

The Noise Collector for Sparse Recovery in High Dimensions

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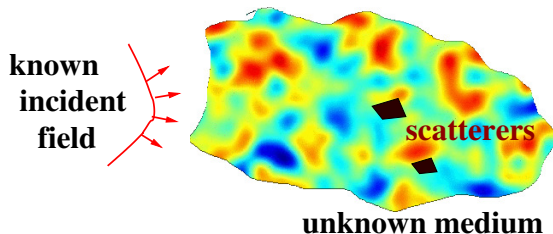
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Support: AFOSR FA9550-17-1-0238,
AFOSR FA9550-18-1-0519.

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Inverse problems

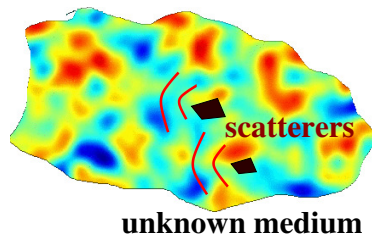
Wave propagation



- Inverse problems aim to reconstruct a medium characteristics from knowledge of the response of the medium to a known incident field.
- In the context of the wave equation we seek to reconstruct the **reflectivity** by recording the medium's response to one or more known excitations.

Inverse problems

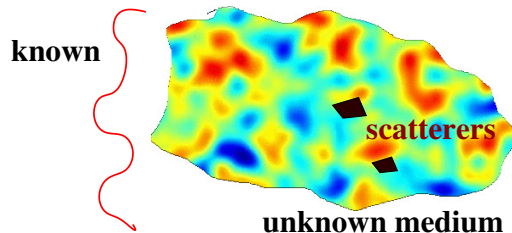
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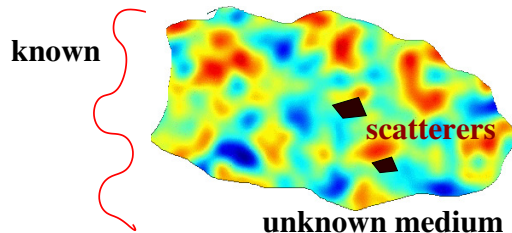
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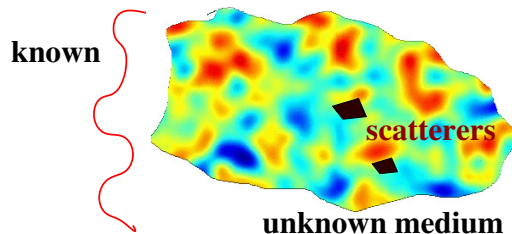
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- We consider **sparse** reflectivities : often true in applications when the object to be imaged occupies a small part of the imaging scene

Inverse problems

Wave propagation



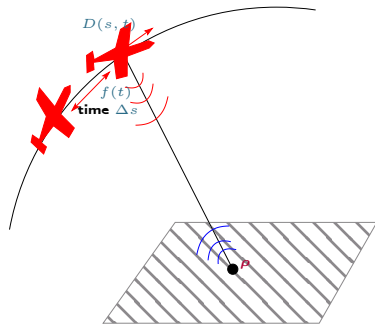
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- Study how **uncertainty** in the data affects the solution

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Applications

Radar

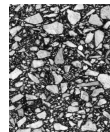
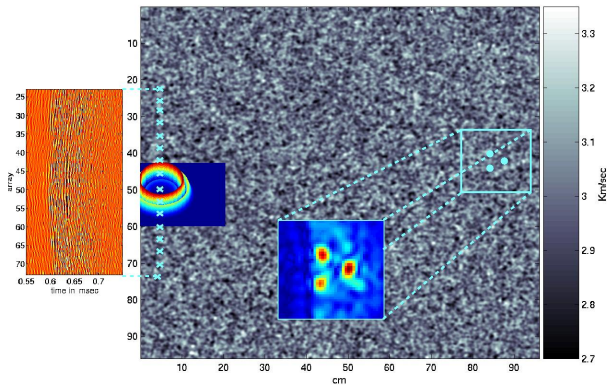


Here we want to retrieve the reflectivity on the ground. The measurements are obtained by sending pulses and collecting the echoes. The sensing matrix models how waves propagate from the airplane to the ground reflectors and back to the plane. The start-stop approximation is assumed.

Uncertainty in the data : measurement noise, measurement location

Applications

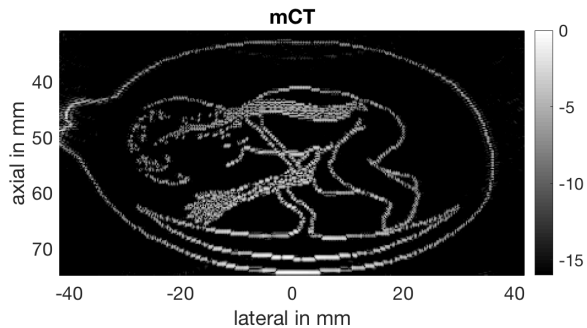
Non-destructive testing



Uncertainty : unknown micro-structure of material ; concrete sample

Applications

Medical Ultrasound

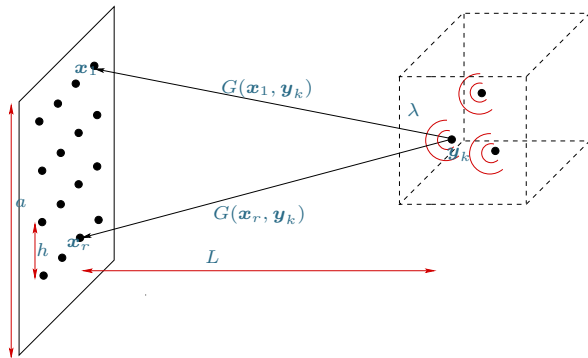


Uncertainty : measurement noise, low SNR

The imaging problem

Passive case

- We consider here the passive imaging problem, where we seek to reconstruct the positions \mathbf{y}_j and complex-valued amplitudes ρ_j , $j = 1, \dots, M$ of sources.

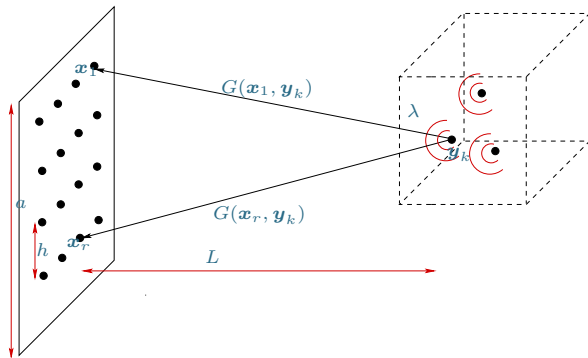


- There are N receivers at the array and K points in the image window IW. We assume that $N \ll K$ and that the unknown ρ has sparse support $M = \text{supp}(\rho)$, $M < N$ and typically $M \ll K$.

The imaging problem

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- The imaging problem consists in solving a **linear** system of the form

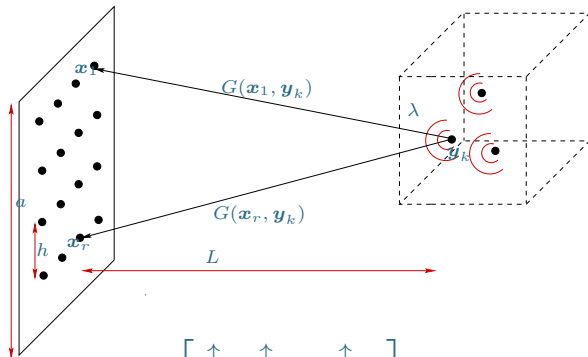
$$\mathcal{A}\rho = \mathbf{b}$$

with \mathbf{b} the data, ρ the unknown, and \mathcal{A} the sensing matrix

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The sensing matrix

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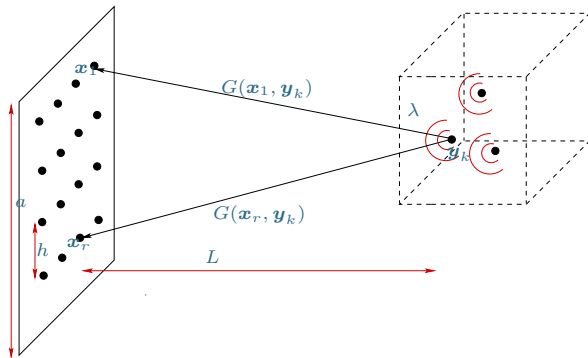


- In this case the sensing matrix is $\mathcal{A} = \begin{bmatrix} \uparrow & \uparrow & \uparrow \\ a_1 & a_2 & a_K \\ \downarrow & \downarrow & \downarrow \end{bmatrix}$ with $a_k = g(\mathbf{y}_k) / \|g(\mathbf{y}_k)\|_2$ and $g(\mathbf{y}_k) = (G(x_1, \mathbf{y}_k), G(x_2, \mathbf{y}_k), \dots, G(x_N, \mathbf{y}_k))^T$

The imaging problem

Active case

- We consider here the passive imaging problem, where we seek to reconstruct the positions \mathbf{y}_j and complex-valued amplitudes ρ_j , $j = 1, \dots, M$ of sources.



- The source imaging problem is considered here for simplicity. The active array imaging problem can be cast under the same linear algebra framework (i.e., solving $\mathcal{A}\rho = \mathbf{b}$) even when multiple scattering is not negligible.

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Compressive sensing

Our problem consist in finding the solution $\boldsymbol{\rho} \in \mathbb{C}^K$ of

$$\mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} = \mathbf{b}_\delta,$$

from highly incomplete ($1 \ll N < K$) measurement data $\mathbf{b}_\delta \in \mathbb{C}^N$

$$\mathbf{b}_\delta = \mathbf{b} + \delta\mathbf{b},$$

corrupted by the noise vector $\delta\mathbf{b}$.

There exist infinitely many solutions to our problem, and thus, it is a priori not possible to find the correct one without some additional information.

The **sparsity** of $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ changes the imaging problem substantially because we can formulate it as an optimization problem which seeks the sparsest vector in \mathbb{C}^K that equates model and data.

Compressive sensing

$$\rho^{\ell_1} : \min \|\rho\|_1, \text{ subject to } \mathcal{A}\rho = \mathbf{b}$$

Theorem¹ : In the noiseless case the ℓ_1 approach gives the exact solution! under the assumption (mutual coherence) :

$$\max_{k \neq k'} |\langle \mathbf{a}_k, \mathbf{a}_{k'} \rangle| \leq 1/(2M), \quad \forall k, k' = 1, \dots, K.$$

Here \mathbf{a}_k : normalized columns of \mathcal{A} , i.e., $\|\mathbf{a}_k\|_2 = 1, \forall k$

Theorem² : The same result can be obtained assuming the sensing matrix \mathcal{A} obeys the M-restricted isometry property which basically states that all sets of M-columns of \mathcal{A} behave approximately as an orthonormal system.

In both cases the assumptions translate to conditions on the discretization of IW since in imaging $a_k = g(\mathbf{y}_k) / \|g(\mathbf{y}_k)\|_2$ with $g(\mathbf{y}_k, \omega_l) = (G(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{y}_k), G(\mathbf{x}_2, \mathbf{y}_k), \dots, G(\mathbf{x}_N, \mathbf{y}_k))^T$

-
1. Donoho & Elad '03
 2. Candès & Tao '05

Remarks

- A pair of columns \mathbf{a}_i and \mathbf{a}_j are coherent, if the corresponding grid-points are close to each other. Therefore the incoherence conditions can be satisfied only for **coarse** image discretizations that imply **poor** resolution.

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- To achieve high resolution we propose to modify the classical theory so as to allow for some coherence in \mathcal{A} .
- Let $\boldsymbol{\rho} \in \mathbb{C}^K$ be an M -sparse solution of $\mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} = \mathbf{b}$. Define the index of its support T . For any $j \in T$ define the corresponding vicinity of \mathbf{a}_j as

$$S_j = \left\{ k \text{ s.t. } |\langle \mathbf{a}_k, \mathbf{a}_j \rangle| \geq \frac{1}{3M} \right\}.$$

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- For any vector $\boldsymbol{\xi} \in \mathbb{C}^K$ define its coherent misfit to $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ as

$$\text{Co}(\boldsymbol{\rho}, \boldsymbol{\xi}) = \sum_{j \in T} \left| \rho_j - \sum_{k \in S_j} \langle \mathbf{a}_j, \mathbf{a}_k \rangle \xi_k \right|,$$

and its incoherent remainder

$$\text{In}(\boldsymbol{\rho}, \boldsymbol{\xi}) = \sum_{k \notin \Upsilon} |\xi_k|, \quad \Upsilon = \cup_{j \in T} S_j.$$

Our abstract result

Theorem

Let ρ be an M -sparse solution of $\mathcal{A}\rho = \mathbf{b}$, and *suppose vicinities S_j do not overlap*. Let ρ_δ be the minimal ℓ_1 -norm solution of the noisy problem

$$\min \|\rho_\delta\|_{\ell_1}, \text{ subject to } \mathcal{A}\rho_\delta = \mathbf{b}_\delta,$$

with $\|\mathbf{b} - \mathbf{b}_\delta\|_{\ell_2} \leq \delta$.

Then

$$\text{Co}(\rho, \rho_\delta) \leq 3\gamma\delta,$$

and

$$\text{In}(\rho, \rho_\delta) \leq 5\gamma\delta.$$

If the noise level $\delta = 0$, and the number of vectors in $\Upsilon = \cup_{j \in T} S_j$ is smaller than the rank of \mathcal{A} , we have exact recovery : $\rho_\delta = \rho$.

Comments/Remarks

- This theorem says that when the vicinities associated to different sources **do not overlap**, ℓ_1 minimization determines their location with **high precision**.

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- When there is **noise** in the data the location of the sources is not retrieved exactly but both the **coherent** and the **incoherent misfit** are **small**.

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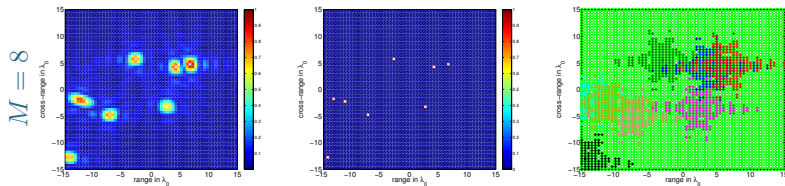
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- The **coherent misfit** concerns the approximation of ρ by degrees of freedom **inside the vicinities**. The coherent misfit being small means that ρ can be well approximated by a linear combination of the values of ρ_δ inside the vicinities of the true support.

ℓ_1 and super-resolution

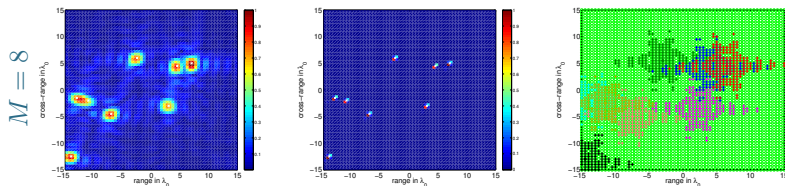
- Exact recovery in the noiseless case



Vicinities overlap

ℓ_1 and super-resolution




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Vicinities overlap

- Robustness to noise** (under smallness assumption) : the solution is decomposed in two parts, the coherent part, ρ_c , which is supported in the vicinities S_j and is close to the true ρ and the incoherent part, ρ_i , usually referred to as grass. The grass is supported away from the vicinities S_j and is shown to be small.

ℓ_1 and super-resolution

- Other works where super-resolution has been studied for highly coherent model matrices \mathcal{A} that arise in imaging
 -  A. Fannjiang and W. Liao, *Coherence pattern-guided compressive sensing with unresolved grids*, SIAM J. Imaging Sci. 5 (2012), pp. 179–202.
 -  L. Borcea and I. Kocyigit, *Resolution analysis of imaging with ℓ_1 optimization*, SIAM J. Imaging Sci. 8 (2015), pp. 3015–3050.
 -  L. Borcea and I. Kocyigit, *A multiple measurement vector approach to synthetic aperture radar imaging*, SIAM J. Imaging Sci. 11 (2018), pp. 770–801.

These works include results regarding the robustness of super-resolution in the presence of noise.

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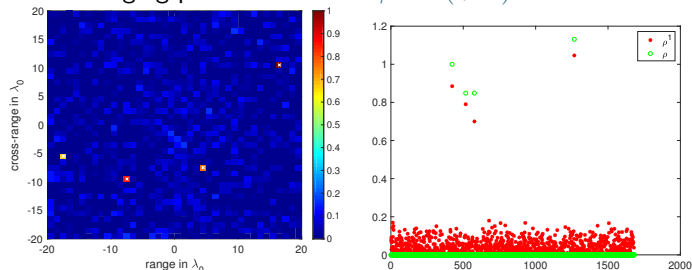
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What about uncertainty in the data (noise)

Our theory implies that a key to control the noise is the constant γ ,

$$\gamma = \sup_{\mathbf{b}} \frac{\|\boldsymbol{\rho}\|_{\ell_1}}{\|\mathbf{b}\|_{\ell_2}} \text{ where } \boldsymbol{\rho} \text{ is the minimal } \ell_1 \text{ - solution of } \mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} = \mathbf{b}.$$

For the imaging problem we have $\gamma = O(\sqrt{N})$ which is not satisfactory.



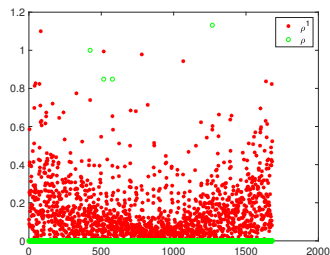
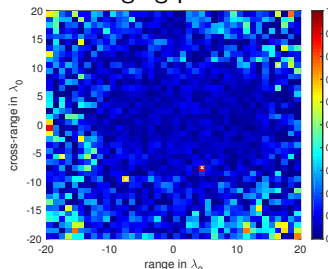
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$N = 1369$ measurements. $K = 1681$ pixels in the images. 100% noise.

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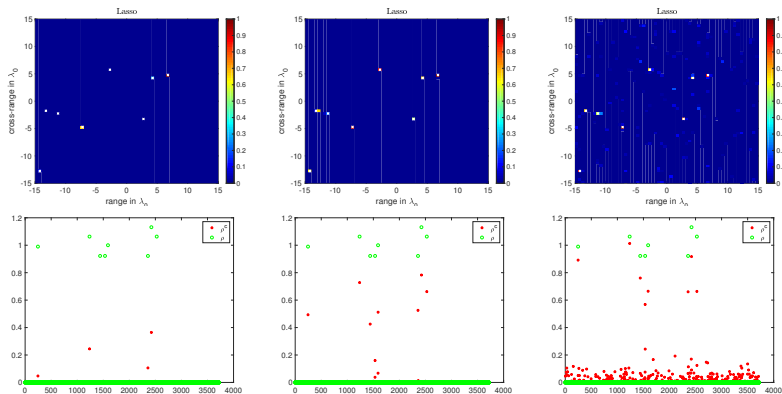
The most commonly used approach to deal with noise is to solve the ℓ_2 -relaxed form of the optimization problem

$$\boldsymbol{\rho}_\lambda = \arg \min_{\boldsymbol{\rho}} \left(\lambda \|\boldsymbol{\rho}\|_{\ell_1} + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} - \mathbf{b}\|_{\ell_2}^2 \right), \quad (1)$$

known as Lasso in the statistics literature [R. Tibshirani '96, Chen & D.Donoho '94, F.Santosa & W.Symes '86].

There are sufficient conditions, depending on the SNR and the value of λ (tuning parameter which should be adequately chosen), for the support of $\boldsymbol{\rho}_\lambda$ to be contained within the true support.

Tuning λ in Lasso



LASSO results with $\lambda = 1$, $\lambda = 0.5$ (optimal) and $\lambda = 0.1$.

100% noise. $N = 625$, $K = 3721$

- ▷ Develop a method for exact support recovery in the presence of noise. No tuning parameters. No a priori knowledge on the level of noise required.

The Noise Collector

We propose to solve instead

$$(\boldsymbol{\rho}_\tau, \boldsymbol{\eta}_\tau) = \arg \min_{\boldsymbol{\rho}, \boldsymbol{\eta}} (\tau \|\boldsymbol{\rho}\|_{\ell_1} + \|\boldsymbol{\eta}\|_{\ell_1}),$$

subject to $\mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} + \mathcal{C}\boldsymbol{\eta} = \mathbf{b} + \boldsymbol{\delta b}$,

where \mathcal{C} is the *Noise Collector* matrix $\mathcal{C} \in \mathbb{C}^{N \times \Sigma}$, $\Sigma \gg K$ and τ is an $O(1)$ weight that is independent of the dimension of the problem and the level of noise.

This minimization problem can be understood as a relaxation of

$$\boldsymbol{\rho}_* = \arg \min_{\boldsymbol{\rho}} \|\boldsymbol{\rho}\|_{\ell_1}, \text{ subject to } \mathcal{A}\boldsymbol{\rho} = \mathbf{b} + \boldsymbol{\delta b},$$

It works by absorbing *all* the noise, and possibly some signal, in $\mathcal{C}\boldsymbol{\eta}_\tau$.

$\boldsymbol{\eta}$ does not correspond to a physical quantity. It is introduced to provide a fictitious source distribution (an appropriate linear combination of the columns of \mathcal{C}) that produces a good approximation to $\boldsymbol{\delta b}$.

Construction of the Noise Collector

- (i) Columns of \mathcal{C} should be sufficiently orthogonal to the columns of \mathcal{A} , so it does not absorb signals with meaningful information.
- (ii) Columns of \mathcal{C} should be uniformly distributed on the unit sphere \mathbb{S}^{N-1} so that we could approximate well a typical noise vector.
- (iii) The number of columns of \mathcal{C} should grow slower than exponential with N , otherwise the method is impractical.

One way to guarantee all three properties is the *deterministic* approach that consists in filling up \mathcal{C} imposing

$$|\langle \mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{c}_j \rangle| < \frac{\alpha}{\sqrt{N}} \quad \forall i, j, \quad \text{and} \quad |\langle \mathbf{c}_i, \mathbf{c}_j \rangle| < \frac{\alpha}{\sqrt{N}} \quad \forall i \neq j,$$

with $\alpha > 1$. Then it can be shown that the number Σ of columns in \mathcal{C} grows at most polynomially : $N^\alpha \leq \Sigma \leq N^{\alpha^2}$.

We consider instead the *random* approach : the columns of \mathcal{C} are drawn at random independently. Then the above inequalities hold but decoherence constraint is weakened by a logarithmic factor $\sqrt{\ln N}$.

Probabilistic design of NC

Choose $\beta > 1$, and pick $\Sigma = N^\beta$ vectors \mathbf{c}_i at random and independently on \mathbb{S}^{N-1} .

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Define the convex hulls

$$H_1 = \left\{ x \in \mathbb{R}^N \mid x = \sum_{i=1}^{\Sigma} \xi_i \mathbf{c}_i, \sum_{i=1}^{\Sigma} |\xi_i| \leq 1 \right\}, \quad H_2 = \left\{ x \in \mathbb{R}^N \mid x = \sum_{i=1}^K \xi_i \mathbf{a}_i, \sum_{i=1}^{\Sigma} |\xi_i| \leq 1 \right\},$$

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Then, for any $\kappa > 0$ there exist constants $\alpha = \sqrt{(\beta - 1)/2}$, $c_0(\kappa, \beta)$ and $N_0 = N_0(\kappa, \beta)$, such that $\forall N > N_0$

$$(i) \quad \max(\max_{i \leq K} (|\langle \mathbf{a}_i, \delta \mathbf{b} \rangle|), \max_{i \leq \Sigma} (|\langle \mathbf{c}_i, \delta \mathbf{b} \rangle|)) < c_0 \frac{\sqrt{\ln N}}{\sqrt{N}},$$

and

$$(ii) \quad \alpha \frac{\sqrt{\ln N}}{\sqrt{N}} \delta \mathbf{b} \in H_1,$$

with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

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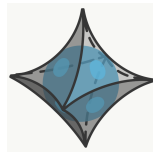
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(i) states that H_1 and H_2 are contained in the ℓ_2 -ball of radius $c_0 \sqrt{\ln N} / \sqrt{N}$ except for a few spikes in statistically insignificant directions.



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Then, for any $\kappa > 0$ there exist constants $\alpha = \sqrt{(\beta - 1)/2}$, $c_0(\kappa, \beta)$ and $N_0 = N_0(\kappa, \beta)$, such that $\forall N > N_0$

$$(i) \quad \max(\max_{i \leq K} (|\langle \mathbf{a}_i, \delta \mathbf{b} \rangle|), \max_{i \leq \Sigma} (|\langle \mathbf{c}_i, \delta \mathbf{b} \rangle|)) < c_0 \frac{\sqrt{\ln N}}{\sqrt{N}},$$

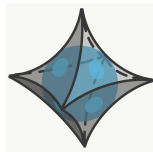
and

$$(ii) \quad \alpha \frac{\sqrt{\ln N}}{\sqrt{N}} \delta \mathbf{b} \in H_1,$$

with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

(i) states that H_1 and H_2 are contained in the l_2 -ball of radius $c_0 \sqrt{\ln N} / \sqrt{N}$ except for a few spikes in statistically insignificant directions.

(ii) states that H_1 contains an l_2 -ball of radius $\alpha \sqrt{\ln N} / \sqrt{N}$ except for a few statistically insignificant directions.



False Discovery Rate is zero

We have the following results :

Theorem (No phantom signal theorem)

Suppose there is no signal : $\rho = 0$ and $\delta\mathbf{b}/\|\delta\mathbf{b}\|_{l_2}$ is uniformly distributed on the unit sphere. Fix $\beta > 1$, and draw $\Sigma = N^\beta$ columns for \mathcal{C} , independently, from the uniform distribution on \mathbb{S}^{N-1} . For any $\kappa > 0$ there are constants $\tau = \tau(\kappa, \beta)$ and $N_0 = N_0(\kappa, \beta)$ such that, $\forall N > N_0$, $\rho_\tau = 0$ with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

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Theorem

Let ρ be an M -sparse solution of $\mathcal{A}\rho = \mathbf{b}$. Assume κ, β , the Noise Collector, and the noise are the same as in Theorem above. If the columns of \mathcal{A} are decoherent : $|\langle \mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{a}_j \rangle| \leq \frac{1}{3M}$, then $\text{supp}(\rho_\tau) \subseteq \text{supp}(\rho)$ for all $N > N_0$ with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

This means that we have **zero** false discovery rate for **any level of noise** and with probability that tends to one as the dimension of the data increases to infinity.

No false positives !

Supports of ρ and ρ_τ agree

Theorem

Suppose r is the magnitude of smallest non-zero entry of ρ . If $\|\delta\mathbf{b}\|_{l_2} \leq c_2 \frac{\|\mathbf{b}\|_{l_2}^2}{\|\rho\|_{l_1}} \frac{\sqrt{N}}{\sqrt{\ln N}}$, $c_2 = c_2(\kappa, \beta, r, M)$, then for all $N > N_0$, $\text{supp}(\rho_\tau) = \text{supp}(\rho)$, with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

Exact support recovery when the noise is not too large.

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Theorem (Exact Recovery)

If there is no noise $\delta\mathbf{b} = 0$. Then, $\rho_\tau = \rho$ for all $M < \frac{2\sqrt{N}}{3c_0\tau\sqrt{\ln N}}$ with probability $1 - 1/N^\kappa$.

Exact recovery in the noise free case.

To find the minimizer ρ_τ, η_τ ,

$$\begin{aligned} (\rho_\tau, \eta_\tau) &= \arg \min_{\rho, \eta} (\tau \|\rho\|_{l_1} + \|\eta\|_{l_1}), \\ &\text{subject to } \mathcal{A}\rho + \mathcal{C}\eta = \mathbf{b} + \delta\mathbf{b}, \end{aligned}$$

we consider a variational approach. We define the function



$$F(x, \eta, z) = \lambda (\tau \|x\|_{\ell_1} + \|\eta\|_{\ell_1}) + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathcal{A}x + \mathcal{C}\eta - \mathbf{b}\|_{\ell_2}^2 + \langle z, \mathbf{b} - \mathcal{A}x - \mathcal{C}\eta \rangle$$

for an $O(1)$ weight τ , and determine the solution as

$$\max_z \min_{x, \eta} F(x, \eta, z).$$

This variational principle finds the minimum exactly for all values of the regularization parameter λ .

To determine the exact extremum, we use the iterative soft thresholding algorithm GeLMA which is a semi-implicit version of the primal-dual method of Chambolle & Pock.

-  M. Moscoso, A. Novikov, G. Papanicolaou and L. Ryzhik, A differential equations approach to l_1 -minimization with applications to array imaging, *Inverse Problems* 28 (2012).
-  A. Chambolle and T. Pock, A first-order primal-dual algorithm for convex problems with applications to imaging, *Journal of Mathematical Imaging and Vision* 40 (2011), pp 120–145.

Pick a value for the regularization parameter λ , e.g. $\lambda = 1$. Choose step sizes $\Delta t_1 < 2/\|[\mathcal{A} | \mathcal{C}]\|^2$ and $\Delta t_2 < \lambda/\|\mathcal{A}\|$. Set $\boldsymbol{\rho}_0 = \mathbf{0}$, $\boldsymbol{\eta}_0 = \mathbf{0}$, $\mathbf{z}_0 = \mathbf{0}$, and iterate for $k \geq 0$:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{r} &= \mathbf{b} - \mathcal{A} \boldsymbol{\rho}_k - \mathcal{C} \boldsymbol{\eta}_k, \\ \boldsymbol{\rho}_{k+1} &= \mathcal{S}_{\tau \lambda \Delta t_1} (\boldsymbol{\rho}_k + \Delta t_1 \mathcal{A}^*(\mathbf{z}_k + \mathbf{r})), \\ \boldsymbol{\eta}_{k+1} &= \mathcal{S}_{\lambda \Delta t_1} (\boldsymbol{\eta}_k + \Delta t_1 \mathcal{C}^*(\mathbf{z}_k + \mathbf{r})), \\ \mathbf{z}_{k+1} &= \mathbf{z}_k + \Delta t_2 \mathbf{r},\end{aligned}$$

where $\mathcal{S}_\lambda(y_i) = \text{sign}(y_i) \max\{0, |y_i| - \lambda\}$.

Note : Choosing two step sizes instead of the smaller one Δt_1 improves the convergence speed.

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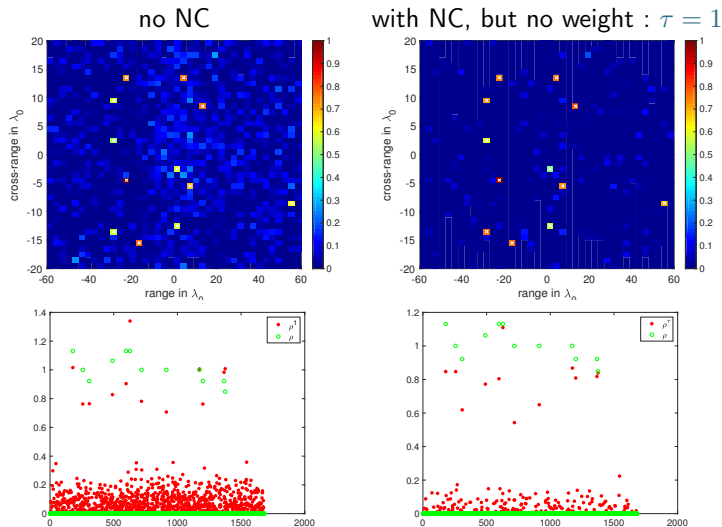
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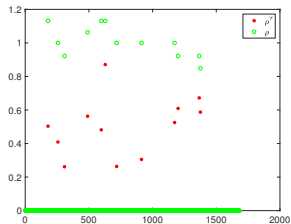
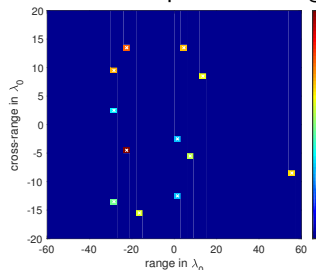
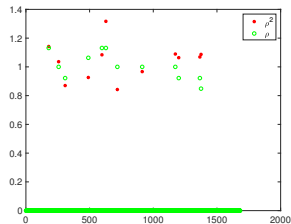
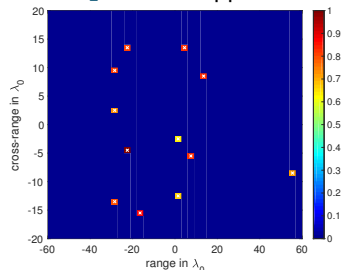
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- The cost of performing the matrix vector multiplication $\mathcal{A}\rho_k$ is NK and, thus, the additional cost due to the Noise Collector is negligible as, typically, $K \gg N^{\beta-1}$.

Results



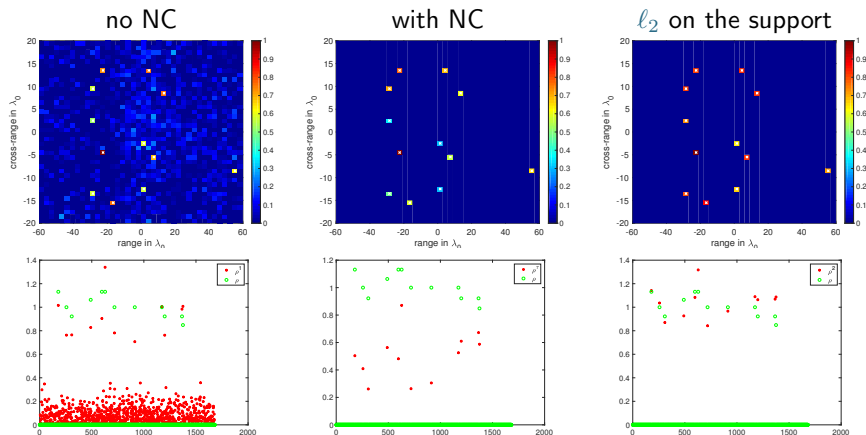
Top row : the images. Bottom row : solution vector with red stars and the true solution vector with green circles.

Results

with NC and no phantom weight τ  ℓ_2 on the support

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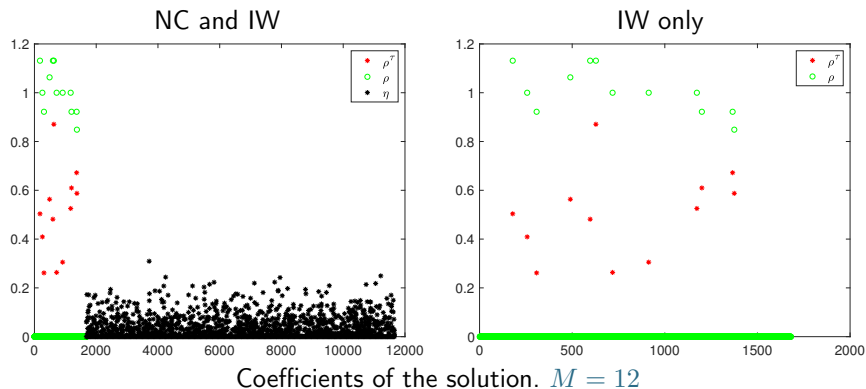
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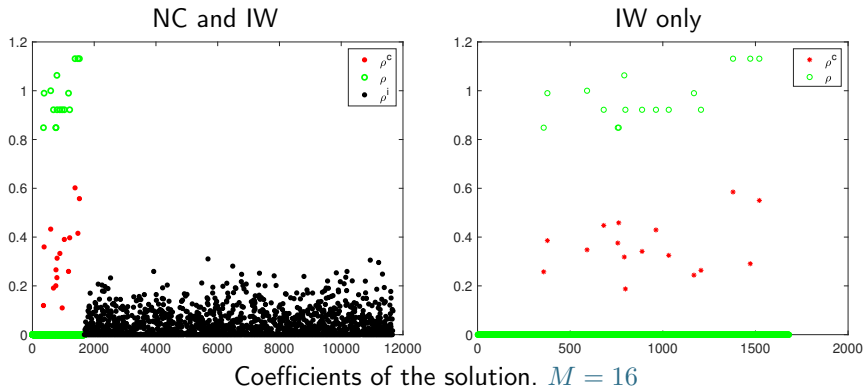
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$$\beta = 1.5, SNR = \frac{\|\mathbf{b}\|_{l_2}}{\|\delta\mathbf{b}\|_{l_2}} = 1, N = 625, K = 1681, \tau = 2.$$

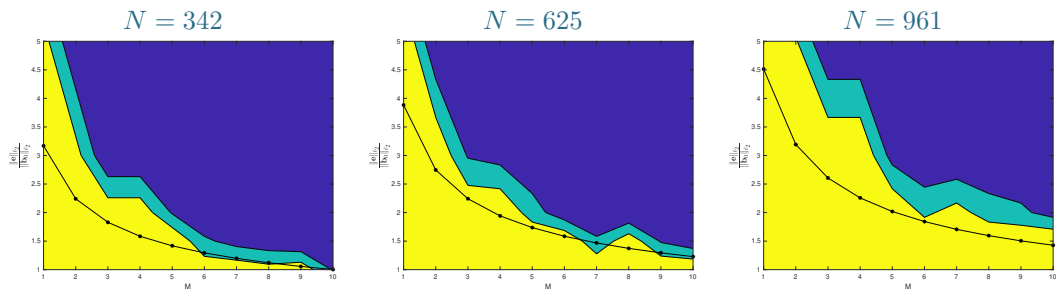
The Noise Collector at work



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Failure to recover



Algorithm performance for exact support recovery. Success corresponds to the value 1 (yellow) and failure to 0 (blue). The small phase transition zone (green) contains intermediate values. Ordinate and abscissa are the sparsity M and $\frac{\|\delta b\|_2}{\|b\|_2}$. The black line is $\frac{1}{\sqrt{\ln N} \sqrt{M}}$.

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- 1 Inverse problems in wave propagation
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- 3 On ℓ_1 and (super)resolution
- 4 Uncertainty in the data
- 5 Conclusion**

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- More on the Noise Collector and its theoretical analysis in

 M. Moscoso, A. Novikov, G. Papanicolaou, CT, *Imaging with highly incomplete and corrupted data*, Inverse Problems, 36(3), p. 035010, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1361-6420/ab5a21>

 M. Moscoso, A. Novikov, G. Papanicolaou, CT, *The Noise Collector for sparse recovery in high dimensions*, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 117 (21), p. 11226-11232, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1913995117>