

CAPTURE-RECAPTURE MODELS WHEN BOTH SOURCES HAVE CLUSTERED OBSERVATIONS

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Introduction

The model most commonly used in capture-recapture estimation of population sizes assumes that individuals are missed or captured in each source independently of all other individuals in the population. However, this assumption may be inadequate for some studies: certain research designs would lead naturally to clustering of misses in the enumeration of a population. This paper will develop a model that will describe the clustering of misses, it will describe biases inherent in the traditional dual system estimator when the model involving clustering holds, and finally, the paper will outline the use of the EM algorithm to estimate the total population size.

Modeling Misses in Each Enumeration

The traditional capture-recapture model assumes that each person in the population has a probability,  $p_1$ , of being captured in the first source (the census), and a probability,  $p_2$ , of being captured in the second source (the PES), that the captures are independent between sources, and that captures are independent between individuals within sources (i.e. no clustering of individuals). There has been extensive work on relaxing the assumption that captures are independent between sources, but the only successful treatments of this problem have been for capture-recapture studies involving three or more data sources. A review of the methodology for multiple systems that are correlated can be found in Bishop, Fienberg, and Holland (1975). For the assumption that captures are independent between individuals within sources, there has been relatively little work done on relaxing this assumption. The reason is that if captures are correlated (implying in this setting clustered misses within enumerated households), the distributions for the number of misses are no longer binomial. The binomial distribution would only be appropriate for the sums of independent Bernoulli events, and we've lost the independence of the events if we allow captures to be clustered within enumerated housing units.

In the model involving clustering, there are two capture events for each source. There is the event of a household being captured in the first source, with probability  $h_1$ , and conditional on the household being captured, each person in the household being captured with probability  $p_1$ . For example, in the census a listing is made of all housing units on a block in an address register, and then within each enumerated housing unit a roster is made of all persons in the housing unit on a census questionnaire. Either the housing unit can be left off the address register (with probability  $1-h_1$ ), or a person can be left off the census questionnaire (with probability  $1-p_1$ ). The same events can be described for source two. The data available for analysis in this model are much more extensive and much more complex than the simple set of data used in the traditional capture-recapture model. The observed data can be expressed in a three - dimensional table

with entries  $m_{ijk}$  as in Table 2.

The first column and row of the table are counts of housing units observed in only the first or only the second sources respectively, distributed by observed household size (0, 1, 2, . . . , with zero signifying a vacant household). The cell in the upper left corner of this table is empty, the out - out cell. This cell represents housing units missed in both enumerations, and all persons in the housing units who were missed.

The remainder of the table is three-dimensional, with entries being counts of housing units enumerated (captured) in both sources. The counts, denoted by  $m_{ijk}$  are counts of households, not persons, but households displaying the the characteristics denoted by the subscripts. The subscripts for  $m_{ijk}$  can be interpreted as:

- i = the number of persons who match in both households.
- j = the number of persons observed in the first source.
- k = the number of persons observed in the second source.

As an example,  $m_{022}$  would be the count of households for which we observed two persons in the census and two persons in the PES, but none of the people matched between the two households. By implication we can say (in the absence of matching errors) that there are at least four persons in each of the households in the  $m_{022}$  count, since there are at least two persons in each of the data sources, but none of the persons match. Note that there may be additional people missed by both sources, so we can only say that there are at least four persons in each household, but there may be five or more persons with some unobserved.

This implies that there are a series of unobserved variables that together comprise the  $m_{ijk}$ . These would be counts of households of specific sizes, in which only some or all of the persons are enumerated at each visit. We can denote these variables as  $X_{ijks}$ , where the subscripts i, j, and k have the same meaning as in the  $m_{ijk}$ , and the subscript s denotes the true but unknown household size. The  $m_{ijk}$  are then seen to be the sum of the  $X_{ijks}$  over s, or

$$m_{ijk} = \sum_{s=j+k-1}^{\infty} X_{ijks} \tag{2}$$

Based on the description given previously, the probability for any household of true size s being enumerated twice and having a specific (i,j,k) distribution is:

$$\binom{s}{i \ j-i \ k-i \ s-j+k-i} h_1^i h_2^{s-i} p_1^{i-j} p_2^{s-j-k+i} \tag{3}$$

where  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  are the capture probabilities for households in source one and source two respectively,

the portion in parentheses is a combina-

toric describing the ways  $s$  persons can be captured twice or only once in either source, and  $p_{jks}$  being the probability for each person in a household of size  $s$  of being observed:

- $P_{11s}$  is the probability of a person being observed both on source one and source two
- $P_{12s}$  is the probability of a person being observed in source one but not in source two
- $P_{21s}$  is the probability of a person being observed in source two but not in source one
- $P_{22s}$  is the probability of a person being missed in both sources.

There is some evidence that the  $p_{jks}$  vary over  $s$  from editing operations in the census. Large families in highly urban, low SES areas have problems in some cases defining exactly who is a household member at a particular time. When several related families live near each other, it may also be hard to determine where a particular person should be counted. As a consequence, people in these settings are more likely to be missed in the census. However, it is also true that other variables are likely to be important to stratification of the estimates and are likely to be as important as household size.

We can define

$$P_{1+s} = P_{11s} + P_{12s} \quad (4)$$

$$P_{+1s} = P_{11s} + P_{21s} \quad (5)$$

as the marginal probabilities of capture for source one and source two respectively. If

$$P_{11s} = P_{1+s} \cdot P_{+1s} \quad (6)$$

the captures in the two sources are independent conditional on the households being captured in both data sources.

Finally, we need to consider the distribution of households of size  $s$ . To describe the distribution of households, we have a parameter set  $R$  consisting of parameters  $(R_0, R_1, R_2, \dots)$  which are the proportions of households in the total population of size zero, one, two, etc.. The distribution of captured household sizes would then be multiple hypergeometric. To complete the model specification, we have a parameter  $N_H$ , which is the true number of households in the population, and we note that

$$\sum_{s=0}^{\infty} R_s = 1.0 \quad (7)$$

$$N_H \sum_{s=0}^{\infty} R_s = N_p \quad (8)$$

where  $N_p$  in the true number of people in the population. As an approximation, we assume the distribution of captured household sizes is multinomial with the aforementioned parameters. The remainder of this paper evaluates the bias in the traditional dual system estimator when the above model holds, and methods of estimation for this model.

#### Biases in the Traditional Dual System Estimates

To evaluate the bias in the traditional dual system estimates, we will take a Taylor Series expansion of the dual system estimator presented in (1) above, and, taking expected values, retain the first order term in the expansion as an approximation to the true expected value of the estimator.

All the data that is needed for estimation is found in table 2 presented above in the  $m_{ijk}$ . To complete the notation started in the previous section, let  $m_{.j}$  be the number of households observed in the first source observed to be of size  $j$  that were missed in the second source, and  $m_{..k}$  be the number of households in the second source observed to be of size  $k$  that were missed in the first source. Then using the totals as presented in table 1 for dual system estimation, the totals can be found as:

$$M = \sum_{ijk} i m_{ijk} \quad (9)$$

$$N_1 = \sum_{ijk} j m_{ijk} + \sum_j j m_{.j} \quad (10)$$

$$\text{and } N_2 = \sum_{ijk} k m_{ijk} + \sum_k k m_{..k} \quad (11)$$

The estimator for the population size,  $N_p$ , is given by equation (1). From the foregoing, using the first term in the Taylor Series Expansion, we get:

$$E \left[ \frac{N_1 N_2}{M} \right] = \frac{E(N_1)E(N_2)}{E(M)} \quad (12)$$

and so

$$E(N_p) = \frac{E(\sum_{ijk} j m_{ijk} + \sum_j j m_{.j}) E(\sum_{ijk} k m_{ijk} + \sum_k k m_{..k})}{E(\sum_{ijk} i m_{ijk})} \quad (13)$$

Wittes (1970) shows that second and higher order terms in the Taylor Series Expansion are of order  $O(N^{-1})$  and can be discarded for large populations. We can evaluate each of these terms by using the fact that the  $m_{ijk}$  are simply sums of the unobserved  $X_{ijks}$  for which we know the distributions. Starting with the denominator:

$$\begin{aligned} E(\sum_{ijk} i m_{ijk}) &= \sum_{ijk} i E(m_{ijk}) = \sum_{sijk} i E(X_{ijks}) \\ &= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s \sum_{ijk} \binom{s}{i \ j-i \ k-i \ s-j-k+i} P_{11s} P_{12s} P_{21s} P_{22s} \end{aligned}$$

$$= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s R_s s p_{11s} \quad (14)$$

$$\begin{aligned} E(\sum_{ijk} j m_{ijk}) &= \sum_{ijk} j E(m_{ijk}) = \sum_{sj} j E(X_{ijs}) \\ &= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s \sum_j \binom{s}{j} \binom{s-j}{i} \binom{s-j-i}{k-i} p_{11s} p_{12s} p_{21s} p_{22s} \\ &= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s \left[ \sum_{ijk} \binom{s}{j} \binom{s-j}{i} \binom{s-j-i}{k-i} p_{11s} p_{12s} p_{21s} p_{22s} \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \sum_{ijk} \binom{s}{i} \binom{s-i}{j-i} \binom{s-i-j}{k-i} p_{11s} p_{12s} p_{21s} p_{22s} \right] \\ &= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s (s p_{121} + s p_{11s}) \\ &= N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s s p_{1+s} \quad (15) \end{aligned}$$

For the observed variables  $m_{.j.}$  and  $m_{.k.}$  there are corresponding underlying unobservable variables  $X_{js}$  and  $X_{ks}$  such that

$$m_{.j.} = \sum_j X_{js} \quad (16)$$

and

$$m_{.k.} = \sum_k X_{ks}, \quad (17)$$

$$\text{with } X_{js} \sim \binom{s}{j} p_{1+s} (1-p_{1+s})^{s-j} \quad (18)$$

$$\text{and } X_{ks} \sim \binom{s}{k} p_{+1s} (1-p_{+1s})^{s-k} \quad (19)$$

Using these relationships, we get

$$\begin{aligned} E(\sum_{ijk} j m_{.j.}) &= \sum_{ijk} j E(m_{.j.}) = \sum_{sj} j E(X_{js}) \\ &= N_H h_1 (1-h_2) \sum_s \sum_j \binom{s}{j} p_{1+s} (1-p_{1+s})^{s-j} \\ &= N_H h_1 (1-h_2) \sum_s R_s s p_{1+s} \quad (20) \end{aligned}$$

Combining (15) and (20) we get

$$E(\sum_{ijk} j m_{ijk} + \sum_j j m_{.j.}) = N_H h_1 \sum_s R_s s p_{1+s} \quad (21)$$

Similarly, for the second source we get

$$E(\sum_{ijk} k m_{ijk} + \sum_k k m_{.k.}) = N_H h_2 \sum_s R_s s p_{+1s} \quad (22)$$

Substituting (14), (21), and (22) into (13) we get the approximation to the expected value of  $N_p$  to be:

$$E(N_p) = \frac{(N_H h_1 \sum_s R_s s p_{1+s}) (N_H h_2 \sum_s R_s s p_{+1s})}{(N_H h_1 h_2 \sum_s R_s s p_{11s})}$$

$$= N_H \left[ \frac{\sum_s R_s s p_{1+s} \sum_s R_s s p_{+1s}}{\sum_s R_s s p_{11s}} \right] \quad (23)$$

Recalling from (8) that the true value of  $N_p$  can be expressed as

$$N_p = N_H \sum_s R_s s,$$

it can be seen that the expected value in (23) will not equal the true value except in providential circumstances. Bias can be defined as:

$$E(N_p) - N_p = N_H \left[ \frac{\sum_s R_s s p_{1+s} \sum_s R_s s p_{+1s}}{\sum_s R_s s p_{11s}} - \sum_s R_s s \right] \quad (24)$$

The difference in brackets is the average perceived household size minus the true average household size (persons per household). A bias results if the average household size differs from what is observed as a result of the capture process.

Several special cases of interest can be examined to consider where and how biases can enter the estimates. In the case where  $p_{11s} = p_{1+s} p_{+1s}$ , independence of captures within households of size  $s$  for all  $s$ , there is no obvious expansion or simplification to determine the direction of the bias. In fact, the bias could still be positive or negative depending on the relationship (relative sizes) between the  $R_s$ ,  $p_{1+s}$ , and  $p_{+1s}$ . Another special case is that in which all of the capture probabilities are equal across different sized households. Equation (23) reduces to

$$E(N_p) = N_H \sum_s R_s s \left[ \frac{p_{1+s} p_{+1s}}{p_{11s}} \right] \quad (25)$$

From (25), the bias in  $N_p$  is now seen to be only a function of correlation bias, whereas in (23) biases could arise from correlation between the sources, heterogeneity among the capture probabilities, or both. The size and direction of the bias can be determined from the size and direction of the correlation. Note that this model explicitly assumes that household captures are independent. If the correlation bias is positive, i.e.

$$p_{11s} = p_{1+s} p_{+1s} + a$$

then (25) demonstrates that the population size will be underestimated.

Finally, the simplest model of all sets  $p_{11s} = p_{11.}$ , implying total independence between sources within households. From (25) it can be seen that  $N_p$  is an unbiased estimator

of  $N_p$ , at least to a first order term. This result says that even though there may be severe clustering of person misses, as long as the captures are independent between and within households between the two sources,

then the dual system estimator is still unbiased. This is the same type of assumption currently used in the traditional dual system estimator.

Three examples are presented to give an appreciation for the extent of the bias possible in the estimates when the capture probabilities are heterogeneous, but there is no correlation bias within households (i.e.  $p_{11s} = p_{1+s}p_{1s}$ ). Table 2 presents examples which retain the same distribution of household sizes for all three examples, and permutations of the capture probabilities.

The examples serve to show that the heterogeneity can lead to an underestimate of the true population size or an overestimate of the true population size. Though the differences look small for average household size, differences between estimates of total population can be quite large. For example, for a state with about two million households, the traditional dual system estimator would underestimate the population by about 58,000 persons. This could have effects on allocations of revenue sharing monies, block grant funding, and other federal allocation programs if different states exhibit different patterns of within household captures.

#### Estimation

The way the model is formulated, it lends itself quite naturally to estimation of the parameter values using the EM algorithm. The EM algorithm is a two step iterative algorithm which generates maximum likelihood estimates of population parameters. The first step of each iteration is used to generate expected values of unobserved variables, conditional on the data actually observed. In this problem, this would mean generating expected values  $E(X_{ijk|s} | m_{ijk})$  to substitute in place of the values of  $X_{ijk}$  which are never observed. The second step of each iteration is to reestimate the population parameters using maximum likelihood techniques and the estimates of the unobserved variables from the first step (known as the complete data).

For this problem, the conditional expected values of the variables in the first step of the  $(t+1)^{st}$  iteration are calculated as:

$$E(X_{ijk|s} | m_{ijk}) = \frac{m_{ijk} R_s^t(i \ j-i \ k-i) p_{11s}^t p_{12s}^t p_{21s}^t p_{22s}^t}{\sum_s R_s^t(i \ j-i \ k-i) p_{11s}^t p_{12s}^t p_{21s}^t p_{22s}^t} \quad (26)$$

$$E(X_{js}^{t+1} | m_{.j.}) = \frac{m_{.j.} R_s^t(j) p_{1+s}^t (1-p_{1+s})^{s-j}}{\sum_s R_s^t(j) p_{1+s}^t (1-p_{1+s})^{s-j}} \quad (27)$$

$$E(X_{ks}^{t+1} | m_{..k}) = \frac{m_{..k} R_s^t(s) p_{+1s}^t (1-p_{+1s})^{s-k}}{\sum_s R_s^t(s) p_{+1s}^t (1-p_{+1s})^{s-k}} \quad (28)$$

For the second step of the iteration, the M step, estimates of the parameter values are calculated as maximum likelihood estimates of the parameters as if the  $X_{ijk}$  were known. The calculation of the MLE's draws upon the complete data likelihood and theory already established for the product-multinomial distribution (Bishop, Fienberg and Holland (1975)). To obtain the complete data likelihood, we start with equations (3), (18), and (19), which are the probabilities of persons being captured or not captured within captured households. We then recognize that, since household events are independent between households, the products  $iX_{ijk}$ ,  $jX_{ijk}$ ,  $kX_{ijk}$ ,  $jX_{js}$ , and  $kX_{ks}$  are total counts of persons who have particular characteristics (e.g.  $iX_{ijk}$  is the total number of persons matched in a household observed to have  $j$  persons in the first capture,  $k$  persons in the second capture, and  $s$  persons actually in the household).

An intuitive approach to the derivation can be seen by simply examining the quantities being estimated. Equation (30) attempts to estimate  $p_{1+s}$ , the proportion of cases in households of size  $s$  who are captured in the first capture effort, regardless of their status in the second capture. This can be seen by examination, where the numerator is the (estimated) number of persons captured in the first sampling for households of true size  $s$ , while the denominator is the total of all persons in households of size  $s$ .

$$p_{1+s}^t = \frac{\sum_{ijk} jX_{ijk} + \sum_j jX_{js}}{\sum_{ijk} sX_{ijk} + \sum_j sX_{js}} \quad (30)$$

$$p_{+1s}^t = \frac{\sum_{ijk} kX_{ijk} + \sum_k kX_{ks}}{\sum_{ijk} sX_{ijk} + \sum_k sX_{ks}} \quad (31)$$

$$R_s^t = \frac{\sum_{ijk} X_{ijk} + \sum_j X_{js} + \sum_k X_{ks}}{\sum_{ijks} X_{ijks} + \sum_{is} X_{js} + \sum_{ks} X_{ks}} \quad (32)$$

To estimate  $p_{11s}$  we only have data available from the  $X_{ijk}$ , and not the row ( $X_{js}$ ) or column ( $X_{ks}$ ) variables involving only one capture. Yet to make full use of data in the table, the denominator of the ratio must use the data from the  $X_{js}$  and  $X_{ks}$ . One could establish a three dimensional table which is only partially complete and iterate to a solution for the  $p_{11s}$ ,  $p_{1+s}$ , and  $p_{+1s}$  at each step

of the EM algorithm, as recommended in Bishop, Fienberg, and Holland (1975), but this is unnecessary. An equivalent procedure is to allocate the  $m_{.j}$  and  $m_{.k}$  to variables  $X_{ijks}$  using the proportions calculated in the previous iterate of the algorithm. This is done in the same way as  $E(X_{ijks}|m_{ijk})$  for variables  $Y_{ijks}$  and  $Z_{ijks}$ , where  $Y_{ijks}$  is the set of variables which are the proportional allocation of the calculated  $X_{js}$ , as if the households had been observed twice and  $Z_{ijks}$  bears the same relationship to  $X_{ks}$ .

Using these "raked" values, we should be able to estimate the values as:

$$p_{11s} = \frac{\sum_{ijk}^t i(X_{ijks} + Y_{ijks} + Z_{ijks})}{\sum_{ijk}^t s(X_{ijks} + Y_{ijks} + Z_{ijks})} \quad (35)$$

Obvious modifications can be made for the MLE's of  $p_{11s}$ ,  $p_{1+s}$ , and  $p_{+1s}$  when restrictions are put on the model, e.g. independence within households or homogeneity across household sizes.

The algorithm is completed by estimating the total number of households using the traditional dual system estimate:

$$N_H = \frac{(\sum_{ijk} m_{ijk} + \sum_j m_{.j})(\sum_{ijk} m_{ijk} + \sum_k m_{.k})}{(\sum_{ijk} m_{ijk})} \quad (36)$$

and

$$N_p = N_H \sum_s R_s \quad (37)$$

For models in which

$$p_{11s} = p_{1+s} p_{+1s} \quad (38)$$

$$\text{or } p_{11.} = p_{1+} p_{+1.} \quad (39)$$

both independence models, the EM algorithm rapidly converges to a single correct solution no matter what starting points are used for the algorithm. The model described by the restriction in (36) is independence within household size groups, demonstrated earlier to lead to biases because of the heterogeneity of the capture probabilities. The interdependence of the values  $R_s, p_{1+s}, p_{+1s}$  makes it impossible to directly estimate the population size except through use of iterative procedures. In the case of the restriction described in (37) where all the capture probabilities are equal for all household sizes, the EM algorithm and the traditional dual system estimator both give unbiased estimates of the population size.

Unfortunately, estimates are not so easily obtained for the full model involving no restrictions on the  $p_{11s}$ , or the reduced model where

$$p_{11s} = p_{11.} \text{ for all } s. \quad (40)$$

When the restriction of independence is removed from the model, there is too much indeterminacy in the model for there to be a single solution. The EM algorithm always converges, but to different sets of final parameter values for different starting points. Another way of looking at the convergence of the EM algorithm is that there is a ridge in the likelihood of equally likely points that satisfy the algorithm. The restriction of independence serves to identify a single point on the ridge.

#### Conclusions and Future Research

The traditional dual system estimator does well under a clustering model at estimating the total population size if all of the assumptions about independence hold and capture probabilities are homogeneous across household size categories. If person misses are clustered within households and within household capture rates differ by households size, the traditional dual system estimates can be biased and a better (unbiased) estimate can be produced using the EM algorithm. Models which allow correlations between within household misses show that the traditional dual system estimator is biased, but the parameters in these models are not estimable.

The model developed above does not allow for variation in the capture probabilities between demographic or geographic subgroups. This can be an especially difficult problem because persons with differing characteristics can be in the same household, and one if forced to model the distribution of these person characteristics for each housing unit of a particular size. This should be the next step attempted in developing a comprehensive model.

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Table 1: Observed Data For Household/Person Population Estimates

			First Source						
	Housing		Out	In					
		Persons		0	1	2	3	4	5 ...
S e c o n d  S o u r c e	Out			{ m,j. }					
	In	0	{ m..k }	{ mijk }					
		1							
		2							
		3							
		4							
	5								
	.								
	.								
	.								

Table 2: Examples of Bias in Traditional Dual System Estimation When Person Misses are Clustered by Household and Within Household Captures are Independent

Household Size (s)	$\theta_s$	Set 1		Set 2		Set 3	
		P1+s	P+1s	P1+s	P+1s	P1+s	P+1s
0	.05	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	.15	.98	.98	.98	.68	.68	.68
2	.20	.95	.95	.95	.71	.71	.71
3	.15	.92	.92	.92	.74	.74	.74
4	.13	.89	.89	.89	.77	.77	.77
5	.10	.86	.86	.86	.80	.80	.80
6	.07	.83	.83	.83	.83	.83	.83
7	.06	.80	.80	.80	.86	.86	.86
8	.04	.77	.77	.77	.89	.89	.89
9	.03	.74	.74	.74	.92	.92	.92
10	.01	.71	.71	.71	.95	.95	.95
11+	.01	.68	.68	.68	.98	.98	.98

$$\frac{\sum \theta_s s p_{1+s} \quad \sum \theta_s s p_{+1s}}{\sum \theta_s s p_{1+s} p_{+1s}} = 3.631 \qquad 3.691 \qquad 3.628$$

$$\sum \theta_s s = 3.660 \qquad 3.660 \qquad 3.660$$

Relative Bias (line 1/line 2)                      99.2%                      100.9%                      99.1%