



Receptor modelling  
of particle  
composition and size  
distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

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# Receptor modelling of both particle composition and size distribution from a background site in London, UK

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Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Abstract

Positive Matrix Factorisation (PMF) analysis was applied to PM<sub>10</sub> chemical composition and particle Number Size Distribution (NSD) data measured at an urban background site (North Kensington) in London, UK for the whole of 2011 and 2012. The PMF analyses revealed six and four factors respectively which described seven sources or aerosol types. These included Nucleation, Traffic, Diffuse Urban, Secondary, Fuel Oil, Marine and Non-Exhaust/Crustal sources. Diffuse Urban, Secondary and Traffic sources were identified by both the chemical composition and particle number size distribution analysis, but a Nucleation source was identified only from the particle Number Size Distribution dataset. Analysis of the PM<sub>10</sub> chemical composition dataset revealed Fuel Oil, Marine, Non-Exhaust Traffic/Crustal sources which were not identified from the number size distribution data. The two methods appear to be complementary, as the analysis of the PM<sub>10</sub> chemical composition data is able to distinguish components contributing largely to particle mass whereas the number particle size distribution dataset is more effective for identifying components making an appreciable contribution to particle number. Analysis was also conducted on the combined chemical composition and number size distribution dataset revealing five factors representing Diffuse Urban, Nucleation, Secondary, Aged Marine and Traffic sources. However, the combined analysis appears not to offer any additional power to discriminate sources above that of the aggregate of the two separate PMF analyses. Day-of-the-week and month-of-the-year associations of the factors proved consistent with their assignment to source categories, and bivariate polar plots which examined the wind directional and wind speed association of the different factors also proved highly consistent with their inferred sources.

## 1 Introduction

Airborne Particulate Matter (PM) is recognised as a major public health concern across the EU with costs estimated at €600bn in 2005 (Official Journal, 2008). In the UK

## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



alone, the annual health costs attributable to pollution by airborne PM were estimated in 2007 at between £ 8.5 bn and £ 18.6 bn (Defra, 2010). PM exposure was also estimated to reduce people's lives by on average seven to eight months, and by as much as nine years for vulnerable residents, such as those with asthma, living in pollution hotspots (Environmental Audit Committee, 2010). There is overwhelming evidence that both short-term and long-term exposure to ambient particulate matter in outdoor air is associated with mortality and morbidity (Pope and Dockery, 2006).

Source apportionment of airborne particulate matter has assumed increasing importance in recent years, driven by two underlying causes. Firstly, legislative pressure to reduce airborne concentrations of particulate matter has highlighted the need for reliable quantitative knowledge of the source apportionment of particulate matter in order to devise cost-effective abatement strategies. The use of source inventories alone is inadequate as these are limited in the components which they are able to quantify reliably but take no account of the different ground-level impacts of pollutants released at different altitudes or those altered by chemical transformations within the atmosphere. Some sources, such as wood burning, particle resuspension and cooking are very difficult to quantify. Consequently, there has been a need for the application of methods capable of source apportionment of ground level concentrations. Secondly, there has been a growing recognition that abatement of PM mass concentrations, taking no account of source, chemical composition or particle size, may not be a cost-effective approach if the health impact of particulate matter differs according to its source of emissions or physico-chemical characteristics. Consequently, a number of recent epidemiological studies have attempted to combine receptor modelling results with time series studies of health effects (e.g. Thurston et al., 2005; Mostofsky et al., 2012; Ostro et al., 2011).

Source apportionment methodology for particulate matter can use either receptor modelling methods or the combination of emissions inventories and dispersion modelling. The latter approach has major weaknesses associated especially with the inadequacy of emissions inventories referred to above. Consequently, most studies have



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



5 quence, particles from different sources may have a very different potency in affecting human health (Harrison and Yin, 2000; Kelly and Fussell, 2012). There have been many health effects studies, of which a number recently have incorporated receptor modelling methods and have sought to differentiate between the effects of different  
10 source categories on human health. Most have provided some positive and often statistically significant associations with given source factors, chemical components or size fractions (Thurston et al., 2005; Mostofsky et al., 2012; Ostro et al., 2011) but to date there is no coherence between the results of different studies and there is no generally agreed ranking in the toxicity of particles from different sources (WHO, 2013).  
15 Consequently, in this context, source apportionment methodology is tending to run ahead of epidemiology and is providing the tools for source apportionment which thus far epidemiological research has yet to utilise fully. Nonetheless, work needs to continue towards embedding source apportionment studies in epidemiological research so as to provide clearer knowledge on the toxicity of particles from different sources, or with differing chemical composition and size association.

Perhaps the most substantial variations in airborne particle properties relate to their size association, which covers many orders of magnitude. In this context, it is perhaps surprising that toxicity (expressed as effect per interquartile concentration range) appears to be of a broadly comparable magnitude for PM<sub>10</sub> mass, which is determined  
20 largely by accumulation mode and coarse mode particles, and particle number which reflects mainly nucleation mode particles. Some studies, however, have suggested different health outcomes associated with the different particle metrics (e.g. Atkinson et al., 2010).

25 In this study, we have applied receptor modelling methods to simultaneously collected chemical composition and particle number size distribution data from a background site within central London (North Kensington). Our study has initially analysed the chemical composition and particle number size distribution datasets separately followed by analysis of the combined dataset to test whether this provides advantages in terms of greater capacity to distinguish between source categories.



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



a  $\text{PM}_{10}^{\text{Woodsmoke}}$  component also included which was derived from the methodology of Sandradewi et al. (2008) utilising Aethalometer and EC/OC data, as described in Fuller et al. (2014). Concentrations of elemental carbon (EC) and organic carbon (OC) were measured by collection on quartz filters (Tissuquartz™ 2500 QAT-UP) and analysed on a Sunset Laboratory thermal-optical analyser using the QUARTZ protocol (which gives results very similar to EUSAAR 2) (NPL, 2013). Alongside the composition measurements, Number Size Distribution (NSD) data were collected using a Scanning Mobility Particle Sizer (SMPS) consisting of a CPC (TSI model 3775) combined with an electrostatic classifier (TSI model 3080) in air dried according to the EUSAAR protocol (Wiedensohler et al., 2012). The data capture of NSD over the two years was 72.5%. Particle mass was determined on samples collected on Teflon-coated glass fibre filters (TX40HI20WW).

### 2.3 Positive matrix factorisation

Positive Matrix Factorisation (PMF) is a well-established multivariate data analysis method used in the field of aerosol science. PMF can be described as a least-squares formulation of factor analysis developed by Paatero (Paatero and Tapper, 1994). It assumes that the ambient aerosol  $X$  (represented by a matrix of  $n \times$  observations and  $m \times \text{PM}_{10}$  constituents or NSD size bins), measured at one or more sites can be explained by the product of a source matrix  $\mathbf{F}$  and contribution matrix  $\mathbf{G}$  whose elements are given by Eq. (1). The residuals are accounted for in matrix  $\mathbf{E}$  and the two matrices  $\mathbf{G}$  and  $\mathbf{F}$  are obtained by an iterative minimization algorithm.

$$x_{ij} = \sum_{h=1}^p g_{ij} \cdot f_{hj} + e_{ij} \quad (1)$$

It is commonly understood that PMF is a descriptive model and there is no objective criterion upon which to choose the best solution (Paatero et al., 2002). This work is no exception and the number of factors and settings for the data sets were chosen using















correlation with the Diffuse Urban factor derived from the NSD dataset than with the Traffic factor from that dataset, and the Diffuse Urban factor from the PM<sub>10</sub> dataset shows a very modest correlation with the Traffic factor from the NSD dataset. This serves to confirm the contribution of traffic to the Diffuse Urban factor. The Nucleation factor in the NSD dataset and Marine and Fuel Oil factors in the PM<sub>10</sub> composition dataset do not correlate substantially with factors in the other dataset.

### 3.3 Combined PM<sub>10</sub> and NSD data

The PM<sub>10</sub> composition and daily average NSD datasets were combined into one daily PM<sub>10</sub>\_NSD data set and analysed using PMF2. By combining the two datasets, an apportionment was made that was sensitive to both particle number and mass composition of the sources. This resulted in a five factor solution which was described by the factors interpreted as: Diffuse Urban, Nucleation; Secondary; Marine and Traffic (Fig. 3). The factor with the smallest mode in the number size distribution (around 25 nm) was attributed to Nucleation. It showed chemical association with species such as sulphate, nitrate, ammonium and organic carbon (OC) and had a slight preference for weekdays over weekends (Fig. 3) and a strong association with the summer months of the year. There is also a well defined traffic factor which has a mode at around 30 nm as observed previously for road traffic (Harrison et al., 2012) as well as chemical associations with Al, Ba, Ca, Cu, Fe, Mn, Pb, Sb, Ti and Zn. This factor clearly therefore encompasses both the exhaust and non-exhaust emissions of particles. A factor which can be clearly assigned on the basis of its chemical association is that described as Aged Marine. This explains a large proportion of the variation in Na, Mg and Cl but shows a number size distribution with many features similar to that of the Traffic factor with which it has rather little in common chemically. Since the aged marine mass mode is expected to be in the super-micrometre region and hence well beyond that measured in the NSD dataset, it seems likely that the size distribution associated is simply a reflection of other sources influencing air masses rich in marine particles.

## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion







a contribution of emissions from shipping burning fuel oil while travelling through the English Channel to the south-east of London. The major difference from all other polar plots confirms this as a highly distinctive source category.

Figure 5 shows both bivariate polar plots (wind direction and wind speed in the left-hand panels) and annular plots showing both wind direction and time-of-day in the right-hand panels for the output for the PMF analysis of the Number Size Distribution data. The Nucleation factor has a very clear behaviour with predominant associations with westerly winds and occurrence in the afternoon when particles have grown sufficiently in size to cross the lower size threshold of the SMPS instrument used. In this case, however, some association with winds from a variety of direction sectors is seen unlike Fig. 10. The Traffic factor again shows a predominant association with easterly winds, although there is some clear association with light westerly winds also. The predominant temporal association is with the morning rush hour and late evening, consistent with the lower temperatures and restricted vertical mixing typical of such times of day combined with high levels of traffic emissions. The Diffuse Urban source, as in Fig. 10, has a predominant association with the easterly wind sector, and there is also a clear temporal association with the morning rush hour and the late evening reflecting both traffic emissions (as for the Traffic factor) and most probably also wood burning emissions in the evening data. The final Secondary factor shows an association with winds from northerly through to south-easterly and a predominance of the cooler hours of the day favouring the presence of semi-volatile ammonium nitrate in the condensed phase. Overall, these plots and those for the  $PM_{10}$  mass composition data are highly consistent with those from the combined  $PM_{10}$  mass composition/Number Size Distribution data analysis.

## 4 Discussion

This work gives quantitative insights into the sources of airborne particulate matter at a representative background site in central London averaged over a two year period.

### Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion









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## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



**Receptor modelling  
of particle  
composition and size  
distribution**

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

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## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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**Table 1.** Measurements collected at the North Kensington Site, 2011 and 2012.

Species	Brief Description	PM Fraction	Detailed Description
TMN	Manganese	PM <sub>10</sub>	Total metal concentration – HF acid digest and ICPMS
TMO	Molybdenum		
TNA	Sodium		
TNI	Nickel		
TPB	Lead		
TSB	Antimony		
TSN	Tin		
TSR	Strontium		
TTI	Titanium		
TV	Vanadium		
TZN	Zinc		
TAL	Aluminium		
TBA	Barium		
TCA	Calcium		
TCD	Cadmium		
TCR	Chromium		
TCU	Copper		
TFE	Iron		
TK	Potassium		
TMG	Magnesium		
PCNT	Particle Number	PM <sub>1</sub>	Condensation particle counter (CPC, TSI) EU reference equivalent. Gravimetric with gaps filled from FDMS-TEOM
PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	EU reference equivalent. FDMS-TEOM with gaps from gravimetric
EC	Elemental Carbon	PM <sub>10</sub>	By thermo chemical analysis using Sunset instrument and NIOSH TOT protocol.
OC	Organic Carbon	PM <sub>10</sub>	OA from wood using uses aethalometer wood burning model of Sandradewi et al., 2008 as in Fuller et al., 2014
CWOD	OA Wood Burning	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	
WNO <sub>3</sub>	Nitrate	PM <sub>10</sub>	Water soluble measured using near real time URG, gaps filled with filter measurements
WSO <sub>4</sub>	Sulphate		
WCL	Chloride		
WNH <sub>4</sub>	Ammonium		
WCA	Calcium		
WMG	Magnesium		
WK	Potassium		

## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



**Table 2.** Average concentrations of gas phase pollutants and meteorological conditions corresponding to the periods when each factor in the PMF results for the PM<sub>10</sub> chemical and NSD exceeded its 90 %ile value.

PM <sub>10</sub>	CO mg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO μg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO <sub>2</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO <sub>x</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	O <sub>3</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	SO <sub>2</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>
Traffic	0.43	50.02	62.59	139.05	12.42	3.71
Fuel Oil	0.20	4.42	27.63	34.33	46.82	1.25
Non-Exhaust/Crustal	0.35	26.64	53.71	94.67	24.50	3.48
Secondary	0.28	18.09	48.79	76.61	48.65	3.23
Marine	0.22	5.69	29.48	38.40	46.54	2.04
Diffuse Urban	0.38	42.69	61.42	126.46	20.15	3.91
NSD	CO mg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO μg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO <sub>2</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	NO <sub>x</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	O <sub>3</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>	SO <sub>2</sub> μg m <sup>-3</sup>
Secondary	0.38	30.72	57.48	104.63	25.93	3.75
Diffuse Urban	0.39	44.19	60.43	128.19	23.84	3.58
Traffic	0.32	29.70	54.04	99.91	20.63	2.77
Nucleation	0.24	9.31	33.52	47.88	37.00	2.23

## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

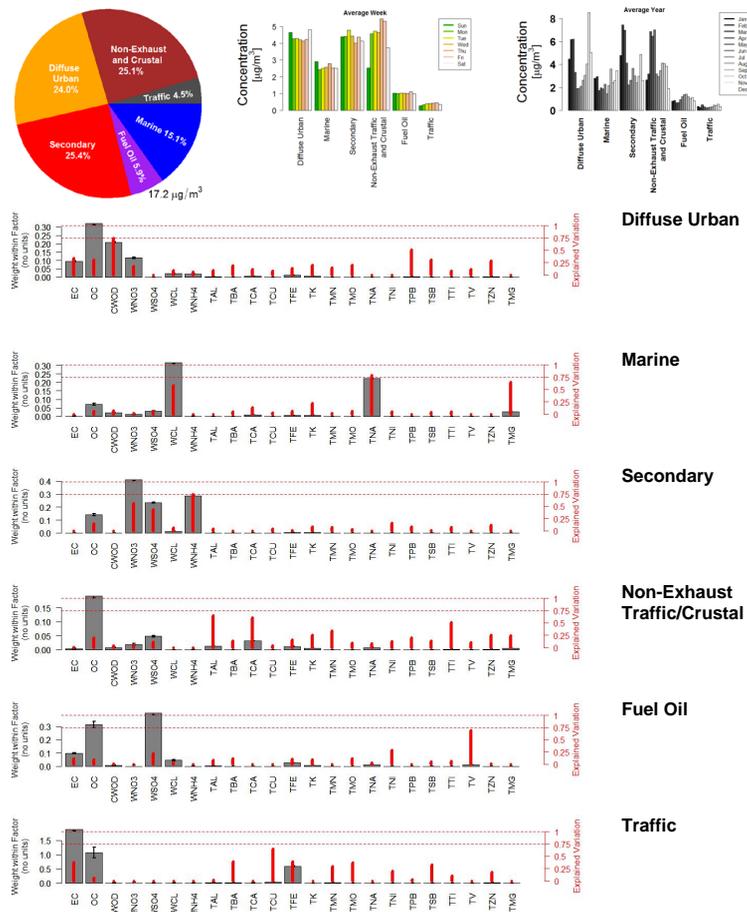
[Title Page](#)
[Abstract](#)
[Introduction](#)
[Conclusions](#)
[References](#)
[Tables](#)
[Figures](#)
[Back](#)
[Close](#)
[Full Screen / Esc](#)
[Printer-friendly Version](#)
[Interactive Discussion](#)
**Table 2.** Continued.

PM <sub>10</sub>	WD degrees	WS ms <sup>-1</sup>	VIS m	P mBar	T °C	DP °C	RH %
Traffic	196	4.79	1197	1022	6.01	3.01	81.93
Fuel Oil	205	11.25	2239	1015	11.41	6.93	75.47
Non-Exhaust/Crustal	134	5.56	951	1023	9.09	5.37	79.33
Secondary	152	6.17	1687	1019	14.98	7.90	65.34
Marine	203	7.84	2085	1015	16.24	11.15	73.93
Diffuse Urban	166	4.87	1405	1020	11.33	6.64	76.54
NSD	WD degrees	WS ms <sup>-1</sup>	VIS m	P mBar	T °C	DP °C	RH %
Secondary	141	5.14	878	1022	10.73	6.33	76.68
Diffuse Urban	168	4.67	1266	1021	10.64	6.13	76.63
Traffic	193	5.79	1903	1020	9.27	5.14	77.51
Nucleation	206	7.95	2103	1015	12.8	7.9	74.27



# Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.



**Figure 1.** Factors outputted from PMF2 run on PM<sub>10</sub> mass composition data showing the contribution (grey bar) and Explained Variation of each metric (red bar).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

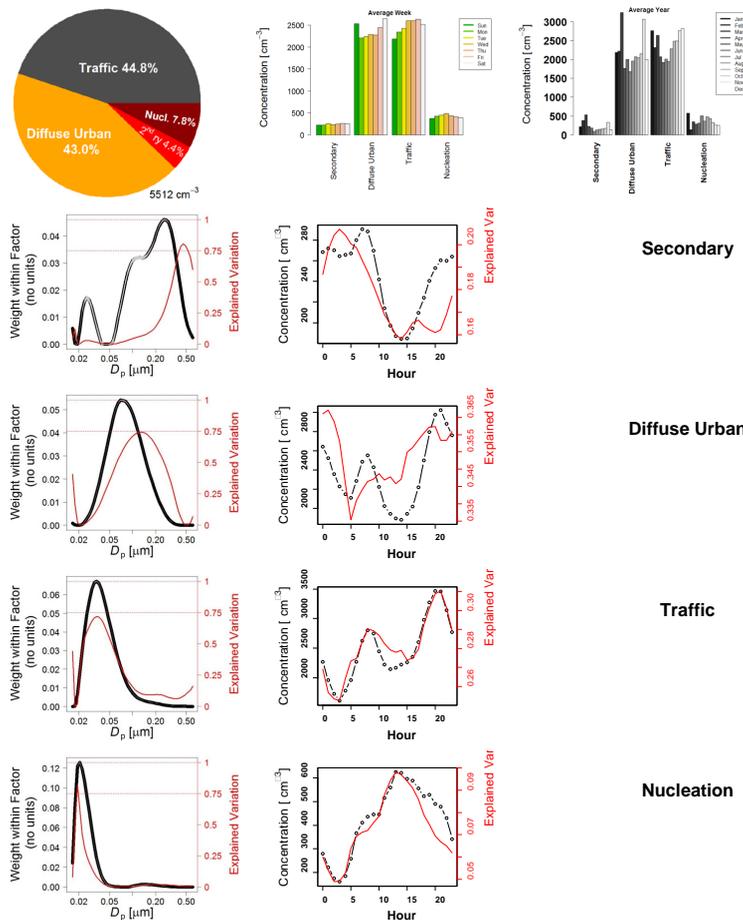
Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.



**Figure 2.** Factors outputted from PMF2 run on the Particle Number Size Distribution showing the contribution (black line) and Explained Variation of each metric (red line).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

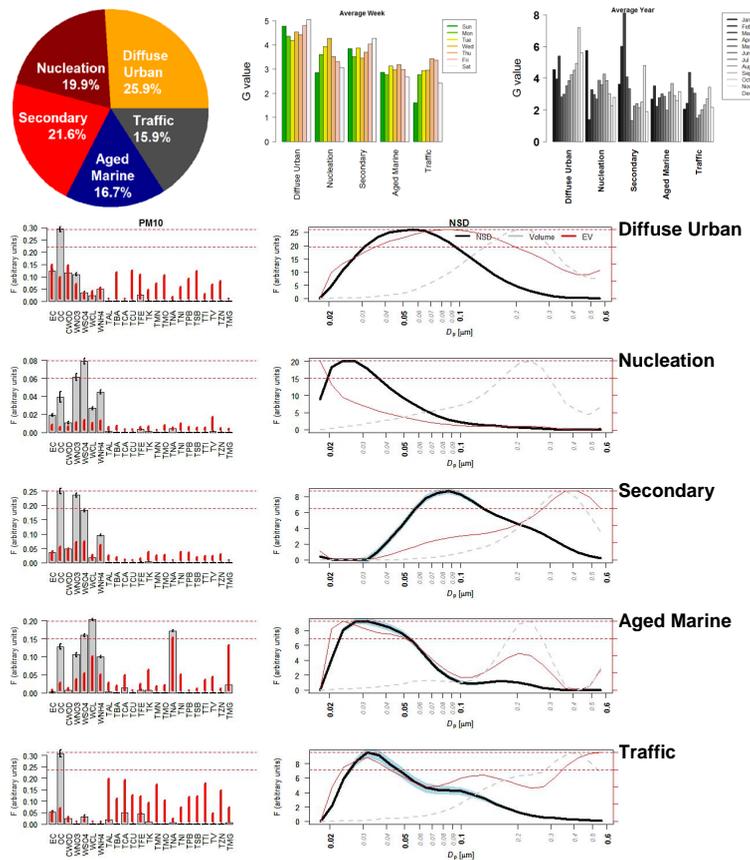
Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.



**Figure 3.** Five factor solution from the combined composition/NSD dataset showing the contribution (black line) and Explained Variation of each metric (red line).

Title Page

Abstract	Introduction
Conclusions	References
Tables	Figures

◀
▶
◀
▶

Back Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

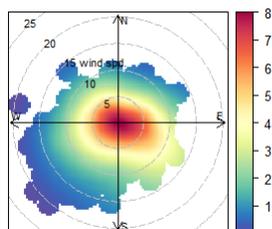
Interactive Discussion



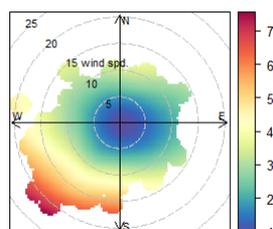
## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

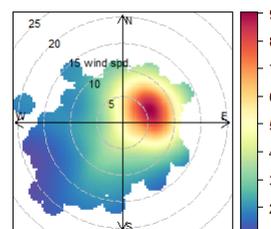
**DIFFUSE URBAN**



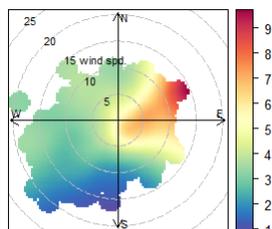
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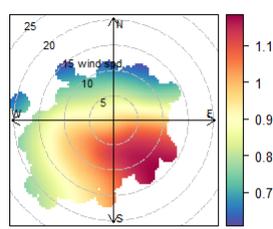
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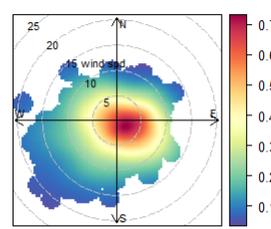
**NON-EXHAUST/  
CRUSTAL**



**FUEL OIL**



**TRAFFIC**



**Figure 4.** Polar plots showing how the daily  $\text{PM}_{10}$  contributions are affected by the daily vector average wind direction and velocity. (Units:  $\text{PM}_{10}$  ( $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ ) and wind speed ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures



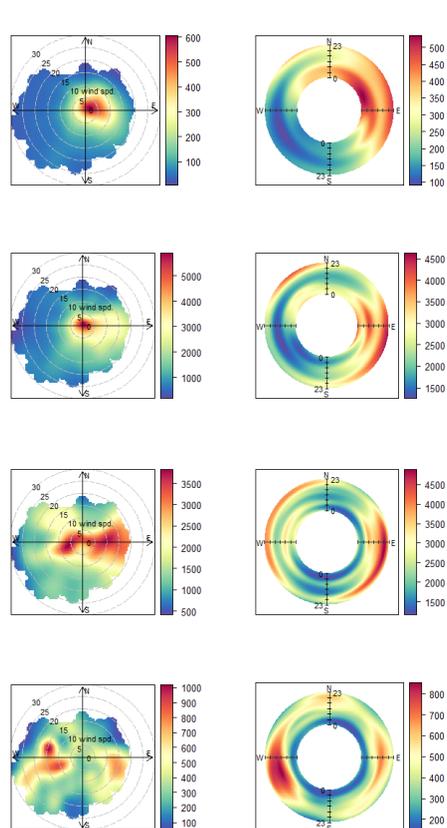
Back

Close

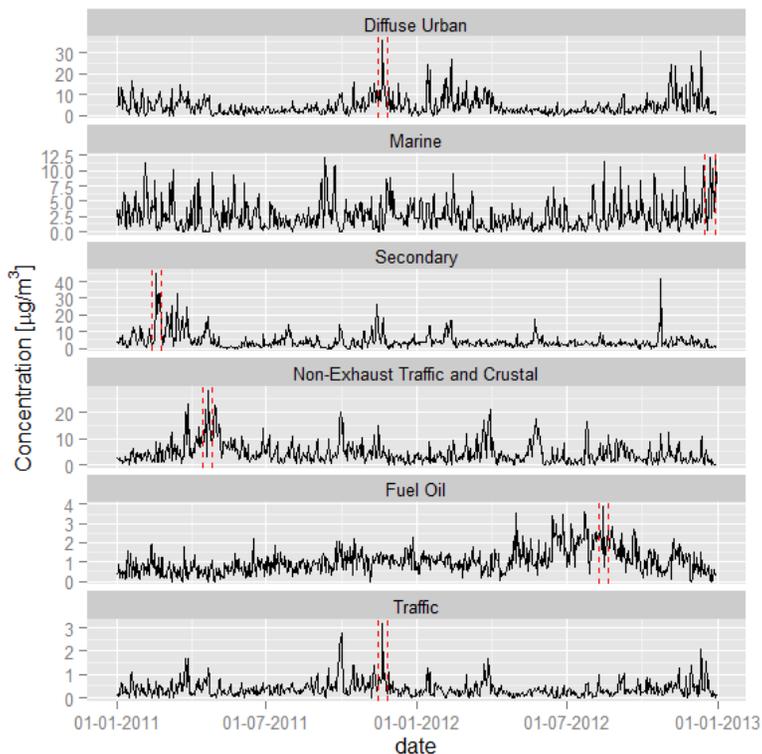
Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



**Figure 5.** Polar plots showing how the hourly NSD contributions are affected by the hourly wind direction and wind velocity. (Units: NSD ( $\text{cm}^{-3}$ ) and wind speed ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ).)



**Figure 6.** Daily Factor Scores outputted from PMF2 GF. (Vertical red lines indicate when each factor has the highest contribution to  $PM_{10}$ . 20 November 2011 – Diffuse Urban; 23 December 2012 – Marine; 18 February 2011 – Secondary; 21 April 2011 – Non-Exhaust and Crustal; 15 August 2012 – Fuel Oil; 20 November 2011 – Traffic.)

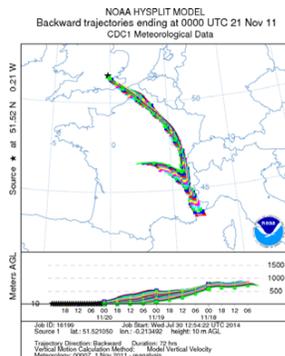
**Receptor modelling  
of particle  
composition and size  
distribution**

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

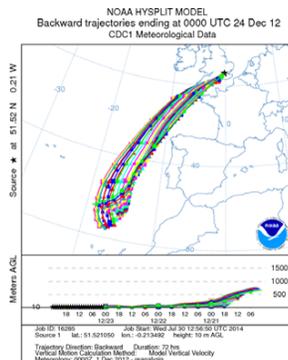
Title Page	
Abstract	Introduction
Conclusions	References
Tables	Figures
◀	▶
◀	▶
Back	Close
Full Screen / Esc	
Printer-friendly Version	
Interactive Discussion	



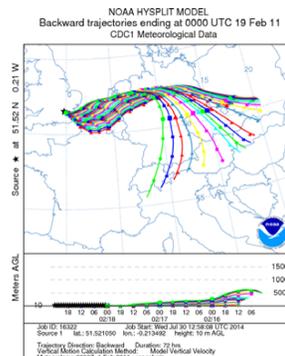
**DIFFUSE URBAN**



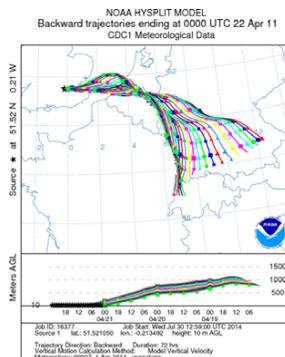
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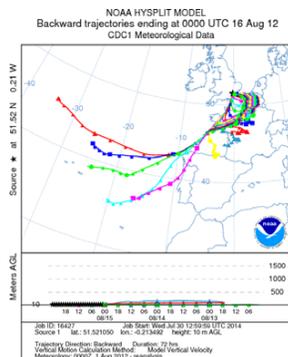
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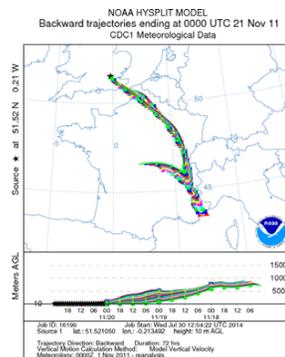
**NON-EXHAUST  
CRUSTAL**



and **FUEL OIL**



**TRAFFIC**



**Figure 7.** Back trajectories corresponding the vertical red lines in Fig. 6, which indicate when each factor has the highest contribution to PM<sub>10</sub> (20 November 2011 – Diffuse Urban; 23 December 2012 – Marine; 18 February 2011 – Secondary; 21 April 2011 – Non-Exhaust and Crustal; 15 August 2012 – Fuel Oil; 20 November 2011 – Traffic).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

⏪

⏩

◀

▶

Back

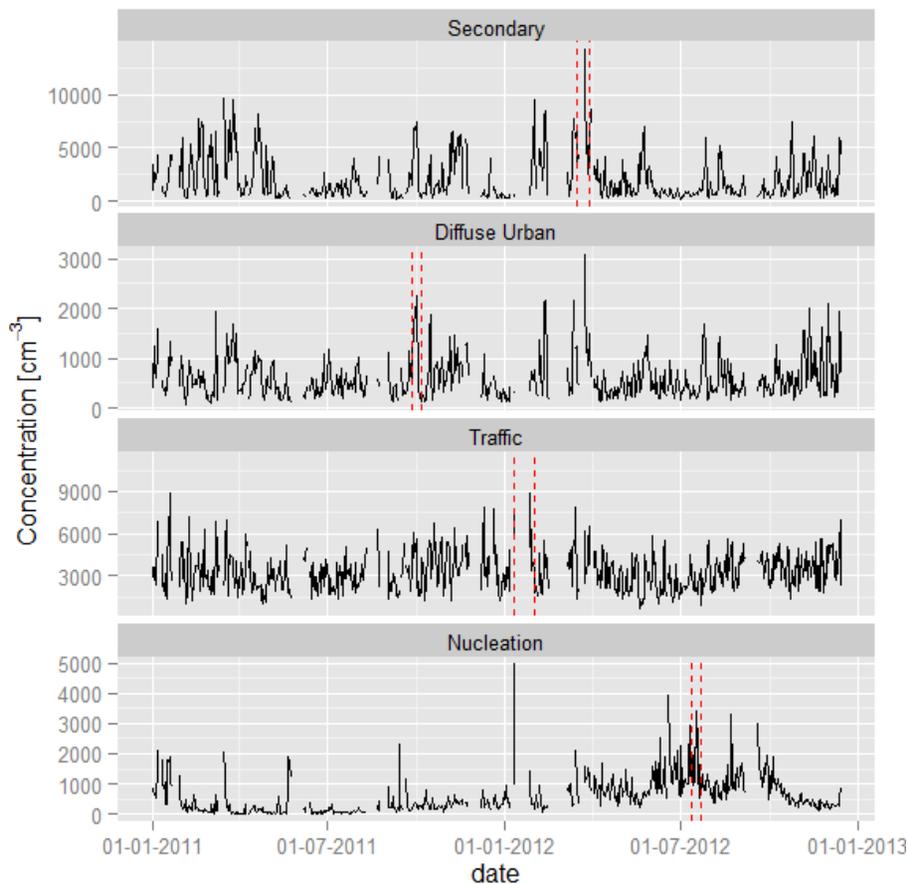
Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion





**Figure 8.** Daily Factor Scores outputted from PMF2 GF (unit  $\text{cm}^{-3}$ ). (Vertical red lines indicate when each factor has the highest daily average contribution to the NSD. 24 March 2012 – Secondary; 1 October 2011 – Diffuse Urban; 27 January 2012 – Traffic; 17 July 2012 – Nucleation.)

Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

Title Page

Abstract Introduction

Conclusions References

Tables Figures

◀ ▶

◀ ▶

Back Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

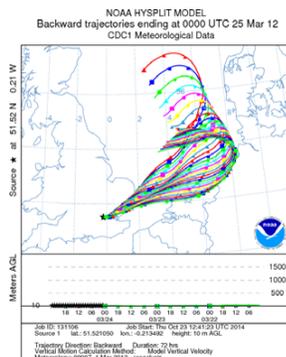
Interactive Discussion



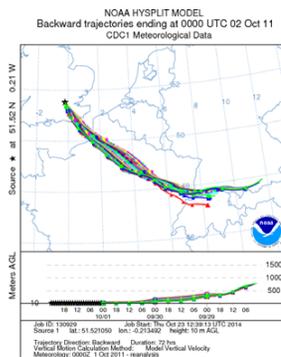
## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

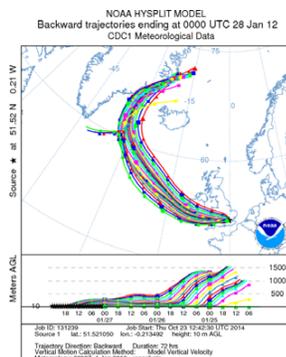
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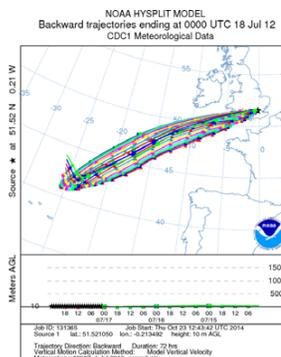
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### TRAFFIC



### NUCLEATION

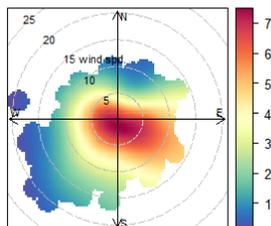


**Figure 9.** Back mass trajectories corresponding the vertical red lines in Fig. 8, which indicate the day each factor has the highest daily contribution to NSD. (24 March 2012 – Secondary; 1 October 2011 – Diffuse Urban; 27 January 2012 – Traffic; 17 July 2012 – Nucleation.)

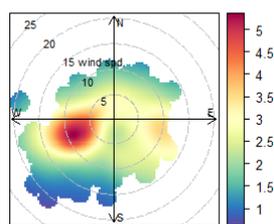
## Receptor modelling of particle composition and size distribution

D. C. S. Beddows et al.

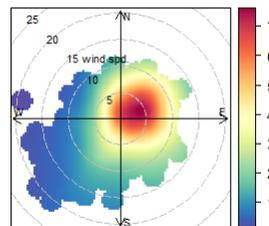
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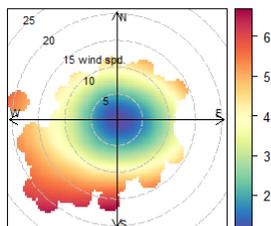
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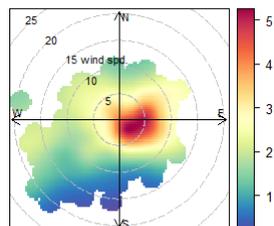
**SECONDARY**



**AGED MARINE**



**TRAFFIC**



**Figure 10.** Polar plots showing how the PMF factors derived from the combined chemical composition/NSD dataset are affected by the daily vector average wind velocity and direction. (Units: G values (arbitrary units) and wind speed ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

