

# STATE-SPACE MODELLING OF DATA ON MARKED INDIVIDUALS

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# \* Manuscript

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2	INDIVIDUALS			
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21	Abstract			
22	State-space models have recently been proposed as a convenient and flexible			
23	framework for specifying stochastic models for the dynamics of wild animal pop-			
24	ulations. Here we focus on the modelling of data on marked individuals which is			

frequently used in order to estimate demographic parameters while accounting for
 imperfect detectability. We show how usual models to deal with capture-recapture
 and ring-recovery data can be fruitfully written as state-space models. An illus tration is given using real data and a Bayesian approach using MCMC methods is
 implemented to estimate the parameters. We give important future developments
 facilitated by the SSM formulation. Overall, the general state-space modelling
 framework is shown to have a great potential in population ecology modelling.

# 8 1 Introduction

The estimation of animal survival is essential in population biology to investigate pop-9 ulation dynamics, with important applications in the understanding of ecological, evo-10 lutionary, conservation and management issues for wild populations (Pollock, 1991; 11 Williams et al., 2002). While the time to event is known in medical, social or engi-12 neering sciences (death, marriage and failure respectively), models for estimating wild 13 animal survival must incorporate nuisance parameters to account for incomplete de-14 tectability in monitoring individuals (Schwarz et Seber, 1999). Typically, individuals 15 are captured, marked and can be resigned or recaptured (encountered thereafter) to 16 construct encounter histories which consist of sequences of 1's and 0's according to 17 whether a detection occurs or not. The likelihood for such data arises from products 18 of multinomial distributions whose cell probabilities are complex functions of survival 19 probabilities - parameters of primary interest - and encounter probabilities - nuisance 20 parameters (Cormack, 1964; Jolly, 1965; Seber, 1965 - CJS thereafter). 21

In this note, we show how the population process can be fruitfully disentangled, by distinguishing the underlying demographic process, i.e. the survival (as well as transitions between sites/states if needed), from its observation, i.e. the detectability. This leads us to consider a natural formulation for capture-recapture models using statespace models (SSMs). Our contribution is in line with a recent paper by Buckland et
al. (2004) who have proposed to adopt SSMs as a convenient and flexible framework
for specifying stochastic models for the dynamics of wild animal populations.

Thus far, SSMs have been mainly used for time series of animal counts (de Valpine, 2004; Millar and Meyer, 2000) or animal locations (Anderson-Sprecher and Ledolter, 1991) to allow true but unobservable states (the population size or trajectory) to be inferred from observed but noisy data (see Clark et al., 2005 and Wang, 2006 for reviews). The novelty of our approach lies in the use of SSMs to fit capture-recapture models to encounter histories.

In Section 2, we discuss how to express the CJS model under the form of a SSM. The 11 implementation details are provided, and real data are presented to compare parameter 12 estimates as obtained using the standard product-multinomial and the SSM approaches. 13 In Section 3, the flexibility of the state-space modeling approach is demonstrated by 14 considering two widely used alternative schemes for collecting data on marked animals. 15 Finally, Section 4 discusses important developments of capture-recapture models facil-16 itated by the SSM formulation. We emphasize that this general framework has a great 17 potential in population ecology modelling. 18

# <sup>19</sup> 2 State-space modelling of capture-recapture data

We focus here on the CJS model for estimating animal survival based on capturerecapture data, as this model is widely used in the ecological and evolutionary litterature (e.g. Lebreton et al., 1992).

#### <sup>1</sup> 2.1 Likelihood

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We first define the observations and then the states of the system. We assume that 2 n individuals are involved in the study with T encounter occasions. Let  $X_{i,t}$  be the 3 binary random variable taking values 1 if individual i is alive at time t and 0 if it is 4 dead at time t. Let  $Y_{i,t}$  be the binary random variable taking values 1 if individual i is 5 encountered at time t and 0 otherwise. Note that we consider the encounter event as 6 being physically captured or barely observed. The parameters involved in the likelihood 7 are  $\phi_{i,t}$ , the probability that an animal i survives to time t+1 given that it is alive 8 at time t (t = 1, ..., T - 1), and  $p_{i,t}$  the probability of detecting individual i at time t9  $(t = 2, \ldots, T)$ . Let finally  $e_i$  be the occasion where individual *i* is encountered for the 10 first time. A general state-space formulation of the CJS model is therefore given by: 11

$$Y_{i,t}|X_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(X_{i,t}p_{i,t}), \quad t > e_i \tag{1}$$

$$X_{i,t+1}|X_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(X_{i,t}\phi_{i,t}), \quad t \ge e_i \tag{2}$$

where Equation (1) and Equation (2) are the observation and the state equations re-14 spectively. This formulation naturally separates the nuisance parameters (the encounter 15 probabilities) from the parameters of actual interest i.e. the survival probabilities, the 16 latter being involved exclusively in the state Equation (2). Such a clear distinction be-17 tween a demographic process and its observation makes the description of a biological 18 dynamic system much simpler and allows complex models to be fitted (Pradel, 2005; 19 Clark et al., 2005). We will refer to this formulation as the individual state-space CJS 20 model (individual SSM CJS hereafter). The rationale behind the above formulation is 21 as follows. We give the full details for the observation Equation (1) only, as a similar 22 reasoning easily leads to Equation (2). If individual i is alive at time t, then it has prob-23

ability  $p_{i,t}$  of being encountered and probability  $1 - p_{i,t}$  otherwise, which translates into  $Y_{i,t}$  is distributed as  $Bernoulli(p_{i,t})$  given  $X_{i,t} = 1$ . Now if individual *i* is dead at time *t*, then it cannot be encountered, which translates into  $Y_{i,t}$  is distributed as Bernoulli(0)given  $X_{i,t} = 0$ . Putting together those two pieces of reasoning, the distribution of the observation  $Y_{i,t}$  conditional on the state  $X_{i,t}$  is given by Equation (1).

Statistical inference then requires the likelihood of the state-space model specified above. Assuming independence of individuals, the likelihood is given by the product of all individual likelihood components. The likelihood component for individual i is the probability of the vector of observations  $\mathbf{Y}_i^T = (Y_{i,e_i}, \ldots, Y_{i,T})$  which gathers the information set up to time T for this particular individual. The likelihood component corresponding to individual i is therefore given by (e.g. Harvey, 1989)

$$\int_{X_{i,0}}, \dots, \int_{X_{i,T}} \left\{ \prod_{t=e_i+1}^T [Y_{i,t}|X_{i,t}] [X_{i,t}|X_{i,t-1}] dX_{i,t} \right\} [X_{i,e_i}] dX_{i,e_i}$$
(3)

where [X] denotes the distribution of X and  $X_{i,e_i}$  the initial state of individual *i* which is assumed to be alive. Because we deal with binary random vectors, we used the counting measure instead of the Lebesgue measure.

In its original formulation, the CJS makes important assumptions regarding individuals. First, all individuals share the same parameters, which means that the survival and detection probabilities depend on the time index only. In mathematical notation, we have  $\phi_{it} = \phi_t$  and  $p_{it} = p_t$  for all i = 1, ..., n, so Equation (1) and Equation (2) become  $X_{i,t+1}|X_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(X_{i,t}\phi_t)$  and  $Y_{i,t}|X_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(X_{i,t}p_t)$  respectively. Second, the CJS model also assumes independence between individuals. By using simple relationships between Bernoulli and Binomial distributions, one can finally fruitfully <sup>1</sup> formulates the original CJS model under the following state-space model:

$$Y_t | X_t^- \sim Bin(X_t^-, p_t) \tag{4}$$

$$X_{t+1}^{-}|X_t^+ \sim Bin(X_t^+, \phi_t) \tag{5}$$

where  $X_t^+$  is the number of survivors of marked individuals from time  $t-1, X_t^-$ , plus the newly marked individuals at time t, and  $Y_t$  is the total number of marked individuals en-5 countered at time t. We will refer to this formulation as the population state-space CJS6 model (population SSM CJS hereafter). Interestingly, specifying the system under a 7 state-space formulation now requires much less equations than the individual SSM CJS 8 model, which may avoid the computational burden. Nevertheless, while the individual 9 SSM CJS involves parameters for every single individual and sampling occasion, the 10 population SSM CJS model makes the strong assumptions that all individuals behave 11 the same as well as independently, which may be of little relevance from the biological 12 point of view. To cope with this issue, in-between modelling can be achieved by consid-13 ering age effects or groups classes in the population SSM model (Lebreton et al., 1992). 14 Finally, covariates can be incorporated in order to assess the effect of environment such 15 as climate change, most conveniently by writing the relationship between the target 16 probabilities and the predictors on the logit scale (Pollock, 2002). 17

#### $_{18}$ 2.2 Implementation

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Fitting capture-recapture models in a state-space framework is complicated due to the high-dimensional integral involved in the individual likelihood Equation (3). To circumvent this issue, several techniques have been proposed including Kalman filtering, Monte-Carlo particle filtering (such as sequential importance sampling) and MCMC (see Clark et al., 2005 and Wang, 2006 for reviews). Our objective here is not to discuss
these different methods. For our purpose, we adopt the MCMC technique which is now
widely used in biology (Ellison, 2004; Clark, 2005), in particular for estimating animal
survival (Seber et Schwarz, 1999; Brooks et al., 2000). Besides, this is to our knowledge
the only methodology which comes with an efficient and flexible program to implement
it, which, in our case, will allow biologists to easily and rapidly adopt our approach.

#### 7 2.3 Illustration

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We consider capture-recapture data on the European dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) that were 8 collected between 1981 and 1987 (Lebreton et al., 1992). The data consists of marking g and recaptures of 294 birds ringed as adults in eastern France. We applied standard 10 maximum-likelihood estimation (Lebreton et al. 1992) and MCMC techniques (Brooks 11 et al. 2000) using the product-multinomial likelihood and the state-space likelihood of 12 Equation (3) in combination with Equation (1) and Equation (2). We ran two overdis-13 persed parallel MCMC chains to check whether convergence was reached (Gelman, 14 1996). We used 10,000 iterations with 5,000 burned iterations for posterior summariza-15 tion. We used uniform flat priors for both survival and detection probabilities. The 16 simulations were performed using WinBUGS (Spiegelhalter et al., 2003). The R (Ihaka 17 and Gentleman, 1996) package R2WinBUGS (Sturtz et al., 2005) was used to call Win-18 BUGS and export results in R. This was especially helpful when converting the raw 19 encounter histories into the appropriate format, generating initial values and calculate 20 posterior modes. The programs are available in Appendix A. Posterior summaries for 21 encounter and survival probabilities are given in Table 1, along with their posterior 22 probability distributions that are displayed in Figure 1. 23

#### [Table 1 about here.]

#### [Figure 1 about here.]

Survival estimates were uniformally similar whatever the method used (Table 1). In
particular, there is a clear decrease in survival 1982-1983 and 1983-1984, corresponding
to a major flood during the breeding season in 1983 (Lebreton et al., 1992).

In contrast, posterior medians of detection probabilities using the CJS SSM approach are quite different from the classical maximum likelihood estimates, but more similar to the posterior medians obtained with the product-multinomial likelihood approach (Table 1). These discrepancies are no longer present when posterior modes are examined, as expected (recall that we use non-informative uniform distributions as priors for all parameters).

The last survival probability as well as the last detection probability are estimated with high variability (Table 1 and Figure 1). The fact that these two parameters cannot be separately estimated is not surprising since the CJS model is known to be parameter-redundant (Catchpole and Morgan, 1997). Also, the first survival probability and the first detection probability are weakly identifiable, due to the fact that very few individuals were marked at the first sampling occasion (approximately 7% of the full data set).

# <sup>18</sup> 3 Further state-space modelling

#### <sup>19</sup> 3.1 Multistate capture-recapture models

Multistate capture-recapture models (Arnason, 1973; Schwarz et al., 1993; AS hereafter) are a natural generalization of the CJS model in that individuals can move between states, according to probabilities of transition between those states. States can be either geographical sites or states of categorical variables like reproductive status or size class

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(Lebreton and Pradel, 2002). We provide here a state-space modelling formulation 1 of the AS model (Dupuis, 1995; Newman, 1998; Clark et al., 2005). Without loss of 2 generality, we consider 2 states. Let  $X_{i,t}$  be the random state vector taking values (1,0,0), (0,1,0) and (0,0,1) if, at time t, individual i is alive in state 1, 2 or dead respectively. Let  $Y_{i,t}$  be the random observation vector taking values (1,0,0), (0,1,0)5 and (0,0,1) if, at time t, individual i is encountered in state 1, 2 or not encountered. 6 Parameters involved in the modelling include  $\phi_{i,t}^{rs}$ , the probability that an animal i 7 survives to time t + 1 given that it is alive at time t (t = 1, ..., T - 1) and makes the 8 transition between state r and state s over the same interval (r, s = 1, 2), as well as  $p_{i,t}^r$ g the probability of detecting individual i at time t in state r (t = 2, ..., T, r = 1, 2). A 10 state-space formulation for the multistate AS model is given by: 11

$$Y_{i,t}|X_{i,t} \sim Multinomial \begin{pmatrix} 1, X_{i,t} \begin{bmatrix} p_{i,t}^{1} & 0 & 1-p_{i,t}^{1} \\ 0 & p_{i,t}^{2} & 1-p_{i,t}^{2} \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \end{pmatrix}$$
(6)  
$$X_{i,t+1}|X_{i,t} \sim Multinomial \begin{pmatrix} 1, X_{i,t} \begin{bmatrix} \phi_{i,t}^{11} & \phi_{i,t}^{12} & 1-\phi_{i,t}^{11}-\phi_{i,t}^{12} \\ \phi_{i,t}^{21} & \phi_{i,t}^{22} & 1-\phi_{i,t}^{21}-\phi_{i,t}^{22} \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \end{pmatrix}$$
(7)

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where Equation (6) and Equation (7) are the observation and the state equations respectively. This formulation has similarities with that of Pradel (2005) who used hidden-Markov models to extend multistate models to cope with uncertainty in state assignment. Again, it should be noted that the state-space formulation allows the demographic parameters to be distinguished from the nuisance parameters. A similar reasoning to that adopted for the CJS model leads to Equations (6) and (7). As expected, Equation (6) and Equation (7) reduce to Equation (1) and Equation (2) if one considers a single state. Making similar assumptions as in the CJS model leads to the
population AS SSM.

#### <sup>3</sup> 3.2 Ring-recovery models

The capture-recapture models presented above deals with apparent survival, which 4 turns out to be true survival if emigration is negligeable. When marks of individuals 5 (or individuals themselves) are actually recovered, true survival probabilities can be 6 estimated using ring-recovery models (Brownie et al., 1985; RR models hereafter). Let 7  $X_{i,t}$  be the binary random variable taking values 1 if individual i is alive at time t and 8 0 if it is dead at time t. Let  $Y_{i,t}$  be the binary random variable taking values 1 if mark of individual i is recovered at time t and 0 otherwise. The parameters involved in the 10 likelihood are  $\phi_{i,t}$ , the probability that an animal i survives to time t+1 given that 11 it is alive at time t (t = 1, ..., T - 1), and  $\lambda_{i,t}$  the probability of recovering the mark 12 of individual i at time t (t = 2, ..., T). A general state-space formulation of the RR 13 model is therefore given by: 14

$$Y_{i,t}|X_{i,t}, X_{i,t-1} \sim Bernoulli\left((X_{i,t-1} - X_{i,t})\lambda_{i,t}\right)$$
(8)

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$$X_{i,t+1}|X_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(X_{i,t}\phi_{i,t}) \tag{9}$$

<sup>17</sup> where Equation (8) and Equation (9) are the observation and the state equations re-<sup>18</sup> spectively. While the state Equation (9) is the same as that in the individual SSM <sup>19</sup> CJS, the observation Equation (8) deserves further explanation. If individual *i*, alive <sup>20</sup> at time *t*, does not survive to time t + 1, then its mark has probability  $\lambda_{i,t}$  of being <sup>21</sup> recovered and probability  $1 - \lambda_{i,t}$  otherwise, which translates into  $Y_{i,t}$  is distributed as <sup>22</sup> Bernoulli( $\lambda_{i,t}$ ) given  $X_{i,t-1} = 1$  and  $X_{i,t} = 0$  i.e.  $X_{i,t-1} - X_{i,t} = 1$ . Now if individual *i* 

is in a given state (dead or alive) at time t and remains in this state till time t+1, then 1 its mark cannot be recovered, which translates into  $Y_{i,t}$  is distributed as Bernoulli(0)2 given  $X_{i,t-1} = 0$  and  $X_{i,t} = 0$  or  $X_{i,t-1} = 1$  and  $X_{i,t} = 1$  i.e.  $X_{i,t-1} - X_{i,t} = 0$ . The distribution of the observation  $Y_{i,t}$  conditional on the combination of states  $X_{i,t-1} - X_{i,t}$  is 4 thus given by Equation (8). Similar comments to that of previous sections can be made 5 here as well. Finally, we note that because the probability distribution of the current 6 observation does not only depend on the current state variable, the model defined by 7 Equation (8) and Equation (9) does not exactly matches the definition of a state-space 8 model but can be rewritten as such (see Appendix B). 9

# <sup>10</sup> 4 Discussion

We have shown that, by separating the demographic process from its observation, CR models for estimating survival can be expressed as SSMs. In particular, the SSM formulation of the CJS model competes well with the standard method when applied to a real data set. Bearing this in mind, we see at least two further promising developments to our approach.

First, by scaling down from the population to the individual level while modelling 16 the survival probabilities, random effects can readily be incorporated to cope with 17 heterogeneity in the detection probability (Huggins, 2001) and deal with a frailty in 18 the survival probability (Vaupel and Yashin, 1985). Second, the combination of various 19 sources of information which has recently received a growing interest, (e.g. recovery 20 and recapture data, Catchpole et al., 1998; recovery and census data, Besbeas et al., 21 2002; Besbeas et al., 2003) can now be operated/conducted in a unique SSM framework 22 and hence benefits from the corpus of related methods. Of particular importance, we 23

are currently investigating the robust detection of density-dependence by accounting
for error in the measurement of population size using the combination of census data
and data on marked individuals.

Because most often, data collected in population dynamics studies give only a noisy
output of the demographic process under investigation, the SSM framework provides
a flexible and integrated framework for fitting a wide range of models which, with
widespread adoption, has the potential to advance significantly ecological statistics
(Buckland et al., 2004; Thomas et al., 2005).

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  animal populations. Academic Press, San Diego.

# <sup>19</sup> Appendix A: WinBUGS code for fitting the CJS <sup>20</sup> model using the SSM formulation

21	*******	##
22	# MODEL	#
23	# State-space formulation of the Cormack-Jolly-Seber model	#

```
1 # observations = 0 (non-encountered) and 1 (encountered)
                                                              #
_2 # states = 0 (dead) and 1 (alive)
                                                              #
  3
4 model
  {
5
6 # Define the priors for survival phi and detectability p
7 p[1] <- 1
8 phi[1] <- 1</pre>
9 for (j in 2:K)
10 {
11 phi[j] ~ dbeta(1,1)
12 p[j] ~ dbeta(1,1)
13 }
  # Define the SYSTEM PROCESS
14
  for (i in 1:n)
15
    {
16
    # if first capture
17
    PrX[i,e[i]] <- 1 # Pr(alive | first capture) = 1</pre>
18
    X[i,e[i]+1] ~ dbern(PrX[i,e[i]]) # alive (a 1 is generated with certainty)
19
    PrO[i,e[i]] <- X[i,e[i]+1] # detection probability at initial detection is 100%</pre>
20
    # otherwise
21
        for (j in (e[i]+1):K)
22
        {
23
        PrX[i,j] <- phi[j] * X[i,j]</pre>
24
        X[i,j+1] ~ dbern(PrX[i,j])
25
```

```
PrO[i,j] <- p[j] * X[i,j+1]</pre>
1
        }
2
    # fullfil the remaining cells with zeros
3
        for (j in 1:(e[i]-1))
        {
5
        PrX[i,j] <- 0</pre>
6
        X[i,j] <- 1
7
        Pr0[i,j] <- 0</pre>
8
        }
9
    }
10
  # Define the OBSERVATION PROCESS
11
  for (h in 1:nx)
12
    {
13
    data[h,3] ~ dbern(PrO[data[h,1],data[h,2]])
14
    }
15
  }
16
  17
  # DATA
18
  # 'K' is the number of encounter occasions
19
  # 'n' is the number of individuals
20
  # 'nx' is 'K' times 'n'
21
  # 'e' is the vector of first encounters ('n' components)
22
  # 'data' is a matrix with dimensions 'nx' times 3 where
23
      the first column gives the current individual (1,...,'n'),
  #
24
      the second column gives the current encounter occasion (1,...,'K'),
  #
25
```

# 4 Appendix B

<sup>5</sup> Let  $Z_{i,t} = [X_{i,t-1}, X_{i,t}]$  be a bivariate random vector where its two components are <sup>6</sup> denoted  $Z_{i,t}^1$  and  $Z_{i,t}^2$ . Equation (8) becomes

$$_{7} \qquad \qquad Y_{i,t}|Z_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli\left((Z_{i,t}^{1} - Z_{i,t}^{2})\lambda_{i,t}\right)$$

$$\tag{10}$$

<sup>8</sup> and Equation (9) becomes

9

$$Z_{i,t+1}|Z_{i,t} = \begin{cases} \left(Z_{i,t+1}^{1}|Z_{i,t}\right) = Z_{i,t}^{2} \\ Z_{i,t+1}^{2}|Z_{i,t} \sim Bernoulli(Z_{i,t}^{2}\phi_{i,t}). \end{cases}$$
(11)

<sup>10</sup> The system defined by Equation (10) and Equation (11) is a state-space model and it <sup>11</sup> is equivalent to the model defined by Equation (8) and Equation (9).

Note that an alternative state-space formulation can be adopted using a multistate
formulation of the RR model (Lebreton et al., 1999) and Section 3.1.

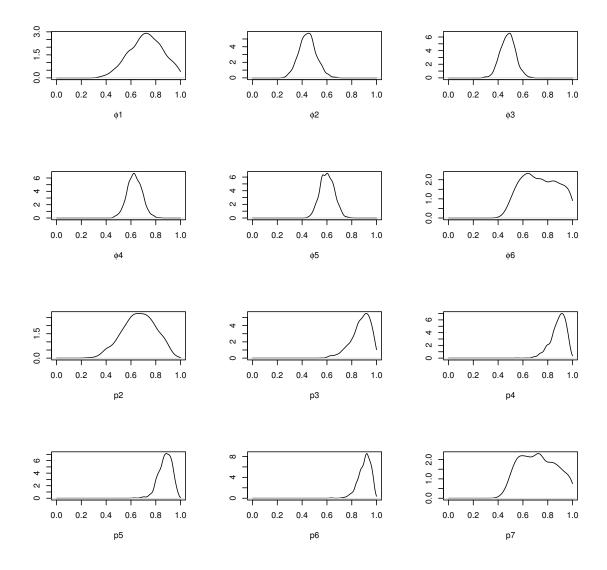


Figure 1: Posterior distributions for the survival and detection probabilities for the Dipper data using the CJS model applied to the Dipper data set as estimated by the state-space model and MCMC methods.

Table 1: Estimated survival and detection probabilities for the Dipper data using the CJS model and three different methods, the state-space model (SSM) using a Monte Carlo Markov Chain (MCMC) method, the product-multinomial model (PMM) using a MCMC method and the PMM using a maximum-likelihood (ML) method. The two first methods were implemented using program WinBUGS (Spiegelhalter et al., 2003), while program M-SURGE (Choquet et al., 2004) was used to implement the last one.

	SSM using MCMC	PMM using MCMC	PMM using ML
Parameter	Posterior median/mode (SD)	Posterior median/mode (SD)	MLE (SE)
$\phi_1$	0.721/0.722 (0.132)	0.723/0.693 (0.132)	$0.718\ (0.156)$
$\phi_2$	$0.448/0.456\ (0.071)$	$0.448/0.460\ (0.071)$	$0.435\ (0.069)$
$\phi_3$	$0.480/0.493\ (0.060)$	$0.480/0.476\ (0.061)$	$0.478\ (0.060)$
$\phi_4$	0.628/0.624 (0.061)	$0.627/0.616\ (0.060)$	$0.626\ (0.059)$
$\phi_5$	0.602/0.601 (0.057)	$0.602/0.607 \ (0.057)$	$0.599\ (0.056)$
$\phi_6$	$0.713/0.640\ (0.142)$	0.720/0.628 (0.143)	- (-)*
$p_2$	0.671/0.658 (0.134)	0.670/0.691 (0.134)	$0.696\ (0.166)$
$p_3$	$0.883/0.918\ (0.083)$	$0.883/0.904\ (0.083)$	$0.923\ (0.073)$
$p_4$	0.888/0.914 (0.063)	0.889/0.912 (0.063)	$0.913 \ (0.058)$
$p_5$	0.882/0.885 (0.057)	$0.883/0.904\ (0.057)$	$0.901 \ (0.054)$
$p_6$	0.913/0.920 $(0.052)$	$0.912/0.935\ (0.051)$	0.932(0.046)
$p_7$	0.735/0.724 (0.142)	$0.727/0.648\ (0.143)$	- (-)*

\* Non-identifiability detected.