CodingLab7

June 8, 2025

Neural Data Science

Lecturer: Dr. Jan Lause, Prof. Dr. Philipp Berens

Tutors: Jonas Beck, Fabio Seel, Julius Würzler

Summer term 2025

Student names: FILL IN YOUR NAMES HERE

LLM Disclaimer: Did you use an LLM to solve this exercise? If yes, which one and where did you

use it? [Copilot, Claude, ChatGPT, etc.]

1 Coding Lab 7: Transcriptomics

Last updated: 2025-06-08 09:54:26CEST

Python implementation: CPython Python version : 3.10.13 IPython version : 8.21.0

sklearn: 1.3.2

numpy : 1.26.2 pandas : 2.2.3 matplotlib: 3.8.0 openTSNE : 1.0.2

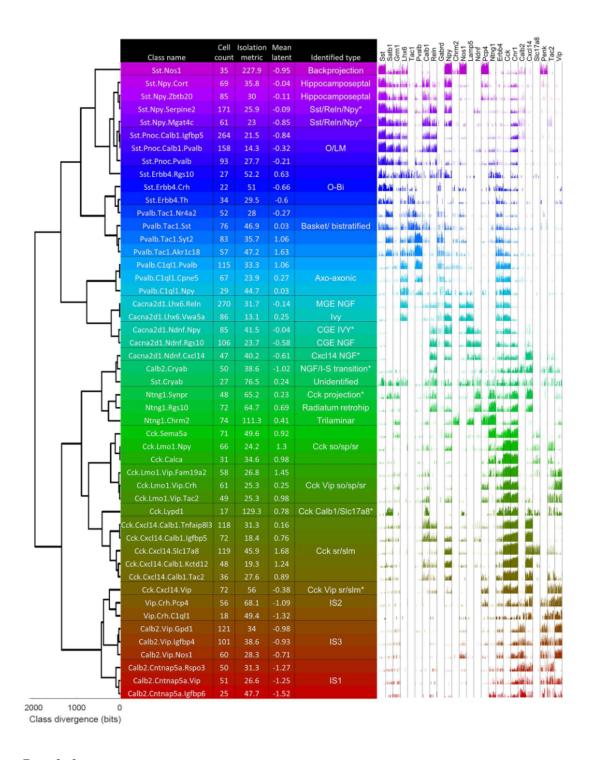
Watermark: 2.5.0

```
[3]: plt.style.use("../matplotlib_style.txt")
```

2 Introduction

In this notebook you are going to work with transcriptomics data, in particular single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) data from the paper by Harris et al. (2018). They recorded the transcriptomes of 3,663 inhibitory cells in the hippocampal area CA1. Their analysis divided these cells into 49 fine-scale clusters coresponding to different cell subtypes. They asigned names to these cluster in a hierarchical fashion according to strongly expressed gene in each clusters. The figure below shows the details of their classification.

You will first analyze some of the most relevant statistics of UMI gene counts distributions, and afterwards follow the standard pipeline in the field to produce a visualization of the data.



2.1 Load data

Download the data from ILIAS, move it to the data/ directory and unzip it there. The read counts can be found in counts, with rows corresponding to cells and columns to genes. The cluster assignments for every individual cell can be found in clusters, along with the colors used in the publication in clusterColors.

```
[4]: # LOAD HARRIS ET AL DATA
     # Load gene counts
     data = pd.read_csv("../data/nds_cl_7/harris-data/expression.tsv.gz", sep="\t")
     genes = data.values[:, 0]
     cells = data.columns[1:-1]
     counts = data.values[:, 1:-1].transpose().astype("int")
     data = []
     # Kick out all genes with all counts = 0
     genes = genes[counts.sum(axis=0) > 0]
     counts = counts[:, counts.sum(axis=0) > 0]
     print(counts.shape)
     # Load clustering results
     data = pd.read_csv("../data/nds_cl_7/harris-data/analysis_results.tsv", u
      clusterNames, clusters = np.unique(data.values[0, 1:-1], return_inverse=True)
     # Load cluster colors
     data = pd.read_csv("../data/nds_cl_7/harris-data/colormap.txt", sep="\s+",u
      →header=None)
     clusterColors = data.values
     # Note: the color order needs to be reversed to match the publication
     clusterColors = clusterColors[::-1]
     # Taken from Figure 1 - we need cluster order to get correct color order
     clusterOrder = [
         "Sst.No".
         "Sst.Npy.C",
         "Sst.Npy.Z",
         "Sst.Npy.S",
         "Sst.Npy.M",
         "Sst.Pnoc.Calb1.I",
         "Sst.Pnoc.Calb1.P",
         "Sst.Pnoc.P",
         "Sst.Erbb4.R",
         "Sst.Erbb4.C",
         "Sst.Erbb4.T",
         "Pvalb.Tac1.N",
         "Pvalb.Tac1.Ss",
         "Pvalb.Tac1.Sy",
         "Pvalb.Tac1.A",
         "Pvalb.C1ql1.P",
         "Pvalb.C1ql1.C",
         "Pvalb.C1ql1.N",
```

```
"Cacna2d1.Lhx6.R",
    "Cacna2d1.Lhx6.V",
    "Cacna2d1.Ndnf.N",
    "Cacna2d1.Ndnf.R",
    "Cacna2d1.Ndnf.C",
    "Calb2.Cry",
    "Sst.Cry",
    "Ntng1.S",
    "Ntng1.R",
    "Ntng1.C",
    "Cck.Sema",
    "Cck.Lmo1.N",
    "Cck.Calca",
    "Cck.Lmo1.Vip.F",
    "Cck.Lmo1.Vip.C",
    "Cck.Lmo1.Vip.T",
    "Cck.Ly",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.Calb1.Tn",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.Calb1.I",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.S",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.Calb1.K",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.Calb1.Ta",
    "Cck.Cxcl14.V",
    "Vip.Crh.P",
    "Vip.Crh.C1",
    "Calb2.Vip.G",
    "Calb2.Vip.I",
    "Calb2.Vip.Nos1",
    "Calb2.Cntnap5a.R",
    "Calb2.Cntnap5a.V",
    "Calb2.Cntnap5a.I",
]
reorder = np.zeros(clusterNames.size) * np.nan
for i, c in enumerate(clusterNames):
    for j, k in enumerate(clusterOrder):
        if c[: len(k)] == k:
            reorder[i] = j
            break
clusterColors = clusterColors[reorder.astype(int)]
```

(3663, 17965)

3 Task 1: Data inspection

Before we use t-SNE or any other advanced visualization methods on the data, we first want to have a closer look on the data and plot some statistics. For most of the analysis we will compare

the data to a Poisson distribution.

3.0.1 1.1. Relationship between expression mean and fraction of zeros

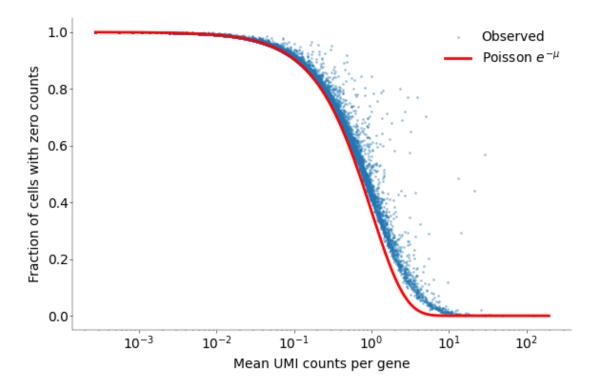
Compute actual and predicted gene expression. The higher the average expression of a gene, the smaller fraction of cells will show a 0 count. Plot the data and explain what you see in the plot.

(3 pts)

[6]: array([0.91784928, 0.99945415, 0.99972704, ..., 0.4146063, 0.92640843, 0.99809082])

```
ax.legend()
plt.tight_layout()
plt.show()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/2298918199.py:1
8: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



Explanation (1 pt) ...

The red curve shows the theoretical Poisson zero-fraction

$$P(X=0) = e^{-\mu}$$

where () is the gene's mean UMI count. For very lowly expressed genes ($\mu \ll 1$), the observed fraction of zeros closely follows this Poisson expectation, reflecting only sampling noise. However, once mean expression rises ($\mu \gtrsim 1$), the **observed** zero-fraction exceeds $e^{-\mu}$. This "excess" zeros is due to technical dropouts (failed transcript capture or detection) and true cell-to-cell variability, which introduce overdispersion beyond Poisson. Consequently, single-cell RNA-seq data are better modeled with a negative-binomial or zero-inflated distribution to account for both the mean–variance relationship and elevated zero rates.

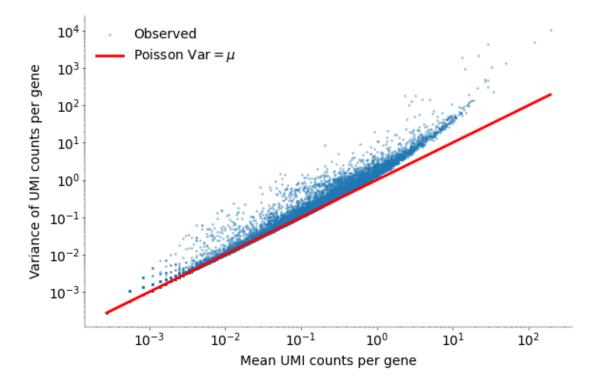
3.0.2 1.2. Mean-variance relationship

If the expression follows Poisson distribution, then the mean should be equal to the variance. Plot the mean-variance relationship and interpret the plot.

```
(2.5 pts)
[8]:  # -----
    # Compute the variance of the expression counts of each gene (0.5 pt)
    # -----
    gene_vars = counts.var(axis=0) # population variance, ddof=0
    gene_vars
[8]: array([1.49899881e-01, 5.45702429e-04, 2.72925744e-04, ...,
         1.24532529e+00, 8.20630026e-02, 1.90734998e-03])
[9]: | # -----
    # Plot the mean-variance relationship on a log-log plot (1 pt)
    # Plot the Poisson prediction as a line
    # -----
    fig, ax = plt.subplots(figsize=(6, 4))
    # scatter observed mean vs variance
    ax.scatter(gene_means, gene_vars, s=5, alpha=0.3, label="Observed")
    # Poisson prediction: Var =
    x_line = np.logspace(np.log10(gene_means.min()), np.log10(gene_means.max()),__
    →100)
    ax.plot(x_line, x_line, "r-", lw=2, label=r"Poisson $\mathrm{Var}=\mu$")
    ax.set_xscale("log")
    ax.set_yscale("log")
    ax.set_xlabel("Mean UMI counts per gene")
    ax.set_ylabel("Variance of UMI counts per gene")
    ax.legend()
    plt.tight_layout()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/1986976209.py:2
0: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()

plt.show()



Explanation (1 pt) ...

Under a Poisson model, the mean and variance are equal:

$$Var(X) = \mu$$
.

In the log-log plot, the red line marks $Var = \mu$. For lowly expressed genes ($\mu \ll 1$), observed variances lie close to the Poisson expectation, indicating sampling noise dominates. As mean expression increases ($\mu \gtrsim 1$), the **observed** variances exceed (), revealing **overdispersion** from technical noise (e.g. dropout, amplification bias) and genuine cell-to-cell heterogeneity. Hence, single-cell UMI counts are better modeled by a negative-binomial (or zero-inflated) distribution, which allows Var(X) = +, Var(X) = +,

3.0.3 1.3. Relationship between the mean and the Fano factor

Compute the Fano factor for each gene and make a scatter plot of expression mean vs. Fano factor in log-log coordinates, and interpret what you see in the plot. If the expression follows the Poisson distribution, then the Fano factor (variance/mean) should be equal to 1 for all genes.

(2.5 pts)

ax.scatter(gene_means, fano, s=5, alpha=0.3, label="Observed")

ax.axhline(1, color="r", lw=2, label="Poisson \$\\mathrm{Fano}=1\$")

Poisson prediction: Fano = 1

ax.set_xlabel("Mean UMI counts per gene")
ax.set_ylabel("Fano factor (variance / mean)")

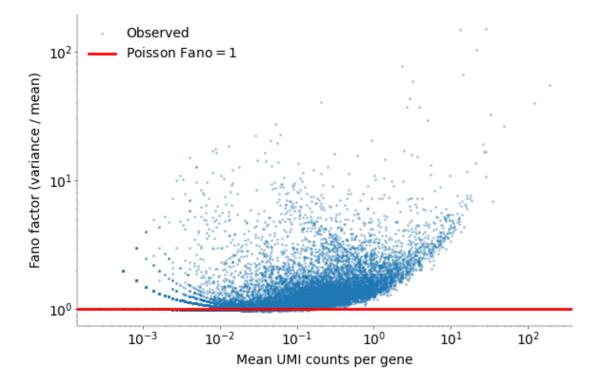
ax.set_xscale("log")
ax.set_yscale("log")

plt.tight_layout()

ax.legend()

plt.show()

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/1615664090.py:2
1: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight layout()



Explanation (1 pt)

Under a Poisson model, the Fano factor is constant:

$$Fano = \frac{Var(X)}{\mu} = 1$$

Single-cell UMI counts are better modeled with a negative-binomial (or zero-inflated) distribution, which allows

$$Var(X) = \mu + \alpha \mu^2$$

for some overdispersion.

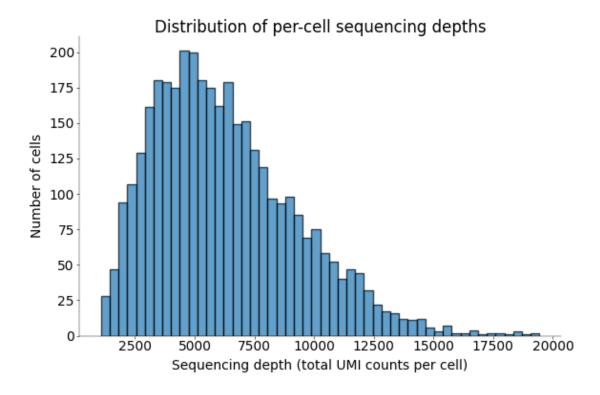
3.0.4 1.4. Histogram of sequencing depths

Different cells have different sequencing depths (sum of counts across all genes) because the efficiency can change from droplet to droplet due to some random expreimental factors. Make a histogram of sequencing depths.

```
# Sum UMI counts across all genes for each cell
depths = counts.sum(axis=1)
depths
```

[12]: array([1662, 2087, 2524, ..., 9924, 10558, 9492])

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/2341488430.py:1
3: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



3.0.5 1.5. Fano factors after normalization

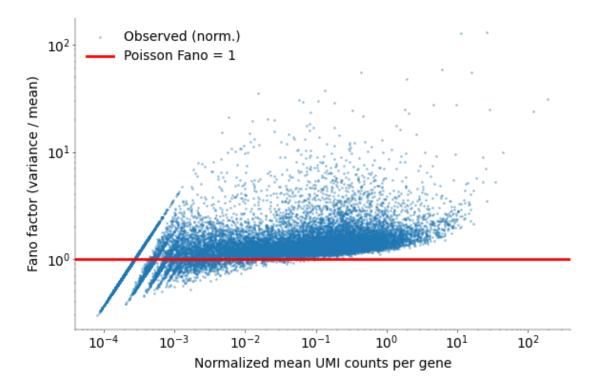
Normalize counts by the sequencing depth of each cell and multiply by the median sequencing depth. Then make the same expression vs Fano factor plot as above. After normalization by sequencing depth, Fano factor should be closer to 1 (i.e. variance even more closely following the mean). This can be used for feature selection.

(2.5 pts)

```
[14]: array([1.4743044 , 1.64107479, 1.01368967, ..., 1.81740881, 1.18732466, 0.78672188])
```

```
plt.show()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/2063836131.py:1
6: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



Sst Fano=131.14
Npy Fano=128.40
Vip Fano=59.11
Cck Fano=55.65
Cpne2 Fano=55.22

Pcp4	Fano=47.65
Ptpn23	Fano=37.25
Pdzd9	Fano=35.06
Malat1	Fano=31.42
Armc2	Fano=30.59

4 Task 2: Low dimensional visualization

In this task we will construct a two dimensional visualization of the data. First we will normalize the data with some variance stabilizing transformation and study the effect that different approaches have on the data. Second, we will reduce the dimensionality of the data to a more feasible number of dimensions (e.g. d=50) using PCA. And last, we will project the PCA-reduced data to two dimensions using t-SNE.

4.0.1 2.1. PCA with and without transformations

Here we look at the influence of variance-stabilizing transformations on PCA. We will focus on the following transformations: - Square root (sqrt(X)): it is a variance-stabilizing transformation for the Poisson data. - Log-transform (log2(X+1)): it is also often used in the transcriptomic community.

We will only work with the most important genes. For that, transform the counts into normalized counts (as above) and select all genes with normalized Fano factor above 3 and remove the rest. We will look at the effect that both transformations have in the PCA-projected data by visualizing the first two components. Interpret qualitatively what you see in the plot and compare the different embeddings making use of the ground truth clusters.

```
(3.5 pts)
```

```
# select important genes (0.5 pts)
# -------

# keep genes with normalized Fano factor > 3
depths = counts.sum(axis=1)
counts_norm = counts / depths[:, None] * np.median(depths)

fano_norm = counts_norm.var(axis=0) / counts_norm.mean(axis=0)
hv_mask = fano_norm > 3
counts_sel = counts_norm[:, hv_mask]
genes_sel = genes[hv_mask]
print("Selected", counts_sel.shape[1], "highly variable genes")
```

Selected 707 highly variable genes

```
[47]: # ------- # transform data and apply PCA (1 pt) # -------
```

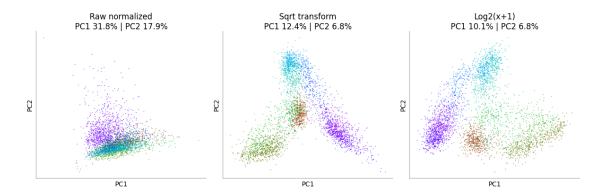
```
from sklearn.decomposition import PCA

raw_data = counts_sel
sqrt_data = np.sqrt(counts_sel)
log_data = np.log2(counts_sel + 1)

pc_raw = PCA(n_components=2).fit_transform(raw_data)
pc_sqrt = PCA(n_components=2).fit_transform(sqrt_data)
pc_log = PCA(n_components=2).fit_transform(log_data)
```

```
[55]: # -----
     # plot first 2 PCs for each transformation (1 pt)
     # -----
     fig, axs = plt.subplots(1, 3, figsize=(12, 4), facecolor="white")
     for ax, pca, pc, title in zip(
         axs,
         [pca_raw, pca_sqrt, pca_log],
         [pc_raw, pc_sqrt, pc_log],
         ["Raw normalized", "Sqrt transform", "Log2(x+1)"],
     ):
         v1, v2 = pca.explained_variance_ratio_[:2]
         ax.scatter(
             pc[:, 0], pc[:, 1], s=6, alpha=0.7, c=clusterColors[clusters],
      ⇔edgecolors="none"
         ax.set_title(f"{title}\nPC1 {v1*100:.1f}% | PC2 {v2*100:.1f}%", fontsize=12)
         ax.set_xlabel("PC1")
         ax.set_ylabel("PC2")
         ax.set_xticks([])
         ax.set yticks([])
         for side in ["top", "right"]:
             ax.spines[side].set_visible(False)
     plt.tight_layout()
     plt.show()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/3816277384.py:2
6: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



Explanation (1 pt) ...

The three panels show PCA on the top Fano > 3 genes after different variance-stabilizing transforms.

- Raw normalized: PC1 = 31.8% and PC2 = 17.9% of total variance. The embedding is stretched along PC1, reflecting a few highly expressed genes dominating the variance. Clusters are partially separable but elongated.
- Sqrt transform: PC1 = 12.4% and PC2 = 6.8%. The square-root stabilizes Poisson noise, producing three "arms" that better resolve major cell-type groups (e.g. Sst, Pvalb, Vip).
- Log (x+1) transform: PC1 = 10.1% and PC2 = 6.8%. This also compresses extreme values and separates clusters, though with slightly less dynamic range than the sqrt.

Overall, variance stabilization ($\sqrt{}$ or log) before PCA yields cleaner, more balanced embeddings by down-weighting outlier genes and highlighting biological heterogeneity.

4.0.2 2.2. tSNE with and without transformations

Now, we will reduce the dimensionality of the PCA-reduced data further to two dimensions using t-SNE. We will use only n = 50 components of the PCA-projected data. Plot the t-SNE embedding for the three versions of the data and interpret the plots. Do the different transformations have any effect on t-SNE?

(1.5 pts)

```
# ------
# Perform tSNE (0.5 pts)
# ------

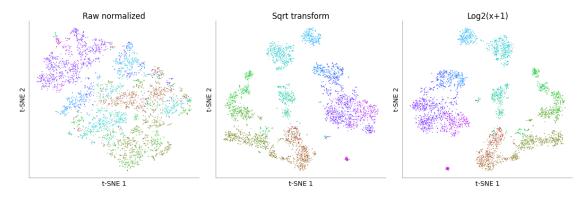
from openTSNE import TSNE

pca50_raw = PCA(n_components=50).fit_transform(raw_data)
pca50_sqrt = PCA(n_components=50).fit_transform(sqrt_data)
pca50_log = PCA(n_components=50).fit_transform(log_data)
```

```
tsne_raw = TSNE(n_components=2, perplexity=30, random_state=0).fit(pca50_raw)
tsne_sqrt = TSNE(n_components=2, perplexity=30, random_state=0).fit(pca50_sqrt)
tsne_log = TSNE(n_components=2, perplexity=30, random_state=0).fit(pca50_log)
```

```
[50]: # ----
      # plot t-SNE embedding for each dataset (1 pt)
      fig, axs = plt.subplots(1, 3, figsize=(12, 4), facecolor="white")
      for ax, emb, title in zip(
          axs,
          [tsne_raw, tsne_sqrt, tsne_log],
          ["Raw normalized", "Sqrt transform", "Log2(x+1)"],
      ):
          ax.scatter(
              emb[:, 0],
              emb[:, 1],
              s=6,
              alpha=0.7,
              c=clusterColors[clusters],
              edgecolors="none",
          ax.set_title(title)
          ax.set xlabel("t-SNE 1")
          ax.set_ylabel("t-SNE 2")
          ax.set xticks([])
          ax.set_yticks([])
          for side in ["top", "right"]:
              ax.spines[side].set_visible(False)
      plt.tight_layout()
      plt.show()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/3616080685.py:1
7: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



4.0.3 2.3. Leiden clustering

Now we will play around with some clustering and see whether the clustering methods can produce similar results to the original clusters from the publication. We will apply Leiden clustering (closely related to the Louvain clustering), which is standard in the field and works well even for very large datasets.

Choose one representation of the data (best transformation based in your results from the previous task) to use further in this task and justify your choice. Think about which level of dimensionality would be sensible to use to perform clustering. Visualize in the two-dimensional embedding the resulting clusters and compare to the original clusters.

(1.5 pts)

```
[36]: # To run this code you need to install leidenalg and igraph
# conda install -c conda-forge python-igraph leidenalg

import igraph as ig
from sklearn.neighbors import NearestNeighbors, kneighbors_graph
import leidenalg as la
```

```
[37]: # Define some contrast colors
      clusterCols = [
           "#FFFF00",
           "#1CE6FF",
           "#FF34FF",
           "#FF4A46".
           "#008941",
           "#006FA6",
           "#A30059",
           "#FFDBE5",
           "#7A4900",
           "#0000A6",
           "#63FFAC",
           "#B79762",
           "#004D43",
           "#8FB0FF",
           "#997D87",
           "#5A0007",
           "#809693",
           "#FEFFE6",
           "#1B4400",
           "#4FC601",
           "#3B5DFF",
           "#4A3B53",
           "#FF2F80",
```

```
"#61615A",
"#BA0900",
"#6B7900",
"#00C2A0",
"#FFAA92",
"#FF90C9",
"#B903AA",
"#D16100",
"#DDEFFF",
"#000035",
"#7B4F4B".
"#A1C299",
"#300018",
"#0AA6D8",
"#013349",
"#00846F",
"#372101",
"#FFB500",
"#C2FFED",
"#A079BF",
"#CC0744",
"#COB9B2",
"#C2FF99",
"#001E09",
"#00489C",
"#6F0062".
"#0CBD66",
"#EEC3FF",
"#456D75",
"#B77B68",
"#7A87A1",
"#788D66",
"#885578",
"#FAD09F",
"#FF8A9A",
"#D157A0",
"#BEC459",
"#456648",
"#0086ED",
"#886F4C",
"#34362D",
"#B4A8BD",
"#00A6AA",
"#452C2C",
"#636375",
"#A3C8C9",
"#FF913F",
```

```
"#938A81",
"#575329",
"#00FECF",
"#B05B6F",
"#8CDOFF",
"#3B9700",
"#04F757",
"#C8A1A1",
"#1E6E00",
"#7900D7",
"#A77500",
"#6367A9",
"#A05837",
"#6B002C",
"#772600",
"#D790FF",
"#9B9700",
"#549E79",
"#FFF69F",
"#201625",
"#72418F",
"#BC23FF",
"#99ADCO",
"#3A2465",
"#922329",
"#5B4534".
"#FDE8DC",
"#404E55",
"#0089A3",
"#CB7E98",
"#A4E804",
"#324E72",
"#6A3A4C",
"#83AB58",
"#001C1E",
"#D1F7CE",
"#004B28",
"#C8D0F6",
"#A3A489",
"#806C66",
"#222800",
"#BF5650",
"#E83000",
"#66796D",
"#DA007C",
"#FF1A59",
"#8ADBB4",
```

```
"#1E0200",
"#5B4E51",
"#6895C5",
"#320033",
"#FF6832",
"#66E1D3",
"#CFCDAC",
"#D0AC94",
"#7ED379",
"#7ED379",
"#012C58",
]
clusterCols = np.array(clusterCols)
```

Leiden r=1.0 \rightarrow 15 clusters

```
# -----
# Plot the results (1 pt)
# ------

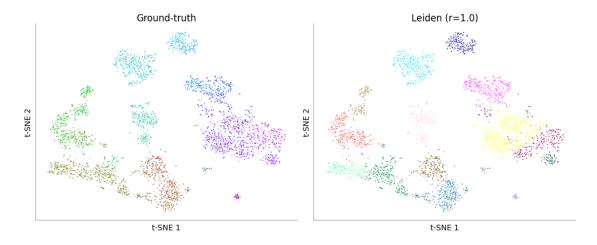
from sklearn.metrics import adjusted_rand_score

fig, axs = plt.subplots(1, 2, figsize=(10, 4), facecolor="white")
for ax, labs, title in zip(
    axs, [clusters, labels1], ["Ground-truth", "Leiden (r=1.0)"]
):
    ax.scatter(
        tsne_sqrt[:, 0],
        tsne_sqrt[:, 1],
        s=6,
```

```
alpha=0.7,
    c=(clusterColors if title == "Ground-truth" else clusterCols)[labs],
    edgecolors="none",
)
ax.set_title(title)
ax.set_xlabel("t-SNE 1")
ax.set_ylabel("t-SNE 2")
ax.set_ylabel("t-SNE 2")
ax.set_yticks([])
for side in ["top", "right"]:
    ax.spines[side].set_visible(False)

ari = adjusted_rand_score(clusters, labels1)
print(f"ARI = {ari:.2f}")
```

ARI = 0.40



4.0.4 2.4. Change the clustering resolution

The number of clusters can be changed by modifying the resolution parameter. How many clusters did we get with the default value? Change the resolution parameter to yield 2x more and 2x fewer clusters Plot all three results as t-SNE overlays (same as above).

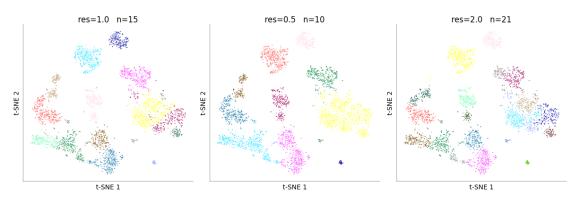
```
(1.5 pts)
```

```
for r in res:
    p = la.find_partition(g, la.RBConfigurationVertexPartition,
    resolution_parameter=r)
    labs = np.array(p.membership)
    labels.append(labs)
    counts.append(len(np.unique(labs)))
print(dict(zip(res, counts)))
```

{1.0: 15, 0.5: 10, 2.0: 21}

```
[54]: # -----
      # Plot the results (1 pt)
     fig, axs = plt.subplots(1, 3, figsize=(12, 4), facecolor="white")
     for ax, r, labs, cnt in zip(axs, res, labels, counts):
         ax.scatter(
             tsne_sqrt[:, 0],
             tsne_sqrt[:, 1],
             s=6,
             alpha=0.7,
             c=clusterCols[labs],
             edgecolors="none",
         ax.set_title(f"res={r}
                                  n={cnt}")
         ax.set_xlabel("t-SNE 1")
         ax.set_ylabel("t-SNE 2")
         ax.set_xticks([])
         ax.set_yticks([])
         for side in ["top", "right"]:
             ax.spines[side].set_visible(False)
     plt.tight_layout()
     plt.show()
```

/var/folders/76/g6ys7mkj75zg7zyn8m093rk40000gn/T/ipykernel_82853/311304628.py:13
: UserWarning: The figure layout has changed to tight
 plt.tight_layout()



[]: