

Comparative Concepts

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Outline

1 Introduction

- The epistemology of orderings
- Gärdenfors on natural properties

2 Natural Comparative Concepts

- Convexity criteria for naturalness
- From comparative to categorical concepts

3 A Prototype-theoretic Approach

- Preliminaries
- Voronoi diagrams I: From prototype type points to areas
- Voronoi diagrams II: From categorical to comparative concepts



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Categorical vs comparative concepts

Categorical concepts

- type of concepts expressed by general terms in natural languages, such as “high”, “exactly 10 meters high”, “cat” or “chair”.
- rules of partitioning a set of objects.

Comparative concepts

- type of concepts expressed by comparative constructions embedding a general term, such as “is higher than”, “is less tall than” or “to look more red”.
- rules of ordering objects.



Varieties of evidence on ordering behaviour

- explicit comparisons (e.g., of the form “ x is F -er than y ”).
- orders induced by probabilities of positive categorisation (Hampton [1998, 2007]).
- orders induced by choice probabilities assigned to ordered pairs (the probability that the one item is picked out—as an F —as compared to the other item) (Suppes et al. [1989]).



Questions

- What kind of cognitive structures underly our ability to order objects in certain ways?
- Why do we order objects in certain ways, and not in different ways?



Natural vs gerrymandered ways of ordering objects

Gruer

Suppose we examine a sample of colour patches x_1, \dots, x_n , where the series is monotonically increasing in greenness. That is, we have a case where for each $0 < i \leq n$, x_i is *greener* than x_{i-1} . Suppose t designates the present point of time. It makes then extensionally no difference to say that we have a case where for each $0 < i \leq n$, x_i is *gruer* than x_{i-1} , where this relation is defined as follows: for any pair of colour patches x and y , x is *gruer* than y just in case either (a) x and y are examined by point t , and x is greener than y , or (b) x and y are both examined after t , and x is bluer than y .



Natural vs gerrymandered ways of ordering objects – cont.

Gruer—inductive version

Suppose we examine the colour patches x_1, \dots, x_n in the temporal order of their mention here, and that there are two other colour patches in the sequence, x_{n+1} and x_{n+2} , which are still hidden. Given n is sufficiently high, it would seem only natural to predict that x_{n+2} is greener than x_{n+1} . On the other hand, the prediction that x_{n+2} is gruer than x_{n+1} would seem quite bizarre—for it would imply that x_{n+2} is bluer than x_{n+1} .

Gradable concepts

- **Gradable concepts:** type of concepts expressed by **gradable terms**, that is, general terms such as “high” or “red” that embed in comparative constructions.
- **Bridge principles:** in order to have a concept of redness, it seems that we need to know that anything redder than something red must be red as well; and also that for something to be distinguishable as red from something else, the former is to be redder than the latter.
 - Put aside delineation based approaches to comparatives (Klein [1980], van Benthem [1982], van Rooij [2009]).

Aim

- Outlining a novel approach to comparative concepts that
 - 1 supplies means of characterising naturalness for comparative concepts, and
 - 2 has constraining effects on the theory of gradable concepts.

- Method: Carrying Peter Gärdenfors' conceptual spaces approach (*Conceptual Spaces* [2000]), which focusses on ungraded categorisation rules, over to comparative concepts.



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Conceptual spaces

- **spaces** are sets D_1, \dots, D_n of **quality dimensions**, i.e., kinds of features with respect to which objects may be judged as more or less similar.
- a **point** in a space is defined by a vector $v = \langle d_1, \dots, d_n \rangle$ where each index represents a dimension.
- each dimension has typically a **geometric** structure.
- **objects** ('stimuli') are represented as points in a space.
- **concepts** are represented as sets in a space.



Conceptual spaces – cont.

examples

- **colours**: a space with the dimensions hue, chromaticness and brightness.
- **geometric figures**: a space with the dimensions shape, size, and angular orientation.



Conceptual spaces – cont'

a side note

- Stalnaker's formulation of a bare particular anti-essentialism (in [1979]).
- Lambert's and van Fraassen's account of analyticity (in [1970]).
- Churchland's naturalistic approach to linguistic meaning (in [1986]).
- Bromberger's realism about types in linguistic theory (in [1992]).

A geometric approach to similarity

A metric model of distances

A two-place real-valued function d on a set M is said to be a metric iff:

D1 $d(a, b) \geq 0$ and $d(a, b) = 0$ only if $a = b$; (minimality)

D2 $d(a, b) = d(b, a)$; (symmetry)

D3 $d(a, c) \leq d(a, b) + d(b, c)$. (triangular inequality)

Similarity and distance

Similarity is inversely related to distance: linear (Tversky [1975]), exponential (Shepard [1987]), Gaussian function (Nosofski [1986]).

A geometric approach to similarity – cont.

power metric model

$$d(x, y) = \left[\sum_{i=1}^n |x_i - y_i|^r \right]^{\frac{1}{r}}$$

- for $r = 2$: Euclidean metric.
- for $r = 1$, city block or Manhattan metric.

Properties (Gärdenfors [2000])

- **Separable dimensions:** can be perceived/cognised independently from each other
 - e.g., hue, chromaticness and brightness are not separable from each other.
- **Domains:** sets of dimensions that are not pairwise separable, but all separable from other dimensions.
- **Properties:** are concepts that refer to so-called *domains*
 - e.g., compare colour concepts with *apple*, which refers to more than one domain (such as colour, shape or texture).

Criteria for naturalness (Gärdenfors [2000])

- 1 connectedness:** A region X is said to be *connected*, if and only if, for all regions Y and Z such that $Y \cup Z = X$, it holds that $C(Y, Z)$. X is *disconnected*, if and only if X is not connected.
- 2 star-shapedness:** A subset C of a conceptual space S is said to be *star-shaped with respect to point p* , if and only if, for all points x in C , all points between x and p are also in C .
- 3 convexity:** A subset C of a conceptual space S is said to be *convex*, if and only if, for all points x and y in C , all points between x and y are also in C .



Convexity criterion P (Gärdenfors [2000])

A natural property is a convex region of a domain in a conceptual space.



Related discussion

- Oddie [2005] on 'natural' value properties.
- evolutionary arguments (from evolutionary psychology: Shepard [1987]; from evolutionary game theory, see Jäger [2009] and Jäger et al. [2009]).
- but see Mormann [1993] for an argument to the effect that the convexity constraint is unnecessarily strong.
- Gärdenfors' argument from prototype theory ([2000]) (sect. 3).

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Modelling orders of points as orders of sets

- for any partially ordered set $\langle P, \geq \rangle$ and any subset Q of P , Q is said to be an **order filter** (or **upward closed set**) if, whenever $x \in Q$, $y \in P$ and $y \geq x$, we have $y \in Q$.
- for any arbitrary set Q of P , we define:
 - $\uparrow Q := \{y \in P \mid (\exists x \in Q) y \geq x\}$.
- \uparrow is an **isomorphism** between $\langle P, \geq \rangle$ and $\langle \uparrow P, \subseteq \rangle$.

Convexity criteria for naturalness

Criterion C1

A strict partial ordering $>$ referring to one domain in a conceptual space is a natural comparative concept only if for all points x in the space, the corresponding set $\{y \mid y > x\}$ is a convex region.

E.g., criterion C1 implies that for any triple of patches x , y and z where both x and y are redder than z , any patch in between in colour shade between x and y should be redder than z as well.



Almost-connectedness

- R is almost connected: $x > y \rightarrow (z > y \vee x > z)$.
- (strict) weak orders: (strict) partial orders that are almost connected.
- indifference ($x \not> y \wedge y \not> x$) is transitive.



Convexity criteria for naturalness – cont.

Criterion C2

A strict weak ordering $>$ referring to one domain in a conceptual space is a natural comparative concept only if for all points x in the space, the corresponding set $\{y \mid y > x \vee (x \not> y \wedge y \not> x)\}$ is a convex region.

E.g., criterion C2 implies that for any triple of patches x , y and z where both x and y are at least as red as z , any patch in between in colour shade between x and y should be at least as red as z as well.



Sivik and Taft [1994]

‘**Isosemantic lines**’ in the colour space, i.e., areas of colours that test persons tended to categorise as equally red, brown, or other, circumscribed a convex area in space.

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Associatedness

For any given comparative concept $>$ and any given categorical concept F , $>$ and F are said to be **associated** with each other iff they satisfy:

$$\text{B1. } x > y \rightarrow (F(y) \rightarrow F(x)).$$

$$\text{B2. } (F(x) \wedge \neg F(y)) \rightarrow x > y.$$

Note

- F may be interpreted both in terms of binary and in terms of gradable classification criteria.
- on failure of almost-connectedness, the transitive closure of indifference may include pairs of objects that should be treated differently in terms of F -ness.



The no-gap condition

- For any given strictly partially ordered set $\langle P, > \rangle$, a pair $\langle P_1, P_2 \rangle$ is said to be a **cut** in $\langle P, > \rangle$ iff:
 - 1 $\{P_1, P_2\}$ is a bipartition in P ;
 - 2 if $x \in P_1$ and $y \in P_2$, then $x > y$.

- A strictly partially ordered set $\langle P, > \rangle$ is then said to satisfy the **no-gap condition** iff for every cut in the set, either $\langle T_1, > \rangle$ has a minimal element or $\langle T_2, > \rangle$ has a maximal element.



Theorem

Let $\langle P, > \rangle$ be a strict weak ordering that satisfies the no-gap condition, and let F be a subset in P , where $>$ and F are associated with each other. Then for some member x of P , either

- $F = \{y \in P \mid y > x\}$, or
- $F = \{y \in P \mid (y > x) \vee (y \not> x \wedge x \not> y)\}$.



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Agenda

- **Approach**: modelling comparative concepts in terms of conceptual space representations of **prototypes**.
- **Focus** on comparative concepts that:
 - refer to **one domain** (Euclidean metric).
 - are **(strict) weak orderings**.
 - which satisfy the **no-gap condition**.
 - are **associated** with a categorical concept.
- Optional constraint: prototype points for F -ness are maximal elements in $\langle M, >_F \rangle$ (**Maximality**).

Disclaimers – Open issues put aside

- Comparative concepts without prototypes? How about concepts such as *long* or *late*? (Kamp and Partee [1995] vs Hampton [2007]; Tribushinina [2008, 2009])
- Prototypes without comparative concepts? How about *dog*, *apple*, or *city*? (Schwartzchild [2008] vs Sasson [2007])
- Concepts that refer to more than one domain, e.g., plausibly, *grue/gruer*.
- Comparative concepts that are less precise: multi-dimensional concepts (*cleverer than*), interval orderings (*later than*), semi-orderings (*definitely larger*) (for the latter types of cases, see Suppes et al. [1989]).

Similarity, typicality, and graded membership

Naive prototype theory

- Typicality (T_F) is a strictly increasing function of similarity to a prototype.
- Graded membership (M_F) is a strictly increasing function of typicality.

Fuzzy semantics

Interpretating graded membership as similarity to the closest prototypical element (Ruspini [1991], Dubois and Prade [1997], Dubois et al. [2001]).

Similarity, typicality, and graded membership – cont.

Osherson and Smith [1997]

- $T_{bird}(robin) > T_{bird}(woodpecker)$.
- but: $M_{bird}(robin) = M_{bird}(woodpecker) = 1$.

Hampton [2007]

M_F is a cumulative normal distribution function of T_F , which has 0 as its infimum and 1 as its supremum (i.e., $M_F(x) := Prob(X \leq x)$, where the random variable X takes T_F values).



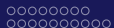
Similarity, typicality, and graded membership – cont.!

Hampton [1998]

Typicality does not always provide a good prediction of graded membership (experiments on artifact concepts).

Open questions

- 1 What prototypes are relevant?
 - 1.a **non-contrastive** accounts: F -er is given for a conceptual space by some prototype for F -ness in the space.
 - 1.b **contrastive** accounts: F -er is given for a conceptual space by some set of disjoint prototypes including the prototype for F -ness.
- 2 In what way are prototypes relevant?
 - 2.a **distance infima (suprema)**: the infimum (or supremum) of distances between a particular point and any point in the prototype area.
 - 2.b **scaling factors**: the factor by which the prototype area is to be expanded/contracted in order to reach a particular point.
 - ...



Working hypothesis

Combining [1.b] with [2.a].



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Voronoi diagrams – standard

Two variants

- A Given a set of ‘prototypical’ points in a metric space, a *Voronoi diagram* divides the space into subsets, where each subset contains one and only one ‘prototypical’ point p and consists of all points with respect to which **there is no closer ‘prototypical’ point than p** (Okabe et al. [1992 [2000]]).
- B Given a set of ‘prototypical’ points in a metric space, a *Voronoi diagram* divides the space into subsets, where each subset contains one and only one ‘prototypical’ point p and consists of all points with respect to which **p is closer than any other ‘prototypical’ point** (Aurenhammer and Klein [2000]).



Convexity result (Okabe et al. [2000: 85])

For Euclidean n -spaces, Voronoi regions are convex.

Let $\{M, d\}$ be a Euclidean metric space and P be a subset (in that space) of points p_1, \dots, p_n . Then for each p_i in P , the Voronoi region associated with p_i relative to P is convex.

How to deal with prototype *areas*?

Generalised Voronoi Categorisation (for 2D-spaces)

An object represented as a point in a conceptual space belongs to the category for which the corresponding prototypical circle is the closest (Gärdenfors [2000]).

Nearest Neighbour Categorisation (for finite sets of prototype points)

An object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs to the category for which the prototype instance that is closest to x is included (cf. Reed [1972]).



How to deal with prototype *areas*? – cont.

Average Distance Categorisation

An object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs to the category to which x has the smallest average distance (Nosofski [1988]).



How to deal with prototype *areas*? – cont.!

Collated Voronoi Categorisation

An object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs to the category for which, for each prototype instance y , x is at least as close to y as to any prototype instance of any ‘competing’ category.

Igor Douven, Lieven Decock, Richard Dietz, Paul Egré:
 “Vagueness: A Conceptual Spaces Approach”,
Journal of Philosophical Logic, forthcoming.

Collated Voronoi categorisation

Let $R = \{r_1, \dots, r_n\}$ be a distribution of disjoint prototype areas.
The set of prototype point distributions for R is defined as:

$$\Pi(R) := \{P = \langle p_1, \dots, p_n \rangle \mid p_i \in r_i\}.$$

The *Voronoi region associated with a point p relative to P* , where $P \in \Pi(R)$ and $p \in P$ is defined as

$$v(p, P) := \{q \mid d(q, p) \leq d(q, p'), \text{ with } p' \in P \text{ and } p' \neq p\}.$$

Accordingly, the *Voronoi region associated with a set r_i relative to R* comes to

$$u(r_i, R) := \bigcap_{p \in P \in \Pi(R)} \{v(p, P) \mid p \in r_i\},$$



Convexity result (Douven et al. [forthcoming: sect. 3])

Let $\{M, d\}$ a Euclidean metric space and P be a subset (in that space) of points p_1, \dots, p_n . Then for each p_i in P , the collated Voronoi region associated with p_i relative to P is convex.



Voronoi diagrams I: From prototype points to areas

How to deal with *comparative* concepts which are associated with a prototype area?

Collated Voronoi Categorisation Generalised

Richard Dietz: “Comparative Concepts”, *Synthese*, forthcoming.



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An equivalence result on collated Voronoi categorisation

Theorem (T1)

Let $\langle M, d \rangle$ be a metric space and R be a set of disjoint subsets r_1, \dots, r_n in M . Then Voronoi region associated with a set r_i relative to R , $u(r_i, R)$, is given by:

$$\{p \in M \mid \sup\{d(p, x) \mid x \in r_i\} \leq \inf\{d(p, y) \mid y \in r_j \in R, j \neq i\}\}.$$

informally ...

Collated Voronoi Categorisation': An object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs to the category F for which the supremum of distances between x and any point in the prototype area of F is no greater than the infimum of distances between x and any point in any prototype area for any 'competing' category.



Collated Voronoi categorisation generalised

Graded Collated Voronoi Categorisation

- For any λ where $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, call distances scaled by λ λ -distances.
- For any λ where $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, an object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs relative to λ to the category for which, for each prototype instance y , the λ -distance between x and y is no greater than the $(1 - \lambda)$ -distance between x and any prototype instance of any 'competing' category.

Collated Voronoi categorisation generalised

Graded Collated Voronoi Categorisation – more formally

The *Voronoi region* associated with a point p relative to P and a factor λ where $P \in \Pi(R)$, $p \in P$, and $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$ is defined as

$$v(p, P, \lambda) := \{q \mid \lambda \cdot d(q, p) \leq (1 - \lambda) \cdot d(q, p'), \text{ with } p' \in P \text{ and } p' \neq p\}.$$

The *Voronoi region* associated with a set r_i relative to a set R and factor λ is defined as

$$u(r_i, R, \lambda) := \bigcap \{v(p, P, \lambda) \mid p \in r_i\}.$$



Collated Voronoi categorisation generalised – cont.

limiting case

For $\lambda = .5$, graded collated Voronoi categorisation amounts to collated Voronoi categorisation.

An equivalence result on graded collated Voronoi categorisation

Theorem (T2)

Let $\langle M, d \rangle$ be a metric space and R be a set of disjoint subsets r_1, \dots, r_n in M . Then for any $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, the Voronoi region corresponding with r_i , R and λ , $u(r_i, R, \lambda)$, is given by:

$$\{p \mid \sup\{\lambda d(p, x) \mid x \in r_i\} \leq \inf\{(1 - \lambda)d(p, y) \mid y \in r_j \in R, j \neq i\}\}$$



Voronoi diagrams II: From categorical to comparative concepts

An equivalence result – cont.

informally ...

For any λ with $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, an object represented as a point x in a conceptual space belongs relative to λ to the category for which the supremum of λ -distances between x and prototype instances is no greater than the infimum of $(1 - \lambda)$ -distances between x and any prototype instances of any 'competing' category.



A restricted convexity result

Theorem (T3)

Let $\langle M, d \rangle$ be a Euclidean n -space, with a prototype set distribution $R := \{r_1, \dots, r_n\}$. For any r_i from R then, the graded collated Voronoi region $u(r_i, R, \lambda)$ is convex if $\lambda \geq .5$.

A restricted convexity result – cont.!

Let $\langle M, d \rangle$ be a metric space and R be a set of disjoint subsets r_1, \dots, r_n in M . Then for any $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, for any pair of distinct 'prototypical points' x and y (where for some $P \in \Pi(R)$, $x, y \in P$), the Voronoi diagram for x, y and λ is given by the equation:

$$\sum_{1 \leq i \leq n} (\lambda p_i - \lambda x_i)^2 = \sum_{1 \leq i \leq n} ((1 - \lambda) p_i - (1 - \lambda) y_i)^2$$

$\lambda = .5$

Equation of a hyperplane that separates the space into two half-spaces:

$$\sum_{1 \leq i \leq n} (a_i \times p_i) + b_i \leq 0, \text{ where } p_i \text{ is the only variable,}$$

The half-spaces are (assuming a Euclidean metric) convex.

A restricted convexity result – cont."

 $\lambda \neq .5$

- equation of a hypersphere centred on a_i , with the radius being $\sqrt{c_i}$:

$$\sum_i (p_i - a_i)^2 \leq c_i, \text{ where } p_i \text{ is the only variable and } c_i > 0,$$

The area circumscribed by the hypersphere is (assuming a Euclidean metric) a convex area, whereas the complement is not convex.

- for $\lambda > .5$ ($\lambda < .5$), the hypersphere is centred on x (y).



Nestedness Lemma

For any metric space $\langle M, d \rangle$, with a prototype set distribution $R := \{r_1, \dots, r_n\}$, for any $\lambda \in [0, 1]$ and $\lambda' \in [0, 1]$, if $\lambda \geq \lambda'$, then $u(r_i, R, \lambda) \subseteq u(r_i, R, \lambda')$.

Collated Voronoi orderings: definition

For any n -space with a metric d , $\langle M, d \rangle$, with a prototype area distribution $R := \{r_1, \dots, r_n\}$, for any λ where $0 \leq \lambda \leq 1$, let $u(r_i, R, \lambda)$ be the category corresponding to r_i , R and λ . For any set $r \in R$, for any x and y in $\langle M, d \rangle$ then:

$$x >_{\langle R, r \rangle}^{cV} y \Leftrightarrow df$$

$$(\exists \lambda : 0 \leq \lambda \leq 1) (x \in u(r_i, R, \lambda) \wedge y \notin u(r_i, R, \lambda)).$$

Collated Voronoi orderings: features

- If the metric is **Euclidean**, then $>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV}$ validates C_1 and C_2 only restrictedly—with respect to any Voronoi region $u(r_i, R, \lambda)$, where $\lambda \geq .5$.
- $>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV}$ is a **strict weak** ordering.
- If the metric is **Euclidean**, then any categorical concept that is associated with $>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV}$ is convex, if it is identical with $\{y \mid y >_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV} x\}$, or identical with $\{y \mid (y >_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV} x) \vee (y \not>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV} x \wedge x \not>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV} y)\}$, for some member x of $u(r, R, \lambda)$ where $\lambda \geq .5$.

Collated Voronoi orderings: features – cont.

- $>_{\langle R,r \rangle}^{cV}$ does not satisfy **Maximality**. E.g.:
 - Suppose $R = \{p_1, \dots, p_3\}$,
 where $p_1 = [0, 1]$, $p_2 = [2, 3]$, $p_3 = [5, 6]$.
 Then for $x = 2$ and $y = 3$, $x, y \in p_2$,
 but $y >_{\langle R, p_2 \rangle}^{cV} x$.
 - Suppose $R = \{q_1, \dots, q_3\}$,
 where $q_1 = [0, 2] \times [0, 1]$, $q_2 = [3, 5] \times [0, 1]$, $q_3 = [0, 2] \times [2, 3]$.
 Then for $x = \{2, 0\}$ and $y = \{1, 1\}$, $x, y \in q_2$,
 but $y >_{\langle R, q_2 \rangle}^{cV} x$.



Conclusion

- The collated Voronoi tessellation method in Douven et al. [2009], which accommodates prototype **areas**, can be furthermore generalised for **graded** cases of categorisation.
- Gärdenfors' convexity criterion **P** for natural properties may be recovered in terms of the convexity criteria **C1** and **C2** for order filters.
- **C1** and **C2** supply even more sufficient means of motivating a generalisation of the convexity criterion **P** for **graded** categorisation.
- The criteria **C1** and **C2** are logically independent from **P**, and they have intuitive force of their own.
- Food for thought: More general models which still have some psychological reality (concepts more than one domain; doing without prototypes; doing without geometric criteria in the first instance).

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Thank you!