

Lecture 06

GEE Image Manipulation:

bands, arithmetic, thresholds, masks

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Sébastien Valade



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
AUTÓNOMA DE
MÉXICO

Previous lecture:

GEE introduction:

⇒ setup, datasets, image visualization, image collection filtering

Today:

GEE image manipulation:

⇒ band arithmetic (spectral indices), thresholds, masks

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1. Band arithmetic

1. Remote sensing principles
2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

2. Thresholding & Masking

1. Thresholding
2. Masking

1. Band arithmetic

1. Remote sensing principles
2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

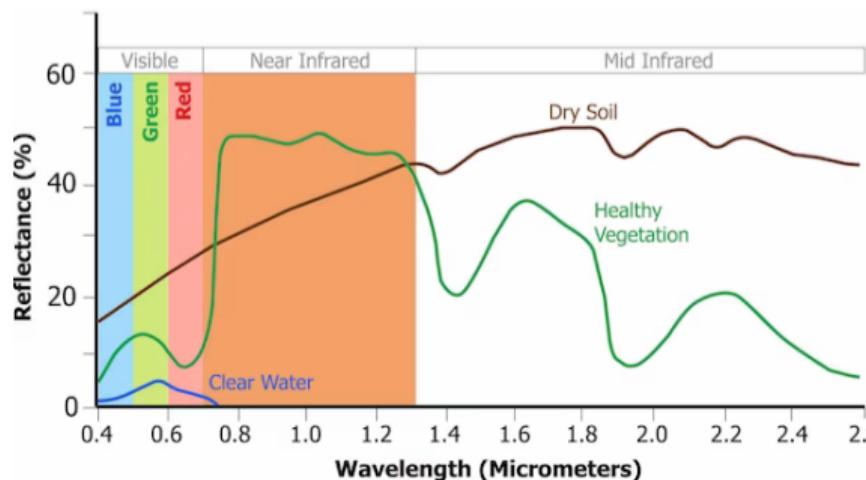
2. Thresholding & Masking

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2. Masking

1.1. Remote sensing principles

Remote Sensing basic principle:

- ⇒ the amount of light reflected by the Earth surface (= **reflectance**) varies depending on both the *surface type* and the *wavelength* of the incident light
- ⇒ each land cover has a unique **spectral signature**



→ vegetation:

- in the Visible (VIS) range: reflects green light & absorbs blue and red light
⇒ appears green to our eye
- in the Near Infrared (NIR) range:
reflectance increases dramatically
⇒ useful to detect vegetation

1.2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

Spectral Indices:

- ⇒ **Spectral Indices** combine multiple bands (often with simple operations of subtraction and division) to help to distinguish particular land covers/use in an image
- ⇒ **Band arithmetic** is the process of adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing two or more bands from an image, and is the basis of many remote sensing analyses
- ⇒ Common spectral indices ([ref](#)):
 - **NDVI** (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index)
 - **NDSI** (Normalized Difference Snow Index)
 - **NBRI** (Normalized Burned Ratio Index)
 - **EVI** (Enhanced Vegetation Index)

$$NDVI = \frac{NIR - red}{NIR + red}$$

$$NDWI = \frac{green - SWIR}{green + SWIR}$$

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$$EVI = 2.5 \times \frac{NIR - red}{NIR + 6 \times red - 7.5 \times blue + 1}$$

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1.2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

EX 1: NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index)

- ⇒ NDVI is a measure of the **greenness** of vegetation
- ⇒ NDVI values range from -1 to 1:
 - **low** values (≤ 0): water, bare soil, urban areas
 - **high** values (≥ 0.5): vegetation

Natural color image



NDVI image



1.2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

EX 1: NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index)

- ⇒ NDVI is a measure of the **greenness** of vegetation
- ⇒ NDVI values range from -1 to 1
- ⇒ implementation in GEE:

```
# NDVI calculation from Image object in GEE (Sentinel-2 image)

# - using basic math operators
nir = image.select('B8')                                # Sentinel-2 nir band
red = image.select('B4')                                 # Sentinel-2 red band
numerator = nir.subtract(red)                          # band arithmetic: nir - red
denominator = nir.add(red)                            # band arithmetic: nir + red
ndvi = numerator.divide(denominator)                  # band arithmetic: numerator / denominator

# - using normalizedDifference method
ndvi = image.normalizedDifference(['B8', 'B4'])
```

1.2. Spectral Indices using band arithmetic

EX 2: EVI (Enhanced Vegetation Index)

- ⇒ EVI is similar to the NDVI, it is used to quantify the **greenness** of vegetation
- ⇒ EVI however corrects for some *atmospheric conditions* and *canopy background noise* and is more sensitive in areas with dense vegetation (incorporates an "L" value to adjust for canopy background, "C" values as coefficients for atmospheric resistance, and values from the Blue band)
- ⇒ implementation in GEE:

```
# EVI calculation from Image object in GEE (Sentinel-2 image)
nir = image.select('B8')
red = image.select('B4')
blue = image.select('B2')

evi = image.expression(
    '2.5 * ((NIR - RED) / (NIR + 6 * RED - 7.5 * BLUE + 1))',
    {
        'NIR': nir,
        'RED': red,
        'BLUE': blue
    })

```

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2. Thresholding & Masking

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2.1. Thresholding

Thresholding

⇒ **Thresholding** is a technique which uses a number (the *threshold value*) and *logical operators* to create a categorized image (pixels are partitioned into categories)

EX 1: thresholding an NDVI image into 2 classes (vegetation vs. non-vegetation):

1. select a *threshold value* above which areas are vegetated, e.g. 0.5
2. use a *logical operator* to binarize the NDVI pixels:

$\text{NDVI} > 0.5 \Rightarrow 1$ (vegetation)

$\text{NDVI} \leq 0.5 \Rightarrow 0$ (non-vegetation)

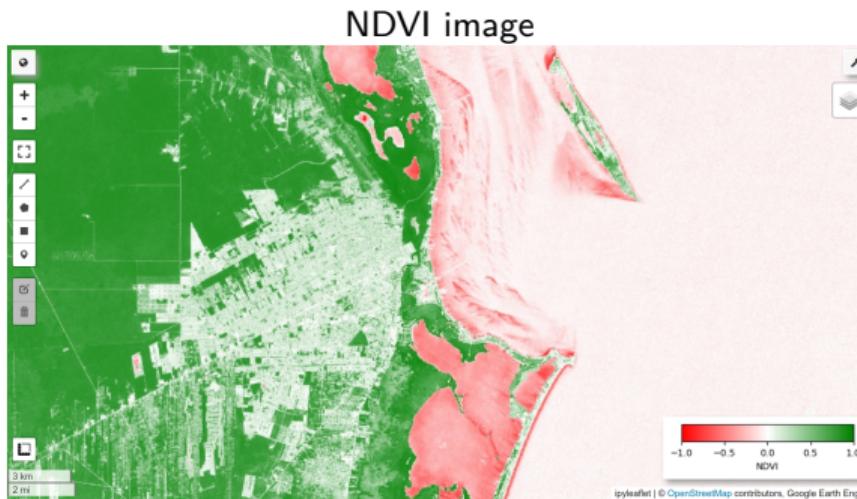
```
# NDVI binary thresholding in GEE
threshold = 0.5
img_thresh = ndvi.gt(threshold) # logical operator "greater than" (gt) on ndvi image
```

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EX 2: thresholding an NDVI image into 3 classes (e.g., vegetation / non-vegetation / water):
⇒ implementation in GEE:

```
# NDVI advanced thresholding in GEE
threshold_1 = -0.1      # set water threshold
threshold_2 = 0.5      # set vegetation threshold

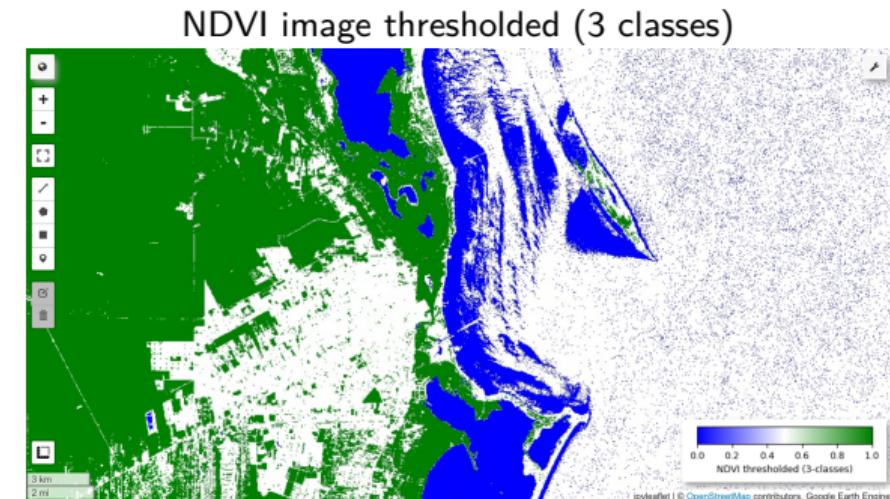
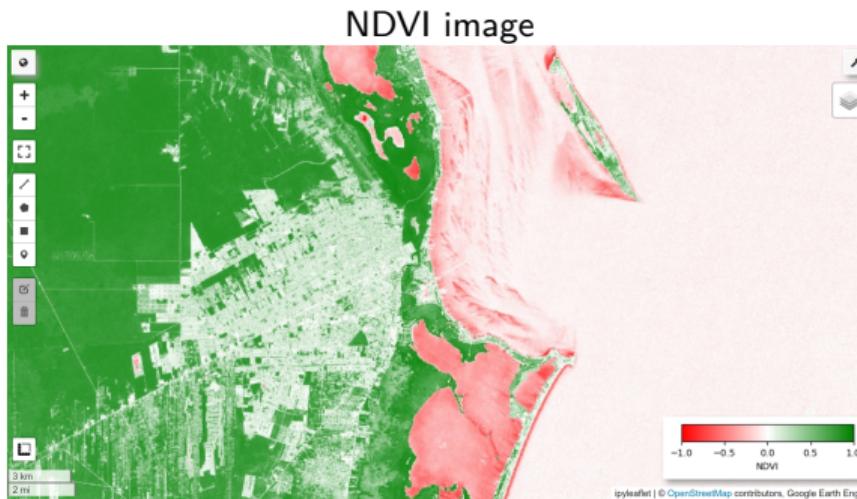
img_thresh = ee.Image(1)                                # Initialize new thresholded image with all values = 1
img_thresh = img_thresh.clip(ndvi.geometry())          # Use clip to constrain size of the ndvi image
img_thresh = img_thresh.where(ndvi.lte(-0.1), 0)       # Make all NDVI values <= threshold_1 equal 0
img_thresh = img_thresh.where(ndvi.gte(threshold_2), 2) # Make all NDVI values >= threshold_2 equal 2
```

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Masking

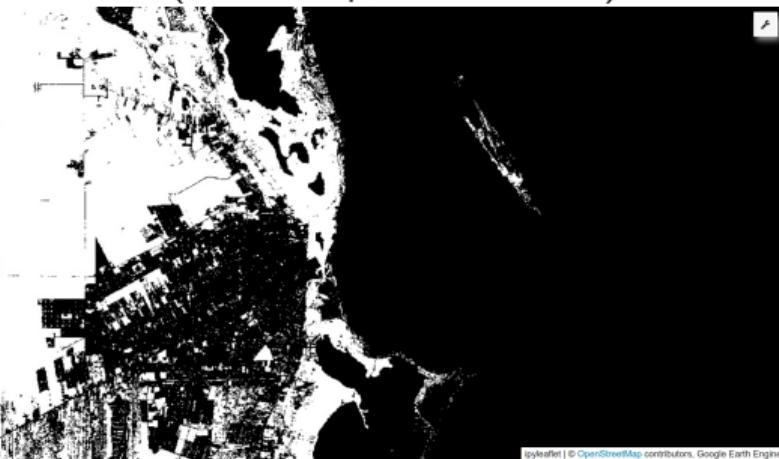
⇒ **Masking** an image is a technique that removes specific areas of an image (those covered by the mask) from being displayed or analyzed

EX: mask non-forest regions of thresholded NDVI image:

NDVI image thresholded (2 classes)



mask (white=keep, black=discard)



2.2. Masking

Masking

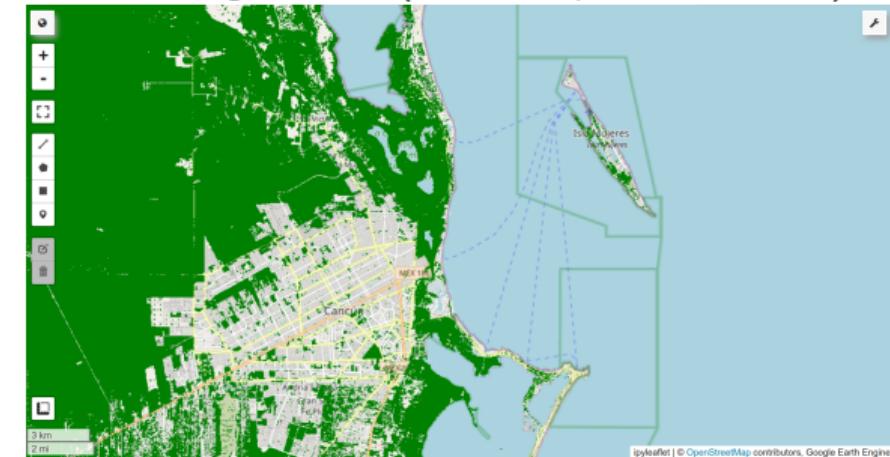
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NDVI image thresholded (2 classes)



NDVI image masked (white=keep, black=discard)



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Masking

⇒ **Masking** an image is a technique that removes specific areas of an image (those covered by the mask) from being displayed or analyzed

EX: mask non-forest regions of thresholded NDVI image:

⇒ implementation in GEE:

```
# NDVI masking in GEE

mask = img_thresh.eq(1)                                # Create a binary mask of non-forest
img_masked = img_thresh.updateMask(mask)               # Update the img_thresh mask with the non-forest mask
mask_final = img_masked.mask()                         # Updated mask

# Visualize masked image
Map.addLayer(img_masked, {'min': 0, 'max': 1, 'palette': ['green']}, 'Masked Forest Layer')

# Visualize updated mask
Map.addLayer(mask_final, {}, 'img_masked Mask')
```