

In memoriam Reinhold Hatzinger (1953 – 2012)



Reinhold Hatzinger passed away at the age of 59 on July 17, 2012. He was a professor in the Department of Statistics and Mathematics of the Vienna University of Economics and Administration. He was torn away from a happy life with his partner in love and in research, Regina Dittrich, in the midst of his teaching and research projects and full of energy and ideas.

He received his PhD from the University of Vienna in the famous and seminal psychometrics research group there, with Klaus Kubinger and Gerhard Fischer as his advisors. The next influential step in his formation was the postgraduate program at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Vienna, where he took courses, among others,

from John Nelder and where he became familiar with the unifying framework of generalized linear models.

Throughout his formation and in the period after, he developed into a statistically inspired psychometrician and psychologically inspired statistician. It did not come as a surprise that his Habilitation was on “A GLM Framework for Item Response Theory Models”. From 1982 to 1989 he was the head of the Biostatistics Group of the Department of Psychiatry at the Vienna University, and in 1989 he was appointed at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration as an assistant professor. He was promoted to the level of associate professor in 1995. At the same university he has built an excellent psychometrics research group.

As a psychometrician he has focused on the two most important aspects of psychology: what people *can* and what they *want*, on models for abilities (item response models) and models for preference and choice, respectively. For both types of models his deep understanding of the models was an excellent basis for the development of generic frameworks, for the solution of specific problems and for providing the user with helpful software: the R packages eRm (Hatzinger & Rusch, 2009; Mair & Hatzinger, 2007) and prefmod (Hatzinger & Dittrich, 2012), each based on profound theoretical ideas, statisti-

cal expertise, and excellent programming skills. Although modesty was one of his characteristics, both in his work and in scientific meetings, his ideas and publications are in fact highly inspiring and have a huge potential.

Apart from his scientific contributions he has also significantly contributed to the formation of students and junior researchers, to the practice of statistics and data analysis, for example through his books on statistical methods and software (Hatzinger, Hornik, Nagel, 2011; Hatzinger & Nagel, 2009).

Above all, he was a beloved teacher, an excellent, inspiring and stimulating advisor, a generous and warmhearted head of his team, and a great host for visiting colleagues. He had all the best one can imagine from an academic scholar, as a person, as a teacher, and as a researcher.

Paul de Boeck

References

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