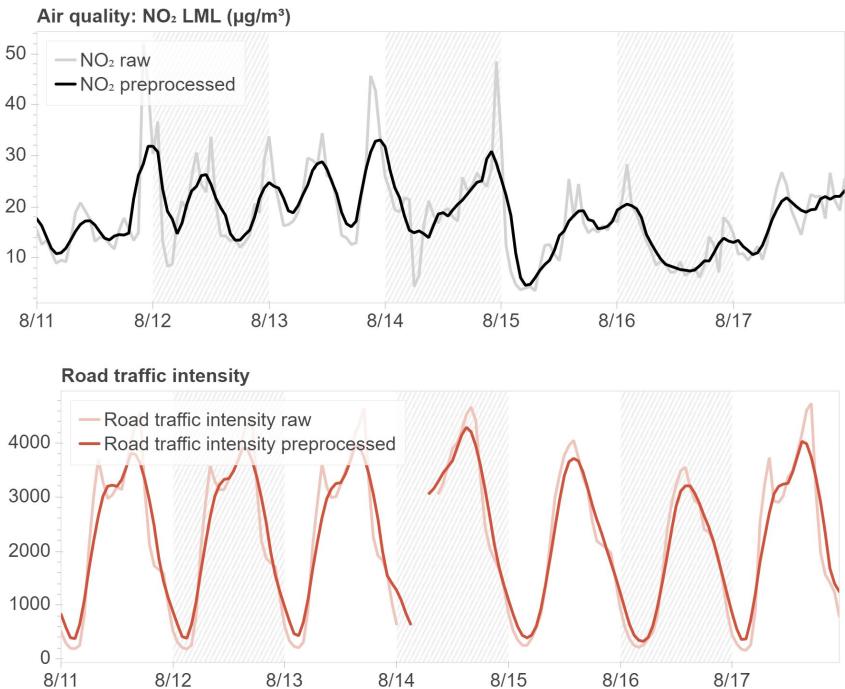


Year 3:

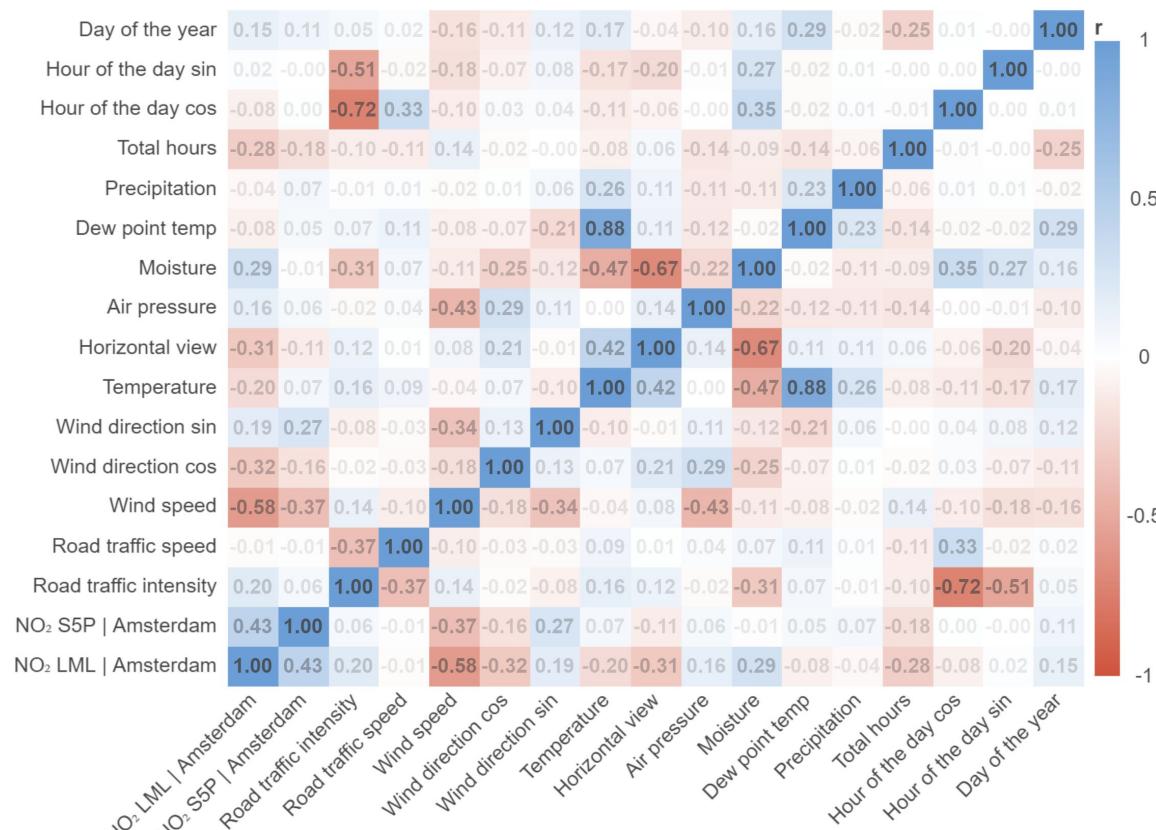


Results

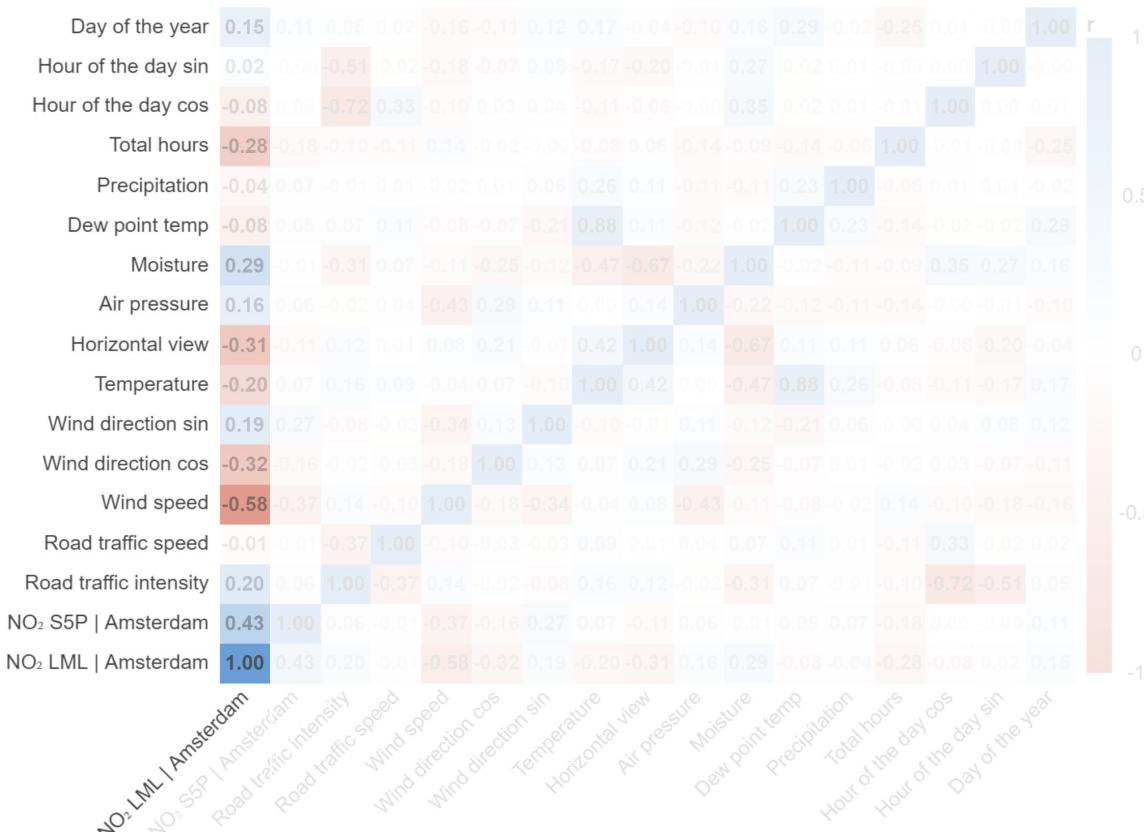
Results | Preparation



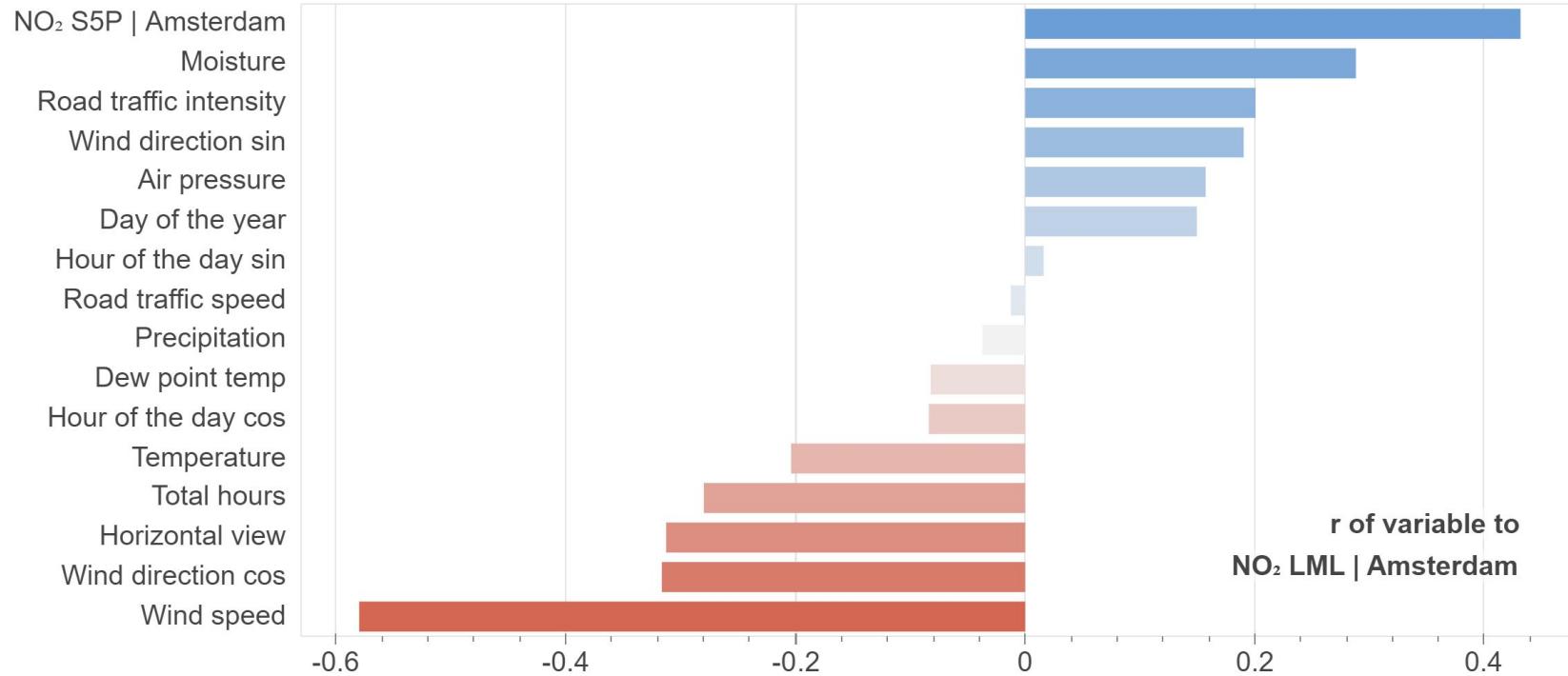
Results | Exploration - Linear correlations



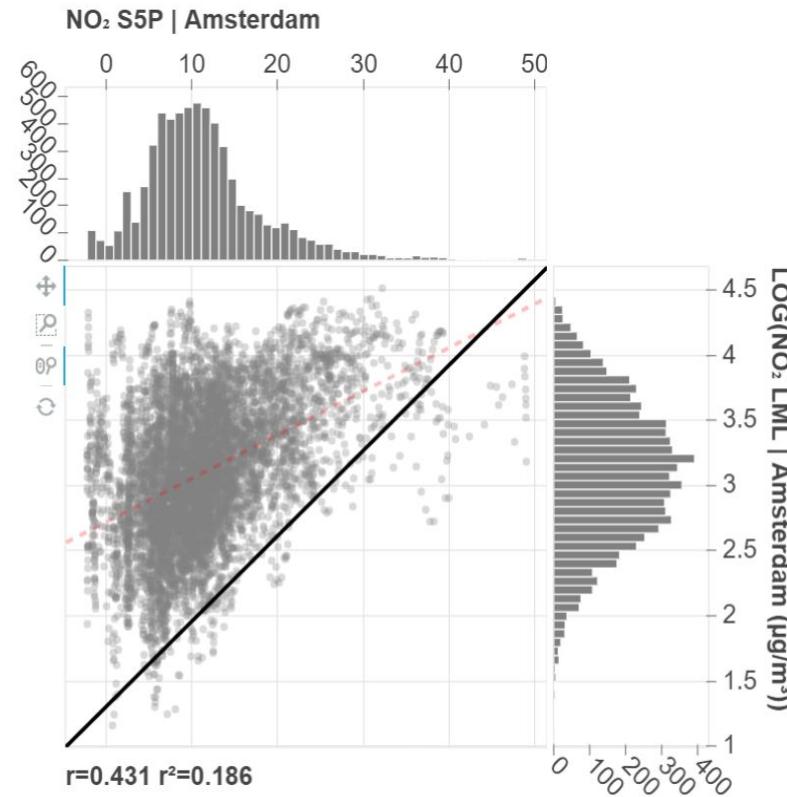
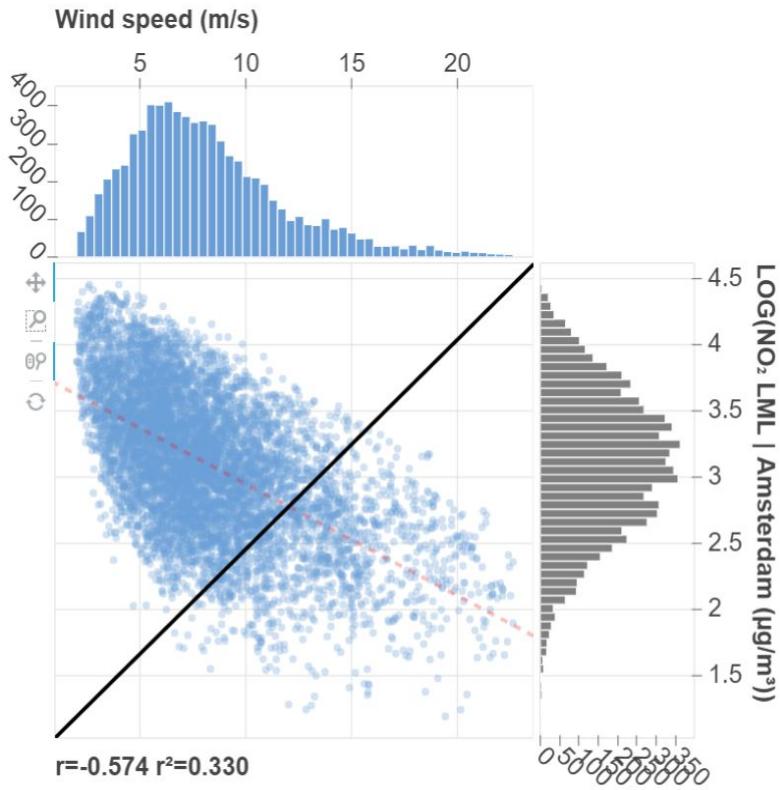
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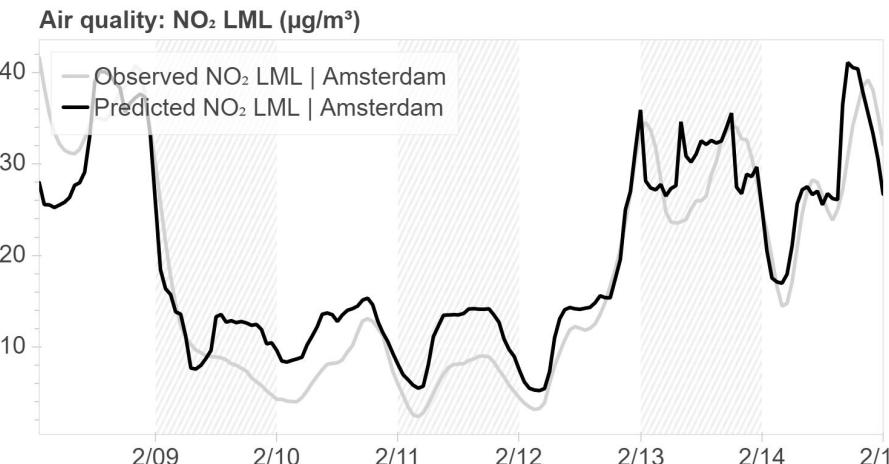
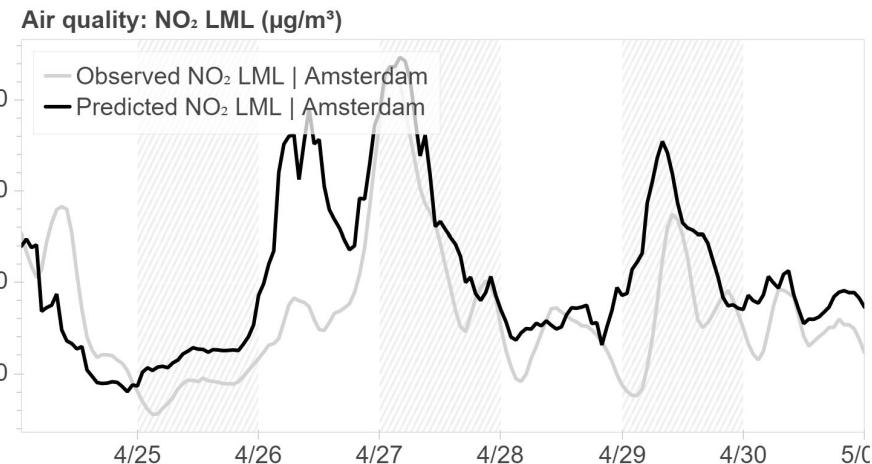
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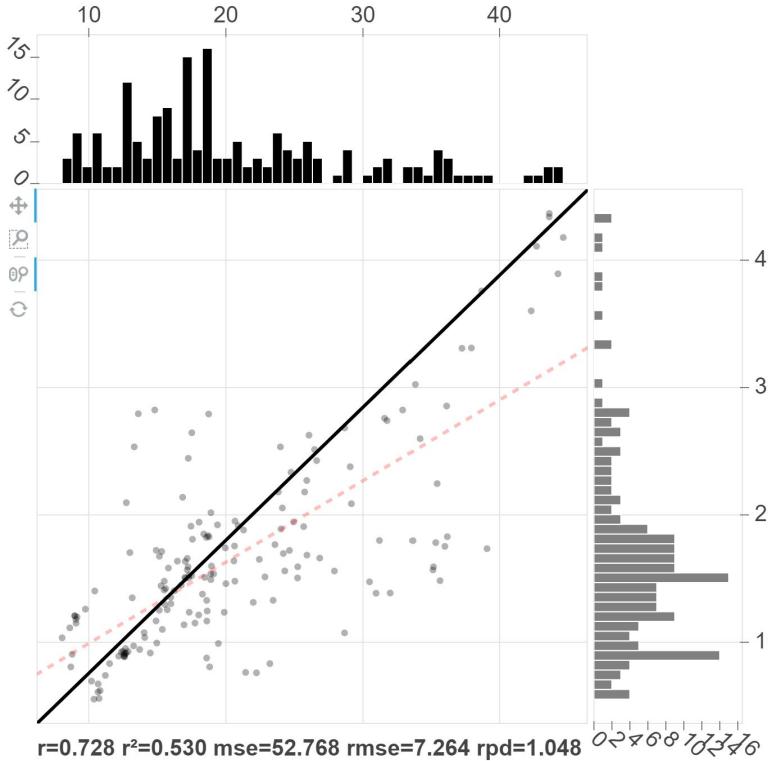


Results | Prediction

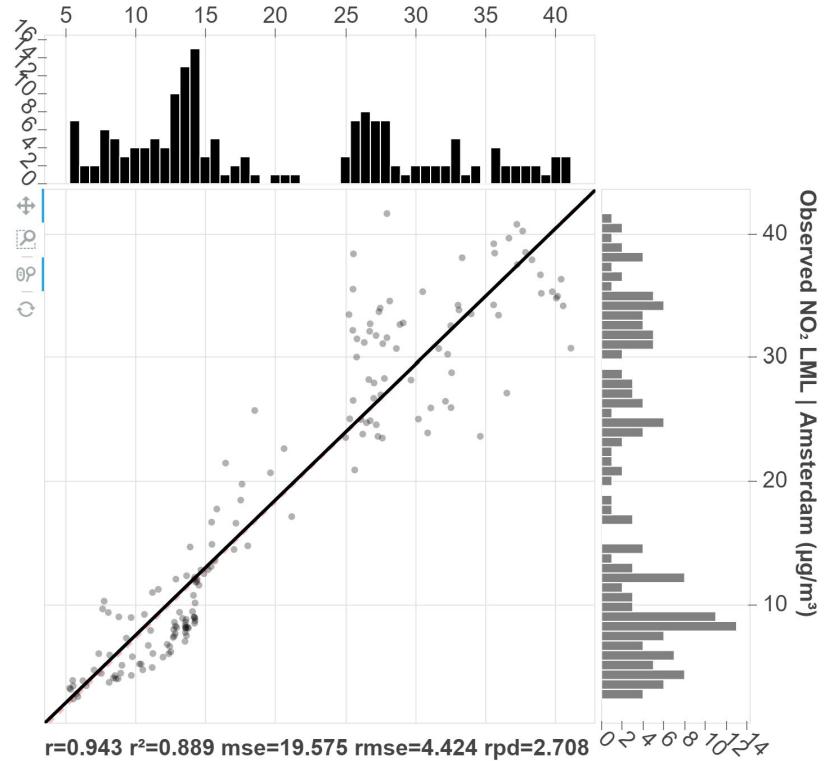


Results | Prediction

Predicted NO₂ LML | Amsterdam ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)



Predicted NO₂ LML | Amsterdam ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)



Results | Prediction accuracy

Location	r	-/+ 95% CI	r ²	-/+ 95% CI	MSE	-/+ 95% CI	RMSE	-/+ 95% CI
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam	0.854	0.107	0.732	0.172	0.063	0.050	0.248	0.084
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Oude Schans	0.777	0.168	0.610	0.241	0.112	0.106	0.327	0.142
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Stadhouderskade	0.766	0.170	0.593	0.242	0.085	0.076	0.285	0.112
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Van Diemenstraat	0.854	0.126	0.733	0.197	0.080	0.082	0.277	0.118
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Haarlemmerweg	0.828	0.092	0.688	0.150	0.079	0.056	0.277	0.097
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Jan van Galenstraat	0.844	0.112	0.716	0.174	0.072	0.062	0.264	0.095
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Vondelpark	0.772	0.165	0.603	0.237	0.117	0.091	0.337	0.117
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Nieuwendammerdijk	0.794	0.117	0.634	0.179	0.168	0.151	0.401	0.170
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Einsteinweg	0.891	0.062	0.794	0.109	0.069	0.057	0.258	0.094
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Ookmeer	0.815	0.104	0.667	0.164	0.195	0.152	0.434	0.164
NO ₂ LML Zaanstad-Hemkade	0.842	0.133	0.713	0.204	0.174	0.312	0.393	0.275
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam -Kantershof	0.805	0.087	0.650	0.139	0.129	0.037	0.359	0.051
NO ₂ LML Badhoevedorp-Sloterweg	0.835	0.092	0.700	0.149	0.113	0.075	0.332	0.104
NO ₂ LML Zaanstad-Hoogtij	0.868	0.060	0.755	0.101	0.140	0.049	0.373	0.062
NO ₂ LML Spaarnwoude-Machineweg	0.843	0.049	0.712	0.082	0.160	0.055	0.399	0.067
NO ₂ LML Hoofddorp-Hoofdweg	0.803	0.126	0.648	0.192	0.193	0.087	0.436	0.095
NO ₂ LML Oude Meer-Aalsmeerderdijk	0.806	0.100	0.652	0.155	0.124	0.047	0.350	0.062
NO ₂ LML Haarlem-Schipholweg	0.853	0.069	0.728	0.114	0.088	0.036	0.296	0.058
Total mean	0.825	0.108	0.685	0.167	0.120	0.088	0.336	0.109

Results | Prediction accuracy

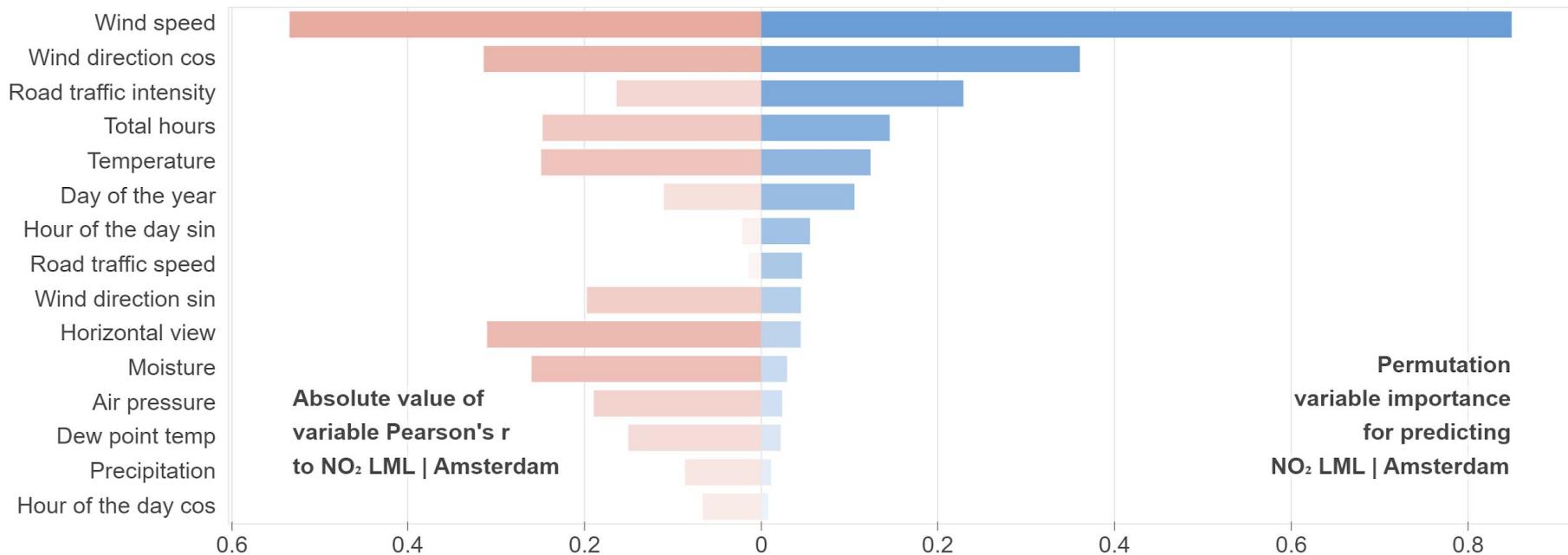
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NO ₂ LML Amsterdam -Kantershof	0.805	0.087	0.650	0.139	0.129	0.037	0.359	0.051
NO ₂ LML Badhoevedorp-Sloterweg	0.835	0.092	0.700	0.149	0.113	0.075	0.332	0.104
NO ₂ LML Zaanstad-Hoogtij	0.868	0.060	0.755	0.101	0.140	0.049	0.373	0.062
NO ₂ LML Spaarnwoude-Machineweg	0.843	0.049	0.712	0.082	0.160	0.055	0.399	0.067
NO ₂ LML Hoofddorp-Hoofdweg	0.803	0.126	0.648	0.192	0.193	0.087	0.436	0.095
NO ₂ LML Oude Meer-Aalsmeerderdijk	0.806	0.100	0.652	0.155	0.124	0.047	0.350	0.062
NO ₂ LML Haarlem-Schipholweg	0.853	0.069	0.728	0.114	0.088	0.036	0.296	0.058
Total mean	0.825	0.108	0.685	0.167	0.120	0.088	0.336	0.109

Results | Prediction accuracy

r	r^2
0.825	0.685

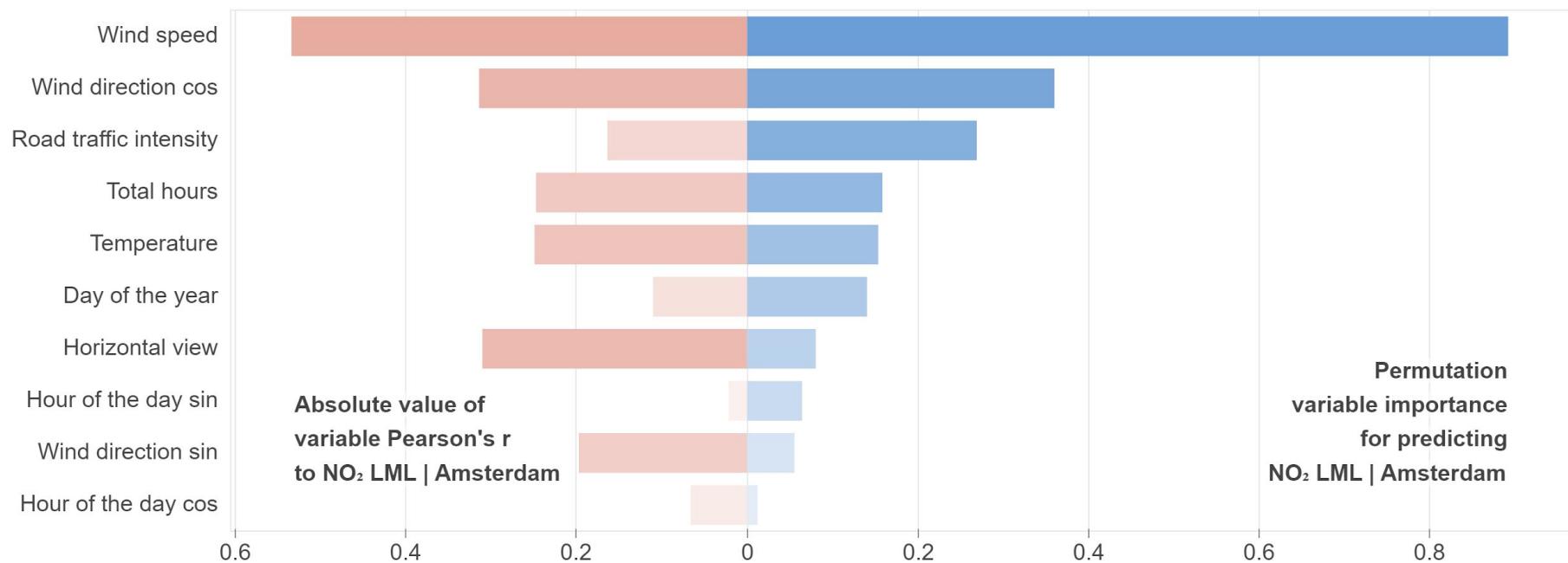
This means that about **~70%** of hourly NO₂ data can be accurately predicted

Results | Prediction - Variable importance



Results | Prediction - Variable importance

Removing redundant variables



Results | Prediction accuracy - selected variables

Prediction accuracy after **removing** redundant variables

Γ

0.824

Γ^2

0.683

-0.11%

-0.27%

Accuracy stays roughly the same

Results | Prediction accuracy - no COVID-19 data

Prediction accuracy after **removing**
COVID-19 training & testing data

r

0.845

+2.51%

r^2

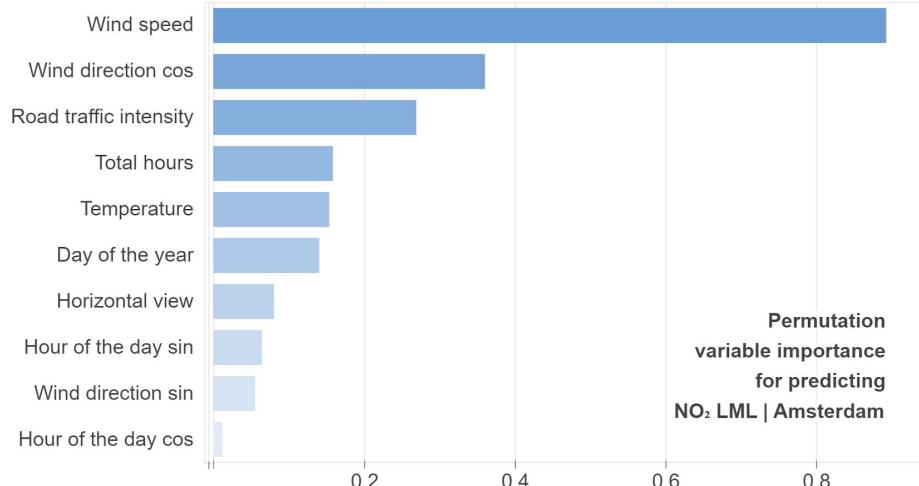
0.715

+4.70%

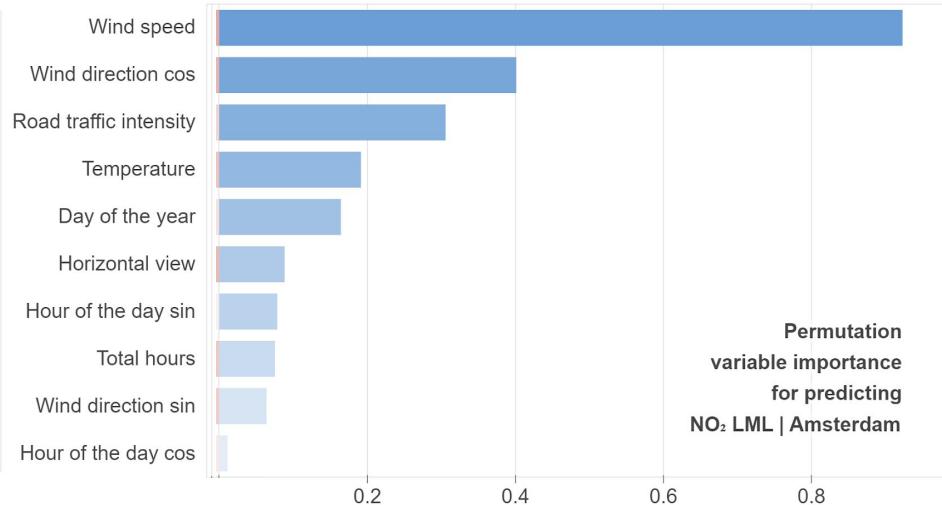
Accuracy improves. This suggest that the data found during COVID-19 lockdowns **disrupt normal 'expected' patterns**

Results | Prediction - Variable importance

Including COVID-19 data



Excluding COVID-19 data



Road traffic intensity is **not** becoming more important during COVID-19 lockdowns in predicting NO₂ -> Its causality remains unclear

Results | Prediction accuracy - satellite data [extra]

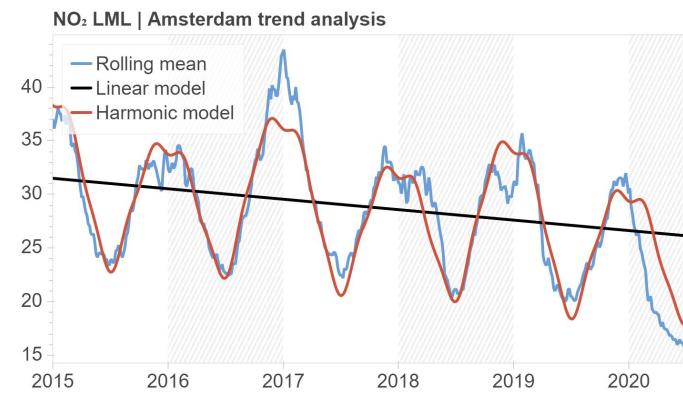
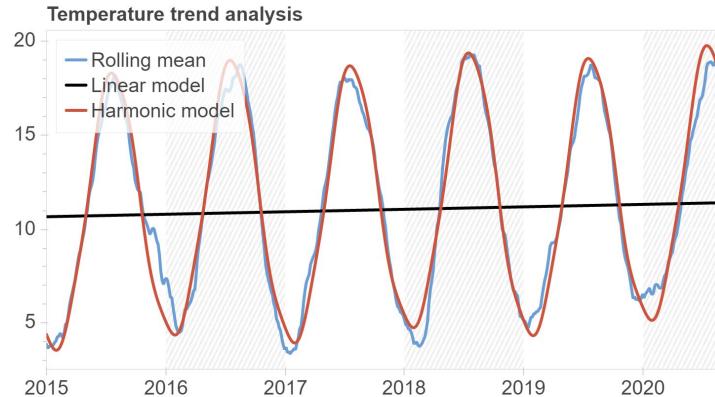
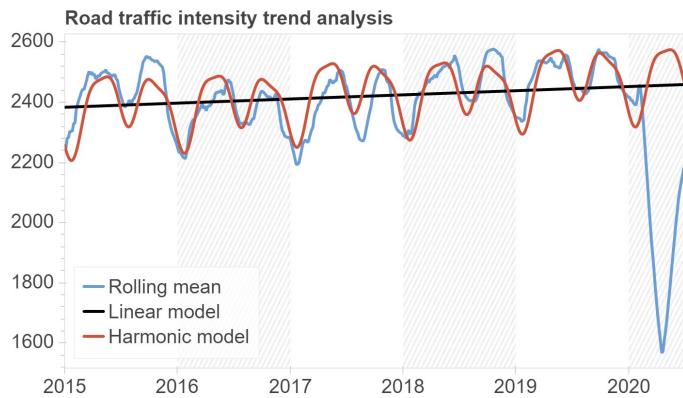
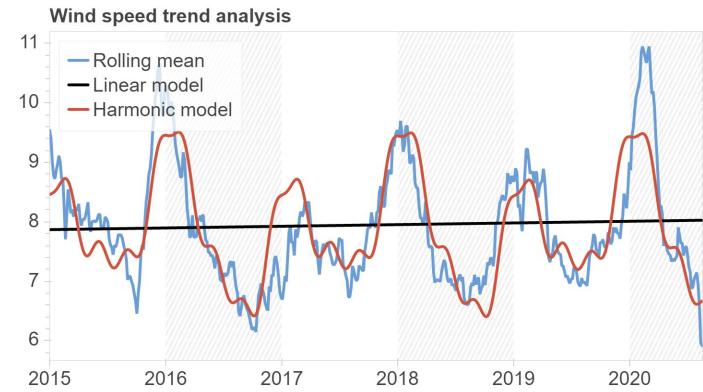
r

+0.98%

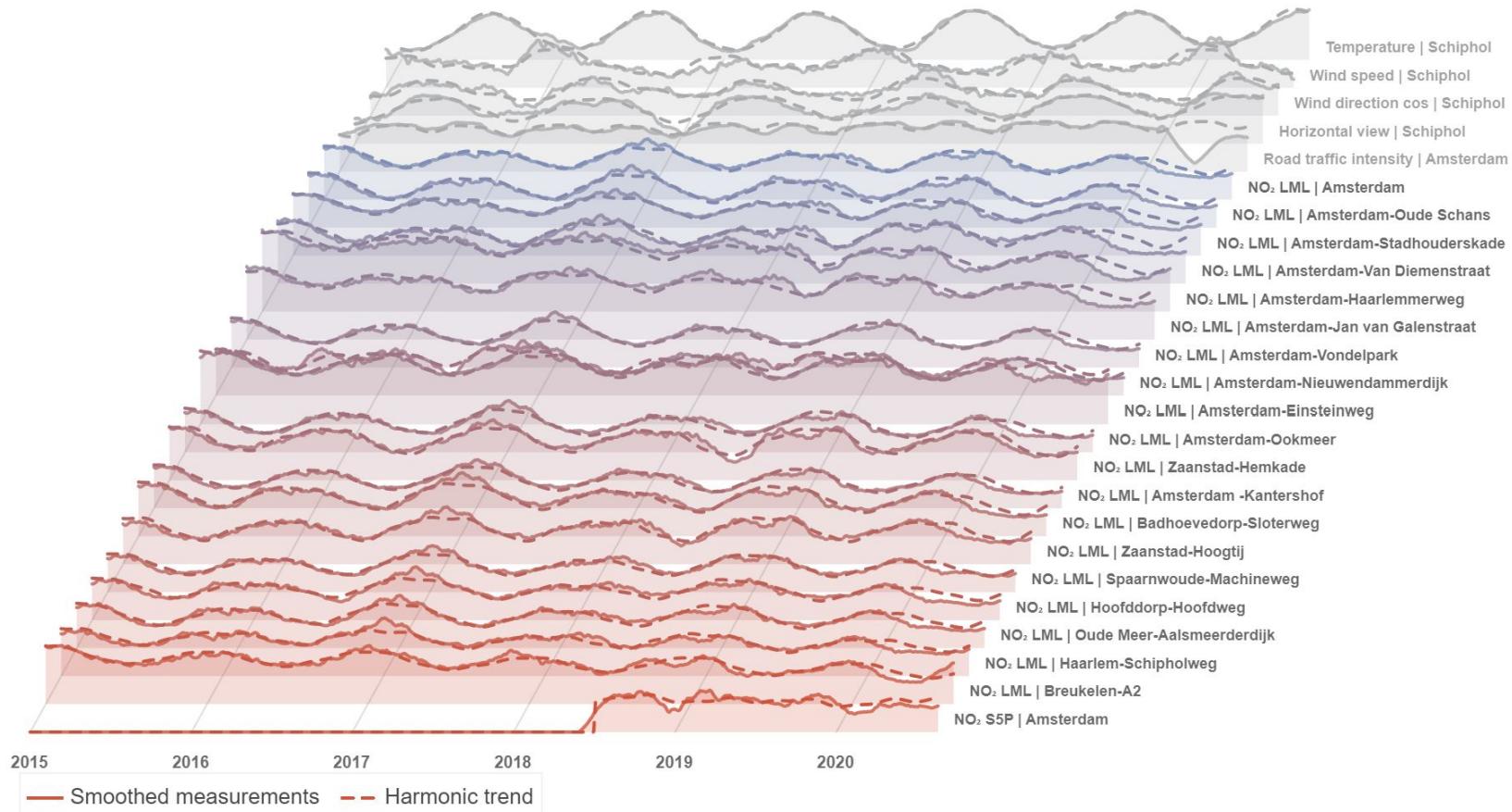
r^2

+1.60%

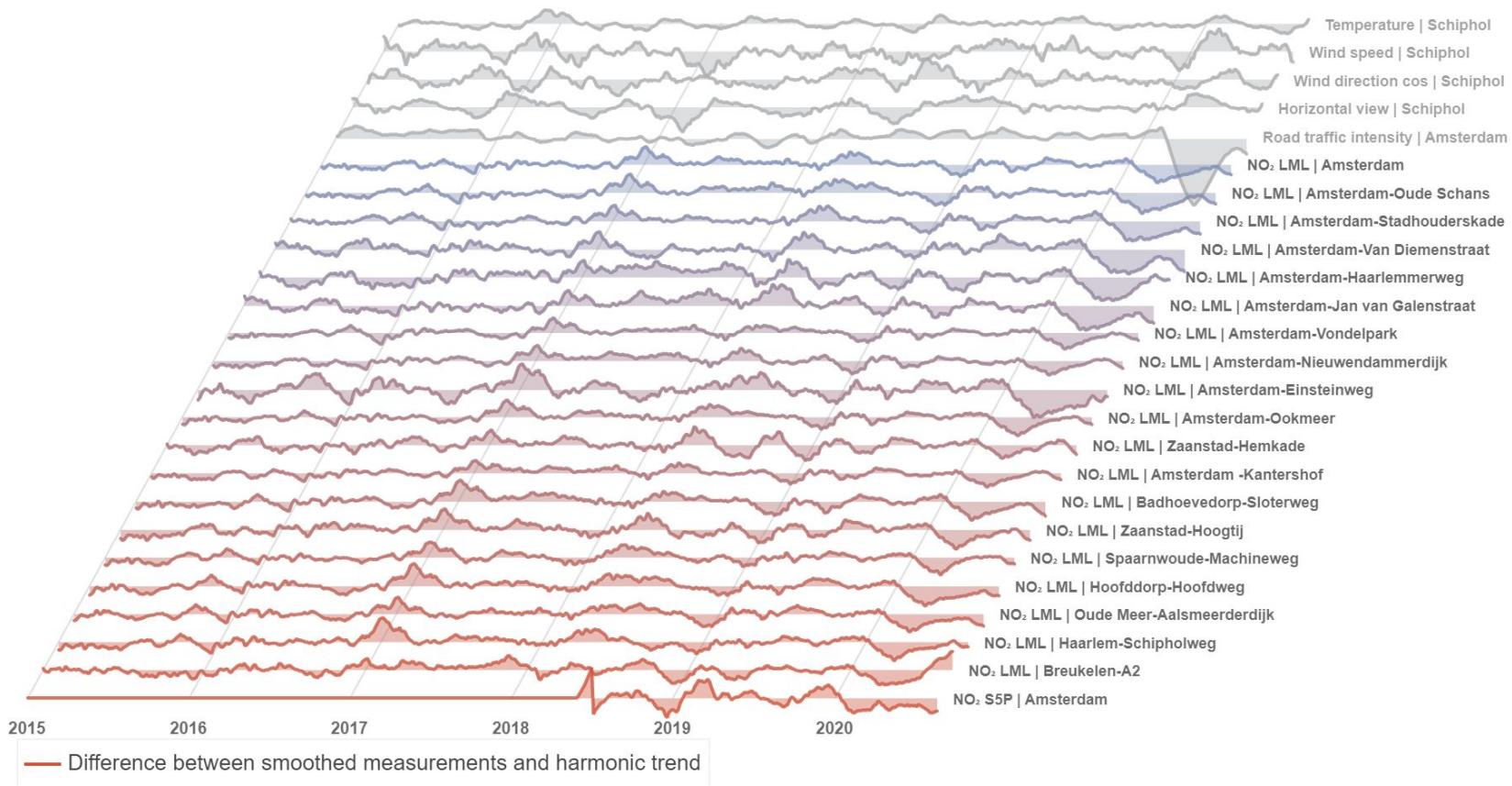
Results | Trend analysis - Harmonic model



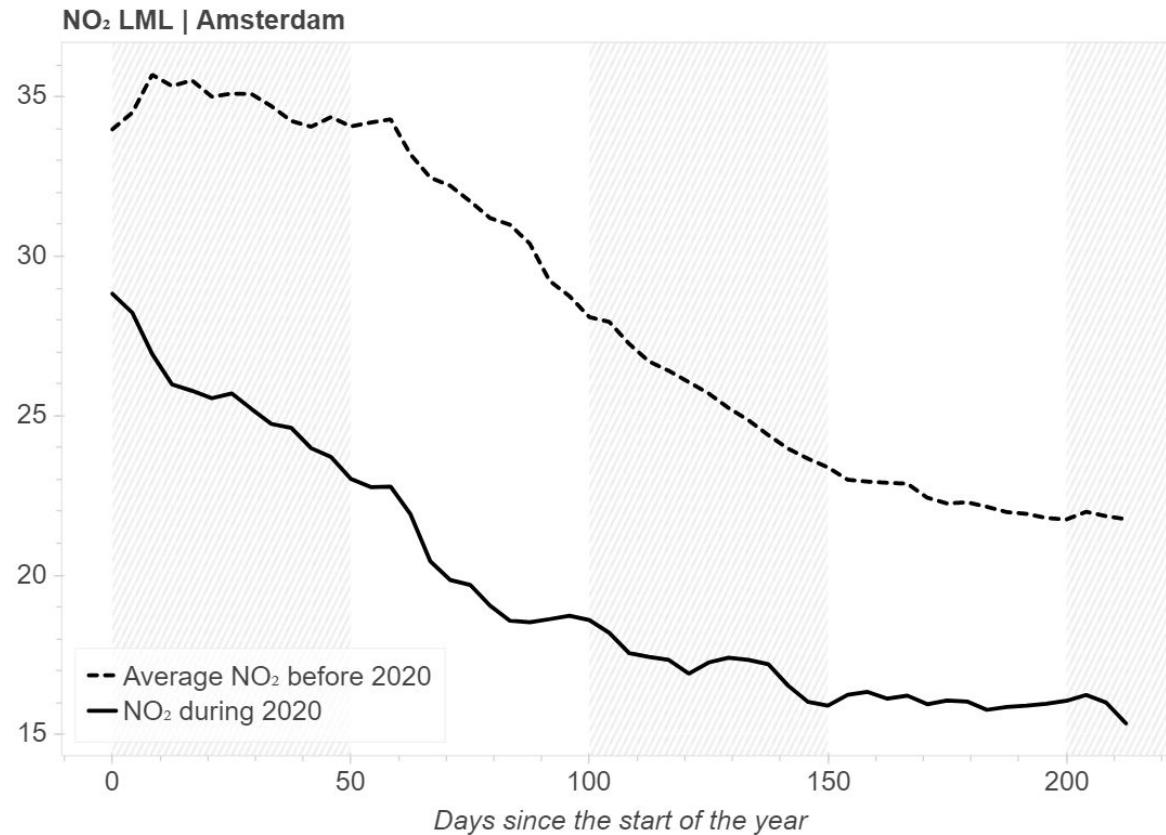
Results | Trend analysis - Harmonic model



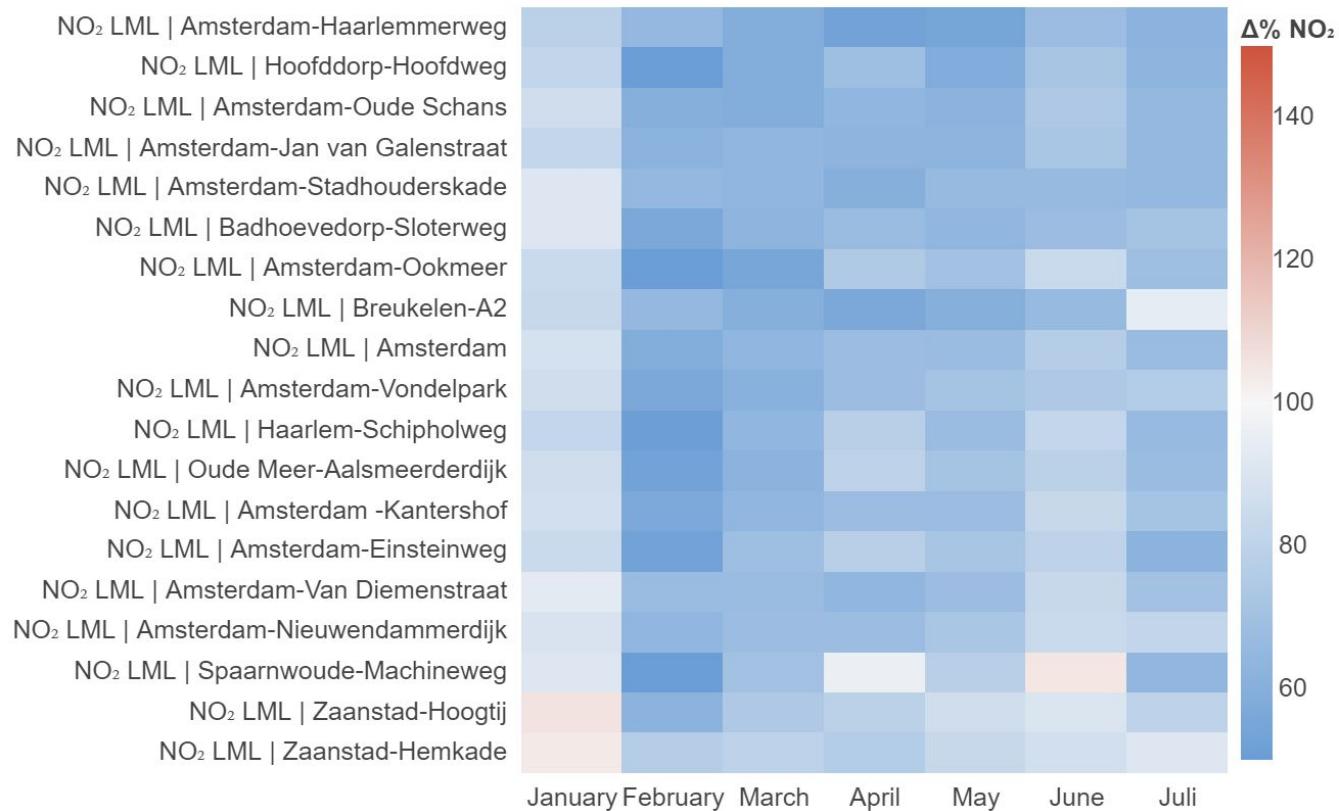
Results | Trend analysis - Harmonic model



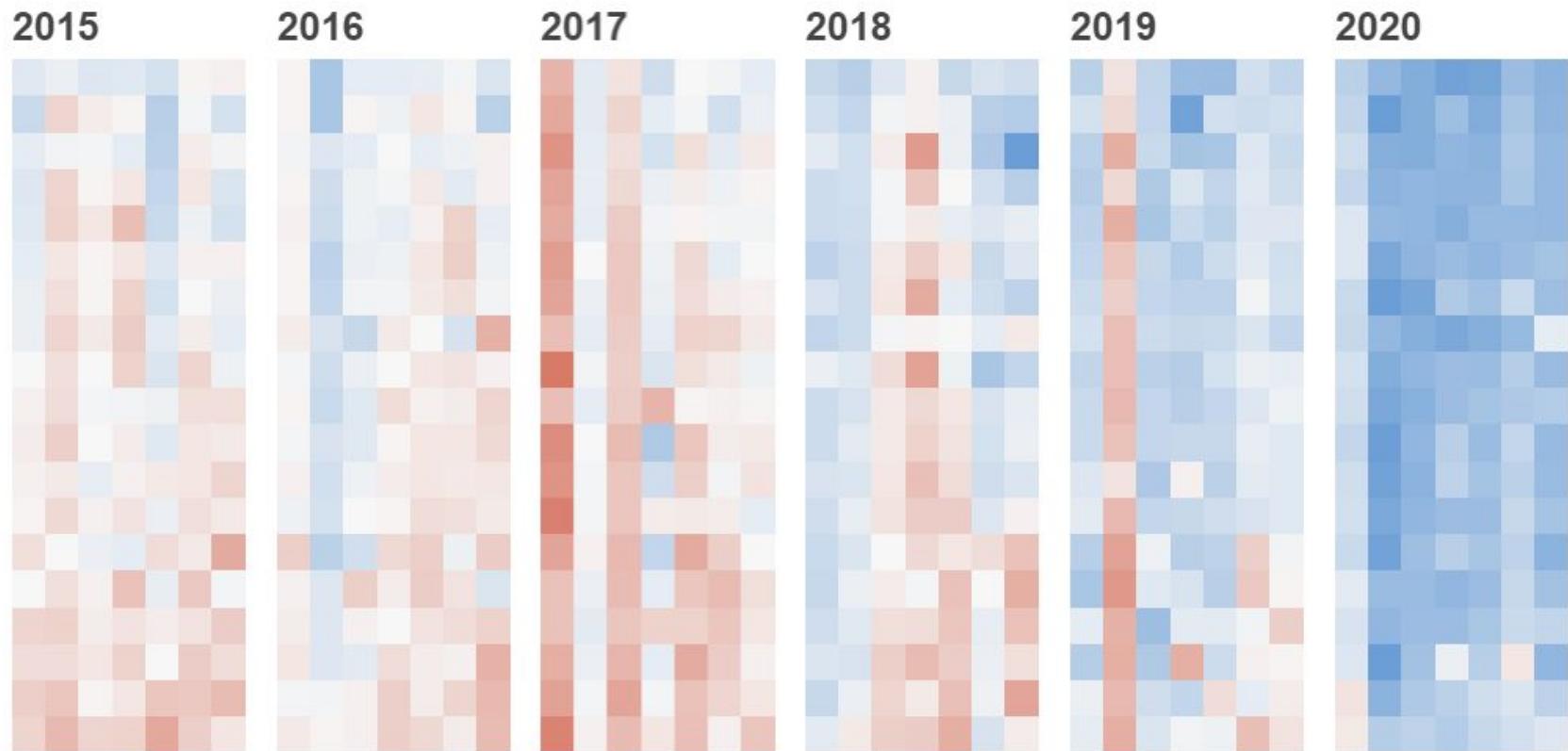
Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison



Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison



Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison



Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison

Location	January	February	March	April	May	June	Juli	Total mean
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Haarlemmerweg	79.34%	65.22%	59.39%	53.11%	54.96%	68.60%	62.28%	63.27%
NO ₂ LML Hoofddorp-Hoofdweg	81.10%	47.12%	59.66%	69.86%	58.85%	72.80%	63.01%	64.63%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Oude Schans	86.05%	60.49%	59.56%	64.48%	62.91%	74.69%	65.21%	67.63%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Jan van Galenstraat	82.51%	62.69%	64.01%	63.59%	63.75%	73.09%	65.54%	67.88%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Stadhouderskade	91.99%	65.42%	64.95%	60.28%	66.32%	66.49%	65.81%	68.75%
NO ₂ LML Badhoevedorp-Sloterweg	91.27%	56.13%	63.34%	67.13%	64.08%	68.98%	71.16%	68.87%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Ookmeer	84.72%	46.27%	55.10%	75.07%	70.46%	84.37%	69.52%	69.36%
NO ₂ LML Breukelen-A2	83.66%	65.25%	60.10%	56.22%	60.80%	66.42%	94.88%	69.62%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam	88.12%	59.91%	64.87%	68.43%	67.27%	77.10%	67.70%	70.49%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Vondelpark	86.03%	56.44%	61.68%	68.74%	71.88%	74.14%	76.41%	70.76%
NO ₂ LML Haarlem-Schipholweg	82.77%	51.45%	64.84%	78.78%	67.71%	82.96%	66.99%	70.78%
NO ₂ LML Oude Meer-Aalsmeerderdijk	86.85%	53.17%	62.03%	80.09%	71.92%	79.31%	67.57%	71.56%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam -Kantershof	87.19%	57.90%	64.28%	68.37%	68.53%	83.43%	71.66%	71.62%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Einsteinweg	84.61%	53.97%	69.48%	78.46%	72.61%	80.75%	62.26%	71.73%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Van Diemenstraat	93.06%	67.45%	67.39%	65.00%	68.48%	83.92%	70.14%	73.64%
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Nieuwendammerdijk	89.81%	64.24%	68.46%	68.15%	73.18%	84.19%	81.38%	75.63%
NO ₂ LML Spaarnwoude-Machineweg	91.15%	45.50%	70.13%	96.13%	78.45%	105.05%	64.75%	78.74%
NO ₂ LML Zaanstad-Hoogtij	106.00%	62.87%	74.88%	79.53%	86.24%	90.02%	80.02%	82.79%
NO ₂ LML Zaanstad-Hemkade	104.93%	77.84%	80.36%	76.59%	83.37%	87.62%	91.94%	86.09%
NO₂ Amsterdam	88.48%	58.91%	64.97%	70.42%	69.04%	79.16%	71.48%	71.78%
Road traffic intensity Amsterdam	109.65%	104.26%	78.32%	59.91%	73.08%	84.06%	93.44%	86.10%
Wind speed / Schiphol	99.10%	158.98%	116.60%	96.21%	104.46%	96.76%	111.72%	111.97%

Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison

Location	January	February	March	April	May	June	Juli	Total mean
NO ₂ LML Amsterdam-Haarlemmerweg	79.34%	65.22%	59.39%	53.11%	54.96%	68.60%	62.28%	63.27%
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Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison

Location	January	February	March	April	May	June	Juli
NO₂ Amsterdam	88.48%	58.91%	64.97%	70.42%	69.04%	79.16%	71.48%
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<i>Wind speed Schiphol</i>	99.10%	158.98%	116.60%	96.21%	104.46%	96.76%	111.72%

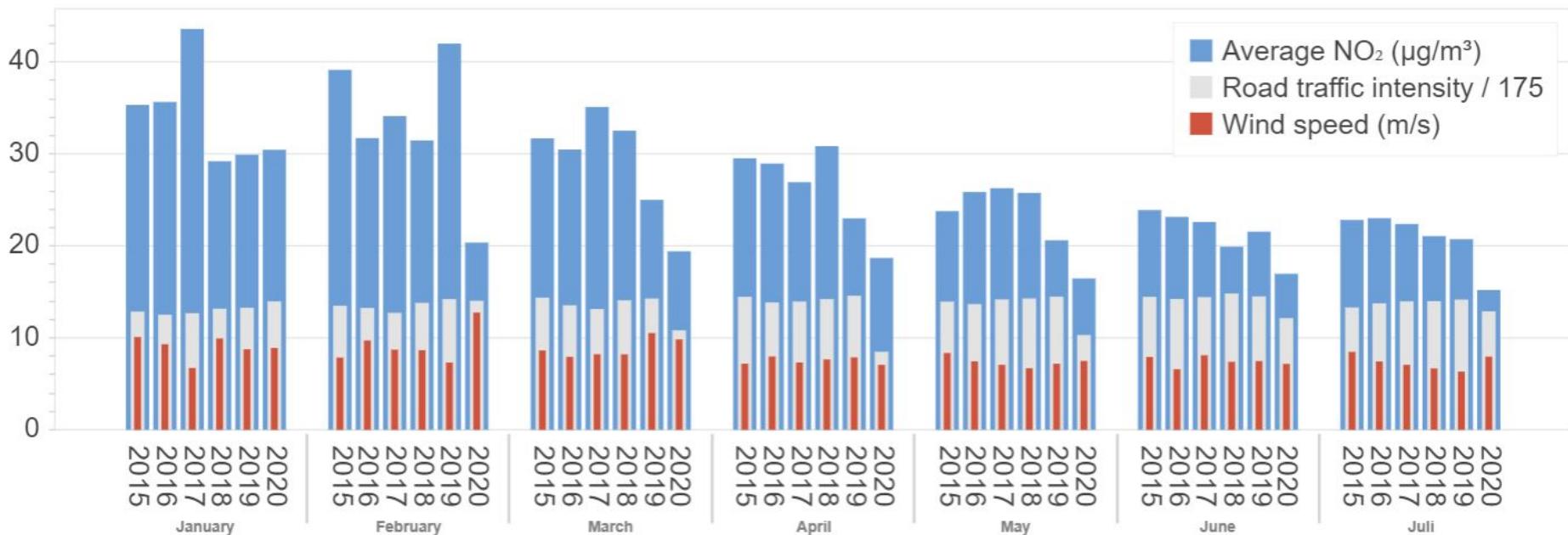
Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison

Location	January	February	March	April	May	June	Juli
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<i>Wind speed Schiphol</i>	99.10%	158.98%	116.60%	96.21%	104.46%	96.76%	111.72%

Results | Trend analysis - Overlap comparison

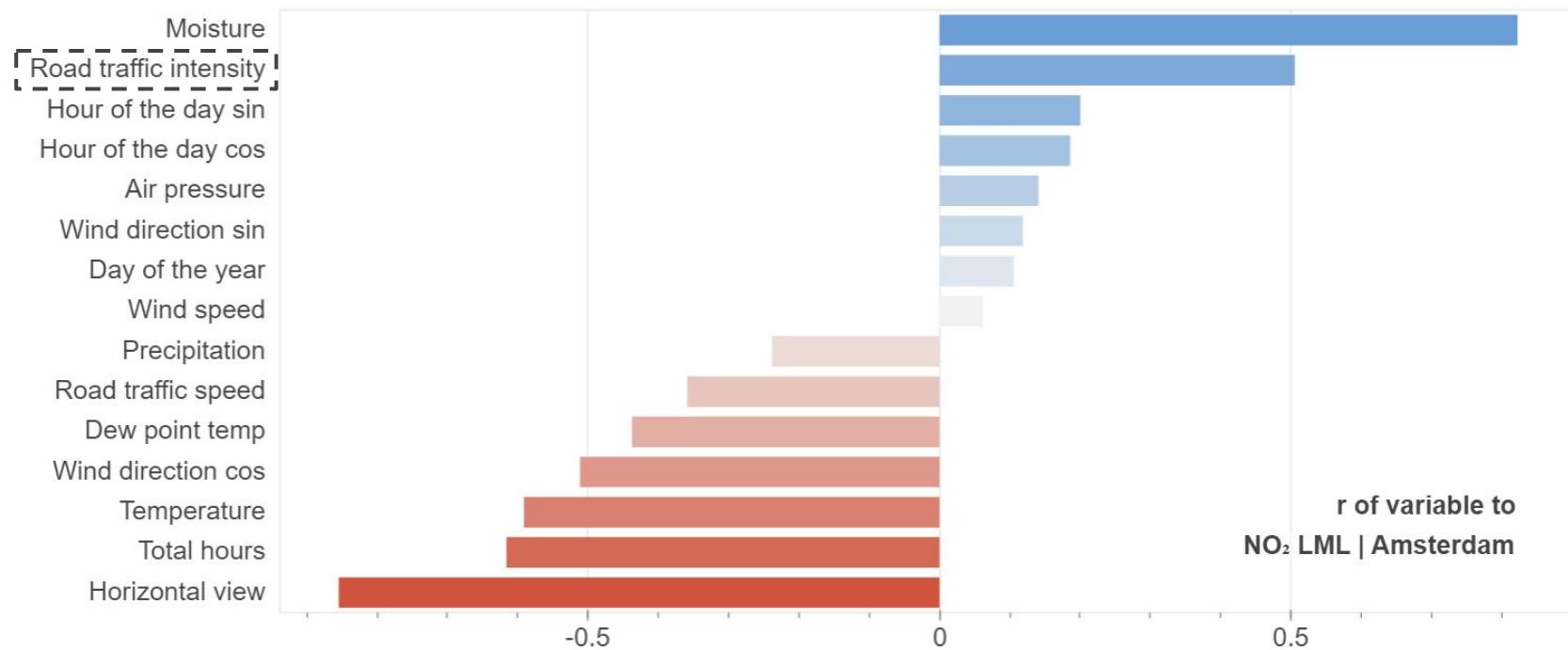
Location	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
NO₂ Amsterdam	88.48%	58.91%	64.97%	70.42%	69.04%	79.16%	71.48%
<i>Road traffic intensity Amsterdam</i>	109.65%	104.26%	78.32%	59.91%	73.08%	84.06%	93.44%
<i>Wind speed Schiphol</i>	99.10%	158.98%	116.60%	96.21%	104.46%	96.76%	111.72%

Results | Trend analysis - Long term



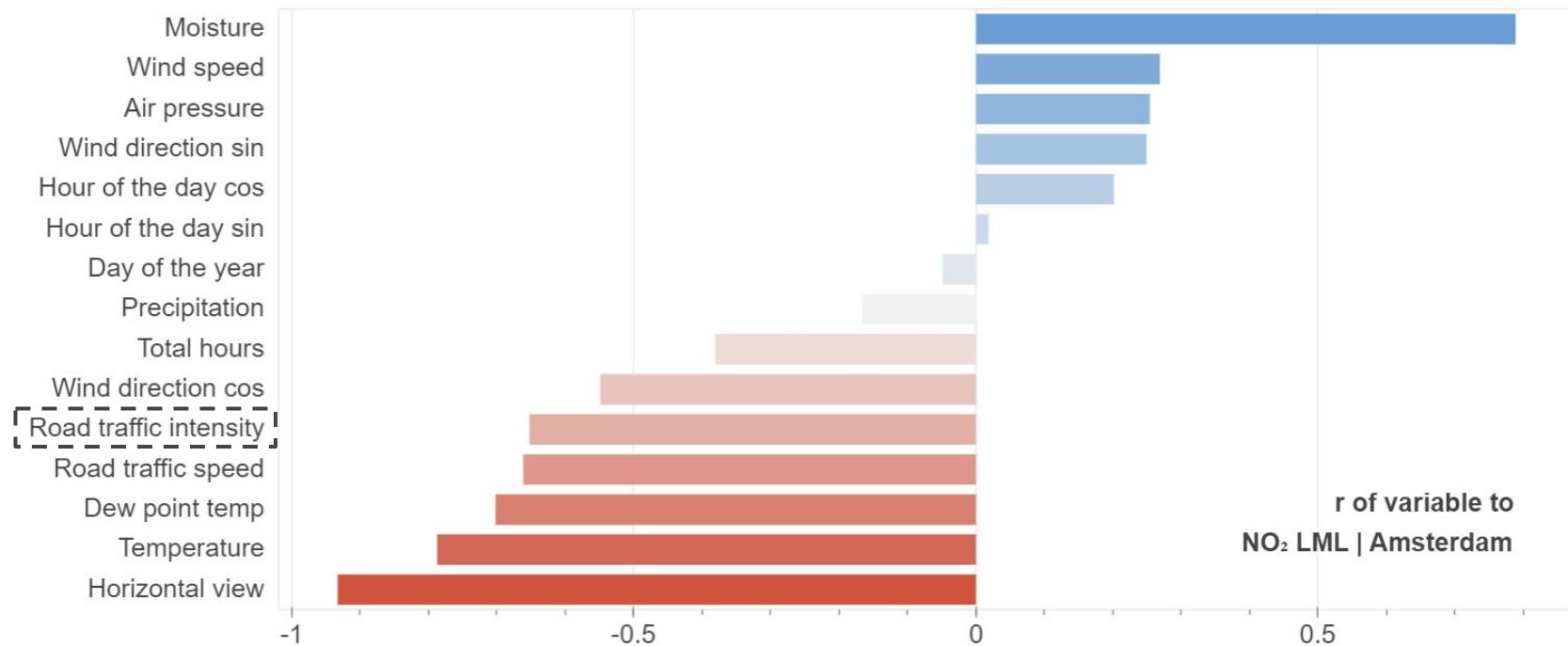
Results | Trend analysis - Long term

Including COVID-19 data



Results | Trend analysis - Long term

Excluding COVID-19 data



Results | Summary

- Preprocessing **helps!**
- **Weak** short term linear correlations
- Predictions are **relatively accurate** & provide **more insight** in the weather + road traffic influence
 - **Strong importance** weather -> wind speed / direction
 - Road traffic intensity has some importance, but hard to **verify causality**
 - Excluding COVID-19 data slightly **improves** prediction accuracy
 - But does **not** alter road traffic intensity importance -> Partially verifying **lack** of causality
 - Satellite data slightly improves prediction accuracy [extra]
- NO₂ and road traffic are **lower** than the seasonal trend during COVID-19 lockdowns
- **Stronger** long term linear correlations
 - Road traffic intensity has a **negative** correlation before COVID-19 lockdowns
 - But a **positive** correlation during COVID-19 lockdowns
 - What can this tell us??
 - **Independent** behavior?
 - Needs **further research** -> Sub populations + Accounting for residuals

Discussion + Conclusion

NO2 was lower than normal during COVID-19 lockdowns in Amsterdam

So was the road traffic intensity, but it is still the question if this caused the lower NO2

NO2 and road traffic intensity may have independently reacted to other (human) factors

This is supported by the fact that the weather did not change from the normal behavior

Further research should look into these potential other factors

But also further investigate the road traffic effects on NO2 as this is easily quantifiable

These findings may advance the additional usefulness of these open data sources

And hopefully contribute to a cleaner air by improving local decision making

Questions?