

NONLINEAR UNMIXING OF HYPERSPECTRAL IMAGES VIA REGULARIZED WASSERSTEIN DICTIONARY LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Hyperspectral images consist of large numbers of pixels across hundreds of spectral bands, making statistical analysis computationally challenging. However, these images often exhibit intrinsic structure that can be leveraged for efficient statistical and machine learning. We propose a novel nonlinear method for unmixing hyperspectral images. In contrast to classical methods which consider an additive linear model, we propose to represent hyperspectral spectra as probability distributions in Wasserstein space and characterize pure spectra as those that allow for typical observations to be reconstructed as entropic Wasserstein barycenters. This allows for the analysis and synthesis of hyperspectral spectra in a geometry-preserving fashion. Results on synthetic data and real HSI show important geometric features of hyperspectral spectra are preserved when utilizing our nonlinear Wasserstein unmixing scheme.

Index Terms— Hyperspectral images, unmixing, optimal transport, Wasserstein space

1. INTRODUCTION

Hyperspectral images (HSI) record reflectance across a range of electromagnetic wavelengths, providing a powerful, high spectral resolution characterization of imaged scenes. While its rich information is useful for a range of remote sensing tasks (e.g., land cover classification [1, 2], land change detection [3], precision agriculture [4], and anomaly detection [5, 6]), HSI data is very high-dimensional. Typically hundreds of spectral reflectance ranges are recorded for millions of pixels. The curse of dimensionality for HSI challenges naive statistical and machine learning methods and demands approaches that leverage intrinsic low-dimensional structures in HSI [7].

Dimension reduction methods such as principal component analysis (PCA) [8], non-negative matrix factorization (NMF) [9, 10], and sparse dictionary learning [11] have proven useful for reducing the dimension of HSI while retaining properties that allow for downstream applications such

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as material labeling or image segmentation. A related notion in HSI analysis is that of *unmixing*, which models individual pixels in HSI as consisting of reflectances from multiple “pure” material spectra, due to the low spatial resolution of typical HSI sensors (e.g., on the order of tens of square meters). Important in its own right for understanding the context of a scene captured by an HSI, unmixing also provides useful features for classification and segmentation methods [12]. HSI unmixing not only provides useful information about the constituent material contents of an individual pixel (when interpreting the learned spectra as pure materials) but also provides an efficient parameterization of the data when the number of learned pure spectra is smaller than the number of spectral bands in the full HSI.

We approach the problem of HSI unmixing via a novel dictionary learning method based on *optimal transport* [13]. While most HSI unmixing methods posit an additive mixture model, we consider a nonlinear mixture model based on entropic Wasserstein barycenters, which preserves the intrinsic geometry of the spectral signatures more effectively than existing methods. We apply our novel geometric Wasserstein dictionary learning scheme to synthetic and real hyperspectral spectra to demonstrate the efficient and interpretable components learned by our method.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides necessary background on unmixing and optimal transport. Section 3 details our Wasserstein Hyperspectral Unmixing (WaHU) algorithm, which is then validated on synthetic and real HSI data in Section 4. We conclude and discuss future work in Section 5.

2. BACKGROUND

Let $\{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n \subset \mathbb{R}^D$ denote a collection of hyperspectral pixels with n being the total number of pixels imaged and D the number of spectral bands. Typical approaches to HSI unmixing attempt to learn pure spectra — which we will refer to as atoms in what follows — $\{z_j\}_{j=1}^m \subset \mathbb{R}^D$ and mixture weights $\{w_i\}_{i=1}^n \subset \mathbb{R}^m$ such that $\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \|\mu_i - \sum_{j=1}^m [w_i]_j z_j\|_2$ is small (i.e., a typical pixel is well-reconstructed by a linear combination of the learned atoms) where $m \ll n$ and $\|\cdot\|_2$

denotes the ℓ^2 norm. Various constraints on the atoms (e.g., non-negativity; lie on an D -simplex) and weights (e.g., non-negativity; lie on an m -simplex; small ℓ^p norm; sparsity) may be imposed to generate interpretable and useful atoms and weights. While well-studied [14, 15], approaches to HSI unmixing based on a linear reconstruction model (i.e., approximating true pixel μ_i via a linear combination of the $\{z_j\}_{j=1}^m$) may fail to capture intrinsic geometry for even simple datasets. See for example Figure 2 (b) and (c) for an illustration of how two linear approaches for unmixing — principal component analysis (PCA) and nonnegative matrix factorization (NMF) — may fail to efficiently represent a family of translated and rescaled Gaussians.

Our approach abandons the linear unmixing model and considers a novel approach to HSI unmixing based on *optimal transport* [13] between probability measures. Let $\Delta^D := \{(x_1, \dots, x_D) \in \mathbb{R}^D \mid \sum_{k=1}^D x_k = 1, x_k \geq 0, \forall k\}$ denote the probability simplex in \mathbb{R}^D . For two probability distributions $\mu, \nu \in \Delta^D$, let $\Pi(\mu, \nu) \subset \Delta^{D \times D}$ denote the space of *couplings* between μ and ν , namely the non-negative matrices $\pi \in \mathbb{R}^{D \times D}$ such that $\forall j, \sum_{i=1}^D \pi_{ij} = \nu_j$, and $\forall i, \sum_{j=1}^D \pi_{ij} = \mu_i$. We suppose μ, ν are supported on a common set of points $\{b_k\}_{k=1}^D \subset \mathbb{R}$. For $p \geq 1$, the *entropic p -Wasserstein distance* [16] between μ and ν is

$$W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\nu, \mu) := \min_{\pi \in \Pi(\mu, \nu)} \sum_{k=1}^D \sum_{\ell=1}^D (\pi_{k\ell} |b_k - b_\ell|^p + \epsilon \pi_{k\ell} \log(\pi_{k\ell})), \quad (1)$$

where $\epsilon > 0$ is a regularization parameter. At an intuitive level, the solution π^* to (1) transports the mass in distribution μ with that in ν in a distance-minimizing manner (first term) while ensuring the mass is smoothly distributed (second term); see [13] and [17] for a thorough overview of the computational and theoretical aspects of entropic optimal transport, respectively.

We can now define a notion of *averaging with respect to entropic p -Wasserstein distance*, namely entropic Wasserstein barycenters [18, 19, 20, 21]. For a set of m probability distributions $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m \subset \Delta^D$ and a vector of weights $w \in \Delta^m$, we define the entropic p -Wasserstein barycenter to be

$$\text{Bary}(\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m; w) := \arg \min_{\mu \in \Delta^D} \sum_{j=1}^m w_j W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\mu, \nu_j). \quad (2)$$

Figure 1 shows $m = 2$ Gaussians $\nu_1 \sim \mathcal{N}(50, 5)$, $\nu_2 \sim \mathcal{N}(130, 10)$ as well as a family of linear mixtures $(1 - t)\nu_1 + t\nu_2$ and a family of entropic 2-Wasserstein barycenters corresponding to weights $(1 - t, t) \in \Delta^2$ for $t \in \{0, .02, .04, \dots, .98, 1\}$. Unlike the linear mixtures, the barycenters smoothly deform from one Gaussian to another. In fact, the associated path of probability measures is related to geodesic paths in the space of probability measures [22].

Given observed probability distributions $\{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n$ (interpreted in our context as HSI pixels after normalization

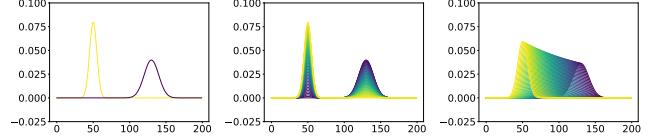


Fig. 1. *Left:* two Gaussian distributions, represented by their densities. *Middle:* linear mixtures of these two Gaussians, showing bi-modal behavior. *Right:* Barycenters of the two Gaussians, showing geometry preservation; in particular, entropic 2-Wasserstein barycenters of Gaussians remain Gaussian [20].

so they lie in Δ^D), we can perform unmixing via a learning scheme that finds probability distributions $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m$ and weights $\{w_i\}_{i=1}^n \subset \Delta^m$ such that each data point μ_i is close to an entropic barycenter with reference measures $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m$ and weights w_i . Specifically, we solve the following regularized Wasserstein dictionary learning problem [23, 24]:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\{\nu_j^*\}_{j=1}^m, \{w_i^*\}_{i=1}^n) \\ &= \arg \min_{\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m, \{w_i\}_{i=1}^n} \sum_{i=1}^n W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\text{Bary}(\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m; w_i), \mu_i) \\ &+ \rho \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m [w_i]_j W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\mu_i, \nu_j), \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

where $\rho > 0$ is a regularization parameter. This formulation generalizes linear unmixing models by (i) replacing linear reconstruction with entropic Wasserstein barycenter reconstruction and (ii) penalizing the use of non-local atoms in the reconstructions. A linear formulation of (3) was considered in [11] and shown to be effective for unsupervised clustering of HSI.

The non-convex optimization problem (3) tries to reconstruct each observed data point well as a barycenter (first term), subject to a locality regularizer that promotes representing using nearby atoms (second term). This program can be approximately optimized using first-order methods that jointly optimize the atoms and weights; we refer to [23] and [24] for details. Our focus is on learning meaningful atoms for HSI unmixing via solving (3) as described in Section 3. We note that our approach differs from existing approaches to HSI unmixing that leverage entropic optimal transport [25], in that our synthesis model for combining atoms is non-linear, based on entropic Wasserstein barycenters.

3. THE WASSERSTEIN HYPERSPECTRAL UNMIXING (WAHU) ALGORITHM

We consider HSI pixels as probability distributions and solve (3) to learn generators that reconstruct the observed data well under the Wasserstein barycenter synthesis model. The approach is laid out in Algorithm 1. The key idea for approxi-

mately solving (3) is to consider the loss function

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{G}(\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m, \{w_i\}_{i=1}^n, \{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n) := \\ \sum_{i=1}^n W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\text{Bary}(\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m; w_i), \mu_i) \\ + \rho \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m [w_i]_j W_{p,\epsilon}^p(\mu_i, \nu_j), \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

and to use automatic differentiation to iteratively update the weights $\{w_i\}_{i=1}^n$ and atoms $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m$; we note that the training data $\{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n$ is fixed in the learning process. First, we initialize the weights uniformly at random from Δ^m and the atoms with k -means++ [26] in Wasserstein space over the training data. From these initializations, we iteratively update via automatic differentiation on \mathcal{G} .

Algorithm 1: Wasserstein Hyperspectral Unmixing (WaHU)

- 1: **Input:** HSI spectra: $\{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n \subset \mathbb{R}^D$; Wasserstein parameter: p ; entropic regularization parameter: ϵ ; locality regularization parameter: ρ ; # iterations: L ; number of atoms: m
- 2: Normalize each pixel μ_i to lie in Δ^D .
- 3: Initialize variables $\alpha^{(0)} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times N}$, $\beta^{(0)} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times m}$.
- 4: **for** $k \leftarrow 1, \dots, L$ **do**
- 5: $\{\nu_j^{(k)}\}_{j=1}^m \leftarrow \sigma(\alpha^{(0)})$, $\{w_i^{(k)}\}_{i=1}^n \leftarrow \sigma(\beta^{(0)})$.
- 6: Compute the objective function
 $\text{loss} \leftarrow \mathcal{G}(\{\nu_j^{(k)}\}_{j=1}^m, \{w_i^{(k)}\}_{i=1}^n, \{\mu_i\}_{i=1}^n)$.
- 7: Compute the gradients with automatic differentiation:
 $\text{loss.backward}()$.
- 8: Update $\alpha^{(k)}, \beta^{(k)}$.
- 9: **end for**
- 10: **Output:** Learned atoms: $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m \leftarrow \sigma(\alpha^{(k)})$; learned weights: $\{w_i\}_{i=1}^n \leftarrow \sigma(\beta^{(k)})$.

In order to perform our optimization over arbitrary matrices $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times D}, \beta \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times m}$ instead of $\{\nu_j\}_{j=1}^m, \{w_i\}_{i=1}^n$ which are constrained to be non-negative and sum-to-1, we use the softmax change of variables function $\sigma(\alpha) = (\nu_1 \mid \nu_2 \mid \dots \mid \nu_m)^\top$ and $\sigma(\beta) = (w_1 \mid w_2 \mid \dots \mid w_n)^\top$ where σ acts row-wise on a matrix and acts on a vector (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) as:

$$\sigma(x_1, \dots, x_n) := \left(\frac{\exp(x_1)}{\sum_{i=1}^n \exp(x_i)}, \dots, \frac{\exp(x_n)}{\sum_{i=1}^n \exp(x_i)} \right).$$

Code implementing Algorithm 1 using the Python OT library [27] as well as all experiments in Section 4 is publicly available¹.

¹https://github.com/fullenbs/WDL_HSI

4. EXPERIMENTS ON SYNTHETIC AND REAL HSI

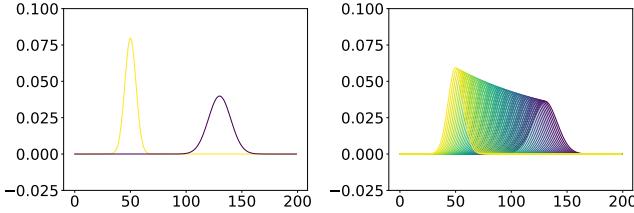
To demonstrate the efficacy of WaHU for HSI unmixing, we consider two datasets: synthetic Gaussians and real Salinas A spectra. We contrast our method with two classical unmixing methods: PCA, which puts no positivity constraints and seeks only to minimize ℓ^2 reconstruction error; and NMF, which enforces non-negativity constraints on atoms and weights.

Synthetic Gaussian Data: We compare WaHU on synthetic Gaussian data in Figure 2. The training data is the same as in the right plot in Figure 1. As we see in Figure 2 (b), PCA learns atoms that *are not probability distributions*, owing to the lack of positivity constraints. We see in Figure 2 (c) that while NMF learns positive atoms that resemble the shapes of the true atoms (albeit they are off by a translation), the reconstructions are poor owing to the underlying additive linear reconstruction model. Such a model cannot adequately account for the particular form of intrinsic low-dimensionality in this data, namely that all observed Gaussians are smooth deformations between two reference Gaussians (more precisely, that they all lay near the geodesic between the generating reference measures in Wasserstein space). On the other hand as seen in Figure 2 (d), WaHU not only learns decent approximations to the generating atoms, but reconstructs the data faithfully. For this experiment, parameters $p = 2$, $\epsilon = .001$, $\rho = 0$, $m = 2$, and $L = 400$ were used for WaHU.

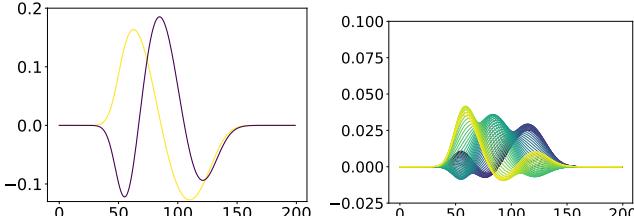
Salinas A Data: Salinas A is a hyperspectral image captured by the AVIRIS sensor in 1998 of an agricultural region in Salinas Valley, CA, USA. It ranges from 380-2500 nm across 224 bands. While the full scene is 83×86 , totaling 7138 pixels, we randomly sample 1002 pixels (167 for each of the 6 labeled material classes) for our unmixing experiments. Figure 3 shows unmixing results with $m = 4$, which allows for easy visualization and contrast with PCA and NMF. As with the synthetic data, PCA fails to even preserve the non-negativity of the training data. NMF learns non-negative atoms as expected, albeit none resemble the observed training points. WaHU learns suitable atoms that indeed resemble typical observations in the data, owing to the use of the locality regularizer in (3). We note that all methods learn atoms that, with respect to their associated synthesis models (linear for PCA and NMF and nonlinear for WaHU), reconstruct the training data well, albeit PCA and NMF appear more affected by outlier pixels than WaHU. In particular, WaHU yields smoother reconstructions. In this experiment, parameters $p = 1$, $\epsilon = .05$, $\rho = .01$, $m = 4$, and $L = 400$ were used.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

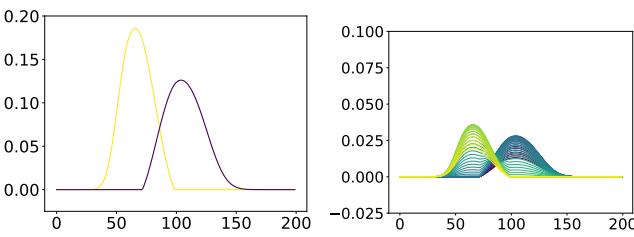
We established a novel unmixing paradigm for hyperspectral images based on optimal transport, specifically entropic p -



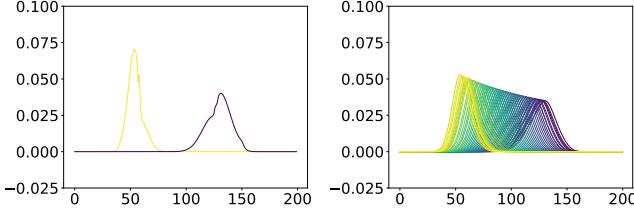
(a) Gaussian atoms (left) and synthetic Gaussian data (right).



(b) PCA atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).



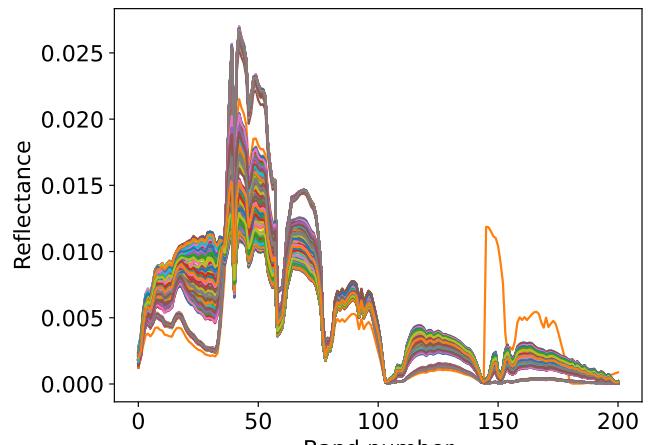
(c) NMF atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).



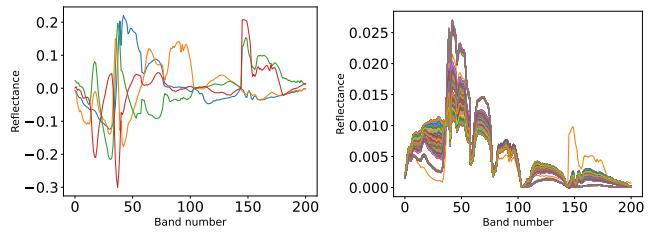
(d) WaHU atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).

Fig. 2. Unmixing results for Gaussian mixtures. PCA and NMF fail to capture the smooth deformations of the pair of Gaussians. This is because a linear synthesis model is inefficient for this data.

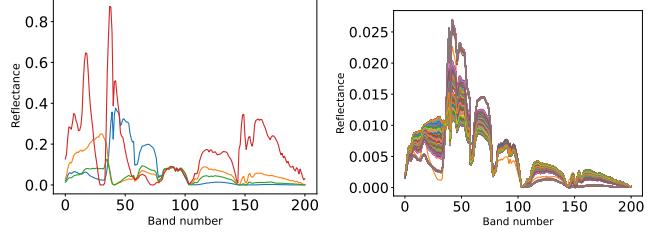
Wasserstein distances and barycenters. By capturing smooth variations between data understood as probability measures, more efficient and interpretable learning is achieved compared to linear benchmarks. In the future, we will consider an unmixing formulation in terms of *unbalanced optimal transport* [28, 29] that allows us to consider spectra without the need to force them to be probability measures. While this paper has focused on the question of learning good atoms, the learned weights $w_i \in \Delta^m$ provide efficient features for downstream learning tasks (e.g., pixel classification and scene segmentation [30, 31, 12, 32]) that may allow for the curse of dimensionality to be broken when $m \ll D$. Developing uses of the weights in supervised and unsupervised labeling tasks



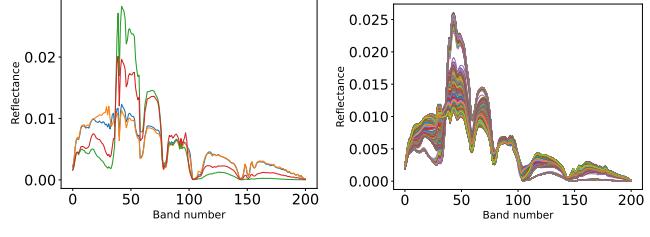
(a) Salinas spectra for training.



(b) PCA atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).



(c) NMF atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).



(d) WaHU atoms (left) and reconstructions (right).

Fig. 3. Unmixing results for Salinas A spectra. PCA, NMF, and WaHU all reconstruct well with respect to their respective synthesis models, but only WaHU learns atoms that resemble the training data.

will be pursued in future work.

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