

Unique Recovery of Transport Maps and Vector Fields from Finite Measure-Valued Data

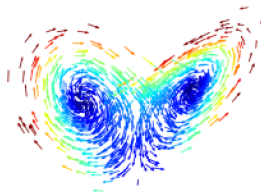
Jonah Botvinick-Greenhouse¹ and Yunan Yang²

¹Institute for Foundations of Data Science, Yale University

²Department of Mathematics, Cornell University

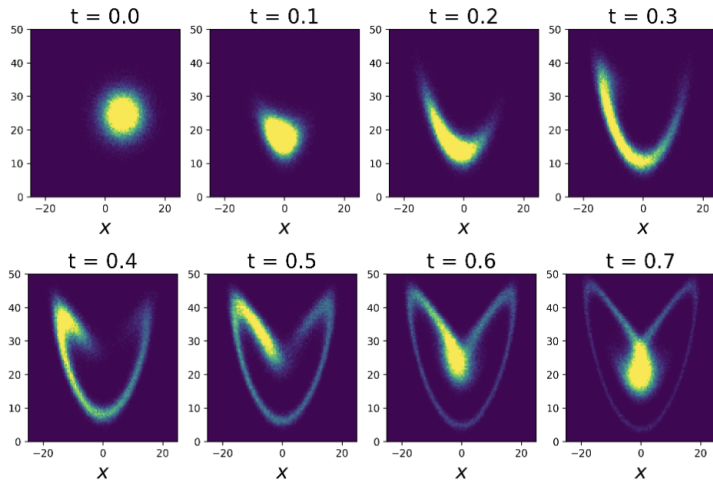
MSRNE Generative Modeling & Sampling Workshop

August 12, 2026

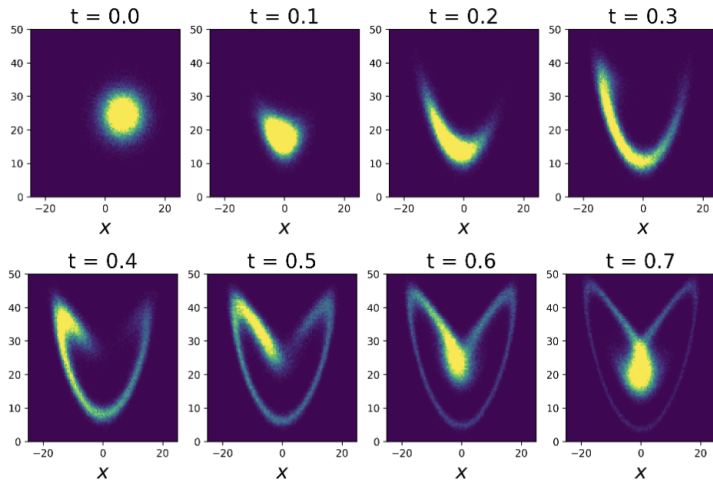


Learning from Population Dynamics

Learning from Population Dynamics



Learning from Population Dynamics



Can we uniquely recover the dynamics from m density snapshots?

Unique Recovery of Transport Maps

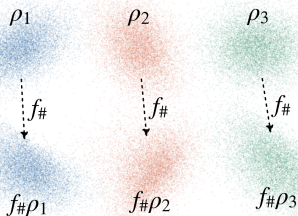
Pushforward uniqueness

(Q1): Does $\{(\rho_j, f\#\rho_j)\}_{j=1}^m$
uniquely identify f ?

Unique Recovery of Transport Maps

Pushforward uniqueness

(Q1): Does $\{(\rho_j, f_{\#}\rho_j)\}_{j=1}^m$
uniquely identify f ?



Unique Recovery of Transport Maps

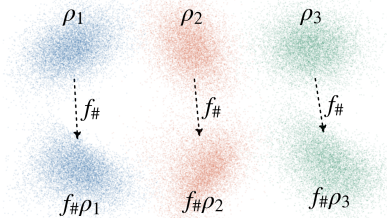
Pushforward uniqueness

(Q1): Does $\{(\rho_j, f_{\#}\rho_j)\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify f ?

Infinitesimal case

Divergence uniqueness

(Q2): Does $\{(\rho_j, \operatorname{div}(\rho_j v))\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify v ?



Unique Recovery of Transport Maps

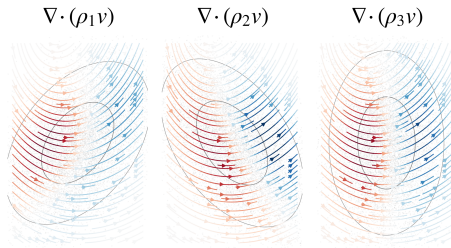
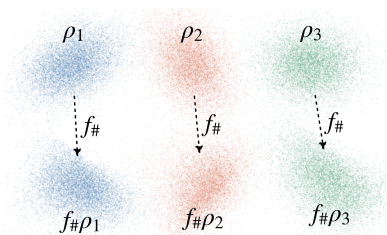
Pushforward uniqueness

(Q1): Does $\{(\rho_j, f\#\rho_j)\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify f ?

Infinitesimal case

Divergence uniqueness

(Q2): Does $\{(\rho_j, \operatorname{div}(\rho_j v))\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify v ?



Unique Recovery of Transport Maps

Pushforward uniqueness

(Q1): Does $\{(\rho_j, f\#\rho_j)\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify f ?

$m > 2d + 1$

Thm: Yes, for a generic set of densities $\mathbf{D}$.

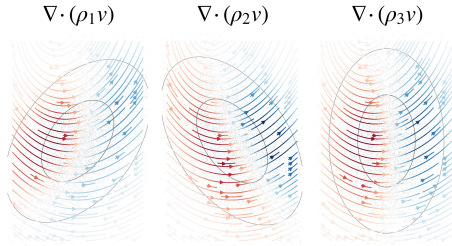
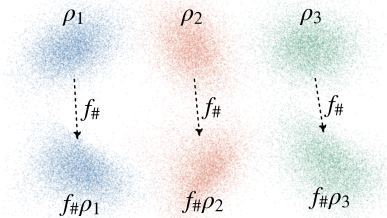
Infinitesimal case

Divergence uniqueness

(Q2): Does $\{(\rho_j, \operatorname{div}(\rho_j v))\}_{j=1}^m$ uniquely identify v ?

$m > 2d + 1$

Thm: Yes, for a generic set of densities $\mathbf{D}$.



Unique Recovery of Transport Maps (cont.)

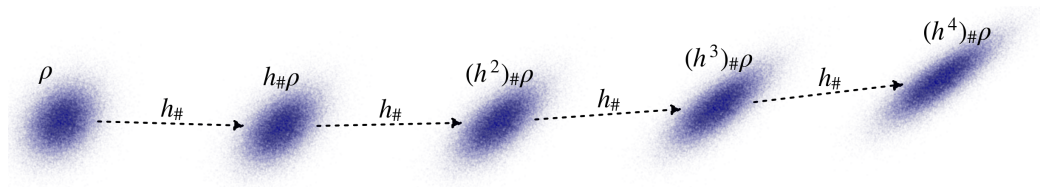
Time-dependent data

(Q3): Do our results generalize if $\rho_j = (h^{j-1}) \# \rho_1$?

Unique Recovery of Transport Maps (cont.)

Time-dependent data

(Q3): Do our results generalize if $\rho_j = (h^{j-1})_{\#}\rho_1$?



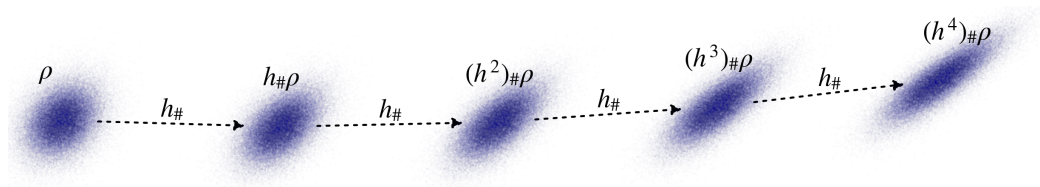
Unique Recovery of Transport Maps (cont.)

Time-dependent data

(Q3): Do our results generalize if $\rho_j = (h^{j-1})_{\#}\rho_1$?

$m > 2d + 1$

Thm: Yes, under a technical assumption on $\rho_1/h_{\#}\rho_1$.



Unique Recovery of Transport Maps (cont.)

Time-dependent data

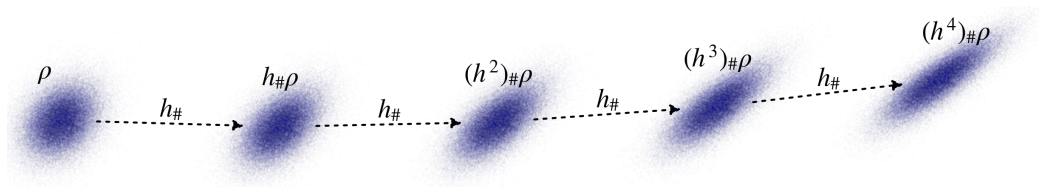
(Q3): Do our results generalize if $\rho_j = (h^{j-1})_{\#}\rho_1$?

$m > 2d + 1$

Thm: Yes, under a technical assumption on $\rho_1/h_{\#}\rho_1$.

Applications

- A new metric comparing pushforward actions
- Data-driven dynamics
- PDE inverse problems
- Generative models
- Measure-valued data fitting



Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$.

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.
2. If $\text{div}(\rho_j v) = \text{div}(\rho_j w)$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $v, w \in \mathfrak{X}^1(M)$, then $v = w$.

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.
2. If $\text{div}(\rho_j v) = \text{div}(\rho_j w)$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $v, w \in \mathfrak{X}^1(M)$, then $v = w$.

Proof Sketch (Pushforward Uniqueness).

Assume $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$.

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.
2. If $\text{div}(\rho_j v) = \text{div}(\rho_j w)$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $v, w \in \mathfrak{X}^1(M)$, then $v = w$.

Proof Sketch (Pushforward Uniqueness).

Assume $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$. Then,

$$\rho_j(f^{-1}(x)) |\det df_x^{-1}| = \rho_j(g^{-1}(x)) |\det dg_x^{-1}|, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m.$$

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.
2. If $\text{div}(\rho_j v) = \text{div}(\rho_j w)$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $v, w \in \mathfrak{X}^1(M)$, then $v = w$.

Proof Sketch (Pushforward Uniqueness).

Assume $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$. Then,

$$\rho_j(f^{-1}(x)) |\det df_x^{-1}| = \rho_j(g^{-1}(x)) |\det dg_x^{-1}|, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m.$$

Thus,

$$\frac{\rho_j(f^{-1}(x))}{\rho_m(f^{-1}(x))} = \frac{\rho_j(g^{-1}(x))}{\rho_m(g^{-1}(x))}, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m-1.$$

Theorem & Proof Sketch

Theorem (B., Yang (2026))

Fix $m > 2d + 1$. There exists a generic subset $\mathbf{D} \subset D_+^1(M, \mathbb{R}^m)$ such that for every $(\rho_1, \dots, \rho_m) \in \mathbf{D}$:

1. If $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $f, g \in \text{Diff}^1(M, N)$, then $f = g$.
2. If $\text{div}(\rho_j v) = \text{div}(\rho_j w)$ for $1 \leq j \leq m$ and $v, w \in \mathfrak{X}^1(M)$, then $v = w$.

Proof Sketch (Pushforward Uniqueness).

Assume $f \# \rho_j = g \# \rho_j$. Then,

$$\rho_j(f^{-1}(x)) |\det df_x^{-1}| = \rho_j(g^{-1}(x)) |\det dg_x^{-1}|, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m.$$

Thus,

$$\frac{\rho_j(f^{-1}(x))}{\rho_m(f^{-1}(x))} = \frac{\rho_j(g^{-1}(x))}{\rho_m(g^{-1}(x))}, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m-1.$$

If $\Phi = (\rho_1/\rho_m, \dots, \rho_{m-1}/\rho_m)$ is an embedding (!), then $\Phi \circ f^{-1} = \Phi \circ g^{-1}$ and $f = g$. □

Applications of our Theory

- Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:

Applications of our Theory

- Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**
 - Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

- Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction
- Data $\{(\rho(t_j, x), \partial_t \rho(t_j, x))\}_{j=0}^m$ from $\partial_t \rho_t + \nabla \cdot (\rho_t v) = 0$ recovers v .

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

- Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction
- Data $\{(\rho(t_j, x), \partial_t \rho(t_j, x))\}_{j=0}^m$ from $\partial_t \rho_t + \nabla \cdot (\rho_t v) = 0$ recovers v .
- $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho] = \text{div}(\rho v) - \text{div}(D \nabla \rho) + R(\rho)$ is identified by $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho_1], \dots, \mathcal{L}_v[\rho_m]$.

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

- Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction
- Data $\{(\rho(t_j, x), \partial_t \rho(t_j, x))\}_{j=0}^m$ from $\partial_t \rho_t + \nabla \cdot (\rho_t v) = 0$ recovers v .
- $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho] = \text{div}(\rho v) - \text{div}(D \nabla \rho) + R(\rho)$ is identified by $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho_1], \dots, \mathcal{L}_v[\rho_m]$.

- **New Metrics for Measure-Valued Inverse Problems & Generative Models:**

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

- Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction
- Data $\{(\rho(t_j, x), \partial_t \rho(t_j, x))\}_{j=0}^m$ from $\partial_t \rho_t + \nabla \cdot (\rho_t v) = 0$ recovers v .
- $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho] = \operatorname{div}(\rho v) - \operatorname{div}(D \nabla \rho) + R(\rho)$ is identified by $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho_1], \dots, \mathcal{L}_v[\rho_m]$.

- **New Metrics for Measure-Valued Inverse Problems & Generative Models:**

$$\mathfrak{D}(f, g) := \sum_{j=1}^m \mathcal{D}(f \# \rho_j, g \# \rho_j),$$

Applications of our Theory

- **Unique recovery of Perron–Frobenius and Koopman Operators:**

$$\mathcal{P}_f \rho_j = \mathcal{P}_g \rho_j, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{P}_f = \mathcal{P}_g$$

$$\mathcal{K}_f y_j = \mathcal{K}_g y_j, \quad 1 \leq j \leq m \implies \mathcal{K}_f = \mathcal{K}_g$$

- **Uniqueness Guarantees in Transport-Based PDE Inverse Problems:**

- Continuity, advection, Fokker–Planck, advection-diffusion-reaction
- Data $\{(\rho(t_j, x), \partial_t \rho(t_j, x))\}_{j=0}^m$ from $\partial_t \rho_t + \nabla \cdot (\rho_t v) = 0$ recovers v .
- $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho] = \operatorname{div}(\rho v) - \operatorname{div}(D \nabla \rho) + R(\rho)$ is identified by $\mathcal{L}_v[\rho_1], \dots, \mathcal{L}_v[\rho_m]$.

- **New Metrics for Measure-Valued Inverse Problems & Generative Models:**

$$\mathfrak{D}(f, g) := \sum_{j=1}^m \mathcal{D}(f \# \rho_j, g \# \rho_j), \quad \mathsf{D}(v, w) := \sum_{j=1}^m \mathbf{d}(\operatorname{div}(\rho_j v), \operatorname{div}(\rho_j w))$$

Application of Data-Driven Metrics

Goal: Recover f_θ by comparing data $f \# \rho_j$ with model simulations $f_\theta \# \rho_j$ via

Application of Data-Driven Metrics

Goal: Recover f_θ by comparing data $f \# \rho_j$ with model simulations $f_\theta \# \rho_j$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) = \sum_{j=1}^m \mathcal{D}(f \# \rho_j, f_\theta \# \rho_j).$$

Application of Data-Driven Metrics

Goal: Recover f_θ by comparing data $f \# \rho_j$ with model simulations $f_\theta \# \rho_j$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) = \sum_{j=1}^m \mathcal{D}(f \# \rho_j, f_\theta \# \rho_j).$$

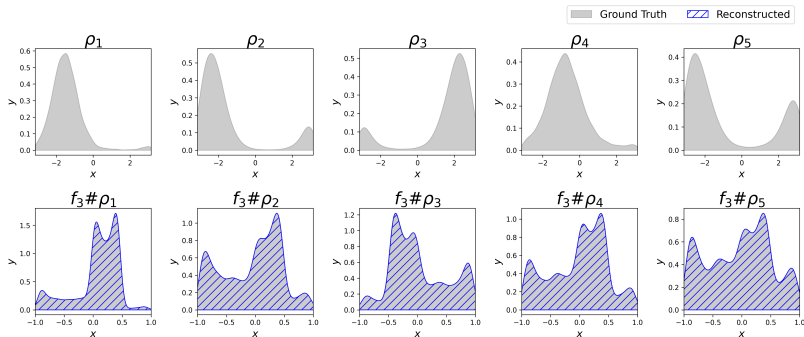


Figure: Input densities ρ_j (top) and output densities $f \# \rho_j$ (bottom).

Application of Data-Driven Metrics

Goal: Recover f_θ by comparing data $f \# \rho_j$ with model simulations $f_\theta \# \rho_j$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) = \sum_{j=1}^m \mathcal{D}(f \# \rho_j, f_\theta \# \rho_j).$$

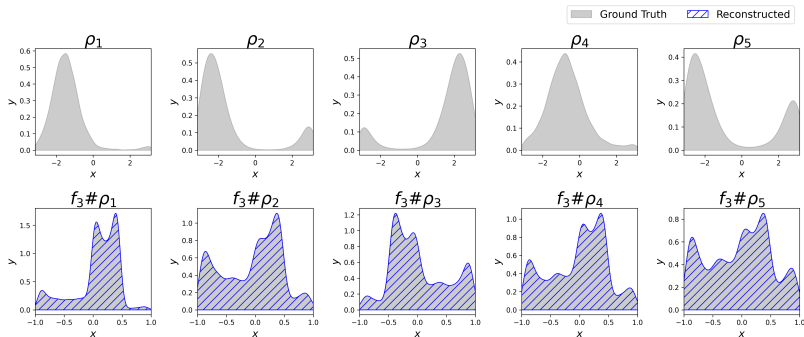


Figure: Input densities ρ_j (top) and output densities $f \# \rho_j$ (bottom).

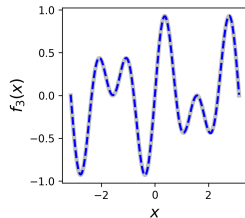


Figure: Reconstructed function

Application of Data-Driven Metrics (cont.)

Goal: Recover v_θ by comparing the data $\text{div}(\rho_j v)$ with the model output $\text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)$ via

Application of Data-Driven Metrics (cont.)

Goal: Recover v_θ by comparing the data $\text{div}(\rho_j v)$ with the model output $\text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) := \sum_{j=1}^m \|\text{div}(\rho_j v) - \text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)\|_{L^2}^2$$

Application of Data-Driven Metrics (cont.)

Goal: Recover v_θ by comparing the data $\text{div}(\rho_j v)$ with the model output $\text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) := \sum_{j=1}^m \|\text{div}(\rho_j v) - \text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)\|_{L^2}^2$$

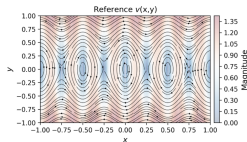


Figure: Reference solution.

Application of Data-Driven Metrics (cont.)

Goal: Recover v_θ by comparing the data $\text{div}(\rho_j v)$ with the model output $\text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) := \sum_{j=1}^m \|\text{div}(\rho_j v) - \text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)\|_{L^2}^2$$

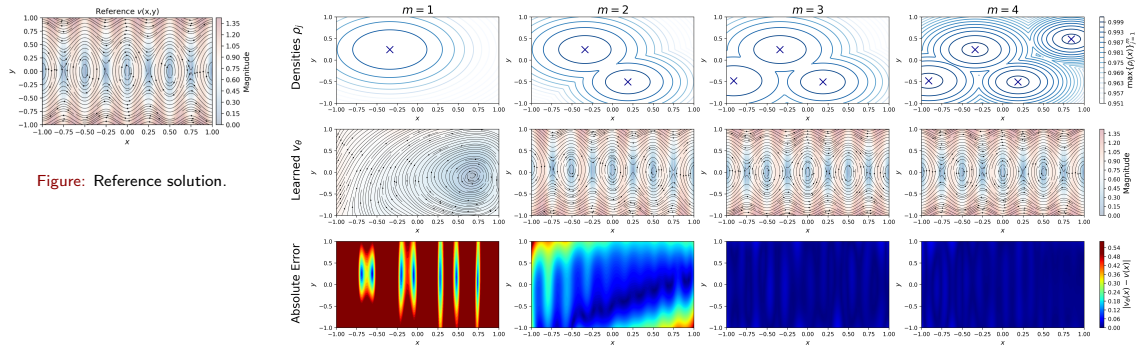


Figure: Reference solution.

Figure: Densities ρ_j (top), learned v_θ (middle), and error (bottom).

Application of Data-Driven Metrics (cont.)

Goal: Recover v_θ by comparing the data $\text{div}(\rho_j v)$ with the model output $\text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)$ via

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathcal{J}(\theta), \quad \mathcal{J}(\theta) := \sum_{j=1}^m \|\text{div}(\rho_j v) - \text{div}(\rho_j v_\theta)\|_{L^2}^2$$

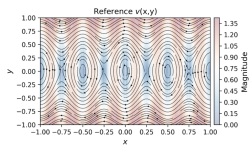


Figure: Reference solution.

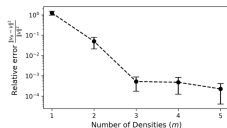


Figure: Error as a function of m .

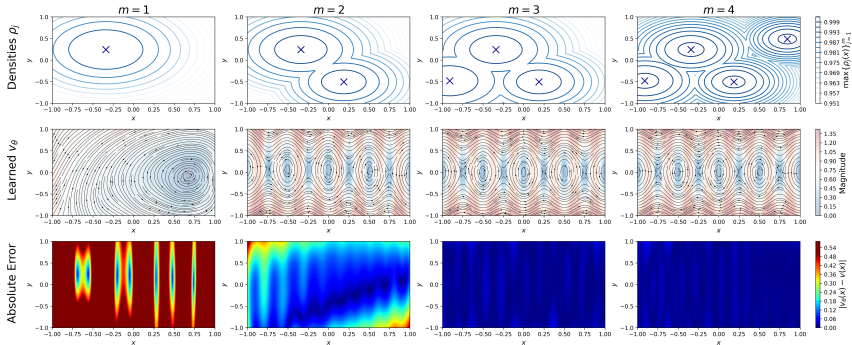
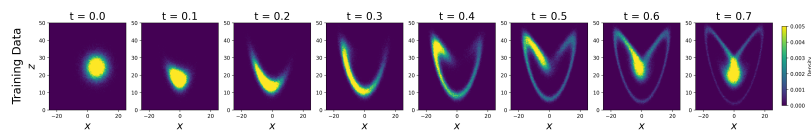
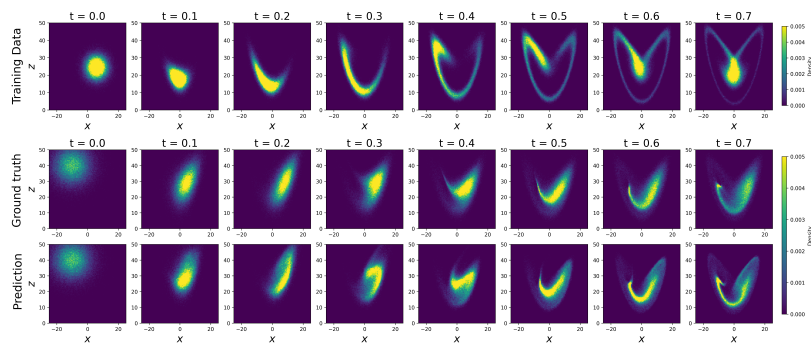


Figure: Densities ρ_j (top), learned v_θ (middle), and error (bottom).

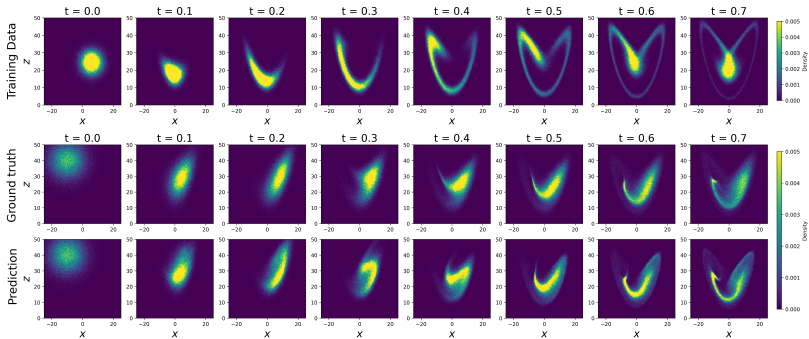
Lorenz-63 Pushforward Recovery



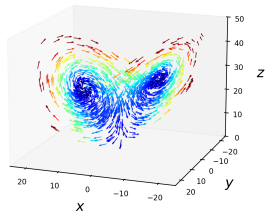
Lorenz-63 Pushforward Recovery



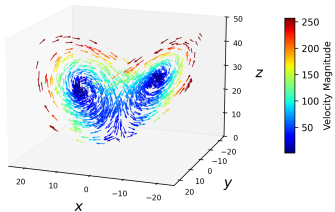
Lorenz-63 Pushforward Recovery



True Vector Field



Learned Vector Field



Conclusion

- New finite-data guarantees for unique recovery of transport maps and vector fields.

Conclusion

- New finite-data guarantees for unique recovery of transport maps and vector fields.
- Embedding-type arguments, where $m > 2d + 1$ depends only on the intrinsic problem dimension.

Conclusion

- New finite-data guarantees for unique recovery of transport maps and vector fields.
- Embedding-type arguments, where $m > 2d + 1$ depends only on the intrinsic problem dimension.
- Applications to generative models, dynamical systems, and PDE-inverse problems.

Conclusion

- New finite-data guarantees for unique recovery of transport maps and vector fields.
- Embedding-type arguments, where $m > 2d + 1$ depends only on the intrinsic problem dimension.
- Applications to generative models, dynamical systems, and PDE-inverse problems.

Thank you for your attention!

Botvinick-Greenhouse, J., & Yang, Y. (2026).
*On the Unique Recovery of Transport Maps and
Vector Fields from Finite Measure-Valued Data.*
arXiv preprint arXiv:2604.07671.

Contact

Jonah Botvinick-Greenhouse (Yale)
Email: jonah.botvinick-greenhouse@yale.edu
Website: jrbotvinick.github.io

