USE OF THE SVM CLASSIFICATION WITH POLARIMETRIC SAR DATA FOR LAND USE CARTOGRAPHY

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***Abstract*— This study comes within the framework of the global cartography and inventory of the Polynesian landscape. An AIRSAR airborne acquired fully polarimettric data in L and P bands, in August 2000, over the main Polynesian Islands. This study focuses on Tubuai Island, where several ground surveys allow the validation of the different results. Different decompositions, such as H/A/α , or based on the Pauli formalism have shown their potential for land use discrimination. In order to take into account these different parameters into a supervised classification scheme, the SVM (Support Vector Machine) method is investigated. When dealing with only the coherent matrix elements, the results show that the SVM classification gives comparative results to those obtain with Wishart classification. Results are significantly improved when adding to the coherent matrix elements, other polarimetric parameters, as H/A/α or the co-polarized circular polarization correlation coefficient, ρ_{rrll}, for the Support Vector definition. Finally the best results are given when merging all the parameters for P and L bands, in addition to the only VV single channel acquired in C band**

***Index Terms*— polarimetry, land use, svm, classification.**

I. Introduction

Radar data are of particular interest over tropical areas such the French Polynesian Islands due to the cloudy conditions generally persistent. Fully polarimetric SAR data were acquired in L and P bands over the main Polynesian islands. The overall goal of this study is to assess the potential of such fully polarimetric SAR data for land-use cartography. When dealing with classification methods applied to full polarimetric data, the Wishart classification [1] or other, based for example on the H/A/α decomposition [2] are generally used. In order to integrate different polarimetric descriptors, not only the elements defining the coherence matrix used in Wishart classification, but also other polarimetric descriptors, such the H/A/α parameters, it is proposed in this study to investigate the SVM (Support Vector Machine) classification method. It is especially well suited to handle linearly non separable case by using the Kernel theory [3], and has been mostly applied to hyperspectral remote sensed data. However few studies has also been conducted with SAR data [4], [5]. The study area and radar data are detailed in the second part of this paper. The third part describes the polarimetric parameters involved in the classification method and briefly presents the principle of the SVM method. Then, results of the SVM classification are discussed in relation with the definition of the Support Vector that has been made.

II. Study area and Dataset

A. Study area

French Polynesia islands are located at the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. They are quickly evolving in the tourism industry, and from the economic and geostrategic points of view. They are thus subject to a strong environmental planning leading to landscape changes as well as to the introduction of invasive species. This study comes within the framework of the global cartography and inventory of the Polynesian landscape. We focus on data acquired over the Tubuai island, in the Australes Archipelago at the South of French polynesia. Tubuai is a 45 km^2 island with a population of about 6000 inhabitants. It is particularly relevant because of its great landscape diversity: several types of forests, agricultural fields, and residential areas.

In our application we would discriminate different kind of landscape. We choose to produce a map with seven classes of four types. The first and the more difficult to discriminate is the forested area with four classes :*Hibiscus tiliaceus* (also called Purau), *Pinus Caribeae* (also called Pinus), *Paraserianthes Falcataria* (also called Falcata) and *Psidium cattleianum*. The second type is the "Low Vegetation" class that includes vegetation up to approximately one-meter height: fern lands, swamps vegetation, and crops. The other type of class is "No Vegetation" class which includes the bare fields and low grass fields. The last class is the sea.

Several ground surveys has been carried out, the last one in July 2005, which, combined to a Quickbird image acquired in August 2004, allowed to give a ground truth over the entire island.

B. Airsar data

An AIRSAR airborne mission took place in August 2000 over the main Polynesian islands. The AIRSAR data were acquired over Tubuai along 2 passes in reverse path, in Polsar mode. Consequently, the data set consists in full polarimetric data in L (λ= 23 cm) and P (λ= 67 cm) bands, with an additional TopSAR C (λ=5.7cm) band channel in VV polarisation.

Data are delivered in MLC (Multi Look Complex) format, corresponding to about 9 looks, with a resolution of 5 meters.

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III. Methodology

A. Polarimetric indicators

For each pixel, the coherency matrix T is derived from the Stokes parameters given by AIRSAR data. Even if the elements of the T matrix give the entire polarimetric information, additional polarimetric parameters are derived: these are the H/A/α coefficients [2], the polarimetric coherence between co-polarized circular polarizations, ρ_{rrll} [6], where LL (resp. RR) stands for Left-Left (resp. Right-Right) polarization. Other indicators such as the Span, and the intensities of circular polarizations have also been investigated. A more detailed description of these parameters is given below:

1) T: The coherency matrix is constructed from a scattering vector in the base of Pauli that reflect geometrical properties [2].

$$k_p = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} S_{HH} + S_{VV} \\ S_{HH} - S_{VV} \\ 2S_{HV} \end{pmatrix}, \ [T] = k_p.k_p^{*T} \tag{1}$$

2) H/A/α: This three parameters are generated by a decomposition in eigenvector of T matrix [2].

- The entropy H characterizes the wave depolarization and is very useful to discriminate for example the forest non forest area each characterized by high and low entropy respectivly.
- The α " The α parameter is particularly interesting because it gives the reflection mechanisms of the wave over the considered pixels. It characterizes the double bound, single bound, and volume scattering. It is meaningful for low entropy values, indicating that the polarimetric information is significant.
- The Anisotropy parameter permit to give a difference between the second and third eigenvalue (mechanism) and is meaningfull for $0.7 < entropy < 0.9$.

3) ρ_{rrll}: It has been shown that this parameter is well suited for bare soil surfaces, as it allows soil roughness discrimination while giving a low sensitivity to soil moisture [6].

$$|\rho_{rrll}| = \sqrt{\frac{\langle |S_{rr}.S_{ll}^*|^2 \rangle}{\langle |S_{rr}|^2 \rangle . \langle |S_{ll}|^2 \rangle}} \tag{2}$$

4) Span: The Span characterizes the total backscattering power that are reflected.

$$SPAN = |S_{hh}|^2 + |S_{vv}|^2 + 2|S_{hv}|^2 \tag{3}$$

5) Intensities in circular basis: We have computed the intensities of the co and cross polarization state in the circular basis (Left and Right) :

$$|S_{ll}|^2, |S_{rr}|^2, |S_{rl}|^2 \tag{4}$$

B. Support Vector Machine

A brief description of SVM is made here and more details can be found in [3].

1) Linear case: We should now consider the case of two classes problem with N training samples. Each samples are described by a Support Vector (SV) X_i composed by the different "band" with n dimensions. The label of a sample is Y_i. For a two classes case we consider the label -1 for the first class and +1 for the other.

The SVM classifier consist in defining the function

$$f(x) = sign(\langle \omega, X \rangle + b) \tag{5}$$

that found the optimum separating hyperplane as presented in Fig. 1, where ω is normal to the hyperplane, and $\frac{|b|}{\|\omega\|}$ is the perpendicular distance from hyperplane to the origin.

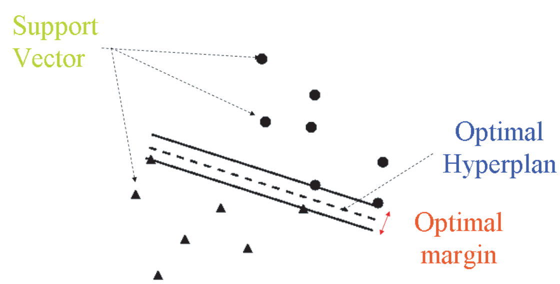

Fig. 1. SVM Classifier-Linear case

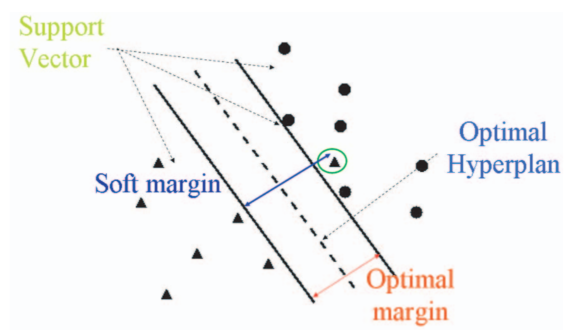

Fig. 2. SVM Classifier-Nonlinear case

The sign of f(x) gives the label of the sample. The goal of the SVM is to maximize the margin between the optimal hyperplane and the support vector. So we search the $\min \frac{\|\omega\|}{2}$.

To do this, it is more easier to use the Lagrange multiplier. The problem comes to solve :

$$f(x) = Sign(\sum_{i=1}^{Ns} y_i.\alpha_i \langle x, x_i \rangle + b) \tag{6}$$

where α_i is the Lagrange multiplier

2) Nonlinear case: If the case is nonlinear as the Fig. 2 the first solution is to make soft margin that is particularly adapted to noised data. The second solution that is the particularity of SVM is to use a kernel. The kernel is a function that simulates the projection of the initial data in a feature space with higher dimension $\phi : \Re^n \mapsto H$. In this new space the data are considered as linearly separable. To apply this, the dot product $\langle x_i, x_j \rangle$ is replaced by the function

$$K(x, x_i) = \langle \phi(x), \phi(x_i) \rangle$$

Then the new function to classify the data are :

$$f(x) = Sign(\sum_{i=1}^{Ns} y_i.\alpha_i.K(x, x_i) + b) \quad (7)$$

Three kernel are commonly used :

- The polynomial kernel $K(x, x_i) = (\langle x.x_i \rangle + 1)^p$
- The sigmoid kernel $K(x, x_i) = \tanh(\langle x.x_i \rangle + 1)$
- The RBF kernel $K(x, x_i) = \exp^{-\frac{|x-x_i|^2}{2\sigma^2}}$

Due to the best results given for the present study, the RBF kernel has been retained here. A future work would be to develop a new kernel accounting for the distribution of the data, such the one is due to the presence of speckle in SAR data.

3) Multiclass case: The principle of SVM was described for a binary classification, but many problems have more than two classes problem. There exists different algorithms to multiclass problem as ”One Against All” (OAA) and ”One Against One” (OAO).

If we consider a problem with K class :

OAA algorithm consists in the construction of k hyperplane that separate respectively one class and the (k-1) other classes.

OAO algorithm consists in the construction of $\frac{k(k-1)}{2}$ hyperplane which separate each pair of classes.

In the two cases the final label is that mainly chosen.

4) Wishart classification: The Wishart classification involved only the T matrix elements especially dedicated to SAR data as it accounts for the Wishart distribution observed due to the presence of speckle noise.

IV. Results and discussion

A. Methodology

We now present the schema of the classification and the different parameters that are used to compute the classification. Table I presents the training and control samples number made with the ground truth data.

TABLE I
TRAINING AND TESTING SAMPLES NUMBER USED FOR THE TUBUAI ISLAND CLASSIFICATION

Sort	Training sample	Control sample
Pinus	5854	5854
Falcata	2779	2779
Purau	6382	6382
Psidium cattleianum	367	367
Low Vegetation	9014	9014
No Vegetation	4608	24.45
Sea	98343	98343

The SVM classification was produced with the Libsvm library [7]. In a first time, results obtained with the SVM method when considering only the T matrix elements are compared to Wishart supervised classification. This later has been performed using PolSarPro software [8]. In a second time, several Support Vector corresponding to the combination of the different polarimetric descriptors given in § III-A have been tested for L and P band tested individually. Finally, different combination of Support Vectors merging the L, P, and C bands parameters were evaluated. Concerning the multiclass case considered for the SVM method, after several tests, the OAO algorithm has been retained as well as the RBF kernel with σ = 0.5 and the cost parameter equal to 1000 (soft margin).

The results of the different classification algorithms have been evaluated using the Producer’s Accuracy (PA) and the User’s Accuracy (UA), as described in [9]:

- $PA = \frac{Pixel\ correctly\ classify}{Pixel\ of\ the\ class}$
- $UA = \frac{Pixel\ correctly\ classify}{Pixel\ labeled\ as\ this\ class}$

An ideal classification would give PA=1 and UA =1.

- PA<1 means that some pixels of the ground truth are not correctly classify .
- UA<1 is a criterion of overclassification.
  It means that they are more pixels in the other classes of the ground truth than in the concerned class.

Due to the different pixel numbers involved in the different control classes, the mean of the PA (MPA) of the classes is preferred to the commonly used overall accuracy.

B. Discussion

1) SVM vs Wishart comparison: The comparison between SVM classification with Support Vector consisting only of the T matrix elements and the Wishart classification gives similar results for L band (MPA= 57.50 vs 56.83 resp.). At P band, a slighty better result for Wishart classifier can be observed (MPA = 60.63 vs 56.44 resp.). This is due a confusion by SVM classifier between ”Low vegetation” and ”Sea” that does not occur with Wishart classifier.

2) Influence of the Support Vector: The influence of the Support Vector configuration when regarding L or P band separately, as well as merging them together with C band has been assessed. Two different Support Vector configurations were tested:

- C1: only the T matrix elements
- C2: all the parameters presented in III-A

Overall results are given in Table II.

When only one band is considered, the C2 with respect to C1 configuration enhances the MPA of 9% and 16% for L and P band respectively.

TABLE II
ACCURACY RESULTS OF DIFFERENT SUPPORT VECTOR CONFIGURATIONS

Bands	L		P		L+P	L+P+Cvv
SV conf.	C1	C2	C1	C2	C2	C2
MPA	56.50	65.94	52.75	68.75	84.03	91.11

Results obtained over the different classes for L band are detailed in Table III.

TABLE III
ACCURACY RESULTS OF THE SVM CLASSIFIER FOR SOME CONFIGURATIONS

Band	L				L+P+Cvv	
SV Conf.	C1		C2		C2	
Accuracy	PA	UA	PA	UA	PA	UA
Pinus	47.75	52.18	58.54	59.58	98.43	99.17
Falcata	16.98	50.32	28.21	57.69	76.83	82.34
Purau	72.50	51.95	72.83	57.75	93.37	89.78
Psidium cattleianum	0	0	19.07	70.00	73.84	80.65
Low Vegetation	91.45	90.32	96.62	93.69	99.01	97.86
No Vegetation	66.86	81.94	89.37	91.74	96.27	98.47
Sea	99.96	99.16	99.87	99.91	99.99	100.00
MPA	56.50		66.36		91.11	

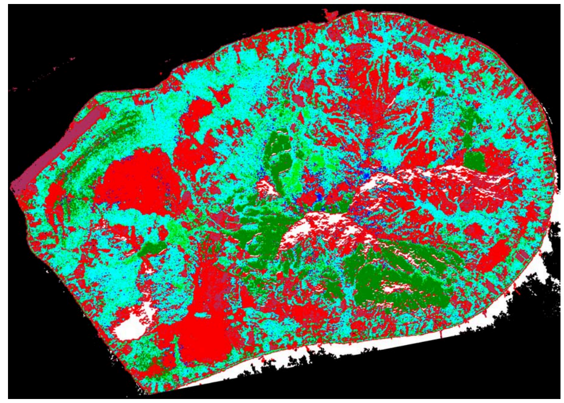

Fig. 3. Result of SVM classification with L+P+Cvv in C2 configuration

Pinus	Falcata	Purau	Psidium cattleianum
Low Vegetation	No Vegetation	See	Unclassified

As expected, the best results are obtained over low and no vegetated classes, at the exception of Purau one, which is the dominant of the 4 sub-classes belonging to the ”densely vegetated” class. The poor results obtained for the *Psidium cattleianum* class may be due to the small relative pixel number of this class.

On the other hand, as expected, the combination of the 3 bands gives the best results. The addition of the single VV channel of the C band is significant as it allows the discrimination between Pinus and Falcata species. Indeed, the crown between Pinus, Falcata and Purau are very different that seems enhanced the Cvv band.

The corresponding classification image is showed in Fig. 3, confirming the quality of the results with respect to ground truth data.

V. CONCLUSION

SVM classification is applied to full polarimetric SAR data over the Tubuai Island, French Polynesia, which is mainly constituted of dense vegetation. When only polarimetric coherency matrix elements are considered, SVM algorithm give similar results than Wishart classifier for L band, and slightly less accurate results for P band. The best configuration for the Support Vector consists in the T matrix elements, in addition to other polarimetric descriptors such H, A, α, circular polarisation intensities, the SPAN, and the copolarised circular polarisation correlation coefficient ρ_{rrll}. The combination of the 3 bands improve significantly the results, even the C band single VV channel that allows to discriminate to dense vegetation classes, i.e. the Pinus and Falcata species.

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