LBP-Structure Optimization With Symmetry and Uniformity Regularizations for Scene Classification

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***Abstract*—Local binary pattern (LBP) and its variants have been widely used in many visual recognition tasks. Most existing approaches utilize predefined LBP structures to extract LBP features. Recently, data-driven LBP structures have shown promising results. However, due to the limited number of training samples, data-driven structures may overfit the training samples, hence could not generalize well on the novel testing samples. To address this problem, we propose two structural regularization constraints for LBP-structure optimization: symmetry constraint and uniformity constraint. These two constraints are inspired by predefined LBP structures, which convey the human prior knowledge on designing LBP structures. The LBP-structure optimization is casted as a binary quadratic programming problem and solved efficiently via the branch-and-bound algorithm. The evaluation on two scene-classification datasets demonstrates the superior performance of the proposed approach compared with both predefined LBP structures and unconstrained data-driven LBP structures.**

***Index Terms*—Local binary pattern (LBP)-structure optimization, scene classification, structural regularization, symmetry constraint, uniformity constraint.**

I. Introduction

LOCAL binary pattern (LBP) and its variants have a wide range of applications, e.g., texture classification [1]–[3], dynamic texture recognition [4]–[6], scene recognition [7]–[10], facial analysis [11]–[19], human detection [20]–[22], and many others [23]–[30]. LBP is popular because of its simplicity, ability to capture image micro-structures, and robustness to illumination variations.

Traditionally, a handcrafted LBP structure was often utilized to extract LBP features [7], [9], [11], [28], [31]–[35]. The most popular LBP structure consists of eight nearest neighbors [7], [9] or P neighbors in a circle [11], [28], [31]. Other geometries, such as line and disk, were explored in local quantized pattern (LQP) [35]. Handcrafted LBP structures are designed based on the human prior knowledge on images, and they may work well across different applications. However, such handcrafted LBP structures may not optimally capture the intrinsic image characteristics of the target application.

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Recently, researchers aim to derive the optimal LBP structures in a data-driven manner. In [14], Maturana *et al.* utilized a heuristic hill-climbing technique to select the suitable LBP structure. Lei *et al.* learnt discriminant image filters and optimal neighborhood sampling strategy in a data-driven way [18]. More recently, Ren *et al.* optimized the LBP structures based on the maximum-joint-mutual-information (MJMI) criterion using binary quadratic programming via the branch-and-bound algorithm [10]. The data-driven LBP structures could well capture the image characteristics of the target application, but they may have the risk of overfitting due to the limited number of training samples.

To address these problems, we propose a new way to incorporate the human knowledge into LBP-structure optimization. We first cast the structure optimization as a point-selection problem based on the maximal-joint-mutual-information criterion [10]. We then extract two design rules from handcrafted LBP structures, i.e., symmetry rule and uniformity rule. Most handcrafted LBP structures are symmetric about the horizontal axis, the vertical axis, and the center pixel. They are also uniformly distributed in different directions at different scales, not closely clustered. This work converts these two design rules into structural regularization constraints for the LBP-structure optimization problem, in the form that could be solved efficiently using binary quadratic programming via the branch-and-bound algorithm. As a result, the final proposed LBP-structure optimization problem with structural constraints could be solved using binary quadratic programming.

The proposed approach is evaluated on two scene-classification datasets: the 21-land-use dataset [36] and the eight-event dataset [37]. It demonstrates superior performance compared with predefined LBP structures, unconstrained data-driven LBP structures, and other state-of-the-art approaches.

II. Proposed Approach

A. Overview

The block diagram of the proposed approach is presented in Fig. 1. It consists of two steps: LBP-structure optimization and LBP feature generation. After deriving the optimal LBP structures, they are used to generate LBP features. Compared with previous data-driven LBP structures [10], we have added two structural regularization constraints: symmetry constraint and uniformity constraint.

The most popular LBP structure used for scene classification consists of eight nearest neighbors [7], [9] highlighted in yellow in Fig. 2. Such a structure could not capture the image characteristics at a larger scale. If we extend it to a larger 5×5 neighborhood shown in Fig. 2, the feature dimension dramatically increases to $2^{24} = 16\,777\,216$, which is too high to handle.

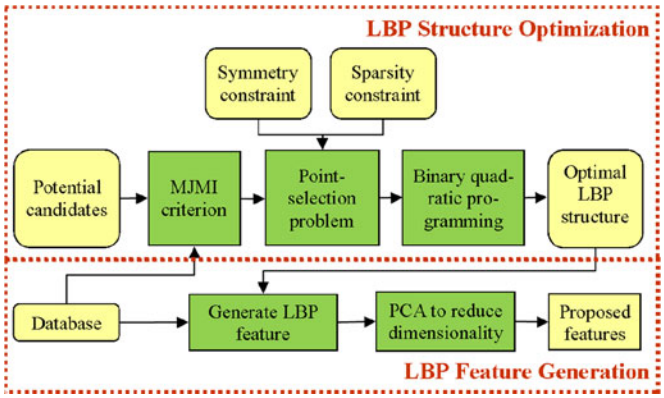

Fig. 1. Block diagram of the proposed approach to extract LBP features.

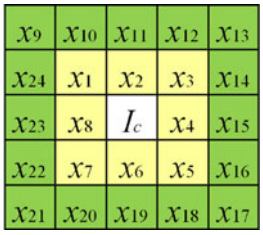

Fig. 2. Potential candidates for scene classification.

We thus treat the binarized-pixel-difference features shown in Fig. 2 as potential candidates, and select a predefined number of points from them to form an optimal LBP structure that could well capture the image characteristics of the target application.

Formally, denote $z_i = C_i - I_c$ as the pixel difference between the neighboring pixel C_i and the center pixel I_c. The binarized pixel difference is defined as

$$x_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } z_i \geq 0, \\ 0 & \text{if } z_i < 0. \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Point C_i is now represented by its binarized pixel difference x_i. We cast the LBP-structure optimization as a point-selection problem: given a set of potential candidates $\mathbf{x} = \{x_i, i = 1, 2, \ldots, n\}$ and target classification variable c, the goal is to find a subset of m candidates $\mathbf{x}_m \subseteq \mathbf{x}$ that optimally characterizes c.

B. LBP Structure Optimization by Using MJMI Criterion

For feature selection, it is desirable to maximize the dependency of selected features on classification variable c (Max-Dependency) [38]. We use mutual information to characterize the dependency. The goal is to find $\mathbf{x}_m \subseteq \mathbf{x}$ so that

$$\mathbf{x}_m^* = \underset{\mathbf{x}_m}{\operatorname{argmax}}\, I(\mathbf{x}_m; c) \tag{2}$$

$$I(\mathbf{x}_m; c) = \int\int p(\mathbf{x}_m, c) \log \frac{p(\mathbf{x}_m, c)}{p(\mathbf{x}_m)p(c)} d\mathbf{x}_m\, dc. \tag{3}$$

It is difficult to reliably estimate $p(\mathbf{x}_m)$ and $p(\mathbf{x}_m, c)$ due to the limited number of samples available and the large number of joint states to be estimated. In [10], a maximal-conditional-mutual-information (MJMI) criterion was utilized for LBP structure optimization. Instead of maximizing intractable $I(\mathbf{x}_m; c)$, the goal is to find a subset $\mathbf{x}_m \subseteq \mathbf{x}$ that maximizes its approximation $\sum_{i \neq j} I(x_i, x_j; c)$, i.e.

$$\mathbf{x}_m^* = \underset{\mathbf{x}_m}{\operatorname{argmax}} \sum_{x_i, x_j \in \mathbf{x}_m, i \neq j} I(x_i, x_j; c). \tag{4}$$

To derive a globally optimal solution, (4) is converted into a binary quadratic programming problem. Denote $\mathbf{a} = (a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n)^T, a_i \in \{0, 1\}$ as the indication vector for $\mathbf{x}$, i.e., $a_i = 1$ means x_i is selected and $a_i = 0$ otherwise. Equation (4) is equivalent to

$$\mathbf{a}^* = \arg\max_{\mathbf{a}} \mathbf{a}^T \mathbf{M} \mathbf{a}, \text{s.t.} \sum_{\mathrm{i}=1}^{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{a_i} = \mathrm{m} \tag{5}$$

where $\mathbf{M} \in \mathcal{R}^{n \times n}$, and its diagonal elements are zero and off-diagonal elements $\mathbf{M}_{i,j} = I(x_i, x_j; c)$.

The joint probability mass function $p(x_i, x_j, c)$ can be estimated efficiently. Denote $h_{p,q}$ as the joint histogram for features x_i, x_j using qth sample of pth class. $p(x_i, x_j|c)$ is estimated as

$$p(x_i, x_j|c = p) \longleftarrow \frac{1}{N_p} \sum_q h_{p,q} \tag{6}$$

where N_p is the number of samples for class p. Then, $p(x_i, x_j, c = p) = p(x_i, x_j|c = p)p(c = p)$, where $p(c = p) = N_p/N$ and N is the total number of samples.

C. Structural Constraints

The optimal LBP structure derived by (5) may overfit the training samples due to the limited number of training samples. To solve this problem, we propose two regularization constraints: symmetry constraint and uniformity constraint.

1) Symmetry Constraint: Most handcrafted LBP structures are symmetric about the horizontal axis, the vertical axis and the center pixel. We thus enforce the data-driven LBP structures to be symmetric. Formally, we define the x-axis (the horizontal axis) symmetry matrix $\mathbf{P}_x \in \mathcal{R}^{n \times n}$ as

$$\mathbf{P}_x(i, j) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } x_i \text{ and } x_j \text{ are } x\text{-axis symmetric}, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise}. \end{cases} \tag{7}$$

Take the candidates in Fig. 2 as an example. x_3 and x_5 are x-axis symmetric. Thus, $\mathbf{P}_x(3, 5) = 1$. Clearly, $\mathbf{P}_x^T = \mathbf{P}_x$.

The indicate vector $\mathbf{a}_x$ that is x-axis symmetric to $\mathbf{a}$ can be obtained by $\mathbf{a}_x = \mathbf{P}_x \mathbf{a}$. We then define the x-axis symmetry measure as

$$\begin{aligned} S_x &= -(\mathbf{a}_x - \mathbf{a})^T (\mathbf{a}_x - \mathbf{a}) \\ &= -\mathbf{a}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_x \mathbf{a} \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

where $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}_x = (\mathbf{P}_x - \mathbf{I})^T (\mathbf{P}_x - \mathbf{I})$, and $\mathbf{I}$ is the identity matrix. If $\mathbf{a}$ is symmetric about the x-axis, $\mathbf{a}_x$ will be the same as $\mathbf{a}$, and hence $S_x = 0$. Otherwise, S_x will be a negative value. A larger S_x indicates a higher symmetry about the x-axis.

Similarly, we define the symmetry measure S_y about the y-axis and S_c about the center pixel as follow:

$$S_y = -\mathbf{a}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_y \mathbf{a}, \tag{9}$$

$$S_c = -\mathbf{a}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_c \mathbf{a} \tag{10}$$

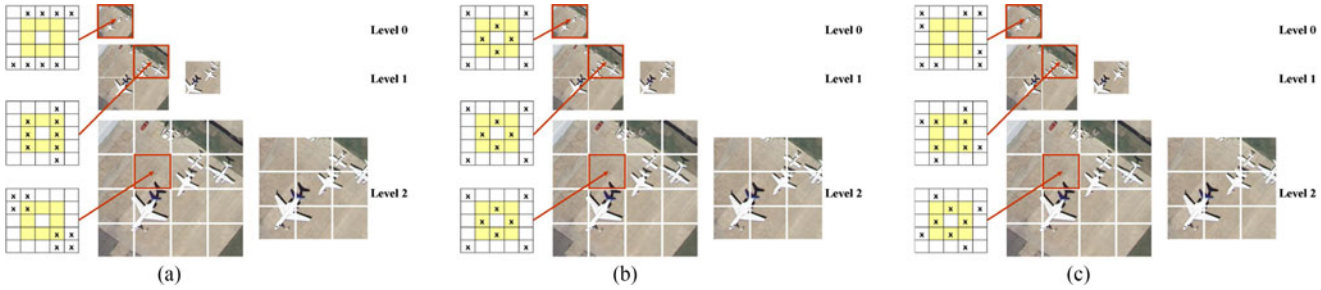

Fig. 3. Optimal LBP structures for the 21-land-use dataset without using structural constraints, using structural constraints only, and using the proposed approach are shown in (a) Without using structural constraints. (b) Using structural constraints only, and (c) Using the proposed approach respectively.

where $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}_y$ and $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}_c$ are similarly defined as $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}_x$. The final symmetry measure is:

$$S = S_x + S_y + S_c = -\mathbf{a}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}} \mathbf{a} \tag{11}$$

where $\tilde{\mathbf{P}} = \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_x + \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_y + \tilde{\mathbf{P}}_c$. Our target is to maximize the symmetry measure S, i.e.

$$\mathbf{a}^* = \underset{\mathbf{a}}{\operatorname{argmax}} -\mathbf{a}^T \tilde{\mathbf{P}} \mathbf{a}, \text{s.t.} \sum_{\mathrm{i}=1}^{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{a_i} = \mathrm{m}. \tag{12}$$

2) Uniformity Constraint: The goal of the uniformity constraint is to uniformly distribute the selected points, in order to avoid the scenario that many selected points are closely clustered. Denote $\mathbf{D} \in \mathcal{R}^{n \times n}$ as the distance matrix, and its entry $D_{ij} = D(x_i, x_j)$ is the Euclidean distance between point x_i and point x_j. For example, $D(x_3, x_{14}) = 1$ for the candidates shown in Fig. 2. We achieve the uniformity by maximizing the following objective function:

$$\mathbf{x}^* = \underset{\mathbf{x}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \sum_{i=1}^{m} \min_{x_j} D(x_i, x_j), x_i, x_j \in \mathbf{x}_m. \tag{13}$$

This criterion maximizes the sum of the distances of all selected candidates to their nearest candidates, which ensures all selected candidates are well separated. However, deriving a globally optimal solution to (13) is NP-hard. We thus propose an alternative objective function:

$$\mathbf{x}^* = \underset{\mathbf{x}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \sum_{x_i, x_j} D(x_i, x_j), x_i, x_j \in \mathbf{x}_m. \tag{14}$$

This objective function maximizes the sum of the distances of all pairs of selected candidates. Equation (14) can be rewritten into matrix form

$$\mathbf{a}^* = \underset{\mathbf{a}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \mathbf{a}^T \mathbf{D} \mathbf{a}, \text{s.t.} \sum_{\mathrm{i}=1}^{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{a_i} = \mathrm{m}. \tag{15}$$

Equation (15) can be solved as a binary-quadratic-programming problem. Approximately, it uniformly distributes the selected candidates in the neighborhood. However, the selected candidates tend to be all boundary neighbors under this criterion. It may not select the inner candidates. As such, the derived LBP structure is not as uniform as we expect by using (13).

Therefore, we propose a new definition of the distance matrix $\mathbf{D}$ in (15). By enforcing the symmetry constraint, we expect the derived LBP structures to be symmetric. We thus define $\mathbf{D}$ as

$$\mathbf{D}_{ij} = \min_{y_j \in \Theta(x_j)} D(x_i, y_j) \tag{16}$$

TABLE I
COMPARISONS WITH THE STATE OF THE ART IN TERMS OF RECOGNITION RATE ON 21-LAND-USE AND 8-EVENT DATASETS

Method	21-land-use	8-event
AdaBoost bin selection [33]	82.7%	80.2%
LQP $Disc_5^{3*}$ [35]	83.0%	78.9%
CENTRIST [7]	85.9%	78.3%
DFD [18]	62.8%	75.7%
Discriminative LBP [14]	73.4%	66.5%
SPCK [36]	73.1%	–
SPCK+ [36]	76.1%	–
SPCK++ [36]	77.3%	–
Scene/Object model + SIFT [37]	–	73.4%
BRSP [41]	77.8%	79.6%
MJMI [10]	87.2%	84.0%
Proposed MJMI + Symmetry	88.1%	84.5%
Proposed MJMI + Uniformity	87.6%	84.7%
Proposed MJMI + Symmetry + Uniformity	**88.5%**	**85.5%**

where $\Theta(x_j)$ is the group of candidates that are x-axis, y-axis, or center symmetric to x_j. $\Theta(x_j)$ includes x_j itself. The distance matrix $\mathbf{D}$ can be precomputed. By using the symmetry constraint (12) and the uniformity constraint [(15) with the distance matrix (16)], we could derive the LBP structures shown in Fig. 3(b).

D. LBP Structure Optimization With Structural Constraints

Equations (5), (12), and (15) are three objective functions that could be solved via binary quadratic programming. We thus combine them as one objective function:

$$\mathbf{a}^* = \underset{\mathbf{a}}{\operatorname{argmax}} \mathbf{a}^T (\mathbf{M} - \lambda_1 \tilde{\mathbf{P}} + \lambda_2 \mathbf{D}) \mathbf{a}, \text{s.t.} \sum_{\mathrm{i}=1}^{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{a_i} = \mathrm{m} \tag{17}$$

where λ_1 and λ_2 are weighting factors. $\mathbf{M}$, $\mathbf{D}$, and $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}$ are normalized by dividing by its maximum value. For simplicity, we set $\lambda_1 = \lambda_2 = \lambda$, i.e., two regularization constraints are equally important. As most entries of $\tilde{\mathbf{P}}$ are zeros, we expect $\lambda \gg 1$. In the experiments, we set $\lambda = 100$. The objective function (17) is a binary-quadratic-programming problem, which can be efficiently solved by the branch-and-bound algorithm [39]. More details can be found in [10].

III. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

We conduct the experiments on the 21-land dataset [36] and the eight-event dataset [37]. We compare the proposed approach with predefined LBP structures, unconstrained data-driven LBP structures, and other state-of-the-art approaches.

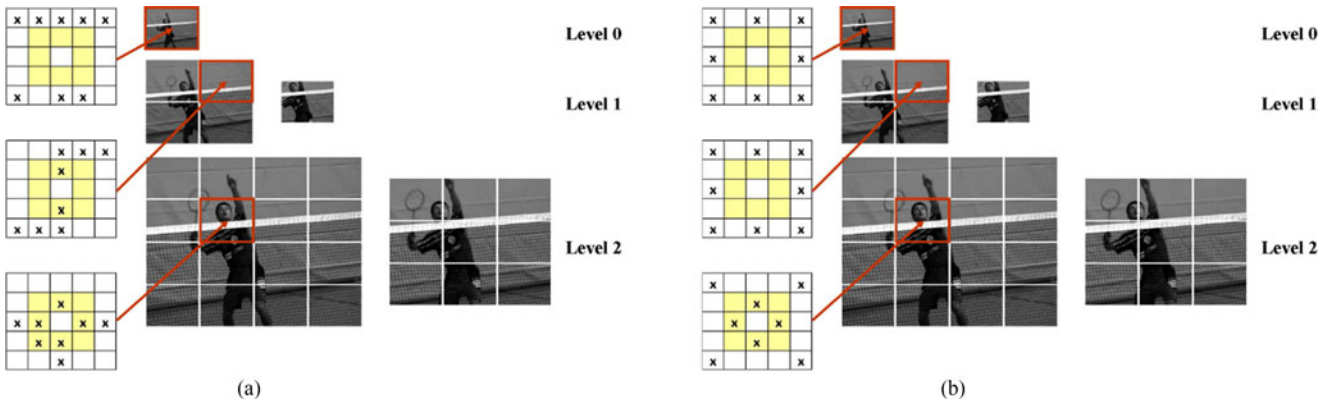

Fig. 4. Optimal LBP structures for the eight-event dataset without and with using structural constraints are shown in (a) and (b), respectively. (a) Without using structural constraints, and (b) Using the proposed approach respectively.

A. Scene Recognition on the 21-Land-Use Dataset

The 21-land-use dataset [36] contains 21 classes of aerial orthoimagery. Each class has 100 images of 256×256 pixels. We utilize the spatial pyramid [40]. The image is hierarchically divided into 31 patches as shown in Fig. 3. One optimal LBP structure is derived for each patch. We follow the same setup as in [7], [10], [36], and [41]. For each class, the images are randomly split into five equal-sized sets. Four of them are used for training and the held-out set is used for testing.

We use CENTRIST [7] as the baseline algorithm, which utilizes eight nearest neighbors as the LBP structure. We also construct the optimal LBP structures using eight points. Some examples of the optimal LBP structures derived without using structural constraints, by using structural constraints only and by the proposed approach are shown in Fig. 3(a)–(c), respectively. Without using structural constraints, the optimal structures are not symmetric, or clustered in some directions, as shown in Fig. 3(a). The optimal structures in Fig. 3(b) are solely determined by structural constraints, and hence they are the same for all patches. The optimal LBP structures derived by the proposed approach in Fig. 3(c) are different for different patches, which better capture the intrinsic image characteristics of different image patches.

We compare the proposed approach with:

1) Direct feature selection/extraction from the LBP-histogram bins: Adaboost bin selection [33], k-means bin clustering by LQP [35], and PCA dimension reduction by CENTRIST [7].
2) Other LBP-structure-learning approaches: discriminant face descriptor (DFD) [18] and discriminative LBP structure learning using a heuristic hill-climbing technique [14].
3) Other state-of-the-art solutions for scene recognition: SPCK, SPCK+, SPCK++ [36], and BRSP [41].
4) The optimal LBP structures derived by MJMI [10] without using structural constraints, and using symmetry constraint or uniformity constraint only.

The comparison results are shown in Table I. CENTRIST utilizes eight nearest neighbors highlighted in yellow. It achieves fairly good performance. MJMI [10] optimizes the LBP structures in a data-driven way, and significantly outperforms other compared approaches. By incorporating structural constraints into the LBP-structure optimization, the proposed approach significantly outperforms MJMI and all other approaches. Compared to MJMI [10] without using structural constraints, the proposed approach improves the recognition rate from 87.2% to 88.5%, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the proposed approach.

B. Scene Recognition on the Eight-Event Dataset

The eight-event dataset [37] is composed of eight sport classes. Each class has 137 to 250 high-resolution images. To capture the image micro-structures at the same scale, we resize the image so that its minimum dimension (height or weight) is 600. The experiments are repeated five times. For each trial, we randomly select 70 images per class for training and 60 for testing, same as in [7], [10], [37], and [41]. Other setups are the same as for the 21-land-use dataset. Some examples of the optimal LBP structures derived without using structural constraints and by using the proposed approaches are shown in Fig. 4(a) and (b), respectively. The structural constraints regularize the LBP structures to be symmetric and scattered.

From the results shown in Table I, we can see that CENTRIST does not perform well on the eight-event dataset. By optimizing LBP structures, MJMI significantly outperforms other compared approaches, including structure-learning approaches, such as DFD [18] and discriminative LBP [14]. The proposed approach further boosts the performance by regularizing the LBP structures using the structural constraints. It increases the recognition rate of MJMI by 1.5%.

IV. Conclusion

Handcrafted LBP structures are designed using human knowledge on images. They are simple and easy to use, but they cannot optimally capture the intrinsic image characteristics of the target application. On the other hand, previous data-driven LBP structures are fine-tuned for the target application, but they may overfit the training samples. To address these problems, we propose a way to incorporate the human knowledge into the LBP-structure optimization. We derive two structural regularization constraints, symmetry constraint and uniformity constraint, from handcrafted LBP structures. Those two constraints are designed in such a way that they can be solved efficiently by binary quadratic programming. The proposed approach is evaluated on two scene-classification datasets. It demonstrates superior performance compared with other state-of-the-art approaches.

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