TSBB15 Computer Vision

Lecture 4 Motion estimation and optical flow



## Motion

In many applications it is the case that

- the scene depicted in the image is dynamic
  - moving objects
  - deformable objects
- or the camera is moving relative to the scene
- in general: both cases



## Motion

- From the camera's (viewer's) perspective these two cases are indistinguishable
  - Unless a high-level interpretation of the scene is available
- However, we can describe how points in the scene move relative to some reference frame, e.g., as defined by the camera



## The motion field



The *motion field* is the projection of the 3D motion onto the image plane It can be

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represented as a vector valued function of the image coordinate

 $\mathbf{m}(\mathbf{x})$ 



## The motion field

- If we can measure the motion field **m**(**x**) it is possible to infer
  - how points and objects are moving relative the camera, or
  - how the camera is moving relative to the scene (*ego-motion* estimation)



## The motion field

- In practice, we cannot measure  $\mathbf{m}(\mathbf{x})$  directly
- However, we can measure how the image intensity moves/varies over time
  - Optical flow Will be formally defined shortly
- But there is no direct relation between the optical flow and the motion field
  - 3D motion may not always generate temporal variations in the image
    - 3D points that move along the projection lines have constant positions in the image
  - Temporal variations in the image may not always correspond to 3D motion



### Physical vs visual motion



From Jähne & Haussecker



## **Displacement estimation**

- One approach to motion estimation considers **two images** of the same scene, e.g.
  - Taken at two different time points, same camera position
    - Images from a video sequence, e.g., two consecutive images. Displacement is an estimate of the motion field m(x)
  - Taken from two different positions, possibly at the same time point
    - Stereo images. Displacement is an estimate of depth in the scene (assuming a stationary scene)



### Example (from *Middlebury*)





## Mathematical model





## Estimation of **d**

• **d**, at point **x**, can be estimated by forming a cost function, based on the constancy of the pixel values:

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y} + \mathbf{d}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \right)^2 d\mathbf{y}$$
  
A region of the origin, same size as  $\Omega$   
A weighting function, e.g., a Gaussian, of same size as  $\Omega$ 

The minimizer of ε is an estimate of d at x, which we then use as an estimate of m(x)



## Estimation of **d**

- As an estimate of m(x), d(x) is referred to as *optic flow* (or optical flow)
- Finding the minimizer of  $\boldsymbol{\epsilon}$  is a non-linear estimation problem
  - Computationally complex problem
- It can be simplified by a linearization of *I*



## Linearization of *I*

• At each point **x**+**y**, the dependency on **d** in the intensity function *I* can be expressed as a Taylor expansion:

$$\nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} \end{pmatrix} = \text{Image gradient at } \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}$$
$$I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y} + \mathbf{d}) = I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d}$$

• Assumption: higher order terms in **d** can be neglected



## Linear estimation of **d**

With this linearlization of *I* at hand:

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

$$\uparrow$$
Equation
(A)
$$\boxed{\frac{\partial I}{\partial u} v_1 + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} v_2}$$

- We want to find the minimum of  $\varepsilon$  with respect to the elements of **d** = ( $v_1$ ,  $v_2$ )
- Find **d** where

$$\left(rac{\partial\epsilon}{\partial v_1} \\ rac{\partial\epsilon}{\partial v_2}
ight) = \mathbf{0}$$



## Determining **d**

$$\begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_1} \\ \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial v_2} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right) \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} d\mathbf{y} \\ 2 \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{d} \right) \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} d\mathbf{y} \end{pmatrix}$$

↓

$$\int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial I}{\partial u} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial v} \end{pmatrix} \left( I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) - J(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) + \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \mathbf{d} \right) \, d\mathbf{y} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$





This is *the Lucas-Kanade equation (LK-equation)*. One equation per pixel in the image (gives one **d** per pixel)



## Determining **d**

• In principle, **d** can be determined from the LK-equation as

- Only works if **T** is not singular, i.e.,
   *I* in Ω **must not be i1D**
- Lucas & Kanade: An Iterative Image Registration Technique with an Application to Stereo Vision, IUW, 1981



## Alternative derivation of LK

- The LK-equation derived here is based on finding the local displacement between two images
- An alternative derivation is provided by the brightness constancy principle



## Brightness constancy

- Think of the intensity function *I* as explicitly depending on the 3 variables, I = I(u, v, t)
- Basic assumption:
  - If we observe intensity *I* at (*u*, *v*, *t*), this intensity
     remains constant over time, but it may
     change position as a function of time
- This is referred to as: *brightness constancy*



## Mathematical formulation

Means: the total derivative of *I* w.r.t. *t* is = 0

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = 0$$

Expand in partial derivatives of *I*:

$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t}\frac{dt}{dt} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial u}\frac{du}{dt} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v}\frac{dv}{dt} = 0$$



## Mathematical formulation

Cont.



- v = (v<sub>1</sub>, v<sub>2</sub>) is the velocity vector of the intensity *I* at (u, v, t)
- **v** is a function of (u, v, t), **v** = **v**(**x**)
- Local estimate of the motion field **m**(**x**)



## **BCCE / Optic flow equation**

Cont. 
$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial I}{\partial u}v_1 + \frac{\partial I}{\partial v}v_2 = 0$$
  
Alternative 
$$\frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \nabla I \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0$$

- This is the Brightness Constancy Constraint Equation (BCCE)
- A.k.a. the optic (optical) flow equation



## BCCE

- Is a differential equation
- It assumes that we can determine/estimate the temporal derivative of I at (*u*, *v*, *t*)
  - In practice, it must be estimated in terms of finite differences
  - Compare to the two-image derivation of the LK-eq
- BCCE is one equation per pixel (and time)
  - But it has 2 unknowns:  $(v_1, v_2)$
  - Cannot be solved at the pixel level



## Determining **v**

• At a pixel **x** = (*u*, *v*), at time *t*, we can formulate a cost function

$$\epsilon = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( \frac{\partial I}{\partial t} + \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \cdot \mathbf{v} \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

- Assumes that **v** is constant within  $\Omega$
- This cost function is very similar to the one used for the 2-image case, Equation (A), slide 14



## LK-equation, again...

• Minimizing  $\varepsilon$ , therefore, implies finding v such that

• Where  $\mathbf{T}(\mathbf{x}) = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \, d\mathbf{y}$   $\mathbf{s}(\mathbf{x}) = -\int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \frac{\partial I}{\partial t} \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \, d\mathbf{y}$ 



## The aperture problem

- Regardless of how the LK-eq has been derived, it cannot be solved robustly for pixels where *I* in Ω is i1D
- Even approximately i1D may cause problems
- This is related to the so-called aperture problem:
  - In a i1D region we cannot determine the local displacement/velocity along a line/edge



## The aperture problem

• Is the pattern in the circle moving down, right, or right-down?



- Since the pattern is i1D, its velocity cannot be completely determined
- We can, however, determine a unique *normal velocity* 
  - -How?



## **BCCE** revisited

• A consequence of BCCE:

In the 3D spatio-temporal volume, *I* must be constant in a direction given by  $\mathbf{v}_{\text{ST}} = (v_1, v_2, 1)$ 

• This implies that  $\nabla_{ST}I$ , the 3D spatio-temporal gradient of *I*, is orthogonal to  $\mathbf{v}_{ST}$ 



## Example





Horisonta I position



## A new cost function

• We define a new cost function  $\varepsilon_{sT}$  as

$$\epsilon_{\rm ST} = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \left( \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\rm ST}^{\rm T} \nabla_{\rm ST} I \right)^2 \, d\mathbf{y}$$

where

$$\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathrm{ST}} = \begin{pmatrix} r_1 \\ r_2 \\ r_3 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathrm{ST}}\| = 1, \quad \nabla_{\mathrm{ST}}I = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_1} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_2} \\ \frac{\partial I}{\partial x_3} \end{pmatrix}$$



## Spatio-temporal motion vector

- $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$ (and  $\mathbf{v}_{sT}$ ) is called the *spatio-temporal motion vector* (it is 3-dimensional)
- $\nabla_{ST}I$  is the spatio-temporal gradient of *I* (also 3-dimensional)
- We will minimize  $\varepsilon_{ST}$  over  $\hat{v}_{ST}$  with the additional constraint

$$\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}\| = 1$$

• This is a *total least squares* formulation of how to determine **v**(**x**)



## Finding the minimum of $\varepsilon_{\rm ST}$

• The constraint can be expressed as

$$c = \|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}\|^2 = r_1^2 + r_2^2 + r_3^2 = 1$$

• The solution is given by  $\hat{\mathbf{V}} S T = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$ that satisfies

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial r_k} \varepsilon = \lambda \, \frac{\partial}{\partial r_k} \, c$$

Lagrange's method for minimisation with constraints

for *k* = 1, 2, 3 (why?)



## The 3D structure tensor revisited

• These 3 equations can be rewritten as

$$\begin{bmatrix} \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \nabla_{ST} I \nabla_{ST}^{T} I \, d\mathbf{x} \end{bmatrix} \, \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = \lambda \, \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$$
(why?)

• Note that the expression inside the bracket is a 3D structure tensor!



## The 3D structure tensor revisited

• We rewrite this as

$$\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{3D}}\,\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = \lambda\,\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$$

- This means that the  $\hat{v}_{ST}$  which minimizes  $\varepsilon$  must be an eigenvector of  $\mathbf{T}_{3D}$
- It should also be normalized:  $\|\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{S}\mathsf{T}}\|=1$
- The eigenvector that minimizes ε is the one of smallest eigenvalue (why?)



## The 3D structure tensor revisited

- Once  $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$  has been determined we can find  $\mathbf{v}_{ST}$  that is
  - Parallel to  $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}$
  - Has its last component = 1
- The first two components of  $\mathbf{v}_{ST}$  are the motion vector  $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2)$

$$v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$$
  $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$ 



## Summary

- We now have 2 alternatives to local motion estimation based on BCCE:
  - 1. least squares minimization (based on  $\mathbf{T}_{_{2D}}$  and  $\mathbf{s}$ )
  - 2. total least squares minimization (based on  $\mathbf{T}_{_{3D}}$ )



#### Summary: Least squares minimization

• Minimize

$$\varepsilon_{ST} = \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \left[ \mathbf{v}_{ST} \cdot \nabla_{3} I \right]^2 d\mathbf{x}$$

where  $\mathbf{v}_{ST} = (v_1, v_2, 1)$  over the motion components  $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2)$ 

- Find **v** by solving  $\mathbf{T}_{2D}$  **v** = **s**
- We can see  $v_{\mbox{\scriptsize ST}}$  as a homogeneous representation of v



### Summary: Total least squares minimization

• Minimize

$$\varepsilon_{ST} = \int_{\Omega} w(\mathbf{x}) \left[ \hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST} \cdot \nabla_3 I \right]^2 d\mathbf{x}$$

over all components of  $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}} = (r_1, r_2, r_3)$  and with the constraint  $\|\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}}\| = 1$ 

- Find  $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{ST}$  as the eigenvector of smallest eigenvalue with respect to  $\mathbf{T}_{3D}$   $r_1$   $r_2$
- Find v from  $\hat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}\,\mathsf{as}}$   $v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$   $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$



## The 3D tensor

In the 3D case, we compute a structure tensor T<sub>3D</sub>, a symmetric 3 × 3 matrix, that can be decomposed as (the spectral theorem)

$$\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{3D}} = \lambda_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T + \lambda_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3^T$$

where  $\lambda_1 \ge \lambda_2 \ge \lambda_3 \ge 0$  are the eigenvalues of  $\mathbf{T}_{3D}$  and  $\mathbf{\hat{e}}_k$  are the corresponding eigenvectors (an orthonormal set)



### The 3D structure tensor

- In general (*not only in the case of motion*) we can distinguish between three cases of the local 3D signal
  - The signal is constant on parallel planes (i1D)
  - The signal is constant on parallel lines (i2D)
  - The signal is isotropic
- Remember that **T** is formed as

$$\mathbf{T}(\mathbf{x}) = \int_{\Omega_0} w(\mathbf{y}) \nabla I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \nabla^{\mathrm{T}} I(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \, d\mathbf{y}$$



The signal is constant on parallel planes (Lasagna)

- (Case 1) The 3D signal is i1D
  - The gradient  $\nabla_{_3}I$  is always parallel to the normal vector of the planes

$$\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \, \widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \, \widehat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T$$

– **T** has rank 1



- $-\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1}$  is a normal vector to the planes
- A moving 2D line generates a 3D signal that is i1D ) T has rank 1



#### The signal is constant on parallel planes

 In this case, the Fourier transform of *I* is concentrated along a line through the origin, in the direction of ê<sub>1</sub>



The signal is constant on parallel lines (Spaghetti)

- (Case 2) The 3D signal is intrinsic 2D (i2D)
  - The gradient  $\nabla_{_3}I$  is always perpendicular to the direction  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{_3}$  of the lines  $\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \, \hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \, \hat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \, \hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \, \hat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T$
  - $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{_3}$  is an eigenvector of eigenvalue o relative to  $\mathbf{T}$
  - **T** has rank 2
  - A moving point generates a 3D signal that is i2D
     ⇒ T has rank 2



### The signal is constant on parallel lines

- In this case, the Fourier transform of *I* is concentrated to a plane through the origin, that has **ê**<sub>3</sub> as its normal vector
- In other words, the plane is spanned by
   \$\hbeca\_1\$ and \$\hbeca\_2\$



# The signal is isotropic (Dumpling)

- (Case 3) The signal varies uniformly in all directions
  - The gradient  $\nabla_{_3}I$  is not restricted to some subspace



$$\mathbf{T} = \lambda_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1^T + \lambda_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_2^T + \lambda_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3 \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_3^T$$

where  $\lambda_1$ ,  $\lambda_2$  and  $\lambda_3$  all are  $\neq 0$ .

- **T** has rank 3
- Not consistent the BCCE



## The signal is isotropic

- In the isotropic case, variations in all directions are uniformly distributed
- Implies that  $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = \lambda$
- We can write  $\mathbf{T} = \lambda \mathbf{I}$  (I is the identity tensor)
- The Fourier transform of the signal extends into all 3 dimensions



## Confidence measures

• As confidence measures for the three cases we can use, *for example*:





## Confidence measures

- They satisfy  $c_1 + c_2 + c_3 = 1$ .
- Furthermore

$$-i1D\text{-signal} \Rightarrow \mathbf{T} \text{ has rank } 1 \Rightarrow$$
$$\lambda_1 > 0, \lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = 0 \Rightarrow c_1 = 1, c_2 = c_3 = 0.$$
$$-i2D\text{-signal} \Rightarrow \mathbf{T} \text{ has rank } 2 \Rightarrow$$
$$\lambda_1 \ge \lambda_2 > 0, \lambda_3 = 0 \Rightarrow c_2 \neq 0, c_3 = 0.$$
$$-\text{Isotropic signal} \Rightarrow \mathbf{T} \text{ has rank } 3 \Rightarrow c_3 \neq 0.$$



## Decomposing **T**

• Based on these confidence measures, **T** can be decomposed as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{T} &= \lambda_{1} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1}^{T} + \lambda_{2} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2}^{T} + \lambda_{3} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{3} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{3}^{T} \\ &= (\lambda_{1} - \lambda_{2}) \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1}^{T} + \\ &+ (\lambda_{2} - \lambda_{3}) \,(\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1}^{T} + \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2}^{T}) + \\ &+ \lambda_{3} \,(\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{1}^{T} + \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{2}^{T} + \hat{\mathbf{e}}_{3} \,\hat{\mathbf{e}}_{3}^{T}) \\ &= \lambda_{1} \,[c_{1} \,\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{rang1}} + c_{2} \,\mathbf{T}_{\mathsf{rang2}} + c_{3} \,\mathbf{I} \,$$



## Summary

- Given a local picture of the signal:
  - The directions along which the signal is constant correspond to the null space of T
  - **T** has a range that is orthogonal to this null space
  - In the Fourier domain: the energy is concentrated to the range of T



## Summary

- The rank of **T** equals the dimension of its range
- The range represent the dimensions in the Fourier domain where there is energy
- We can define confidence measures (in various ways) that indicate which rank or case that **T** represents
- In general, **T** can be a combination of the different cases



- At each point (x<sub>1</sub>, x<sub>2</sub>, t) we can estimate the local 3D structure tensor T
- If **T** has rank 2 it corresponds to a non-i1D signal in the 2D image
- Since **T** has rank 2 we can "uniquely" determine an eigenvector of smallest eigenvalue:

$$\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}} = (r_1 \ r_2 \ r_3)$$



• From the previous derivations we know that

$$\widehat{\mathbf{v}}_{\mathsf{ST}} \sim \mathbf{v}_{\mathsf{ST}} = (v_1 \, v_2 \, 1)$$

• Consequently, we can compute the motion components as

$$v_1 = \frac{r_1}{r_3}$$
  $v_2 = \frac{r_2}{r_3}$ 



- If **T** has rank 1 it means that the corresponding 2Dsignal is i1D
  - A moving line or edge
- The null space of **T** is 2-dimensional
- We cannot uniquely determine  $\mathbf{v}_{\rm ST}$ , and therefore  $\mathbf{v}$  cannot be uniquely determined
- Related to the aperture problem



- However, in this case we can determine the *normal motion* of the 2D-signal
- Let **p**=(p<sub>1</sub>, p<sub>2</sub>, p<sub>3</sub>) be an eigenvector of largest eigenvalue relative to **T**



– The spatio-temporal normal motion vector  $\mathbf{v}_{\text{st}}$  must satisfy





• From these two relations, the normal motion is given as

$$\mathbf{v}_{\text{norm}} = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} = -\frac{p_3}{p_1^2 + p_2^2} \begin{pmatrix} p_1 \\ p_2 \end{pmatrix}$$



• Finally, if **T** has rank 3 this implies that the local signal does not satisfy the conditions expressed in BCCE. (why?)



# A strategy for motion estimation

- Compute the 3D tensor **T**<sub>3</sub>
- Determine its eigenvalues
- Classify the tensor into each of the three cases, based on some confidence measures (how?)
- If rank 1: compute the normal motion
- If rank 2: compute the "true" motion
- If rank 3: no motion can be determined

