

# **A flexible metaheuristic framework for solving rich vehicle routing problems**

Inauguraldissertation  
zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades  
der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät  
der Universität zu Köln

2011

vorgelegt von

Dipl.-Wirt.-Inf. Ulrich Vogel

aus Hürth

Referent: Prof. Dr. Dr. Ulrich Derigs  
Korreferent: Prof. Dr. Dirk Briskorn  
Tag der Promotion: 16.12.2011

Wirtschaftsinformatik und Operations Research

Band 17

**Ulrich Vogel**

**A flexible metaheuristic framework  
for solving rich vehicle routing problems**

D 38 (Diss. Universität Köln)

Shaker Verlag  
Aachen 2012

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Zugl.: Köln, Univ., Diss., 2011

Copyright Shaker Verlag 2012

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-8440-0674-2

ISSN 1433-8521

Shaker Verlag GmbH • P.O. BOX 101818 • D-52018 Aachen

Phone: 0049/2407/9596-0 • Telefax: 0049/2407/9596-9

Internet: [www.shaker.de](http://www.shaker.de) • e-mail: [info@shaker.de](mailto:info@shaker.de)

# Contents

<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>List of Algorithms</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations and Symbols</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Planning Problems in Road Transportation . . . . .	5
1.2 Decision Support for Road Transportation . . . . .	6
1.3 Metaheuristic VRP Framework . . . . .	8
1.4 Main Contributions . . . . .	10
1.5 Outline . . . . .	12
<b>I Vehicle Routing Problems and Solution Procedures</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2 Rich Vehicle Routing Problems</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 The Standard VRP . . . . .	17
2.2 Extensions of the VRP . . . . .	20
2.2.1 Vehicle Routing Problem with Time Windows . . . . .	20
2.2.2 Vehicle Routing Problem with Compartments . . . . .	20
2.2.3 Split Delivery Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	22
2.2.4 Periodic Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	23
2.2.5 Truck and Trailer Routing Problem . . . . .	24
2.2.6 Other Rich VRPs . . . . .	26
<b>3 Metaheuristic Solution Methods</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Construction Heuristics . . . . .	32
3.2 Neighborhood Search . . . . .	33

3.3	Metaheuristic Controls . . . . .	34
3.3.1	Simulated Annealing . . . . .	36
3.3.2	Deterministic Annealing . . . . .	36
3.3.3	Tabu Search . . . . .	36
3.3.4	Attribute Based Hill Climber . . . . .	37
3.3.5	Other Metaheuristic Strategies . . . . .	37
3.4	Local Search Neighborhoods . . . . .	39
3.5	Large Neighborhood Search . . . . .	42
 <b>II Metaheuristic Framework</b>		<b>47</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Framework Requirements</b>	<b>49</b>
4.1	Existing VRP Frameworks and Libraries . . . . .	49
4.2	Essential Framework Attributes . . . . .	53
4.3	Adaptation Requirements . . . . .	54
<b>5</b>	<b>Concepts of the Metaheuristic Framework</b>	<b>57</b>
5.1	Architecture . . . . .	58
5.2	Base Heuristics . . . . .	60
5.2.1	The LS-ABHC Heuristic . . . . .	60
5.2.2	The LS-RRT Heuristic . . . . .	62
5.2.3	The LNS-RRT Heuristic . . . . .	63
5.3	Hybrid Methods . . . . .	65
5.3.1	The HYBRID-ABHC Heuristic . . . . .	65
5.3.2	The HYBRID-RRT Heuristic . . . . .	67
5.4	Algorithm Adaptation . . . . .	67
5.4.1	Construction Heuristics . . . . .	70
5.4.2	Local Search Neighborhoods . . . . .	71
5.4.3	Large Neighborhood Search Operations . . . . .	74
<b>6</b>	<b>Design of the Metaheuristic Framework</b>	<b>77</b>
6.1	Data Structure Classes . . . . .	79
6.1.1	Problem Instance Classes . . . . .	79
6.1.2	Solution Classes . . . . .	81
6.2	Relevant Algorithmic Component Classes . . . . .	85
6.2.1	Construction Heuristic Classes . . . . .	87
6.2.2	Metaheuristic Classes . . . . .	88

---

6.2.3	Local Search Neighborhood Classes . . . . .	89
6.2.4	Large Neighborhood Search Classes . . . . .	92
6.3	Solver Configuration Classes . . . . .	94
<b>III</b>	<b>Customizing</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Adaptation to Rich VRPs</b>	<b>101</b>
7.1	Vehicle Routing Problem with Time Windows . . . . .	102
7.2	Vehicle Routing Problem with Compartments . . . . .	103
7.3	Split Delivery Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	106
7.4	Periodic Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	110
7.5	Truck and Trailer Routing Problem . . . . .	114
7.5.1	Solution Representation . . . . .	115
7.5.2	Construction Heuristics . . . . .	116
7.5.3	Large Neighborhood Search . . . . .	118
7.5.4	Local Search . . . . .	121
7.6	Other Rich VRPs . . . . .	125
<b>8</b>	<b>Computational Results</b>	<b>129</b>
8.1	Standard Parametrization . . . . .	130
8.2	Final Results . . . . .	135
8.2.1	Standard VRP . . . . .	137
8.2.2	Vehicle Routing Problem with Time Windows . . . . .	142
8.2.3	Vehicle Routing Problem with Compartments . . . . .	145
8.2.4	Split Delivery Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	151
8.2.5	Periodic Vehicle Routing Problem . . . . .	154
8.2.6	Truck and Trailer Routing Problem . . . . .	158
8.3	Summary . . . . .	163
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>169</b>
9.1	Critical Review . . . . .	170
9.2	Future Research . . . . .	172
<b>A</b>	<b>Pseudocodes</b>	<b>175</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>177</b>



# List of Figures

1.1	EU-27 road transportation by transportation modes. . . . .	2
1.2	Example of a road transportation DSS user interface. . . . .	7
2.1	Tour types in the TTRP. . . . .	25
3.1	Local search intra-tour moves. . . . .	40
3.2	Local search inter-tour moves. . . . .	40
3.3	Tour distance vs. number of tours with split deliveries. . . . .	42
3.4	Alternation between intensification and diversification. . . . .	43
3.5	Steps of a large neighborhood search move. . . . .	44
4.1	Solving multiple VRPs with a rich PDPTW formulation and solver. . . . .	52
5.1	Framework architecture. . . . .	58
5.2	Steps of a rich VRP operation. . . . .	68
6.1	Data structure classes. . . . .	79
6.2	Interplay of solution representations. . . . .	82
6.3	Algorithmic component classes. . . . .	86
7.1	Inter-tour moves with joins of split deliveries. . . . .	107
7.2	Alternative TTRP solution representations. . . . .	115
7.3	Special removal and insertion operations in the TTRP. . . . .	118
7.4	Post-processing steps for removing a subtour root. . . . .	120
7.5	Special exchange moves in the TTRP. . . . .	122
7.6	Relocate-subtour neighborhood. . . . .	124
7.7	Switch-vehicle-type neighborhood. . . . .	124
8.1	Parameter settings of LS-RRT and LNS-RRT. . . . .	132
8.2	Parameter settings of HYBRID-ABHC and HYBRID-RRT. . . . .	134
8.3	Convergence of solution quality for the standard VRP. . . . .	138

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

8.4	Convergence of solution quality for the VRPTW: total distance. . . . .	145
8.5	Convergence of solution quality for the VRPC. . . . .	147
8.6	Solutions with and without split deliveries. . . . .	151
8.7	Convergence of solution quality for the SDVRP. . . . .	152
8.8	Convergence of solution quality for the PVRP. . . . .	156
8.9	Convergence of solution quality for the TTRP. . . . .	160
8.10	Overall solution qualities and computation times. . . . .	163
8.11	Impact of parameter tuning. . . . .	165
8.12	Average and maximum deviations within data sets. . . . .	166
8.13	Variability of tour distance over multiple runs. . . . .	167

# List of Tables

8.1	Iteration limit scenarios. . . . .	136
8.2	Aggregated results for the standard VRP. . . . .	139
8.3	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the standard VRP. . . . .	141
8.4	Aggregated results for the VRPTW: number of vehicles. . . . .	143
8.5	Aggregated results for the VRPTW: total distance. . . . .	144
8.6	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the VRPTW. . . . .	146
8.7	Aggregated results for the VRPC. . . . .	148
8.8	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the VRPC. . . . .	150
8.9	Aggregated results for the SDVRP. . . . .	153
8.10	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the SDVRP. . . . .	155
8.11	Aggregated results for the PVRP. . . . .	157
8.12	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the PVRP. . . . .	159
8.13	Aggregated results for the TTRP. . . . .	161
8.14	Comparison with a state-of-the-art method for the TTRP. . . . .	162



# List of Algorithms

3.1	Neighborhood search . . . . .	34
5.1	The LS-ABHC heuristic . . . . .	61
5.2	The LS-RRT heuristic . . . . .	63
5.3	The LNS-RRT heuristic . . . . .	64
5.4	The HYBRID-ABHC heuristic . . . . .	66
5.5	The HYBRID-RRT heuristic . . . . .	67
5.6	User-definable functions in savings heuristic . . . . .	70
5.7	User-definable functions in sweep heuristic . . . . .	71
5.8	User-definable functions in relocate . . . . .	72
5.9	User-definable functions in LNS removals . . . . .	74
5.10	User-definable functions in LNS insertions . . . . .	75
7.1	Ejection procedure for split deliveries . . . . .	109
7.2	Subtour removal . . . . .	121
A.1	User-definable functions in exchange . . . . .	175
A.2	User-definable functions in 2-opt* . . . . .	176
A.3	User-definable functions in relocate <sup>f</sup> . . . . .	176
A.4	User-definable functions in 2-opt . . . . .	176



# List of Abbreviations and Symbols

2L-CVRP	Capacitated vehicle routing problem with two-dimensional loading constraints
3L-CVRP	Capacitated vehicle routing problem with three-dimensional loading constraints
ABHC	Attribute based hill climber
AMP	Adaptive memory programming
ARP	Arc routing problem
BKS	Best known solution(s)
CMT	Set of testing instances by Christofides et al. (1979)
CV	Coefficient of variation
CVRP	Capacitated vehicle routing problem
DDM	Dialog, data, models
DSS	Decision support system
DVRP	Dynamic vehicle routing problem
FSMVRP	Fleet size and mix vehicle routing problem
GDA	Great deluge algorithm
GIS	Geographic information system
GIST	Greedy indirect search technique
GLS	Guided local search
GPS	Global positioning system

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

---

GWKC	Set of testing instances by Golden et al. (1998)
HVRP	Heterogeneous vehicle routing problem
HYBRID-ABHC	ABHC heuristic with LS neighborhoods and LNS moves
HYBRID-RRT	RRT heuristic with LS neighborhoods and LNS moves
LNS	Large neighborhood search
LNS-RRT	RRT heuristic with LNS moves
LS	Local search
LS-ABHC	ABHC heuristic with LS neighborhoods
LS-RRT	RRT heuristic with LS neighborhoods
MDVRP	Multi-depot vehicle routing problem
Mflop/s	Million floating point operations per second
MP-VRP	Multi-pile vehicle routing problem
NV	Number of vehicles
OOP	Object-oriented programming
OR	Operations research
OVRP	Open vehicle routing problem
PDP	Pickup and delivery problem
PDPTW	Pickup and delivery problem with time windows
pkm	Passenger-kilometer
PVRP	Periodic vehicle routing problem
RPDPTW	Rich pickup and delivery problem with time windows
RRT	Record-to-record travel
SA	Simulated annealing
SD	Steepest descent

SDVRP	Split delivery vehicle routing problem
TA	Threshold accepting
TD	Total distance
TDVRP	Time-dependent vehicle routing problem
tkm	Tonne-kilometer
TS	Tabu search
TSP	Traveling salesman problem
TTRP	Truck and trailer routing problem
VNS	Variable neighborhood search
VRP	Vehicle routing problem
VRPB	Vehicle routing problem with backhauls
VRPC	Vehicle routing problem with compartments
VRPM	Vehicle routing problem with multiple use of vehicles
VRPPD	Vehicle routing problem with pickups and deliveries
VRPTT	Vehicle routing problem with trailers and transshipments
VRPTW	Vehicle routing problem with time windows
$A$	Set of ABHC attributes
$A(S)$	Set of ABHC attributes of a solution
$A^e$	Set of entering ABHC attributes
$\bar{A}^e$	Set of entering ABHC attributes (problem-specific)
$A^l$	Set of leaving ABHC attributes
$\bar{A}^l$	Set of leaving ABHC attributes (problem-specific)
$amem$	ABHC attribute memory
$C$	Set of compartments

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

---

$C_i$	Set of customer visit combinations
$c_{ij}$	Arc cost
$cost(S)$	Solution cost
$customers(t)$	Set of customers visited during a tour
$d$	Depot
$e_i$	Begin of customer time window
$\mathcal{F}$	Set of feasible solutions
$f_i$	Customer service frequency
$\mathcal{I}$	Set of insertion heuristics
$I^{pc}$	Set of product/compartment incompatibilities
$I^{pp}$	Set of product/product incompatibilities
$l_i$	End of customer time window
$locations(t)$	Set of locations visited during a tour
$m$	Maximum number of vehicles
$m_k$	Maximum number of trucks
$m_l$	Maximum number of trailers
$\mathcal{N}$	Set of neighborhoods
$N$	Set of nodes/locations
$N_c$	Set of customers
$N(S)$	Set of neighbors of a solution
$N(S, i)$	Set of neighbors reachable by a move involving a specific customer
$O_i$	Set of orders placed by a customer
$P$	Set of products
$p^{LS}$	Probability of LS move in a hybrid method

$p_o$	Order product type
$Q$	Vehicle capacity
$Q_c$	Compartment capacity
$Q_k$	Truck capacity
$Q_t$	Trailer capacity
$q$	Number of customers removed in LNS
$q_i$	Customer demand
$q_o$	Order quantity
$\mathcal{R}$	Set of removal heuristics
$R(i, j)$	Shaw removal relatedness between two customers
$r$	Removal percentage in LNS
$s_i$	Customer service time
$T$	Maximum travel duration
$t$	Number of periods in planning horizon
$t_{ij}$	Arc travel time
$tours(S)$	Set of tours of a solution
$V$	Set of vehicles
$\beta$	LS-RRT randomization
$\beta^{SR}$	Shaw removal randomization
$\beta^{STR}$	Subtour removal randomization
$\beta^{WR}$	Worst removal randomization
$\Delta$	Cost increase
$\bar{\Delta}$	Cost increase (problem-specific)
$\delta$	RRT deviation

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

---

$\Phi$	Problem-specific information
$\Phi^s$	Problem-specific sequence-level information
$\Phi^t$	Problem-specific tour-level information
$\varphi$	Shaw relatedness weight for distance
$\chi$	Shaw relatedness weight for time windows
$\psi$	Shaw relatedness weight for demand
$\omega$	Shaw relatedness weight for product type