

Global-Sigma

immediate

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Contents

1 Gaussian kernel width σ

The other important parameter for `DiffusionMap` is the Gaussian kernel width σ that determines the transition probability between data points. The default call of **destiny** – `DiffusionMap(data)` aka `DiffusionMap(data, 'local')` – uses a local σ per cell, derived from a local density estimate around each cell.

Using the 1.0 default, `sigma = 'global'`, estimates σ using a heuristic. It is also possible to specify this parameter manually to tweak the result. The eigenvector plot explained above will show a continuous decline instead of sharp drops if either the dataset is too big or the σ is chosen too small.

The σ estimation algorithm is explained in detail in ?. In brief, it works by finding a maximum in the slope of the log-log plot of local density versus σ .

```
[2]: library(destiny)
      data(guo_norm)
```

Using `find_sigmas`

An efficient variant of that procedure is provided by `find_sigmas`. This function determines the optimal σ for a subset of the given data and provides the default σ for a `DiffusionMap` call. Due to a different starting point, the resulting σ is different from above:

```
[3]: sigmas <- find_sigmas(guo_norm, verbose = FALSE)
      optimal_sigma(sigmas)
```

```
10.8945955274194
```

The resulting diffusion map's approximation depends on the chosen σ . Note that the σ estimation heuristic only finds local optima and even the global optimum of the heuristic might not be ideal for your data.

```
[4]: palette(cube_helix(6))

plots <- lapply(
```

```

list('local', 5, round(optimal_sigma(sigmaz), 2), 100),
function(sigma) plot(
  DiffusionMap(guo_norm, sigma), 1:2,
  main = paste('σ =', sigma),
  col_by = 'num_cells', draw_legend = FALSE))
do.call(gridExtra::grid.arrange, c(plots, ncol = 2))

```

