

A Walk Along Models for Count Data in Microbial Ecology



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joint work with Julien Chiquet and Stéphane Robin



Shandong University Summer School, Weihai, 2021, July 20-23



Julien Chiquet, M.M., Stéphane Robin,
Variational inference for probabilistic Poisson PCA
<http://doi.org/10.1214/18-AOAS1177> (*Annals of Applied Statistics*, 2019)



Julien Chiquet, M.M., Stéphane Robin,
Variational inference for network inference with count data
<https://proceedings.mlr.press/v97/chiquet19a/chiquet19a.pdf> (*ICML19*)



Julien Chiquet, M.M., Stéphane Robin,
The Poisson-lognormal model as a versatile framework for the joint analysis of species
abundances
<http://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2021.588292> (*Frontiers in Ecol. and Evol.*, 2021)



PLNmodels package, development version on github
`devtools::install_github("pln-team/PLNmodels", build_vignettes=TRUE)`
<https://pln-team.github.io/PLNmodels/>



Outline

- 1 Tentative Syllabi
- 2 Motivation
- 3 Multinomial Models
- 4 Log-Normal Models
- 5 Applications

Multivariate models

- L1:** Overview of the concepts
- L2:** Review of multivariate models based on multinomial distributions
- L3:** Review of other multivariate count models
- L4:** Log-normal models: MLN and PLN

PLN models

- L5:** Estimation in the PLN model
- L6:** PLN-PCA for dimension reduction
- L7:** PLN-LDA and PLNmixture for classification and clustering
- L8:** PLNnetwork for network inference

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Microbiome: Impact of Weaning on Piglets' Microbiome



Data from [MBE⁺¹⁵].

- $n = 155$ samples (= 31 piglets at 5 times)
- $p = 1038$ bacterial species (OTUs) with prevalence ≥ 0.05
- Some covariates (sex, sire, etc)
- Offsets: o_i = offset for sample i (sequencing depth)

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Aim: Study impact of weaning on gut microbiota

A look at the data

Metabarcoding data from [MBE⁺¹⁵]

- count matrix with $n = 155$ piglets, $p = 1038$ species

```
mach_counts[1:2, c(3, 9, 12, 15)]  
##      5982 347 349 5854  
## SF0901    0 23   3   0  
## SF0902    8   0   4   0
```

- $d = 8$ covariates (sex, mother, weaning status, ...)

```
mach_covariates[1:2, ]  
##       Run Project Time Bande sex      mere Weaned  
## SF0901  3 Kinetic D14  1105   1 17MAG101814  TRUE  
## SF0902  3 Kinetic D36  1105   1 17MAG101814 FALSE
```

- Sampling effort in each sample

```
mach_offsets[1:2, c(1:4, 48:51)]  
##      16342 164 5982 5980 10413 6307 8949  346  
## SF0901 3084 3084 3084 3084 3084 3084 3084 3084  
## SF0902 2182 2182 2182 2182 2182 2182 2182 2182
```

Pathobiome: Oak powdery mildew



Data from [JFS⁺¹⁶].

- $n = 116$ oak leaves = samples
- $p = 114$ microbial species
 - $p_1 = 66$ bacterial species (OTUs, based on the 16S)
 - $p_2 = 48$ fungal species (OTUs, based on the ITS)
- covariates: tree (resistant, intermediate, susceptible), height, distance to trunk, ...
- offsets: $o_{i1} \neq o_{i2}$ = offset for bacteria, fungi

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```
offsets[1:2, c(1:4, 48:51)]  
##      f_1  f_2  f_3  f_4 E_alphaftoides b_1045 b_109 b_1093  
## [1,] 2488 2488 2488 2488      2488   8315   8315   8315  
## [2,] 2054 2054 2054 2054      2054    662    662    662
```

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```

Aim. Understand the interaction between the species, including the oak mildew pathogen *E. alphitoides*.

Problematic & Basic formalism

Data tables: $\mathbf{Y} = (Y_{ij}), n \times p$; $\mathbf{X} = (X_{ik}), n \times d$; $\mathbf{O} = (O_{ij}), n \times p$

- Y_{ij} = abundance (read counts) of species j in sample i
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Need for multivariate analysis to help deciphering the ecosystem

- exhibit **patterns of diversity**
 - ~~> summarize the information from \mathbf{Y} (PCA, clustering, ...)
- understand **between-species interactions**
 - ~~> 'Network' inference (variable/covariance selection)
- correct for technical and **confounding effects**
 - ~~> account for covariates and sampling effort

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 - correct for technical and **confounding effects**
 - ~~ account for covariates and sampling effort
- ~~ need a generic framework to **model dependencies between count variables**

Microbial Ecology 101

- 1 Apply your favorite **distance** (Jaccard, Bray-Curtis, UniFrac, weighted UniFrac, etc)

Microbial Ecology 101

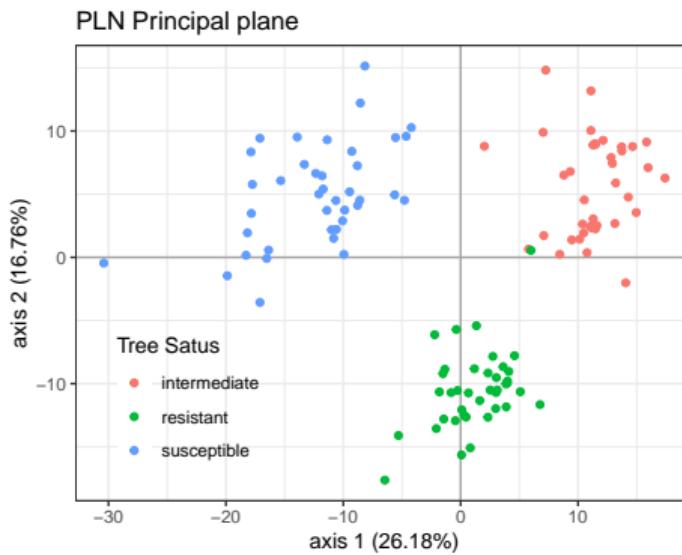
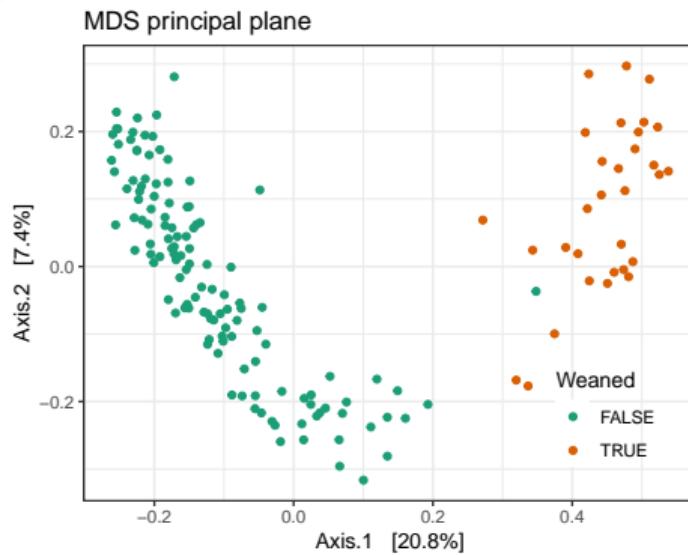
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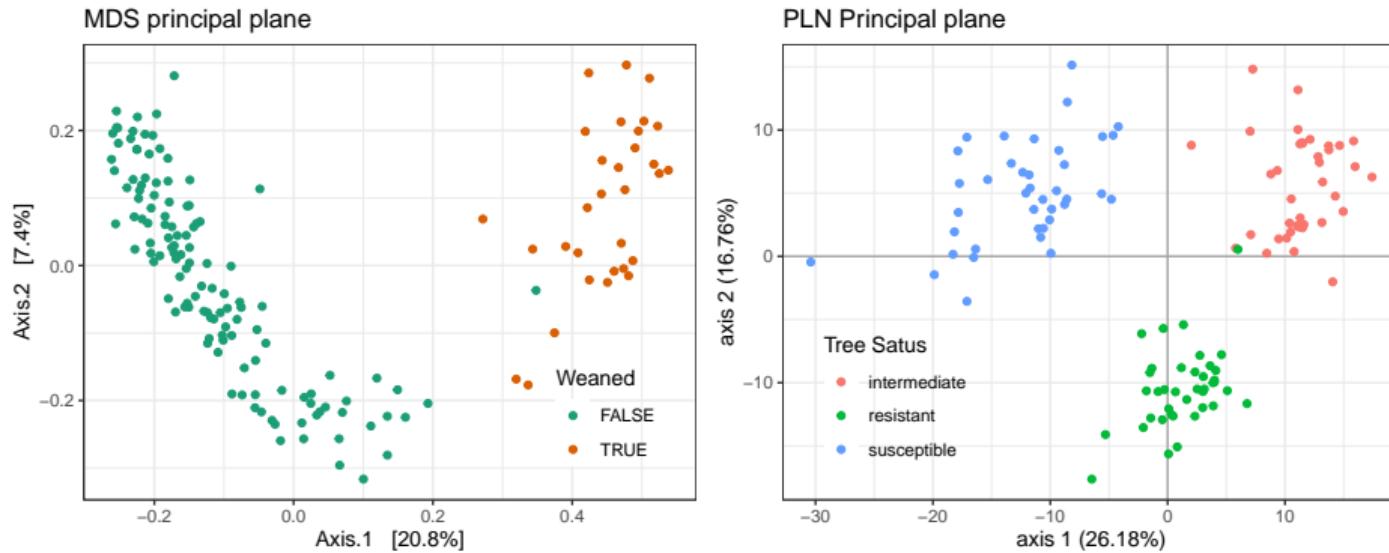
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- ③ Plot resulting *graph*
- ④ *Et voilà!*



Microbial Ecology 101



- ① Perfect for **finding** structure...
- ② But not for **modeling** it

What kind of generic models?

What kind of generic framework for multivariate count data?

What kind of generic models?



My Wish List to Santa

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 - model average communities;
 - model dispersion (biological variability);
 - model interaction between OTUs (ecological networks);
 - accomodate heterogeneous communities;
 - integrate data from different sources (bacterial and fractions)

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- **fast and easy** to fit to data;

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- **interpretable**;
- **fast and easy** to fit to data;
- **good fits** to data (e.g. simulate **realistic samples**).

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3 Multinomial Models

- Multinomial
- Mixture of Multinomials
- (Mixture of) Dirichlet-Multinomial
- Latent Dirichlet Allocation

4 Log-Normal Models

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Multinomial Models

Intuition

- There are p species with proportions $\pi = (\pi_1, \dots, \pi_p)$ in the species
- You pick N (sequencing depths) individuals with replacement

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Mathematical Model

$$\mathbf{Y} \sim \mathcal{M}(N, \boldsymbol{\pi})$$

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Mathematical Model

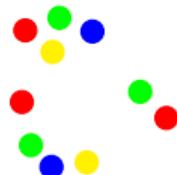
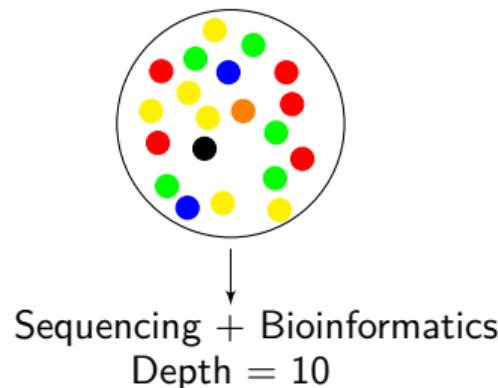
$$\mathbf{Y} \sim \mathcal{M}(N, \boldsymbol{\pi})$$

Inference is easy

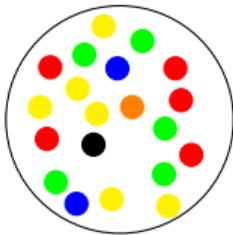
$$\hat{\pi}_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n Y_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^n N_i}$$

with Y_{ij} the abundance of species j in sample i and N_i the depth of sample i .

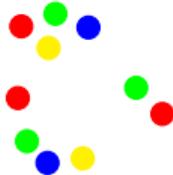
Multinomial distribution: draw balls (with replacement) from a box



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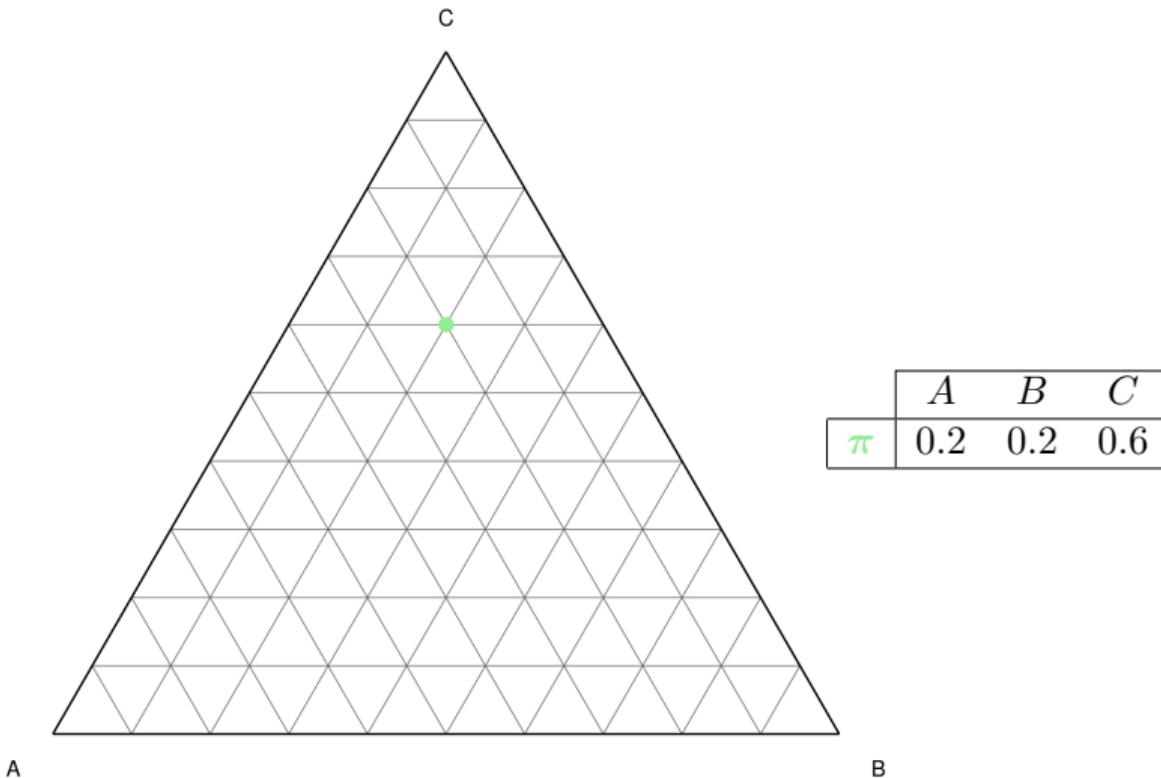


Sequencing + Bioinformatics
Depth = 10

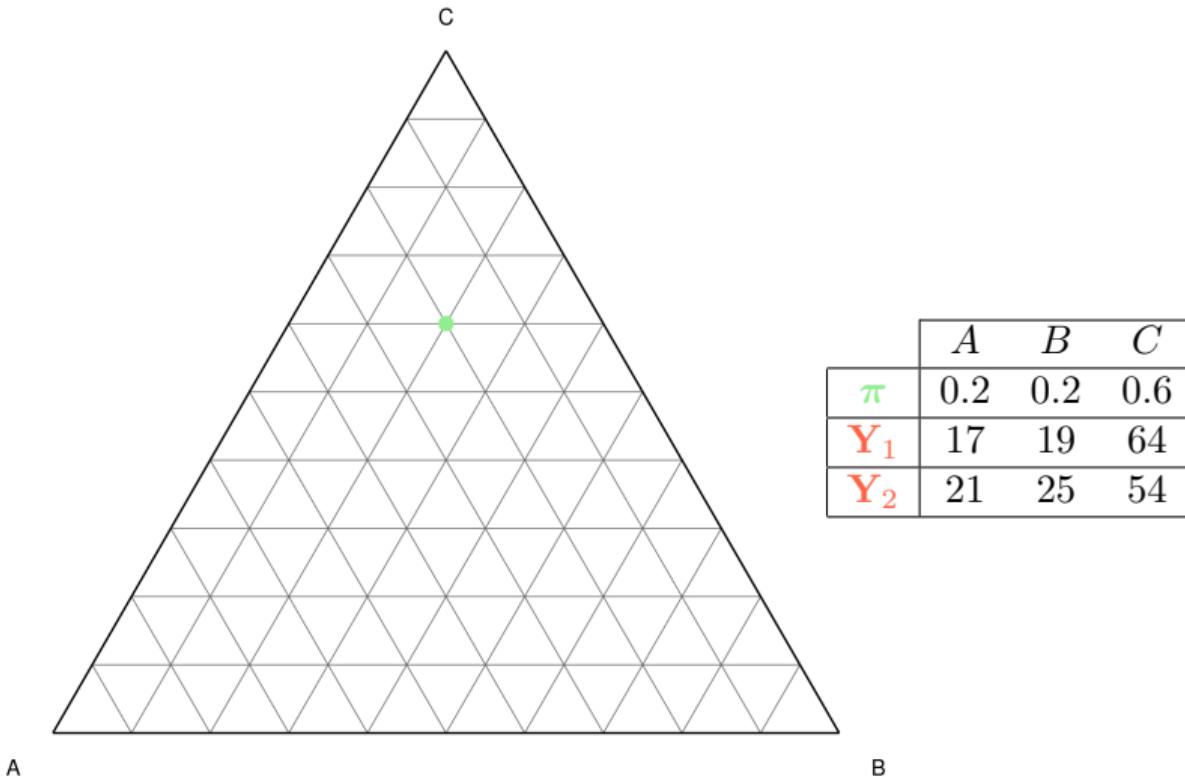


| | ● | ○ | ● | ● | ● | ○ |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Prop. | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.05 | 0.10 | 0.05 |
| Counts | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Obs. Prop. | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0 | 0.2 | 0 |

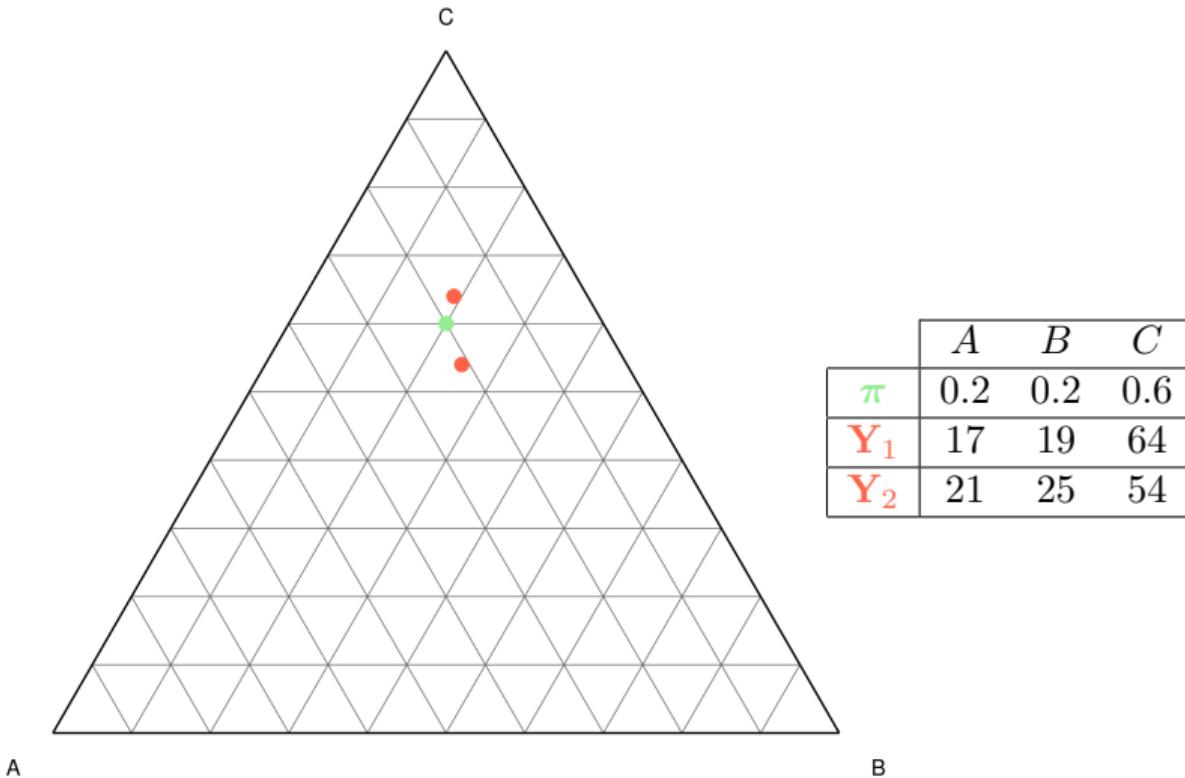
Multinomial Model



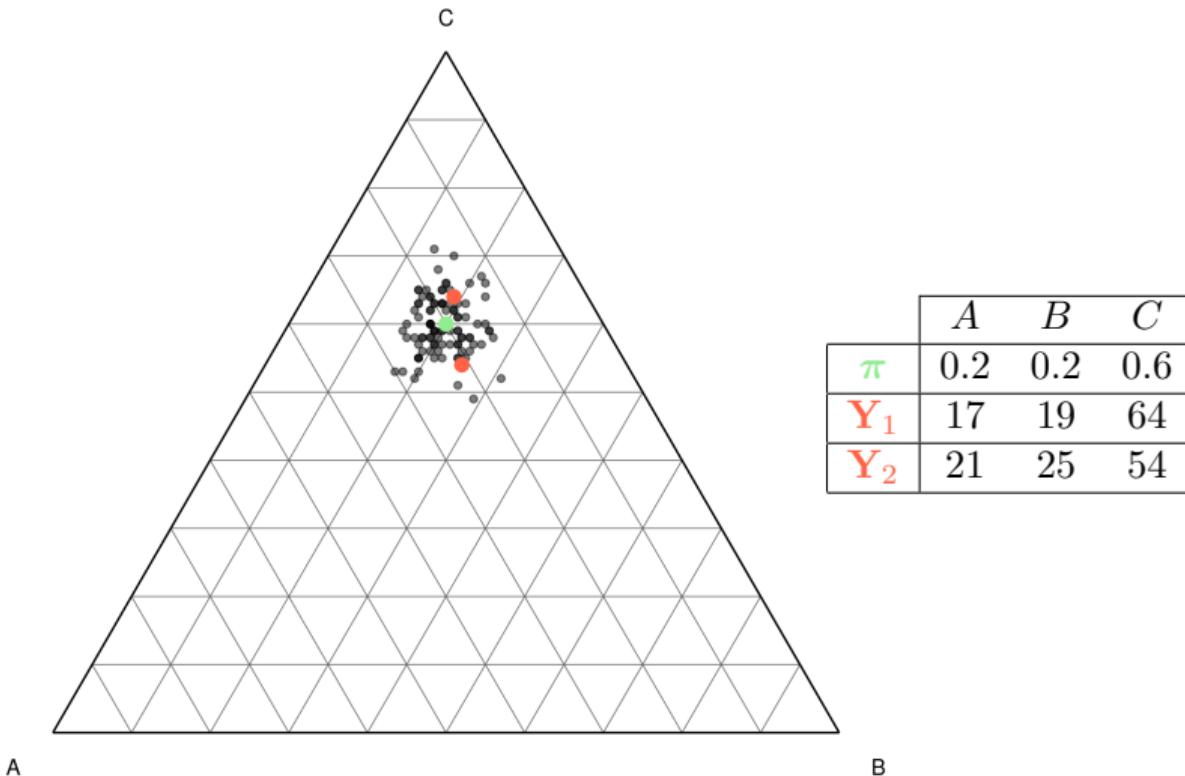
Multinomial Model



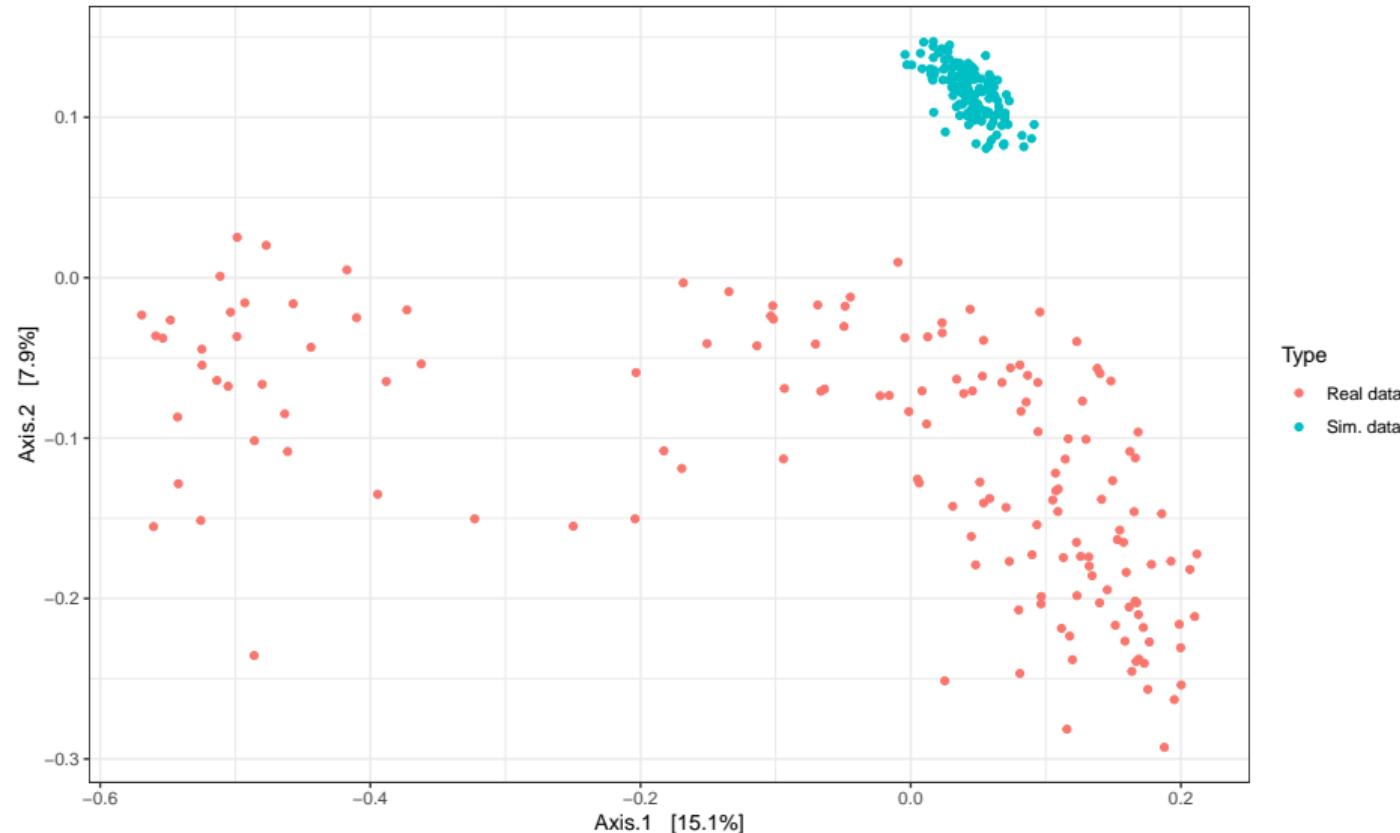
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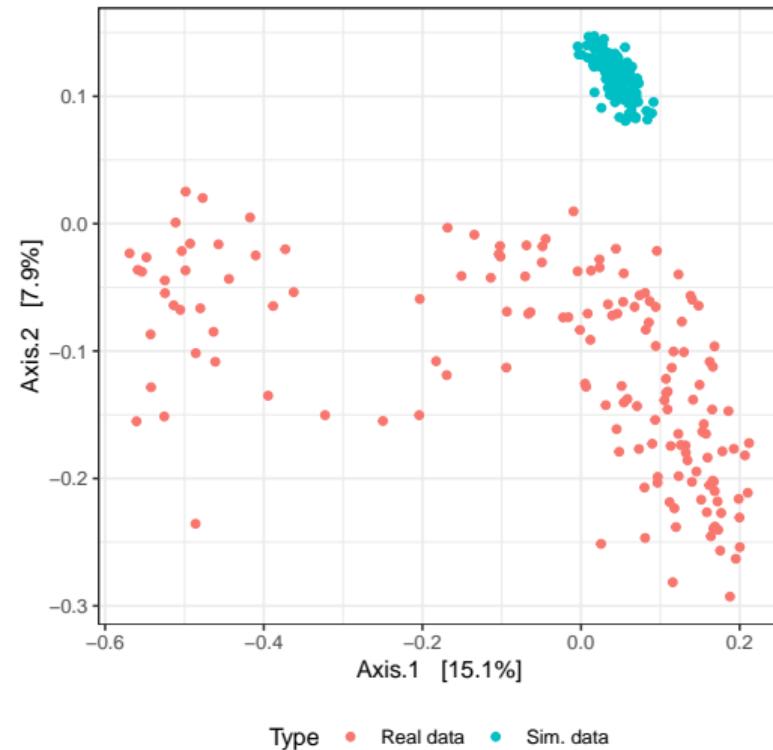
Example of Multinomial Model



Drawbacks

Heterogeneity

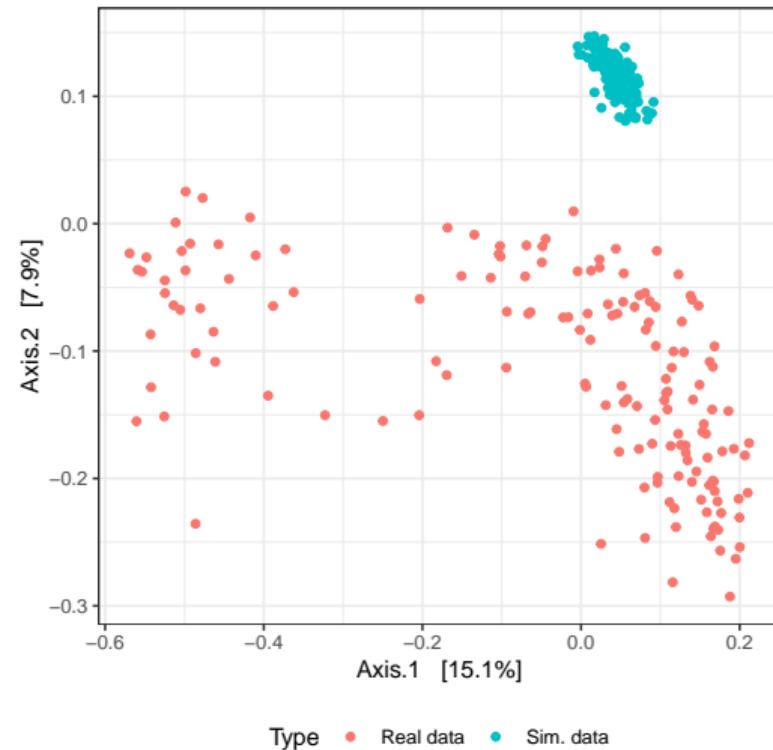
- Lack of heterogeneity



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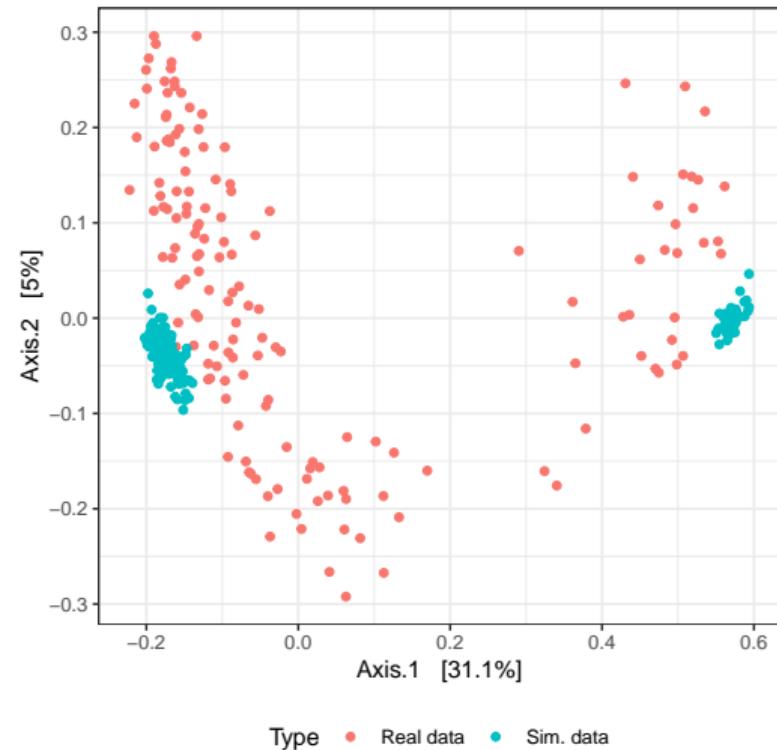
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~~ Fit only part of the data



Drawbacks

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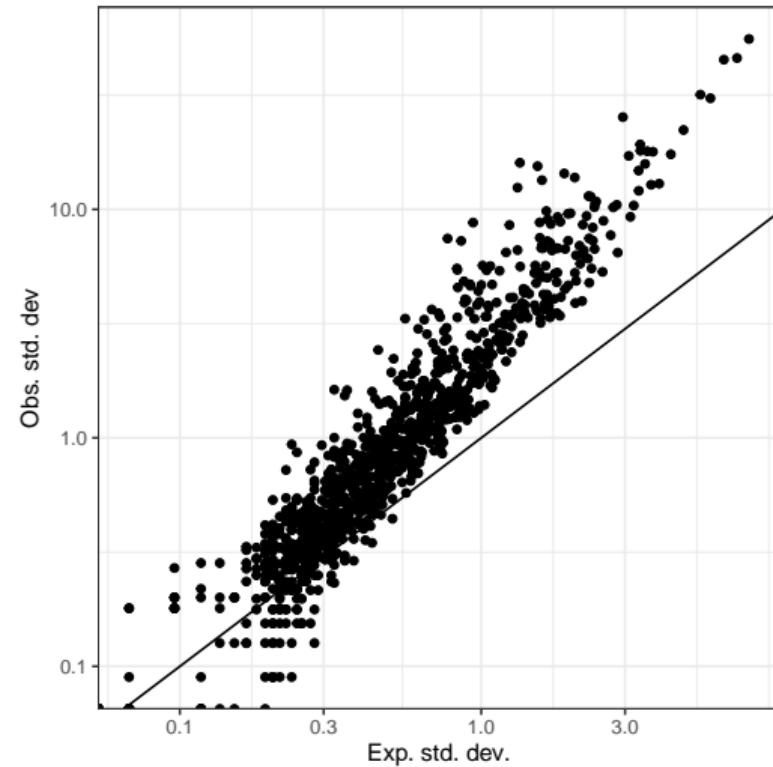
- Lack of heterogeneity
~~ Fit only part of the data
- Lack of variance



Drawbacks

Heterogeneity

- Lack of heterogeneity
 - ↝ Fit only part of the data
- Lack of variance
- Small dispersion

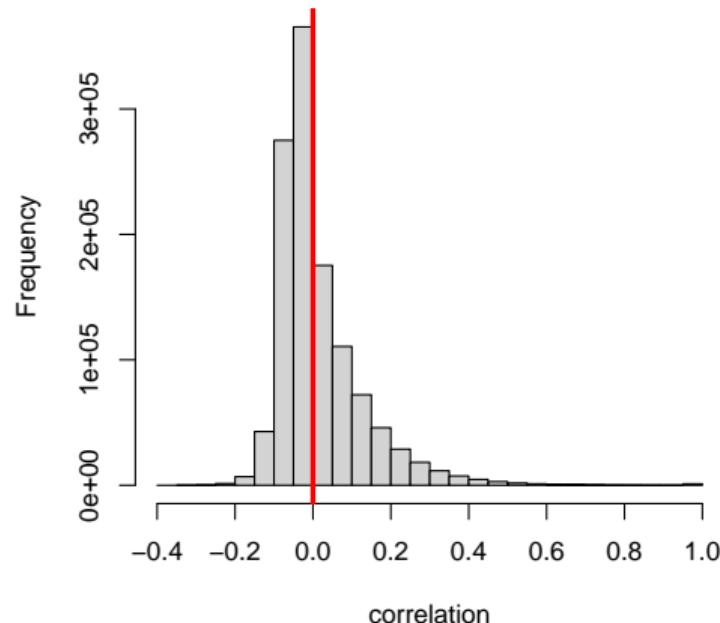


Drawbacks

Heterogeneity

- Lack of heterogeneity
~~ Fit only part of the data
- Lack of variance
- Small dispersion
- Wrong correlations

Correlation Histogram



Pros and Cons

Pros

- + Parsimonious model: $p - 1$ parameters to model p abundances
- + Easy to estimate
- + interpretable parameter

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Cons

- Bad for heterogeneity
- Bad for dispersion around average composition (\simeq biological variability)
- Bad for correlations between OTUs

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Intuition

- Each sample belongs to one of K groups
- Group k is characterized by its composition π_k
- A sample from group k has composition π_k
- Reads are sampled according to a multinomial process

Mixture Models

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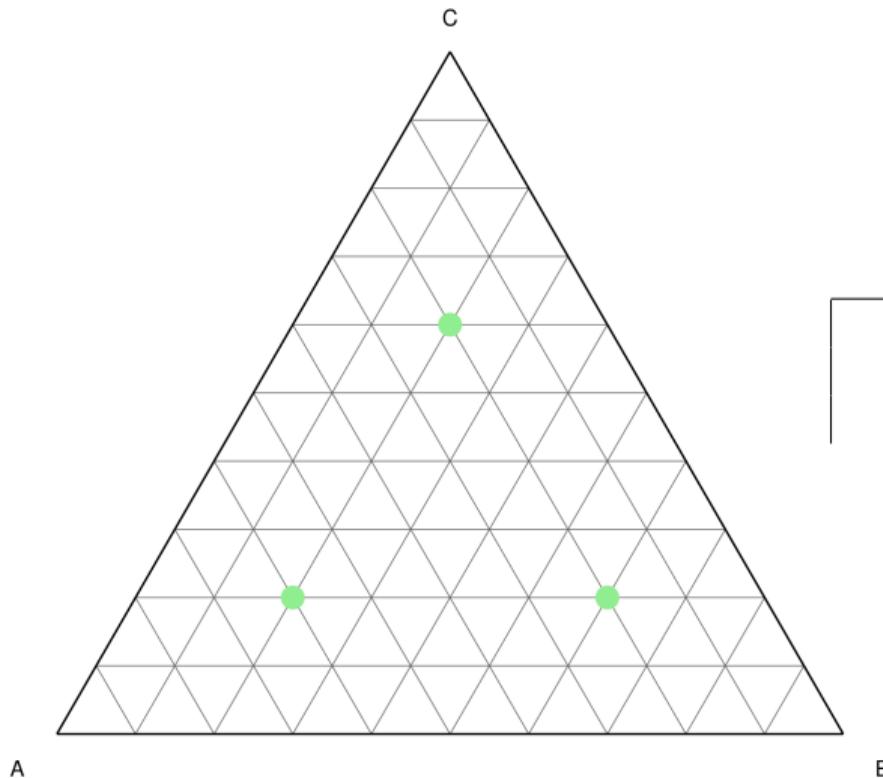
Hierarchical Model

$$\begin{aligned} Z &\sim \mathcal{M}(1, \boldsymbol{\alpha}) \\ Y|Z = k &\sim \mathcal{M}(N, \boldsymbol{\pi}_k) \end{aligned}$$

where

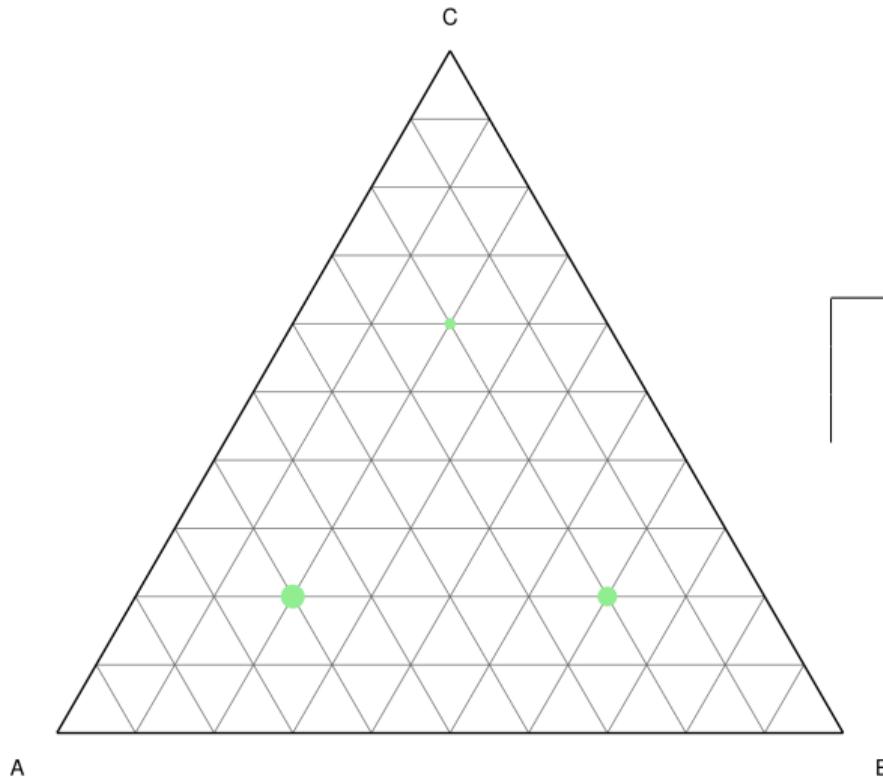
- $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_K)$ are the proportions of the K groups,

Mixture of Multinomial



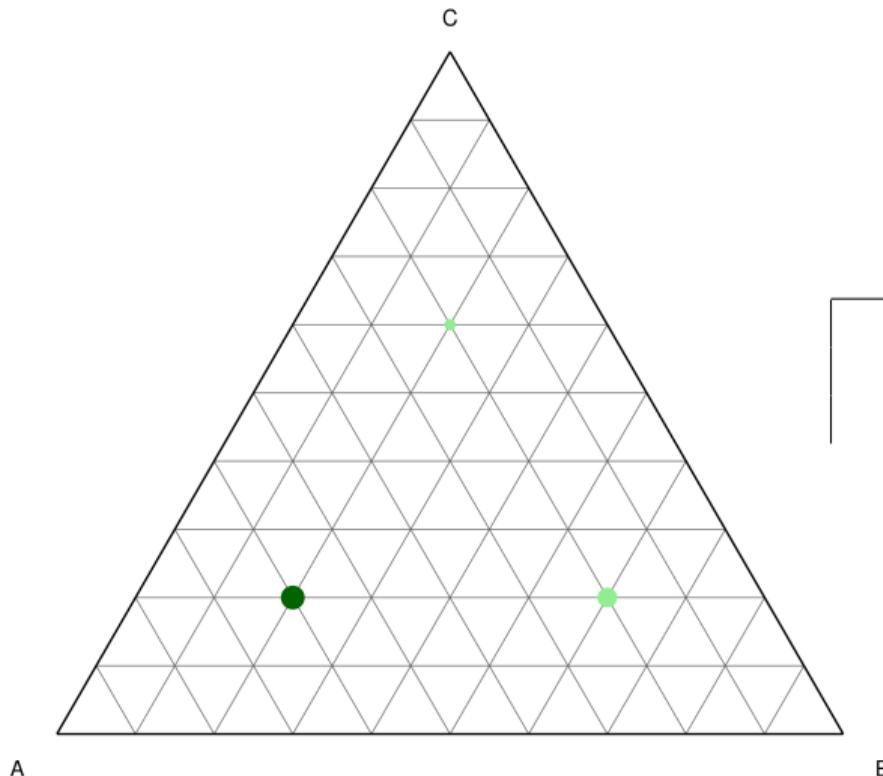
| | A | B | C | α |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| π_1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | |
| π_2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.2 | |
| π_3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | |

Mixture of Multinomial



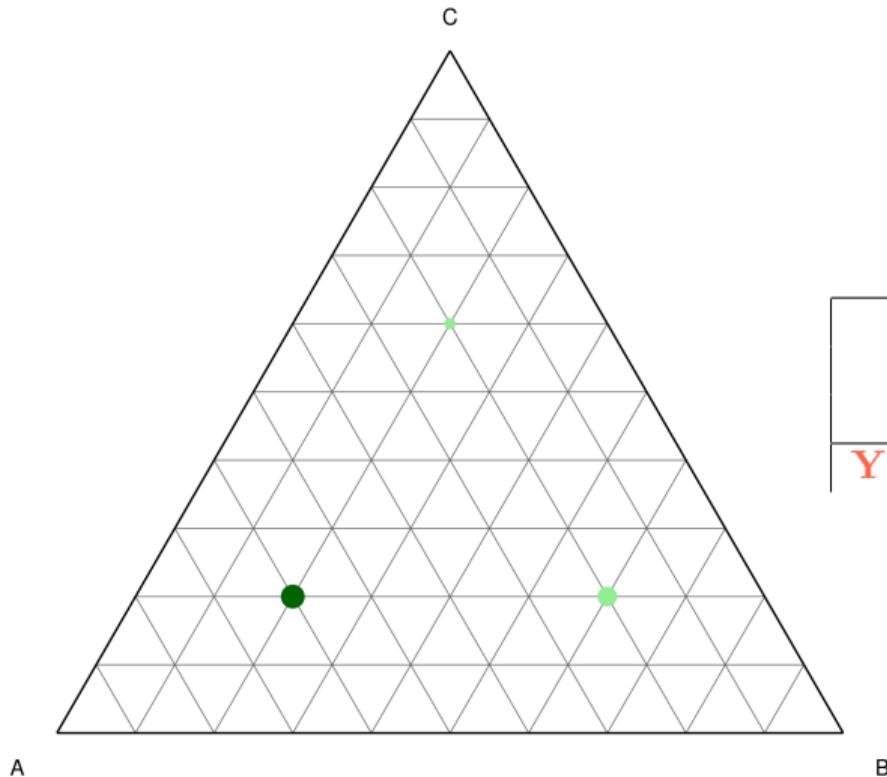
| | A | B | C | α |
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| π_1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| π_2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| π_3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.1 |

Mixture of Multinomial



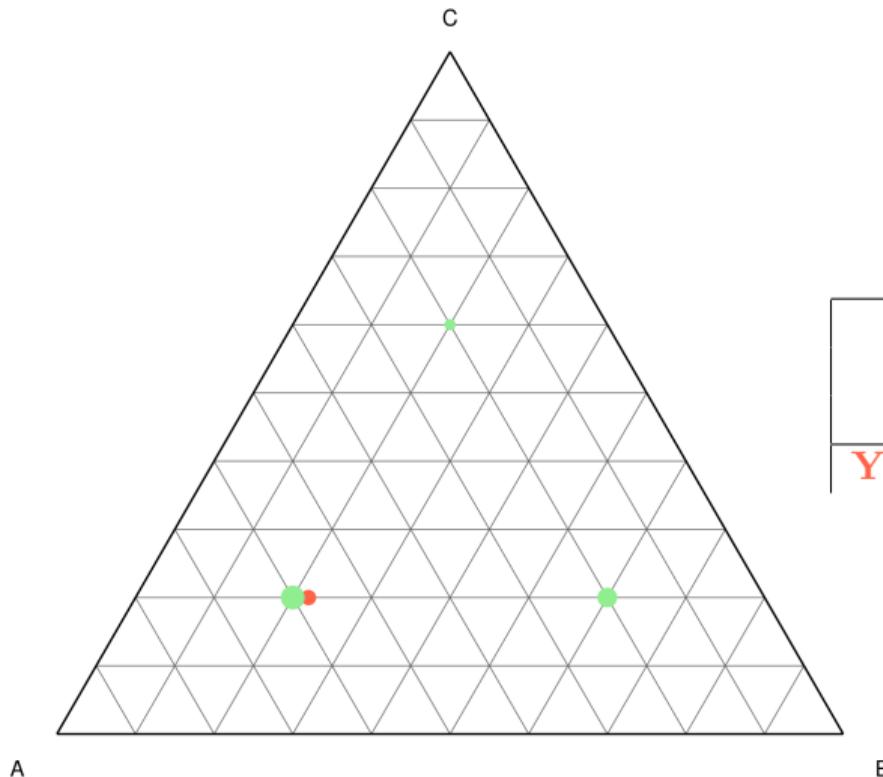
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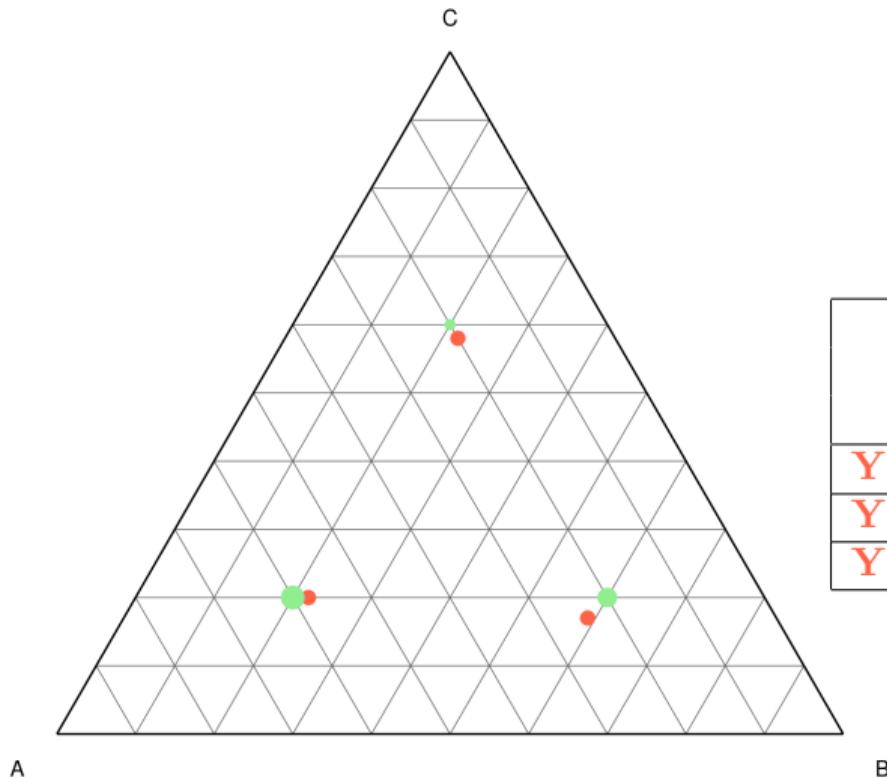
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| $Y Z=1$ | 58 | 22 | 20 | |

Mixture of Multinomial



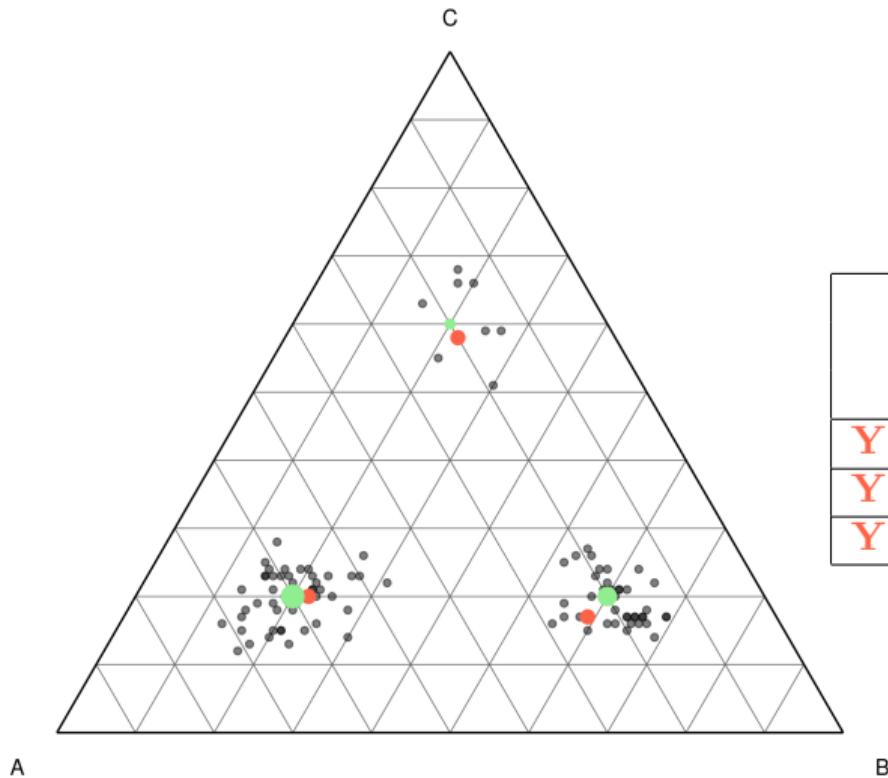
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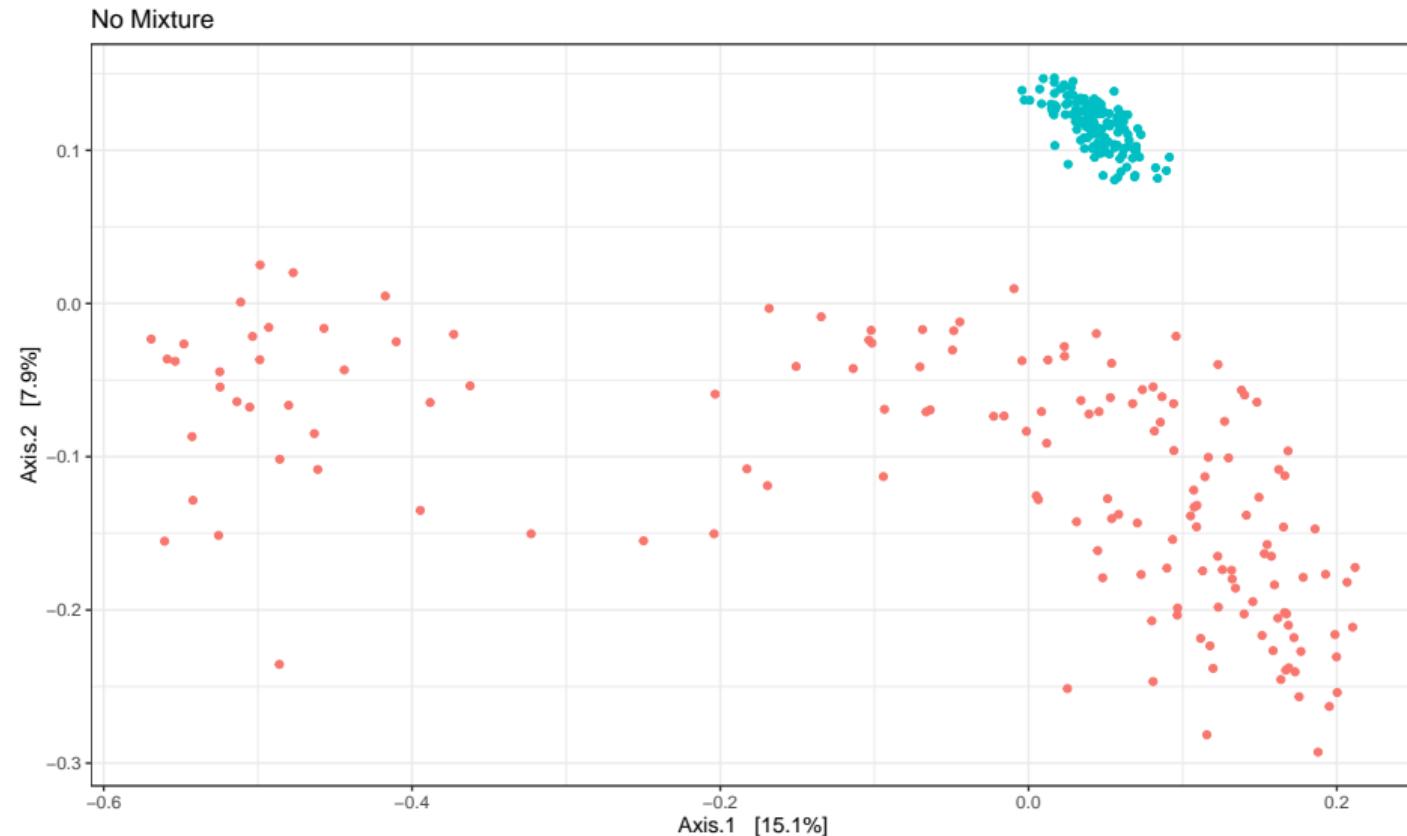
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| $Y Z=2$ | 24 | 59 | 17 | |
| $Y Z=3$ | 20 | 22 | 58 | |

Mixture of Multinomial

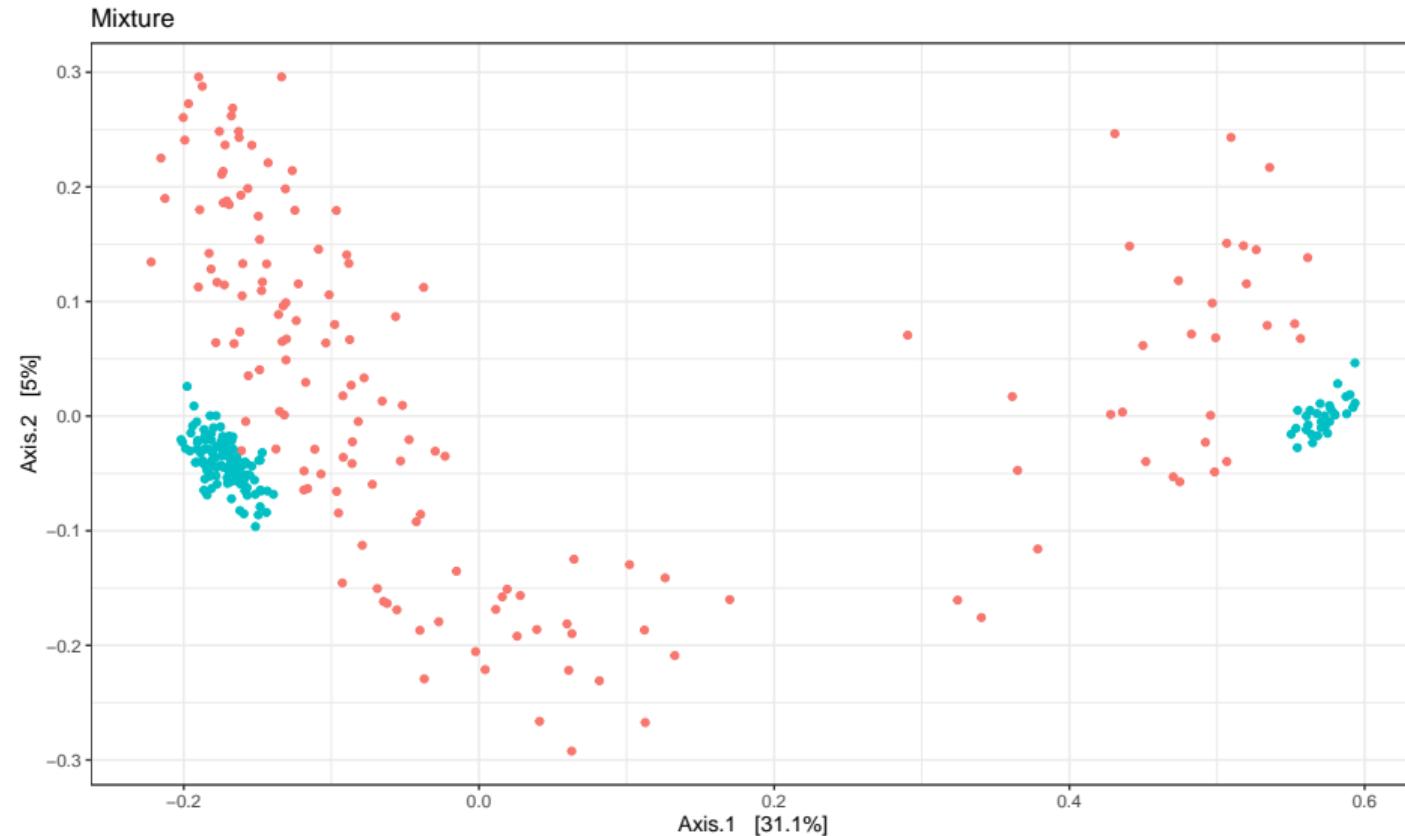


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Example of Mixture Models



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- + Good for heterogeneity
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- + Inference is easy when groups are known ↗ simple averages

Cons

- Inference is more involved when groups are unknown
↗ iterative EM algorithm
- Bad for dispersion
- Bad for correlations between OTUs

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- N_i reads are sampled from π_i according to a multinomial \rightsquigarrow **Technical / Sampling** variability

Dirichlet - Multinomial

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Hierarchical Model

$$\pi$$

Ecosystem average composition

$$\pi_i \sim \mathcal{D}(\kappa\pi)$$

Sample average composition

$$\mathbf{Y}_i \sim \mathcal{M}(N_i, \pi_i)$$

Observed counts

where $1/\kappa$ models the **level of variability** (large $1/\kappa \rightsquigarrow$ large variability)

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Hierarchical Model

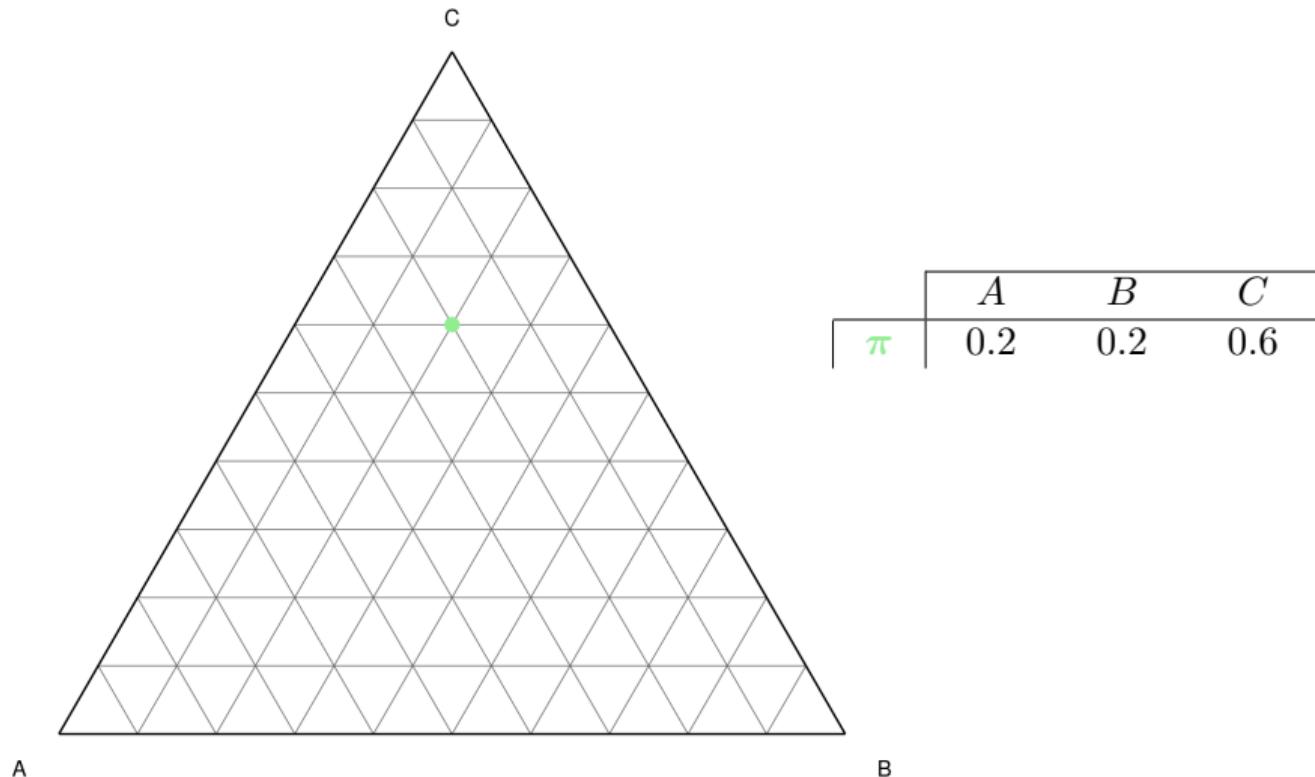
$$\begin{array}{ll} \pi & \text{Ecosystem average composition} \\ \pi_i \sim \mathcal{D}(\kappa\pi) & \text{Sample average composition} \\ \mathbf{Y}_i \sim \mathcal{M}(N_i, \pi_i) & \text{Observed counts} \end{array}$$

where $1/\kappa$ models the **level of variability** (large $1/\kappa \rightsquigarrow$ large variability)

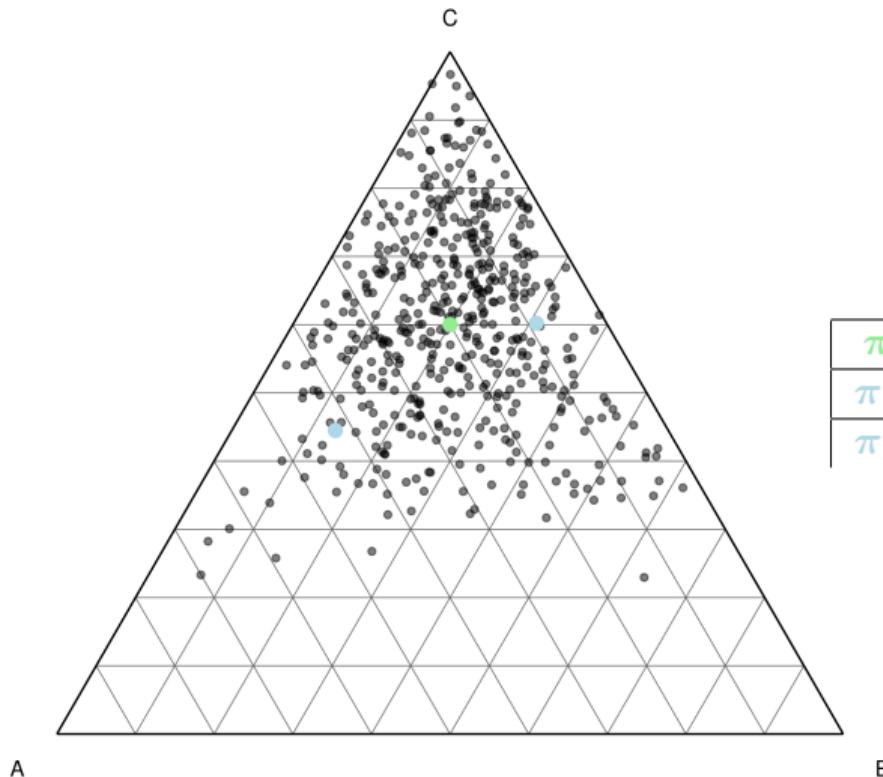
Mixture Layer

Can be **combined** with a mixture model

Dirichlet-Multinomial distribution

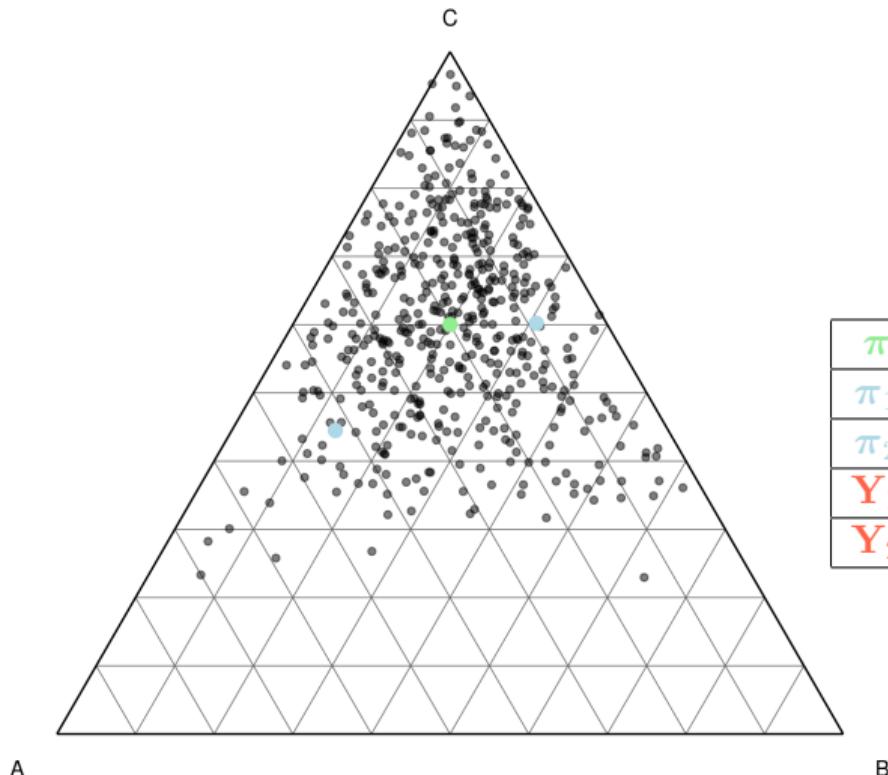


Dirichlet-Multinomial distribution



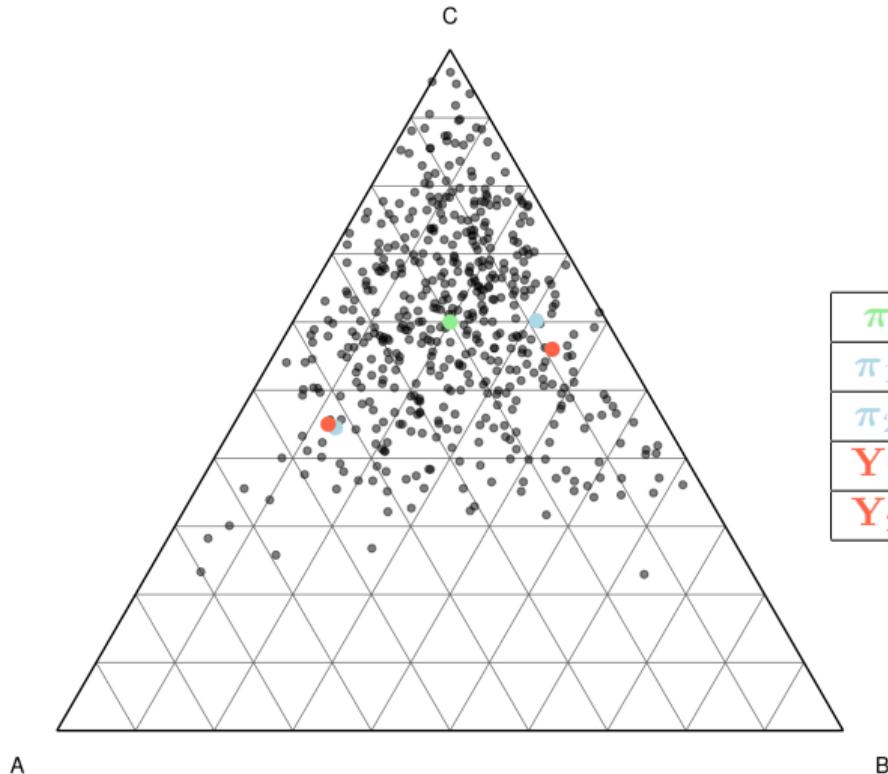
| | A | B | C |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| π | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| π_1 | 0.089 | 0.309 | 0.602 |
| π_2 | 0.423 | 0.132 | 0.445 |

Dirichlet-Multinomial distribution



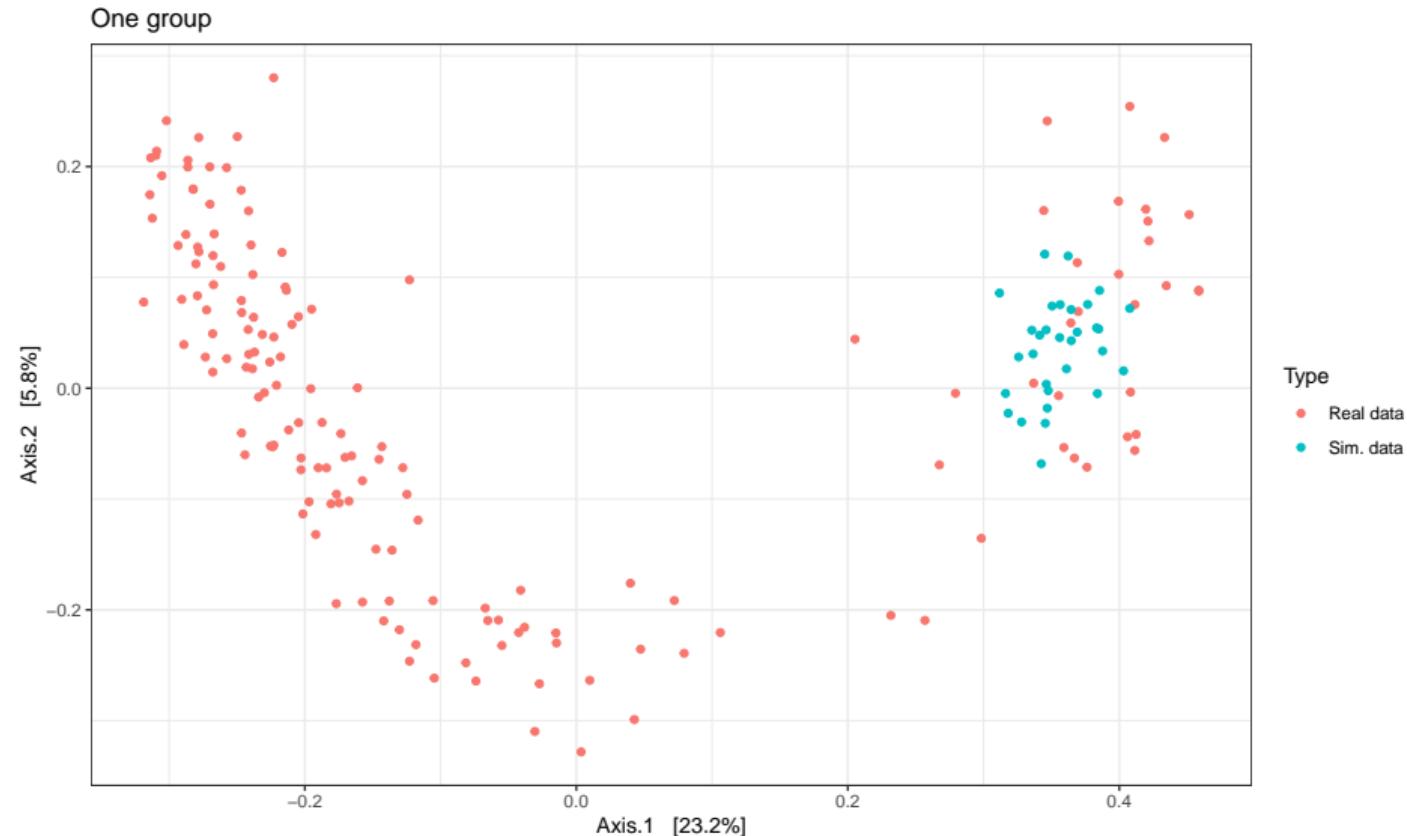
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Dirichlet-Multinomial distribution

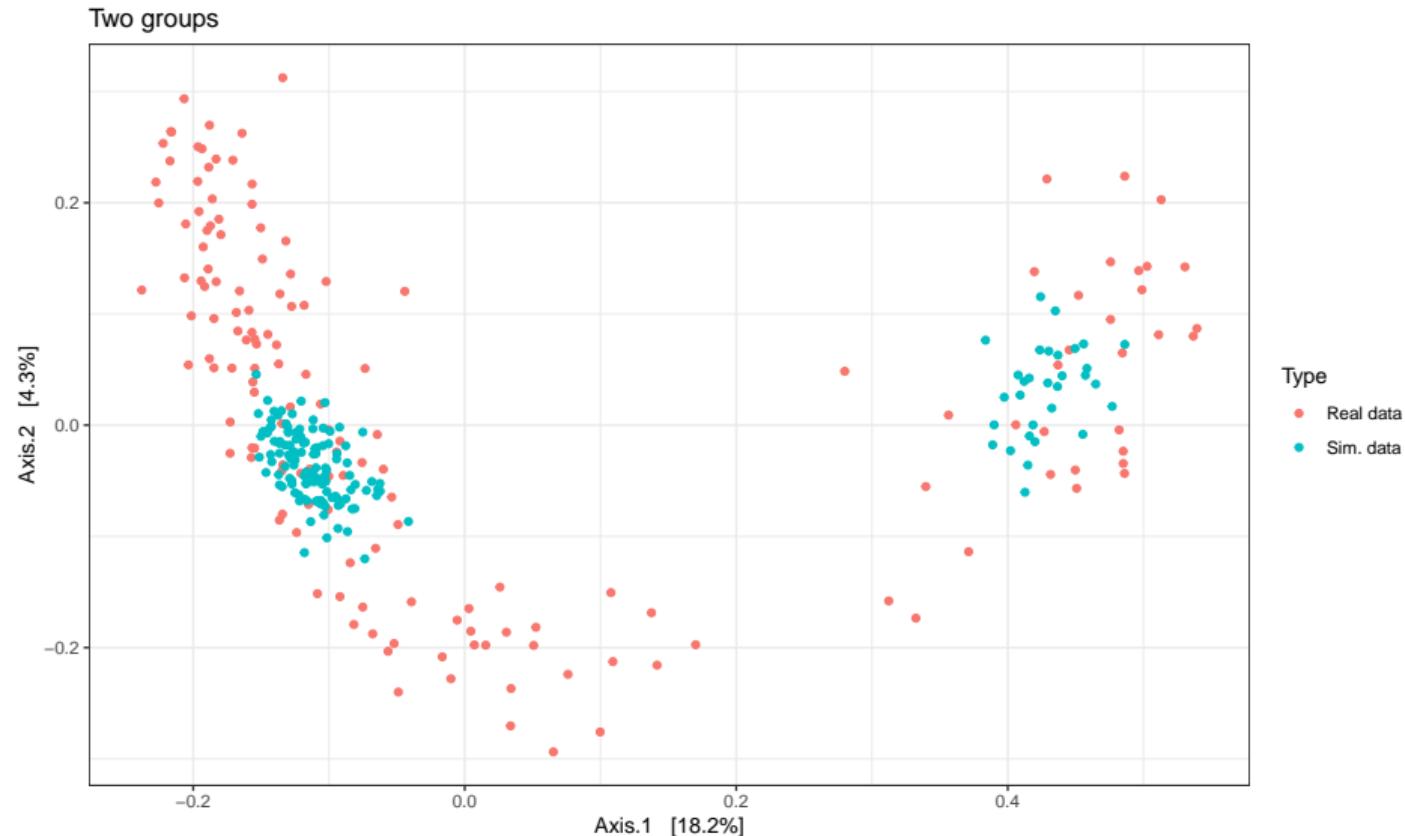


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Example of Dirichlet-Multinomial



Example of Dirichlet-Multinomial (Cont'd)



Pros and Cons

Pros

- + Good for heterogeneity
- + So-so or OK for dispersion
- + Parcimonious: $K(p + 1) - 1$ parameters for K groups

Pros and Cons

Pros

- + Good for heterogeneity
- + So-so or OK for dispersion
- + Parcimonious: $K(p + 1) - 1$ parameters for K groups

Cons

- Inference is more involved
 - Known groups \rightsquigarrow gradient descent
 - Unknown groups \rightsquigarrow Iterative EM algorithm + gradient descent
- Bad for correlations between OTUs

Outline

1 Tentative Syllabi

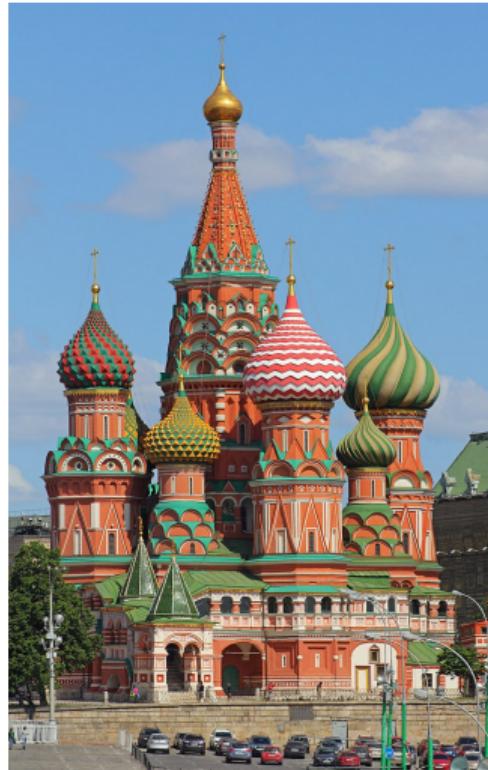
2 Motivation

3 Multinomial Models

- Multinomial
- Mixture of Multinomials
- (Mixture of) Dirichlet-Multinomial
- Latent Dirichlet Allocation

4 Log-Normal Models

5 Applications



©A. Savin

Latent Dirichlet Allocation

Intuition

- There are K archetype ecosystems $1, \dots, K$

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- Each archetype has its own composition π_k

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Hierarchical Model

$$\pi_1, \dots, \pi_K$$

Archetypes average compositions

$$\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{D}(\kappa \boldsymbol{\alpha})$$

Proportion of archetypes in sample

$$\tilde{\pi}_k \sim \mathcal{D}(\kappa_k \pi_k)$$

Noisy version of π_k

$$z_i \sim \mathcal{M}(1, \boldsymbol{\theta})$$

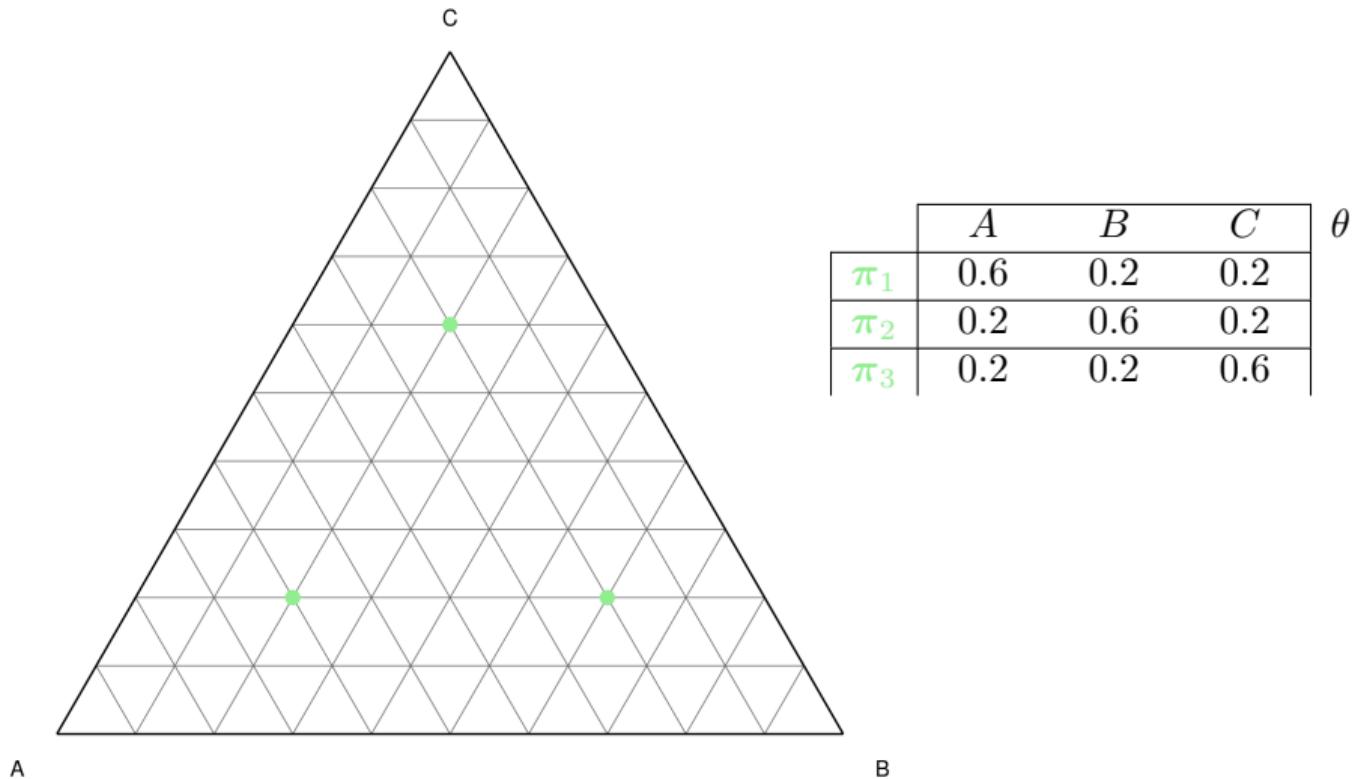
Archetype of origin of read i

$$w_i | z_i = k \sim \mathcal{M}(1, \tilde{\pi}_k)$$

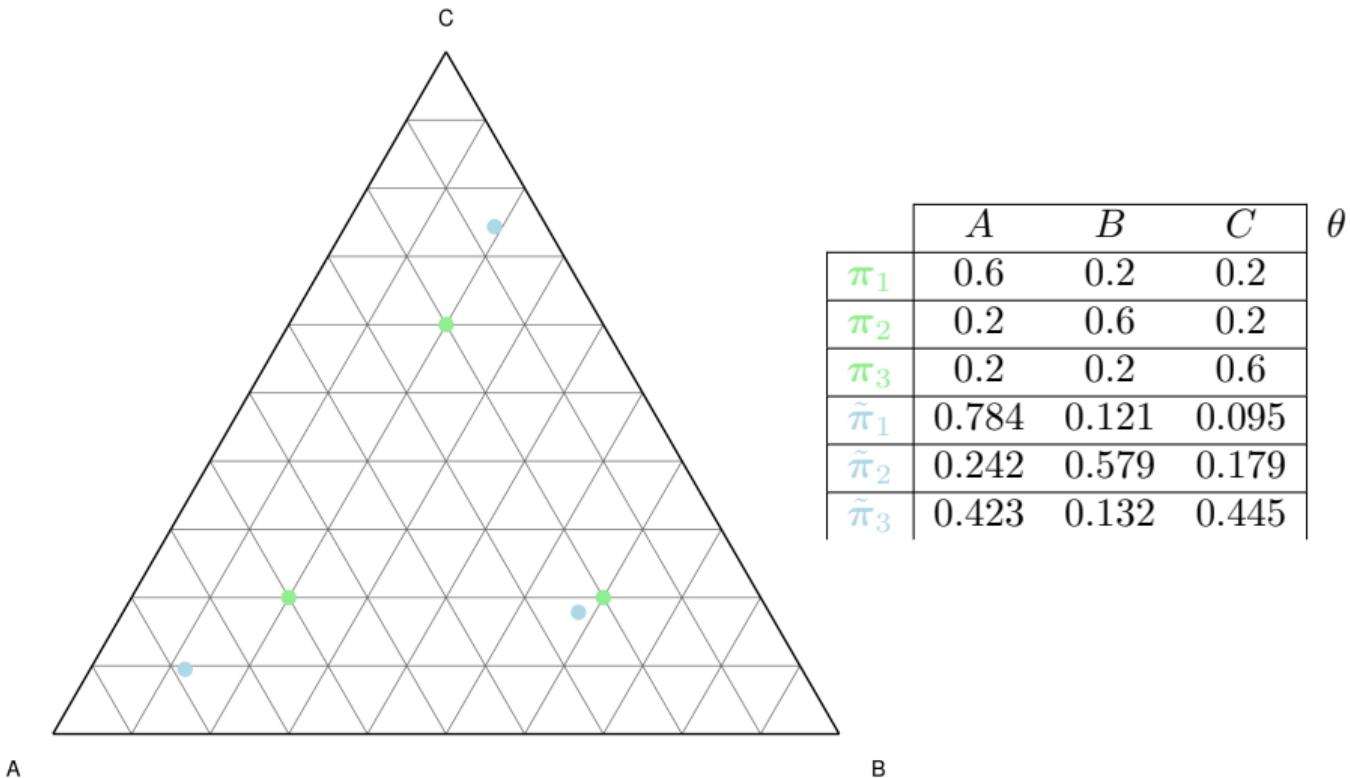
OTU of read i

where κ and the κ_k control noise levels.

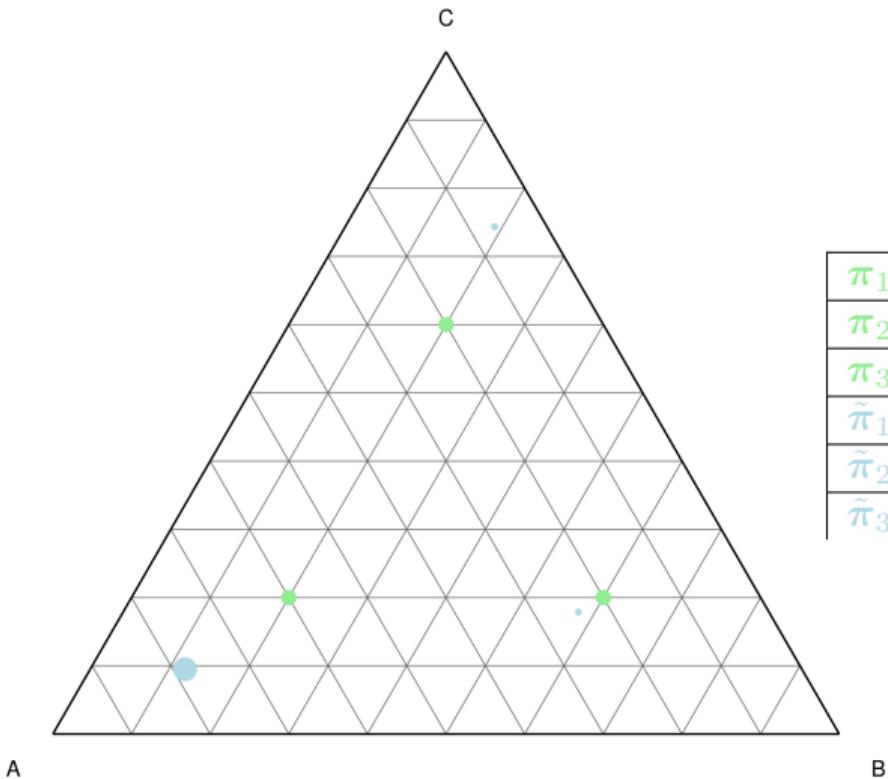
Latent Dirichlet Allocation



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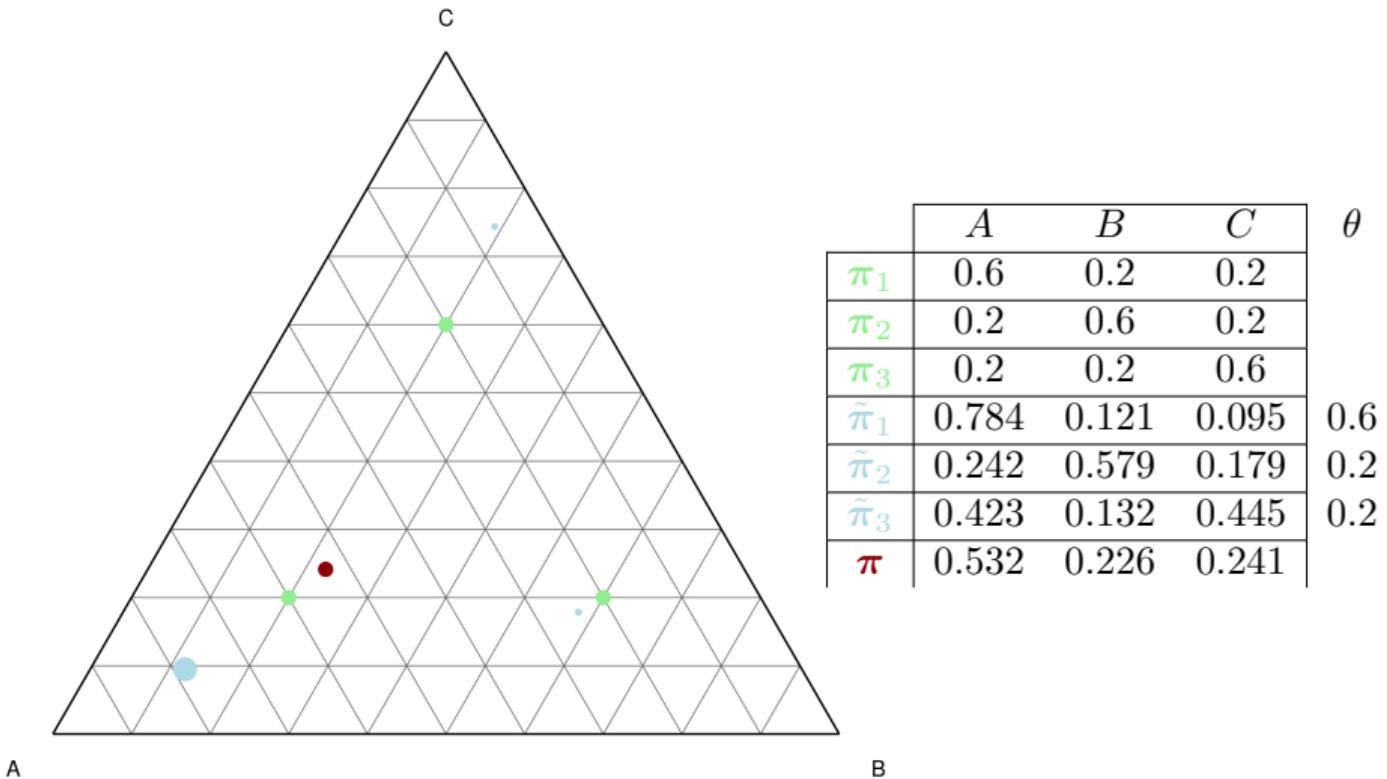


Latent Dirichlet Allocation

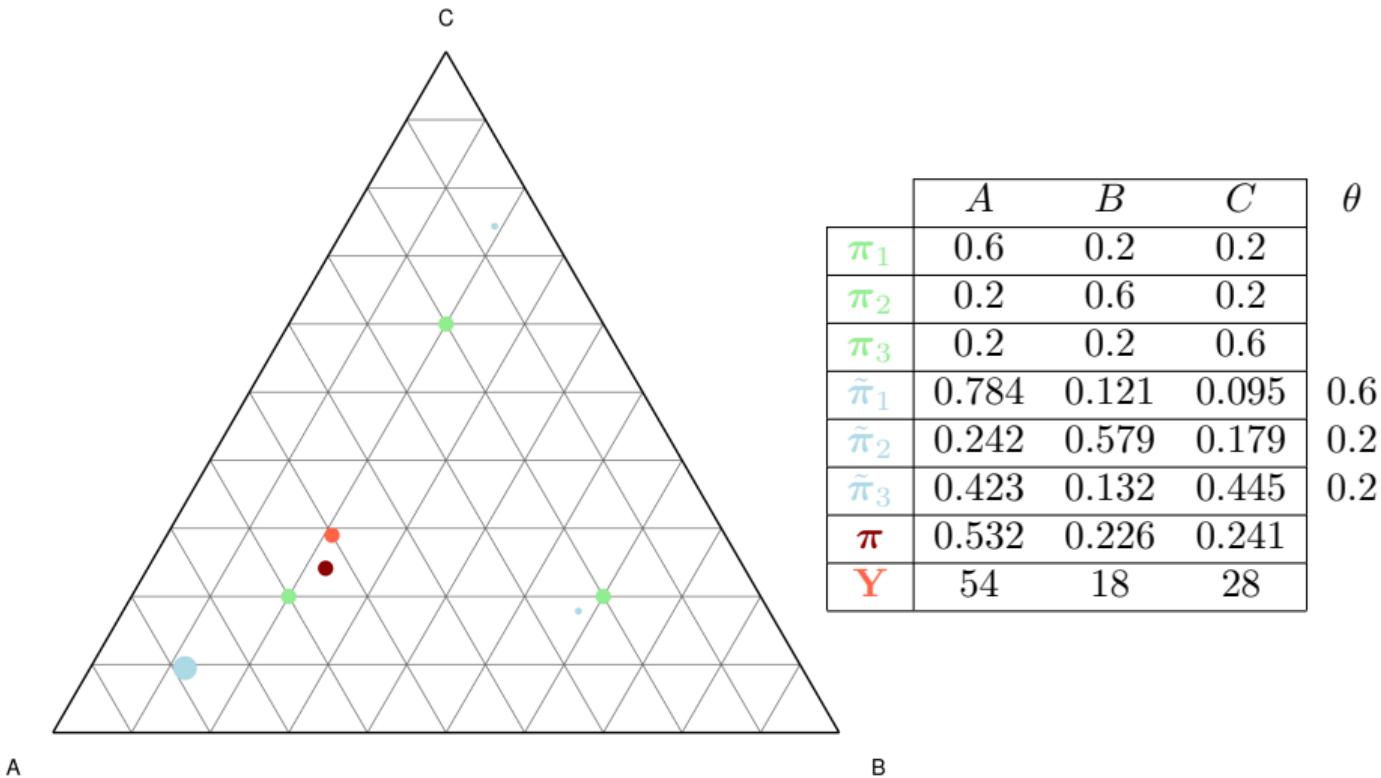


| | A | B | C | θ |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| π_1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | |
| π_2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.2 | |
| π_3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | |
| $\tilde{\pi}_1$ | 0.784 | 0.121 | 0.095 | 0.6 |
| $\tilde{\pi}_2$ | 0.242 | 0.579 | 0.179 | 0.2 |
| $\tilde{\pi}_3$ | 0.423 | 0.132 | 0.445 | 0.2 |

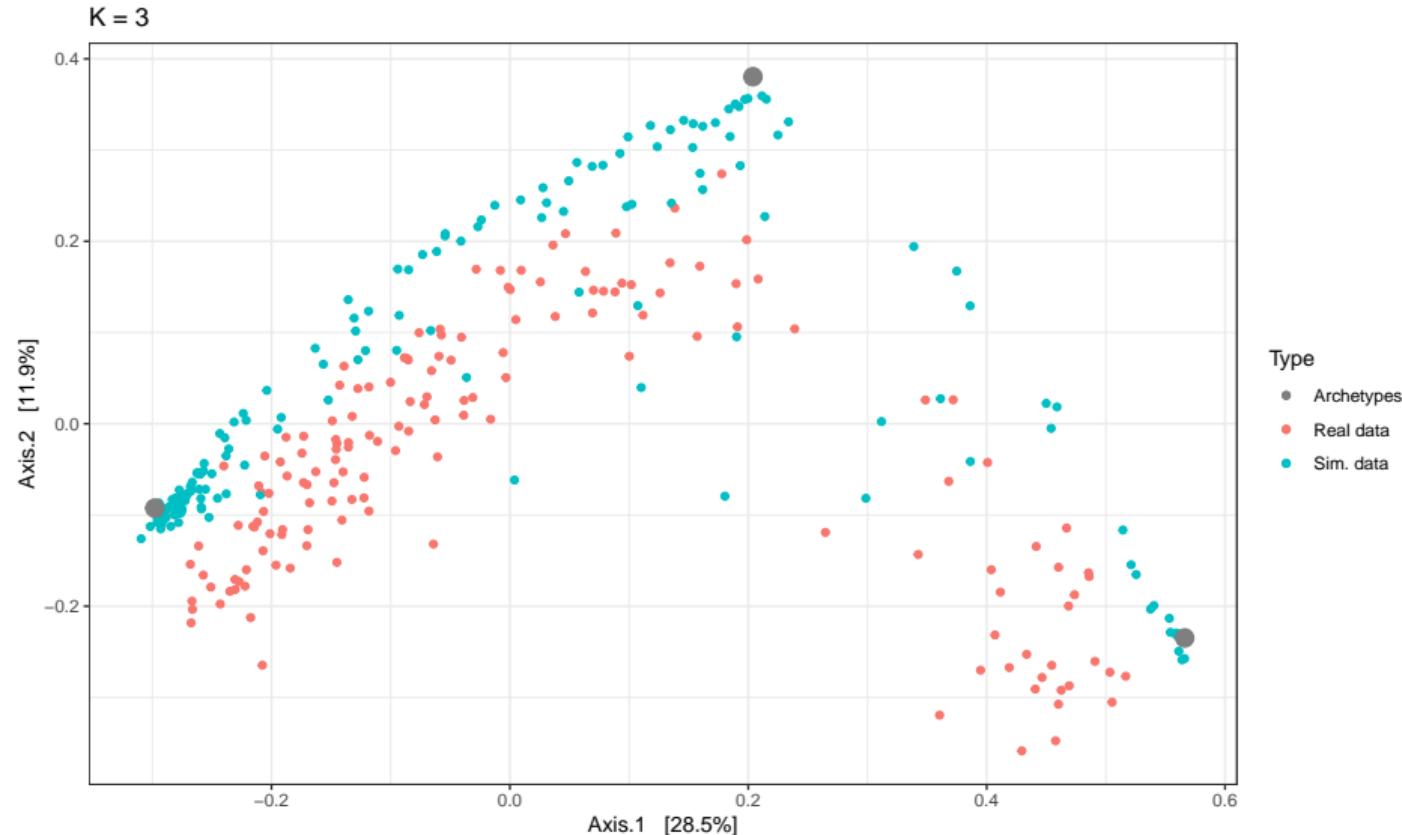
Latent Dirichlet Allocation



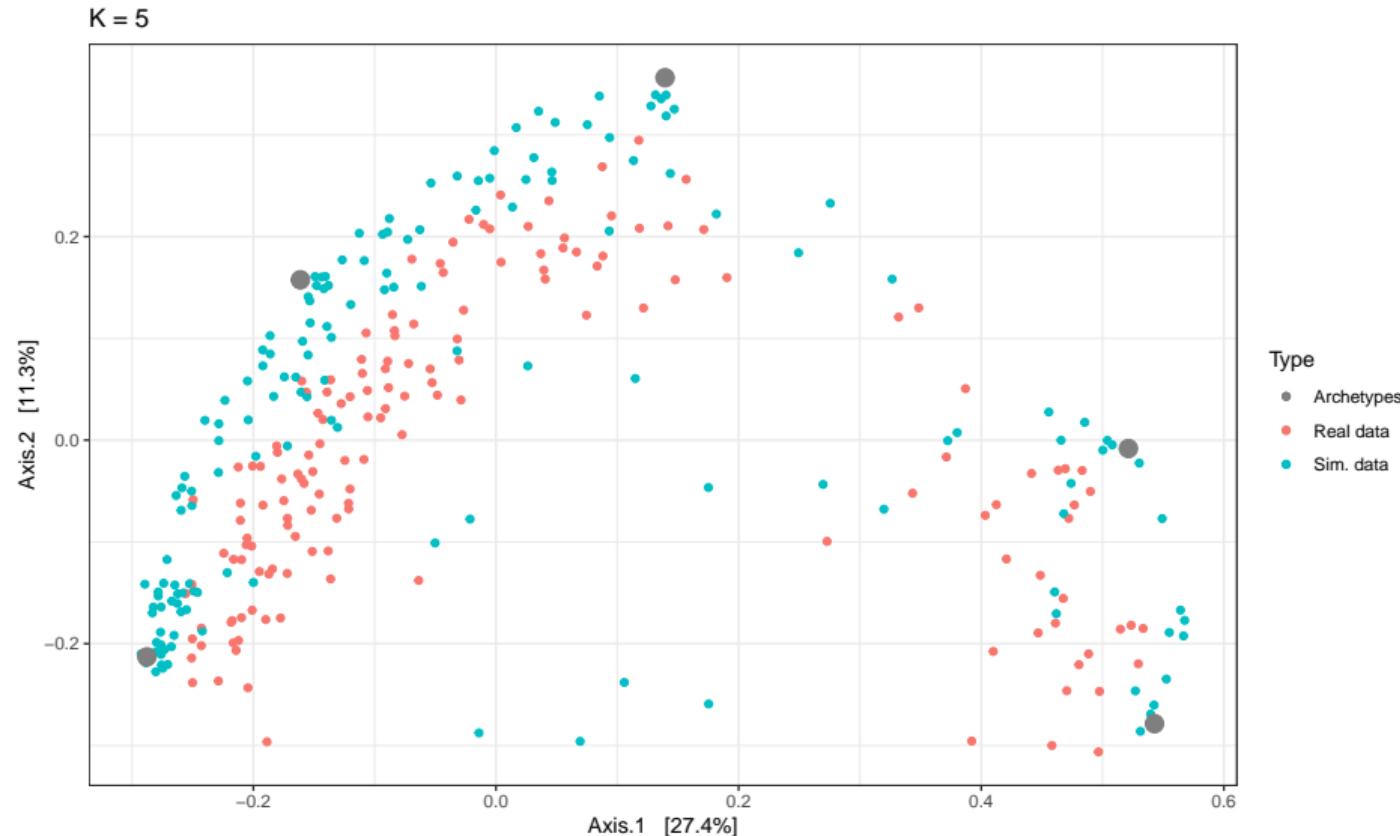
Latent Dirichlet Allocation



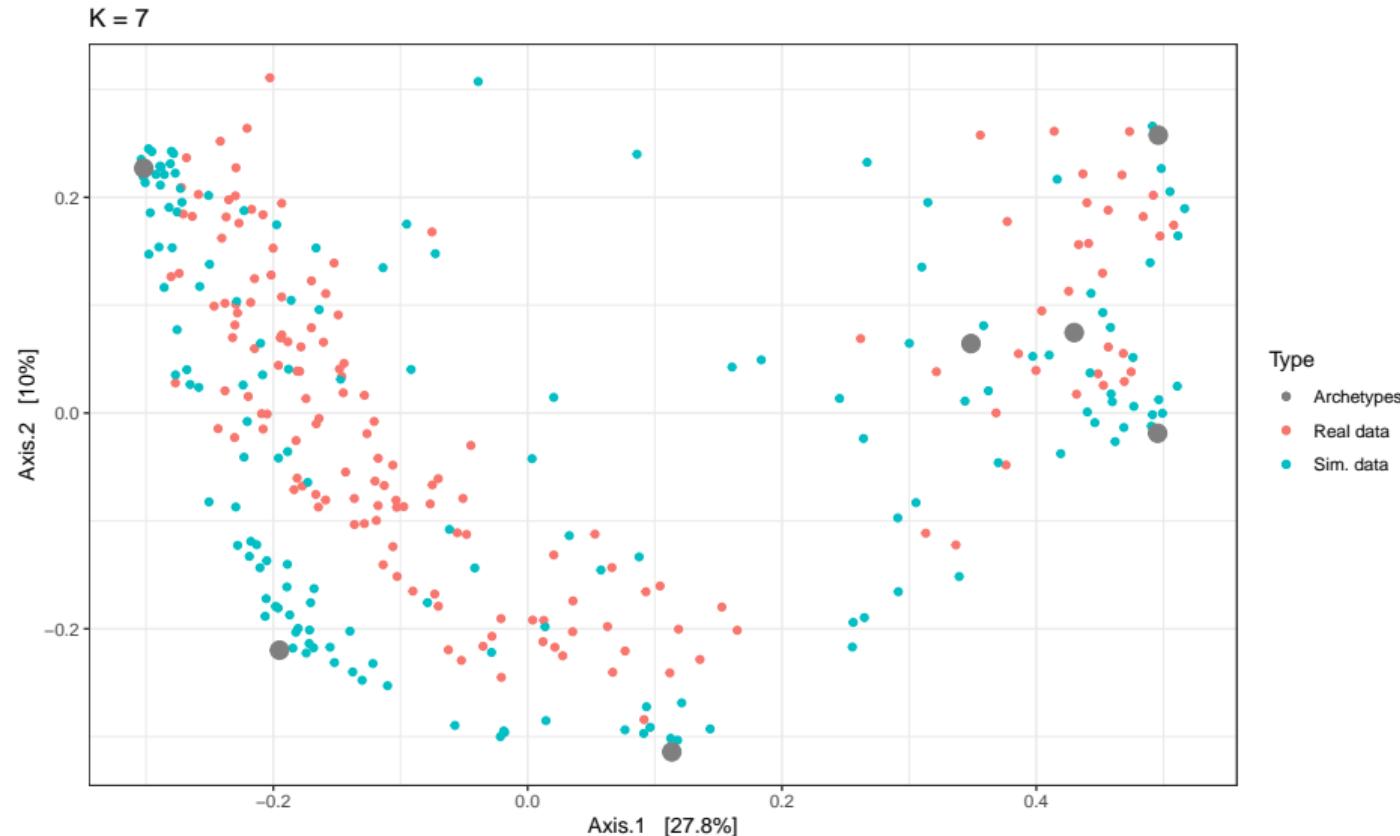
Example of Latent Dirichlet Allocation



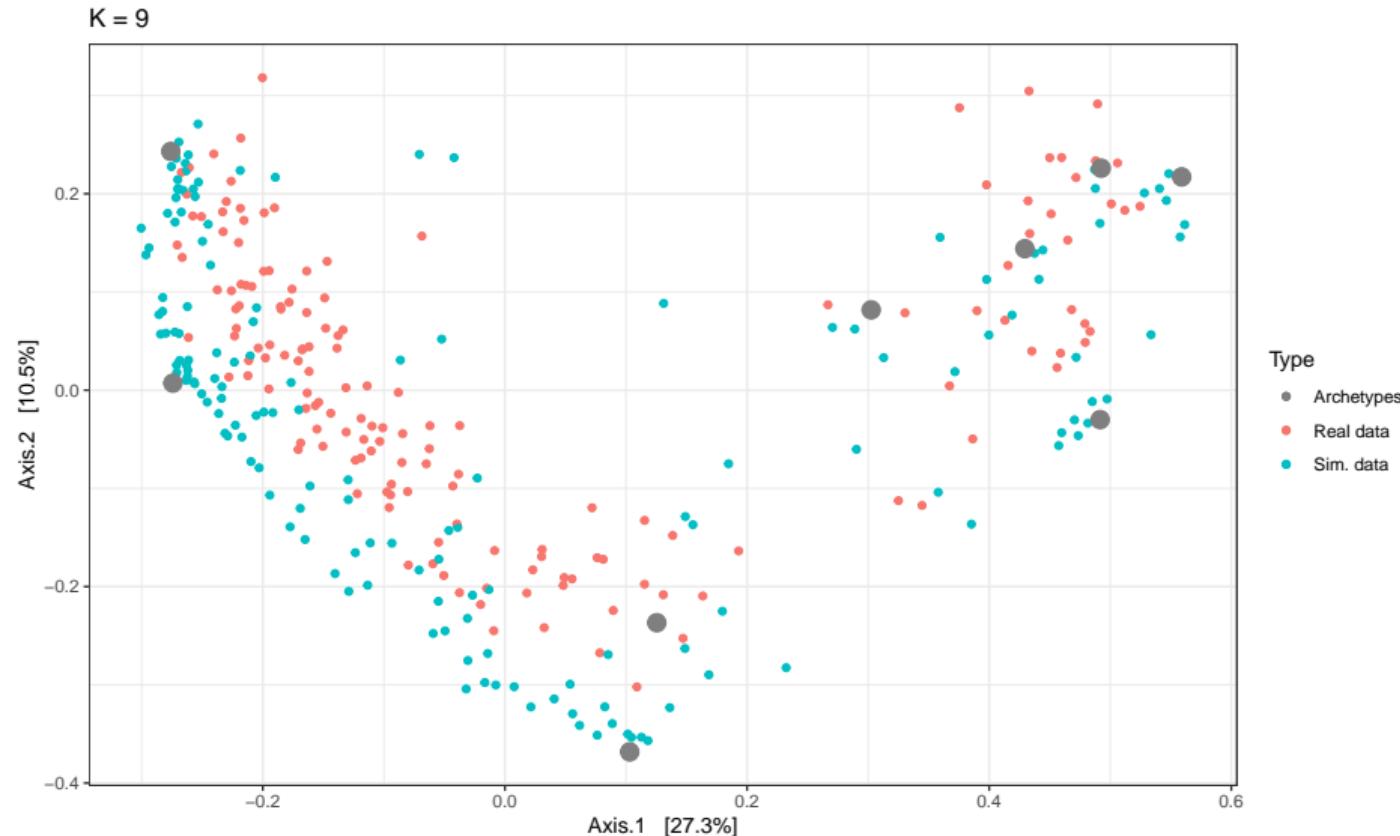
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- + Good for dispersion
- + Parcimonious: $K(p + 1)$ parameters for K archetypes

Cons

- Inference is very involved
 - ~~ gradient descent + EM algorithm / Gibbs sampling
- Interpretation is complex ~~ archetypes are not groups
- Bad for correlations between OTUs

Partial Summary

Multinomial-based models are **good** at

- modeling **compositions**;
- modeling **dispersion** around average compositions;
- modeling **heterogeneity**;
- using (relatively) few parameters

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Multinomial models are **bad** at

- modeling **interactions** between covariates;
- accounting for **covariates**;
- Integrating datasets from **different sources** (e.g. 16S, ITS)

Outline

1 Tentative Syllabi

2 Motivation

3 Multinomial Models

4 Log-Normal Models

- Multinomial Log-Normal
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5 Applications

Modeling Correlations

Multivariate Gaussian models are the *de facto* distribution to model correlations.

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For continuous variables

- The p variables \mathbf{Y}_i (e.g. species abundances) are explained
- by the values of the d covariates \mathbf{X}_i and the p offsets \mathbf{O}_i

$$\mathbf{Y}_i = \underbrace{\mathbf{X}_i \mathbf{B}}_{\text{accounts for covariates}} + \underbrace{\mathbf{O}_i}_{\text{accounts for sampling effort}} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_i, \quad \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_i \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}_p, \underbrace{\Sigma}_{\text{dependencies between species}})$$

+ null covariance \Leftrightarrow independence \rightsquigarrow uncorrelated species do not interact

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But abundances are not gaussian...

Use a **latent variable models** with a gaussian latent layer and a count observed layer

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©cbrettre

Multinomial Log-Normal

Intuition

- The latent layer models so-called **basis abundances** \mathbf{z}

Multinomial Log-Normal

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Hierarchical Model

$$\mathbf{z} \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

Abundance basis

$$\boldsymbol{\pi} | \mathbf{z} = \left(\frac{e^{z_j}}{\sum_{j'} e^{z_{j'}}} \right)_j$$

Average composition

$$\mathbf{Y} \sim \mathcal{M}(N, \boldsymbol{\pi})$$

Observed composition

Multinomial Log-Normal

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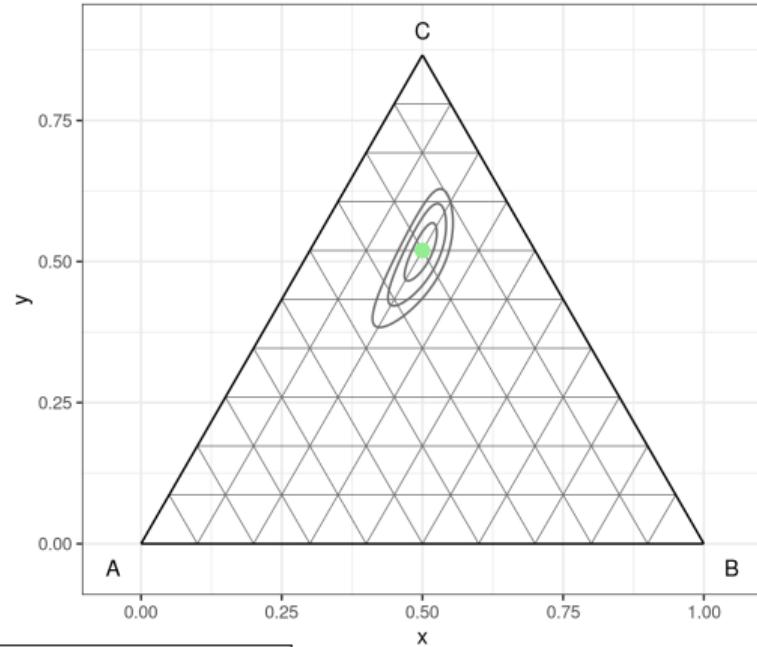
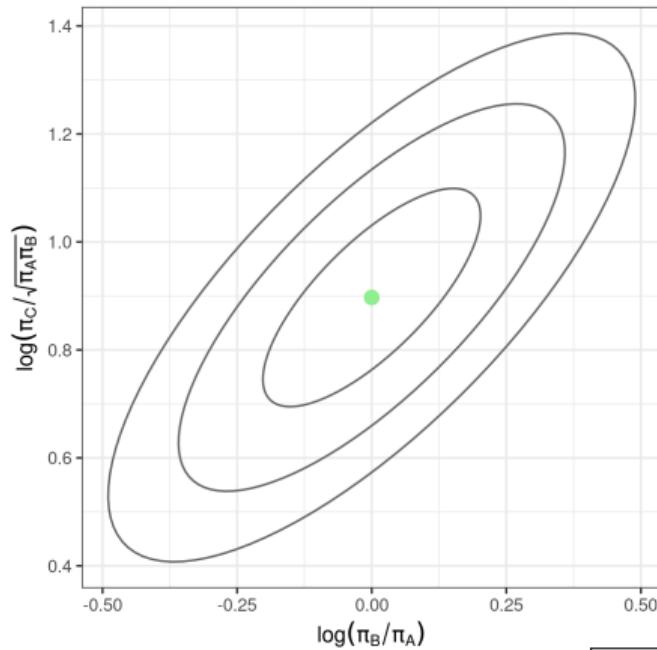
$$\mathbf{Y} \sim \mathcal{M}(N, \boldsymbol{\pi})$$

Observed composition

Mixture Layer

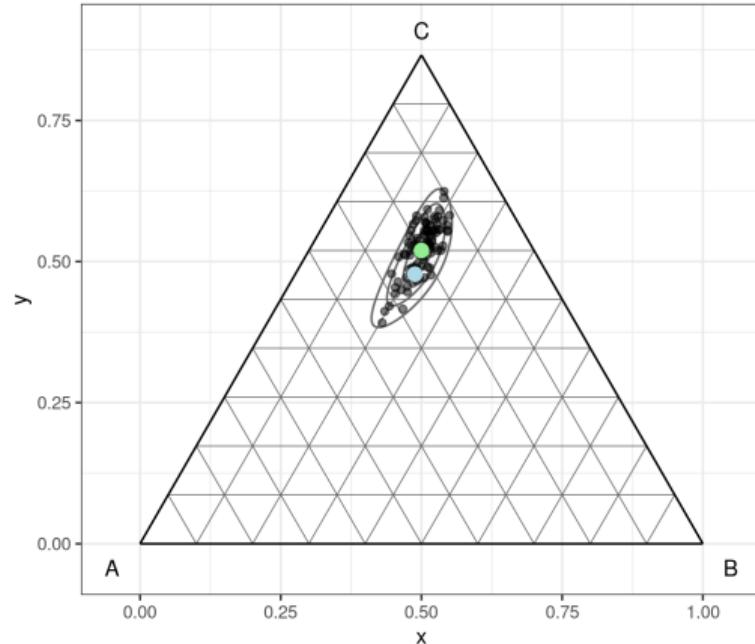
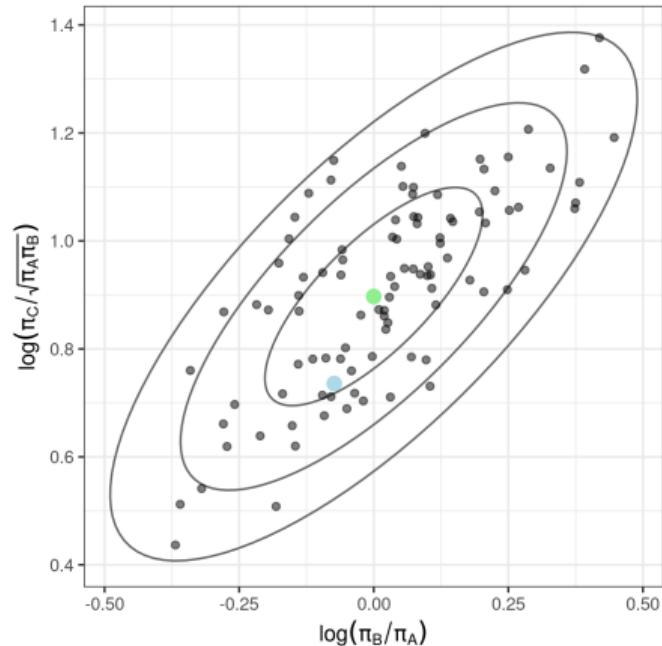
Can be combined with a mixture model

Multinomial Log-Normal



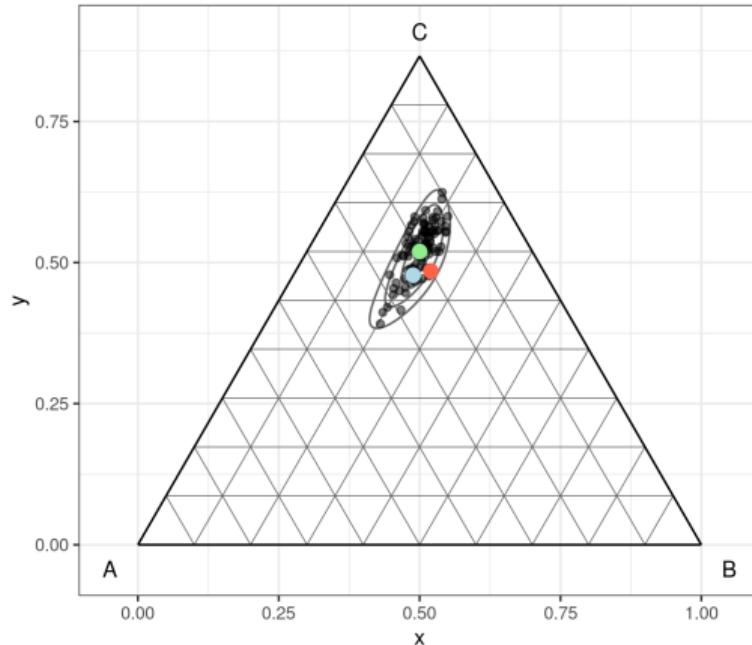
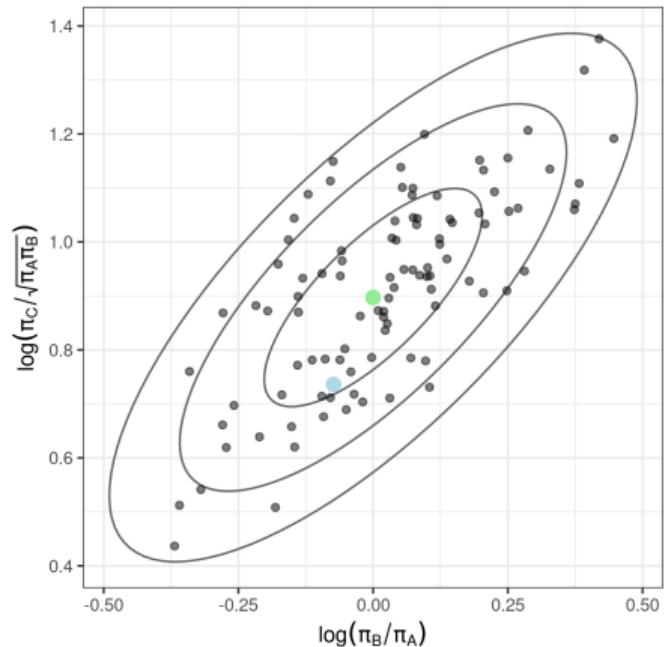
| | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | A | B | C |
| π | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |

Multinomial Log-Normal



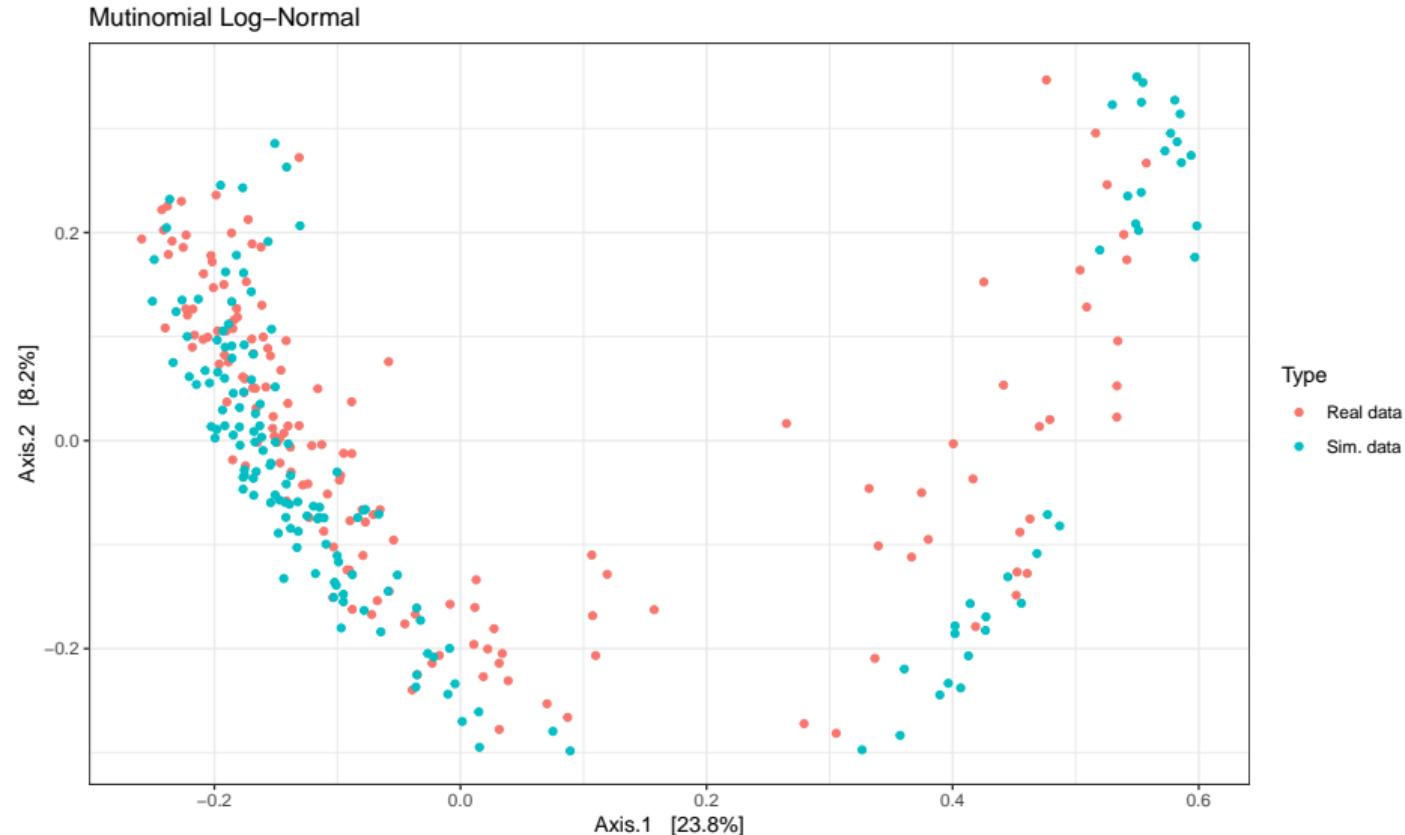
| | <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>C</i> |
|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| π | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| π_1 | 0.235 | 0.213 | 0.552 |

Multinomial Log-Normal



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|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| π | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
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| Y | 20 | 24 | 56 |

Example of Multinomial Log-Normal



Pros and Cons

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- The model is not parsimonious: $p(p + 3)/2$ parameters
- Inference is involved
 - ~~> iterative EM algorithm
- Modeling is done at the proportion level

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5 Applications



Poisson-log normal (PLN) distribution [AH89]

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Hierarchical Model

$$\mathbf{z} \sim \mathcal{N}(\boldsymbol{\mu}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})$$

Basis

$$\lambda_j | \mathbf{z} = e^{z_j}$$

Average count of species j

$$\mathbf{Y}_j | \mathbf{z} \sim \mathcal{P}(e^{z_j})$$

Observed count of species j

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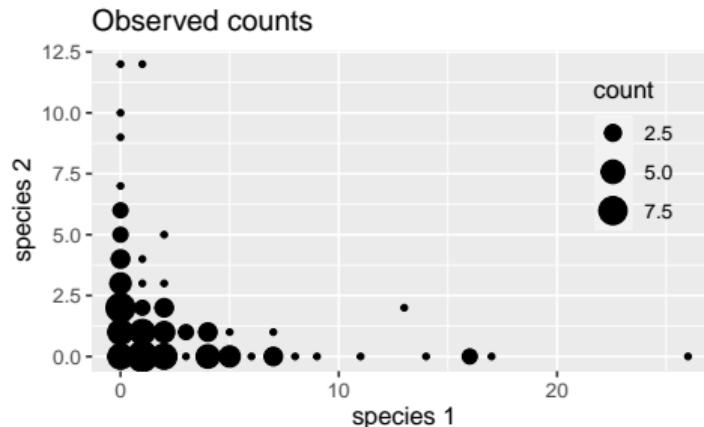
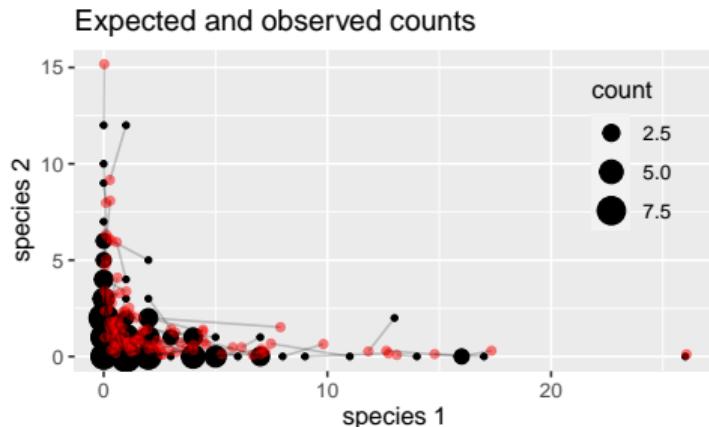
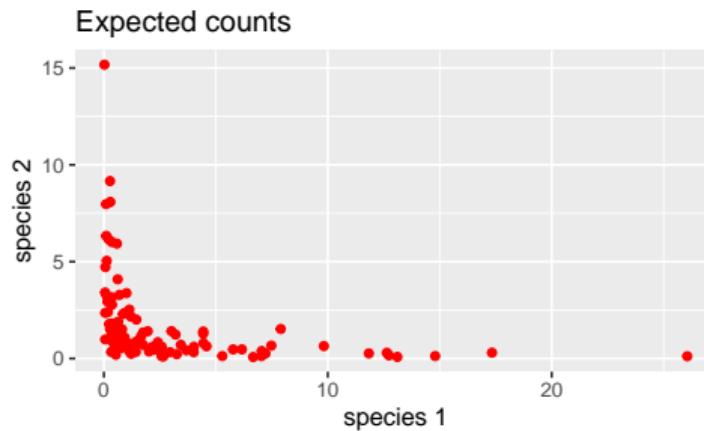
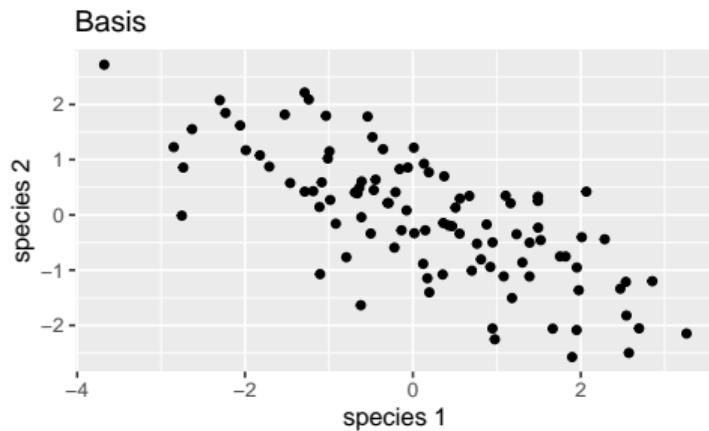
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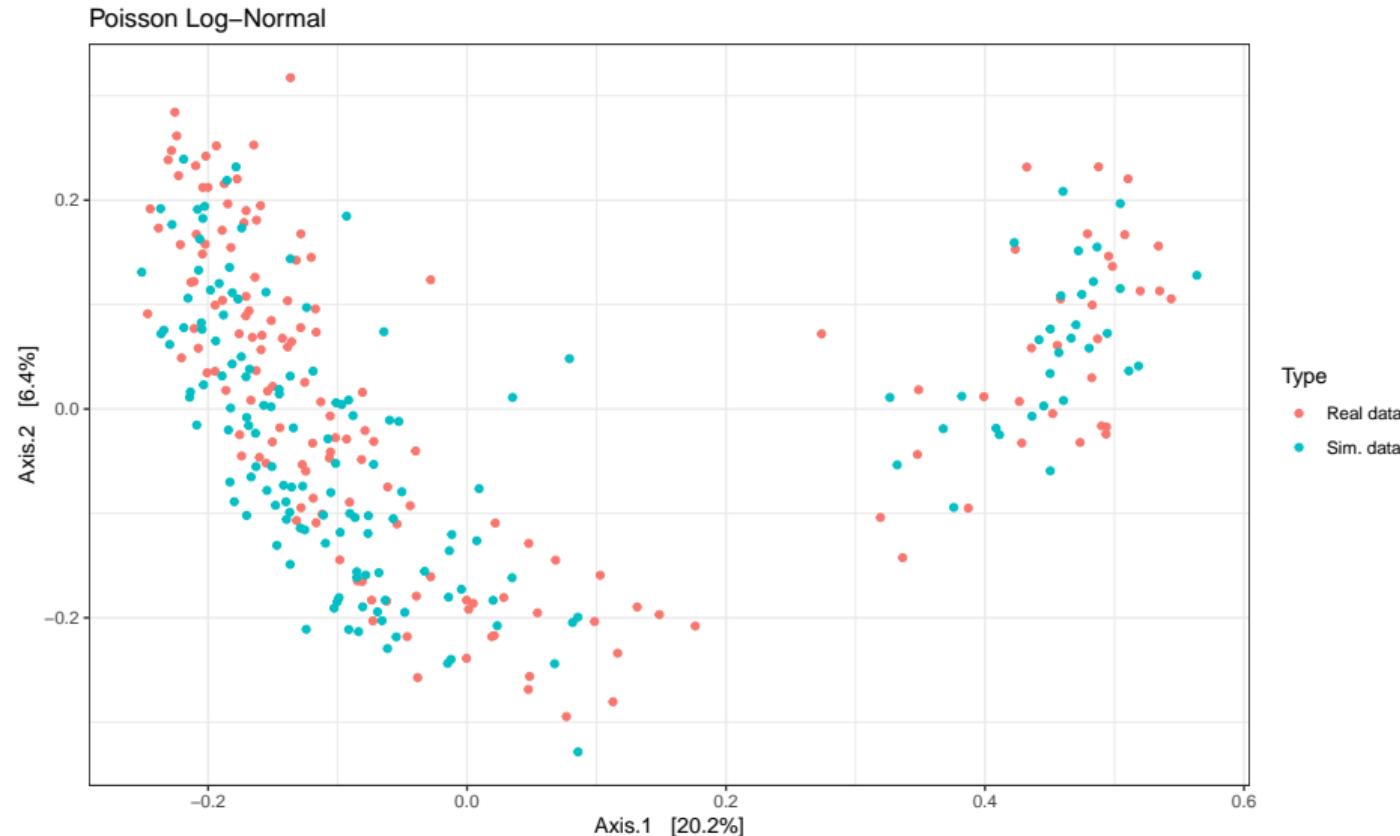
Mixture Layer

Can be combined with a mixture model

Geometrical view



Example of Poisson Log-Normal



Pros and Cons

Pros

- + Good for heterogeneity
- + Good for dispersion
- + Good for correlations between OTUs
- + Modeling done at the count level
 - ~~ counts can be on different scales and come from different sources

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- The model is not parsimonious: $p(p + 3)/2$ parameters
- Inference is quite involved
 - ~~ iterative EM algorithm + gradient descent
- Sequencing depths are only controlled on average

Partial Summary

Log-Normal models are **good** at

- modeling **compositions**;
- modeling **dispersion** around average compositions;
- modeling **heterogeneity**;
- modeling **interactions** between OTUs;
- accounting for **covariates** through the linear model.

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Log-Normal models are **bad** at

- being **parsimonious**
- MLN results are easier to interpret (proportions)
- PLN allows to mix data from **different sources** (16S, ITS, etc.)

Outline

- 1 Tentative Syllabi
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- 5 Applications
 - PCA
 - Linear Discriminant Analysis

PLN model in Microbial Ecology

PLN: a flexible models accounting for:

- Heterogeneity and average compositions (\simeq first order moments)
- Dispersion and correlation between OTUs (\simeq second order moments)
- Structuring covariates
- Counts coming from different data sources

PLN model in Microbial Ecology

PLN: a flexible models accounting for:

- Heterogeneity and average compositions (\simeq first order moments)
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Allows for *traditional* multivariate analysis:

Idea: put additional constraints in the model

- PCA \rightsquigarrow small rank Σ
- Linear Discriminant Analysis \rightsquigarrow known group structure on μ
- Network Inference \rightsquigarrow sparse/tree-like Σ^{-1}
- Mixture Models \rightsquigarrow unknown group structure on μ
- etc.

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PLN-PCA: summarize information

Dimension reduction and visualization. Typical task in multivariate analysis

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{Z}_i \text{ iid } &\sim \mathcal{N}_p(\mathbf{0}_p, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}), & \text{rank}(\boldsymbol{\Sigma}) = q \ll p \\ \mathbf{Y}_i | \mathbf{Z}_i &\sim \mathcal{P}(\exp\{\mathbf{O}_i + \mathbf{X}_i\boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{Z}_i\})\end{aligned}$$

→ Find a low-dimensional base (PCA axes) to represent the latent covariance

Fit the PLNPCA models with offsets and various covariates.

```
Qmax = 30; Q <- 1:Qmax;

## Model with offset
models.offset <- PLNPCA(counts ~ 1 + offset(log(offsets)), ranks=Q)

## Models with offset and covariates (tree + orientation)
formula <- counts ~ 1 + covariates$tree + covariates$orientation + offset(log(offsets))
models.tree.orientation <- PLNPCA(formula, ranks=Q) # approx 10 mn
```

PCA: vizualization

PLN PCA separates well the kind of tree

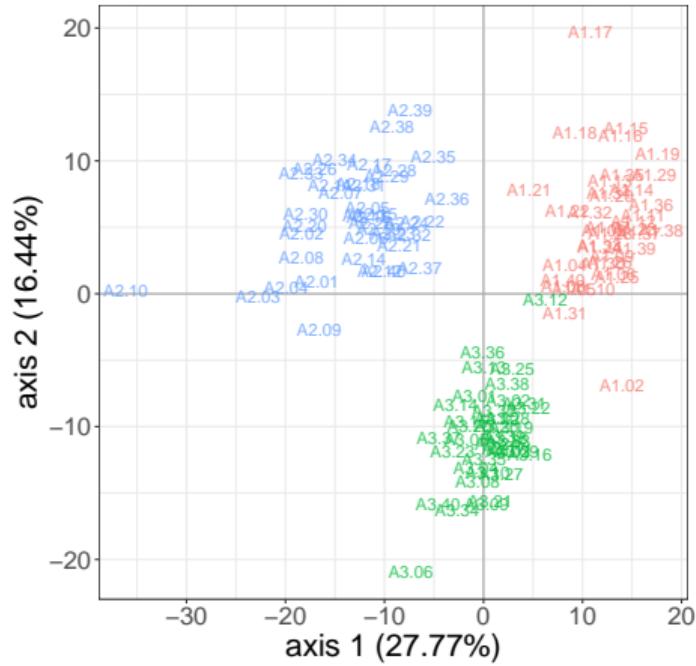
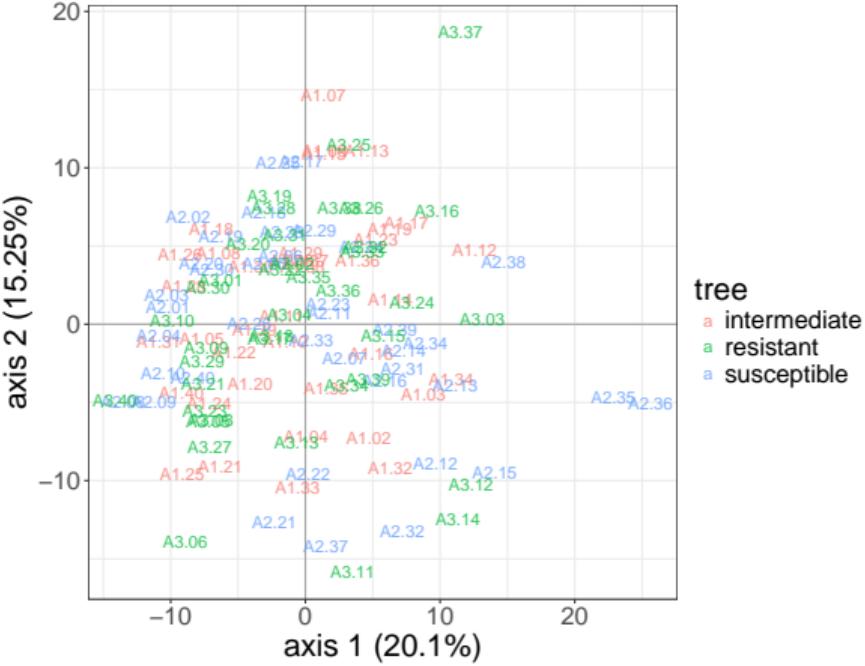


Figure: offset only



offset + covariates

PCA: visualization II

Introduction of covariates unravels hidden patterns

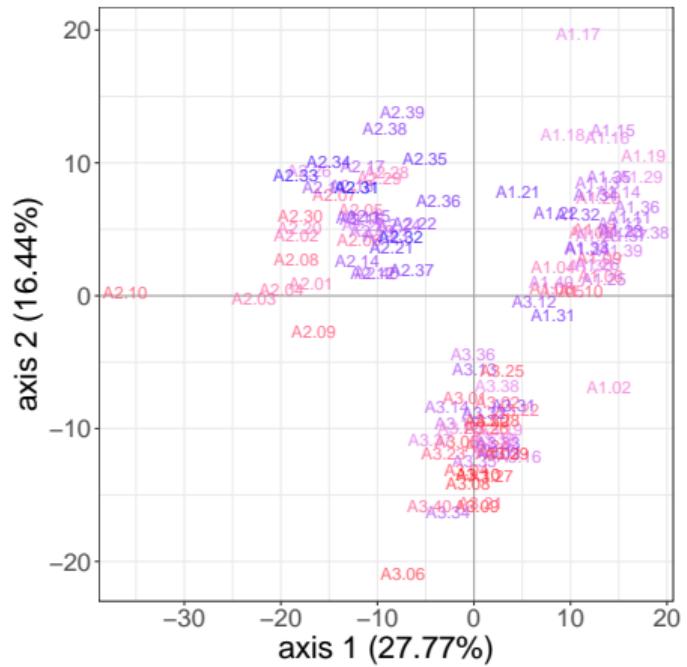
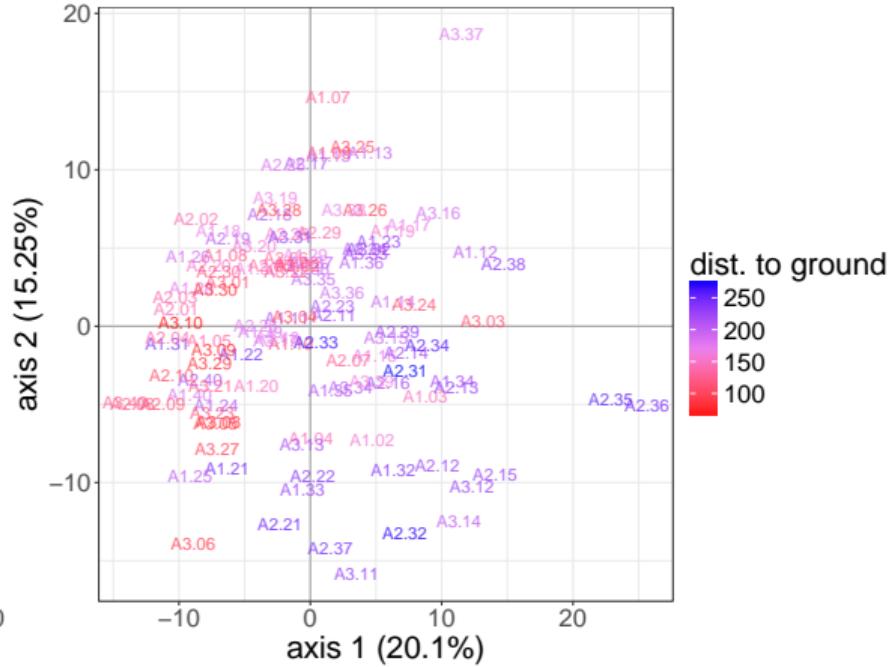


Figure: offset only



offset + covariates

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Fit the PLNLDA models

find the linear combination that separates the grouping

Fit the model with offsets, and various covariates

```
myLDA_tree <- PLNLDA(Abundance ~ offset(log(Offset)), grouping = tree, data = oaks)

##
## Performing discriminant Analysis...
## DONE!

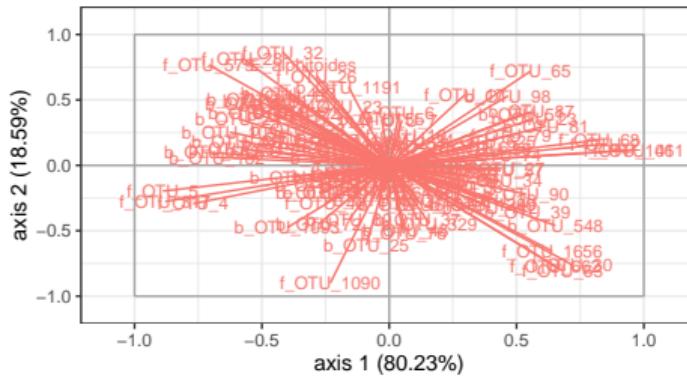
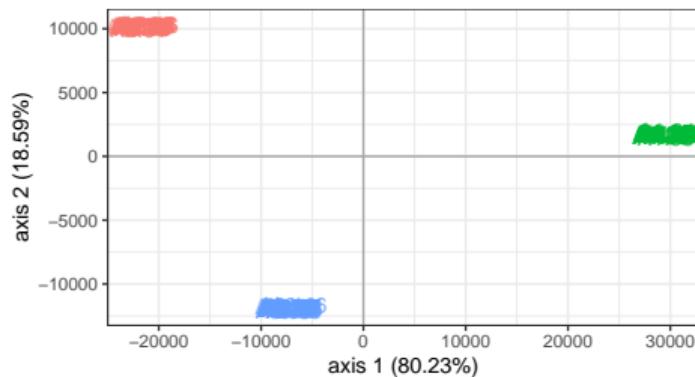
myLDA_tree$plot_LDA()
```

LDA on tree status

Axes contribution

axis 1 : 80.23%

axis 2 : 18.59%



classification

a susceptible

a intermediate

a resistant

Prediction error (10 fold cross-validation)

| | susceptible | intermediate | resistant |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| intermediate | 0 | 38 | 0 |
| resistant | 0 | 0 | 39 |
| susceptible | 39 | 0 | 0 |

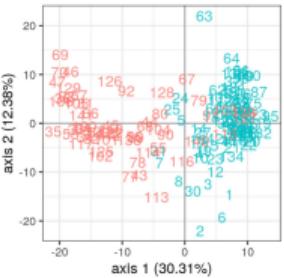
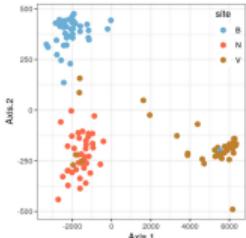
Conclusion

Summary PLN = generic model for multivariate counts

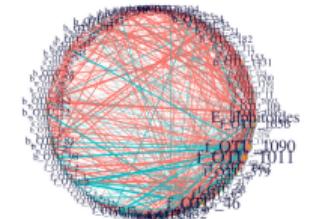
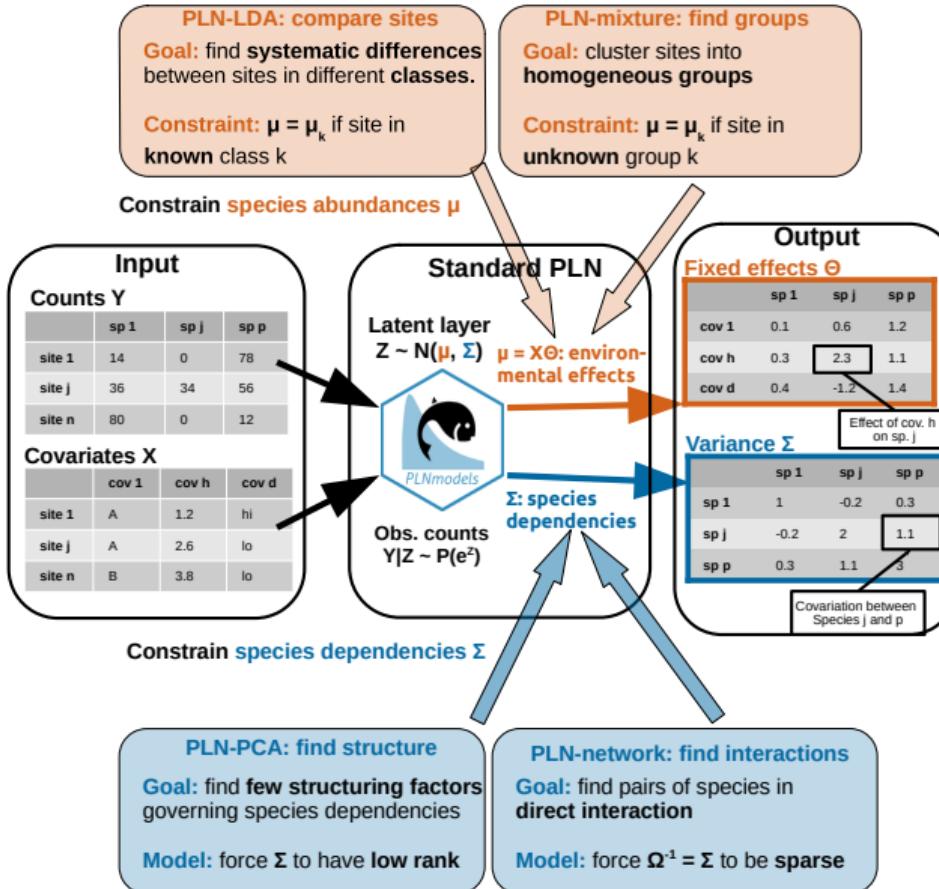
- Corrects for covariates and offset (\simeq sequencing depths)
- Flexible statistical modeling
- PLNmodels R-package

Additional extensions

- Add technical/biological "zeros" (zero-inflation)
- Extensions: sparse PCA, mixture models
- Confidence interval and tests
- Missing data...



Work with N. Peyrard and M.-J. Cros



Work with C. Vacher

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