

CEE 616: Probabilistic Machine Learning
M5 Unsupervised Learning:
L5c: Clustering

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College of Engineering

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Outline

- ① Introduction
- ② Similarity measures
- ③ K-means clustering
- ④ Mixture models
- ⑤ Hierarchical clustering
- ⑥ DBSCAN
- ⑦ Silhouette
- ⑧ Summary

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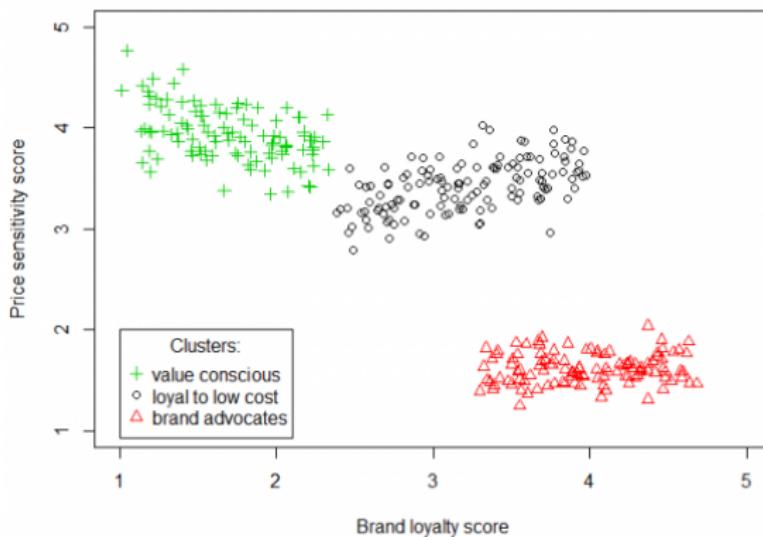
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Similarity Measures

- How similar are two observations?
 - Geographical distance
 - Vehicle color
 - Vehicle type
 - Vehicle brand
 - Engine type
 - Engine power
 - ...



Figure: Vehicles as items for cluster analysis

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$$d(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_k) = \left[\sum_{j=1}^p |x_{ij} - x_{kj}|^m \right]^{1/m} \quad (3)$$

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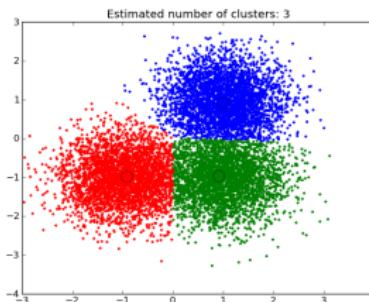
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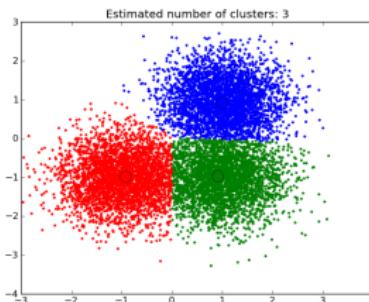
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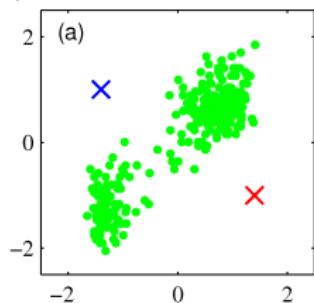
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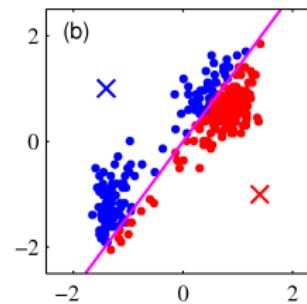
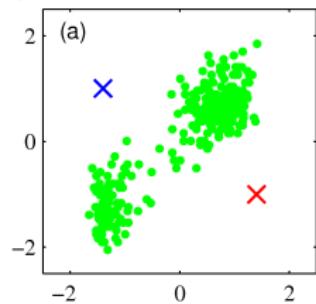
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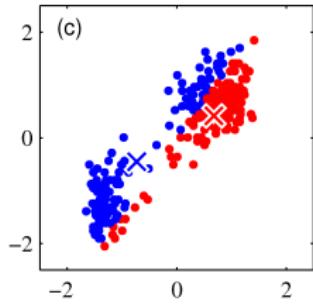
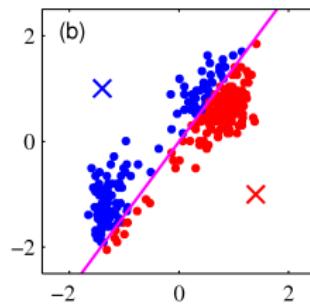
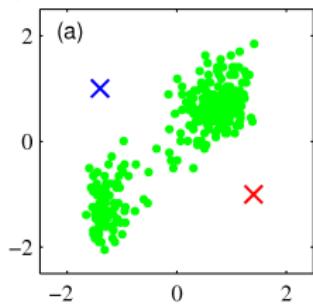
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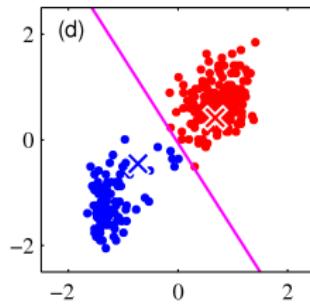
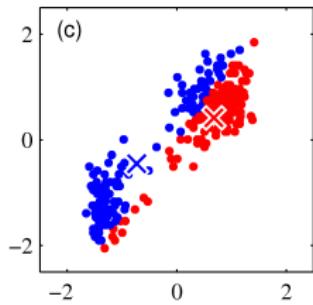
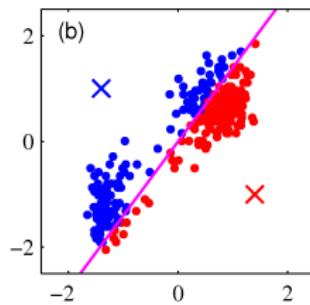
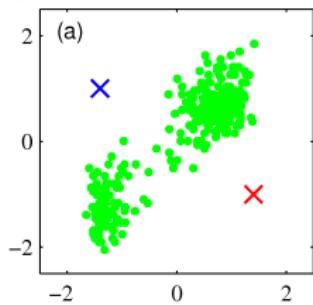
$$\min \sum_{k=1}^K \frac{1}{|C_k|} \sum_{x \in C_k} d(x, \bar{x}_k)^2$$



Source: Christopher M. Bishop, *Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning*

K-means Clustering: Illustration (a) - (d)

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K-means Clustering: Illustration (e) - (h)

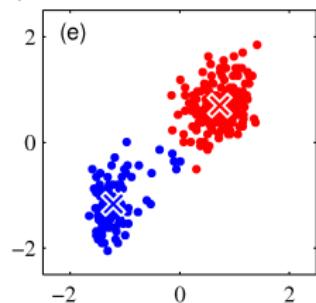
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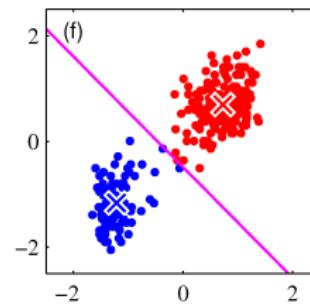
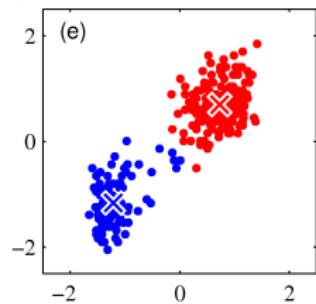
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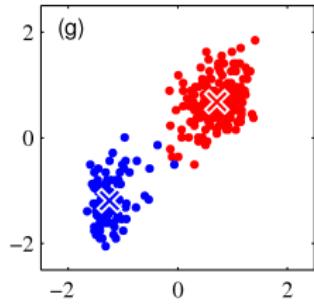
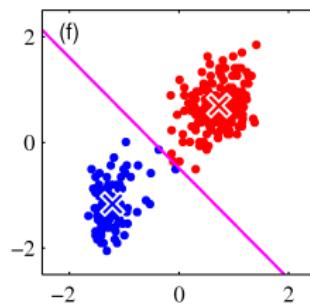
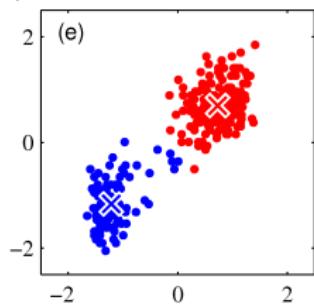
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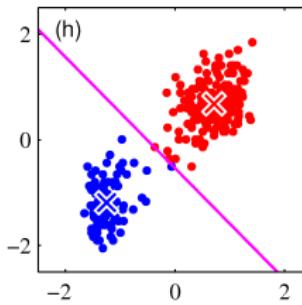
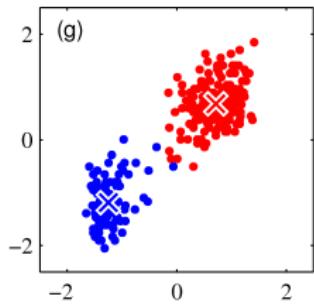
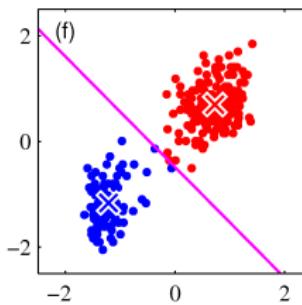
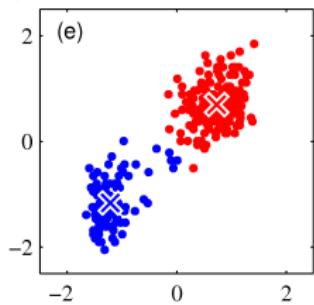
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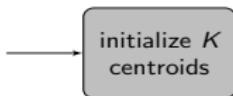
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K-means Clustering: Algorithm

K-means Clustering: Algorithm

initialize K
centroids

K-means Clustering: Algorithm



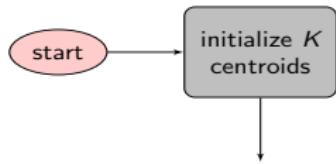
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- The W at convergence depends on the initial centroids chosen (local minimum).

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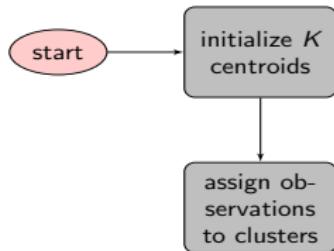
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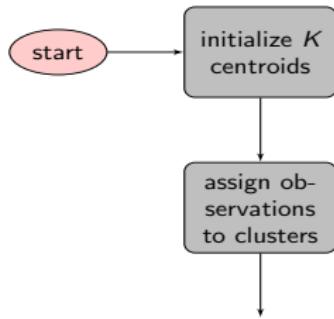
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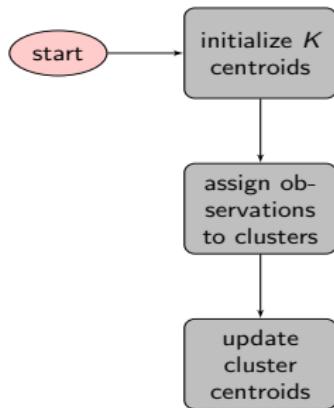
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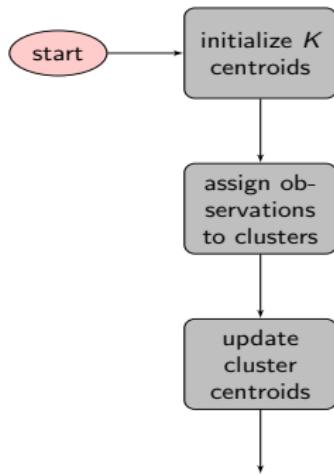
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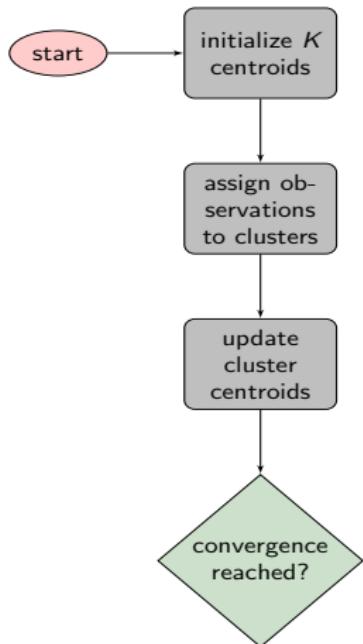
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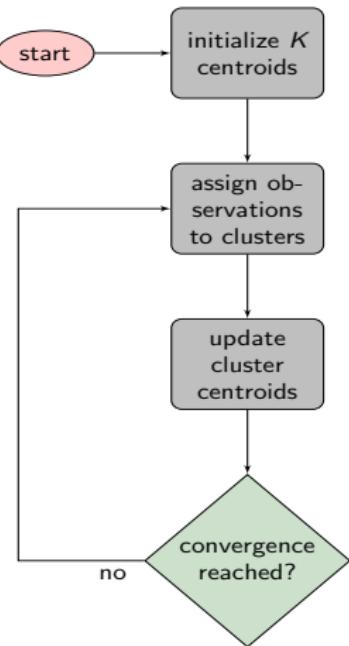
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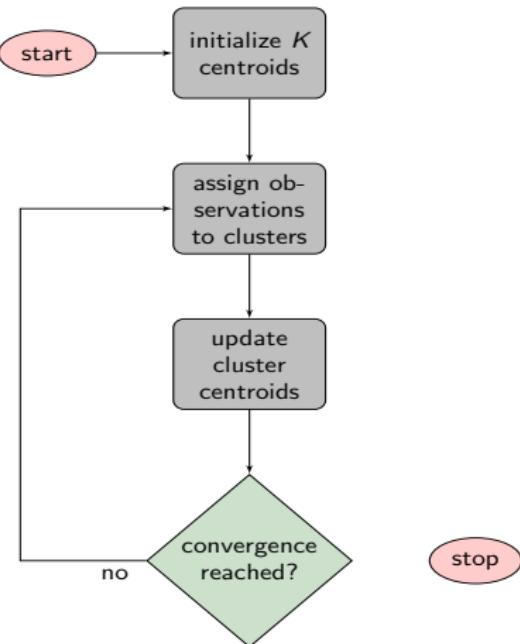
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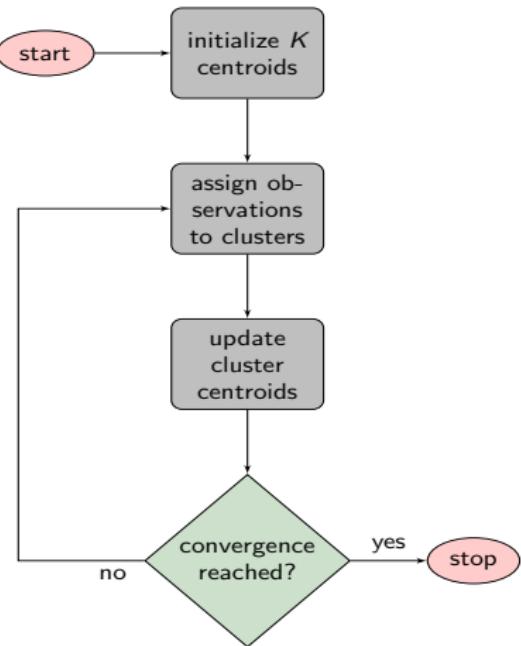
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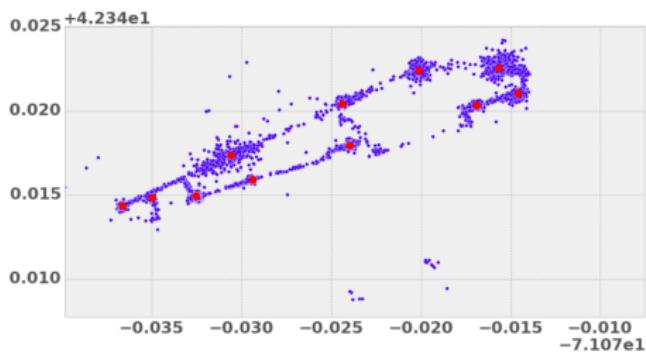
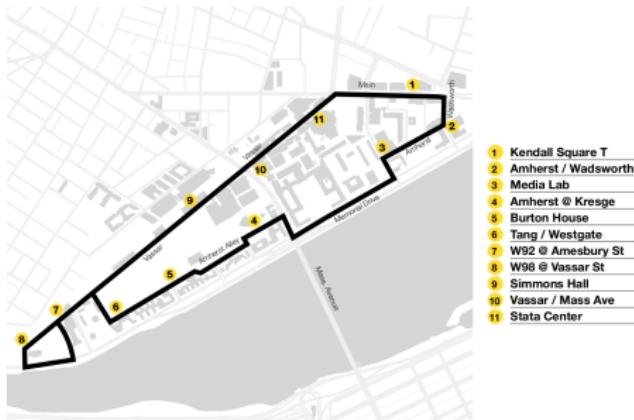
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KMeans example: MIT tech shuttle



Purple dots: GPS points from buses; Red dots: centroids

Jimi Oke (UMass Amherst)

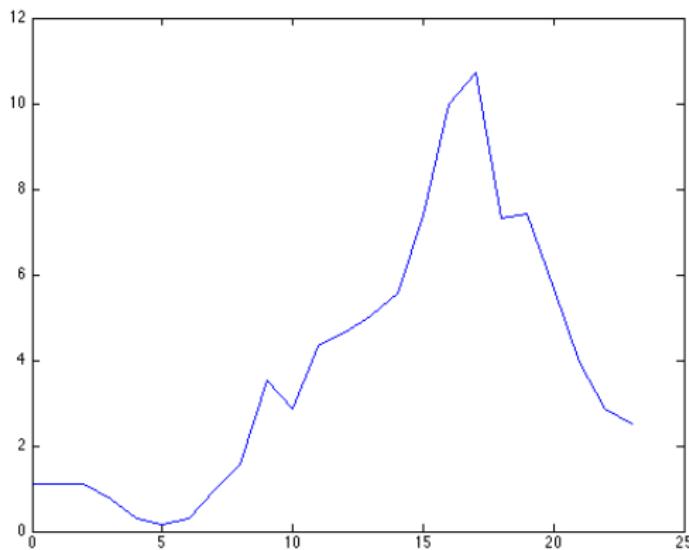
L5c: Clustering

Tue, Dec 9, 2025

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Clustering Hubway rentals

- Comparing patterns
- Challenge: group stations according to similar demand patterns



Clustering Hubway rentals

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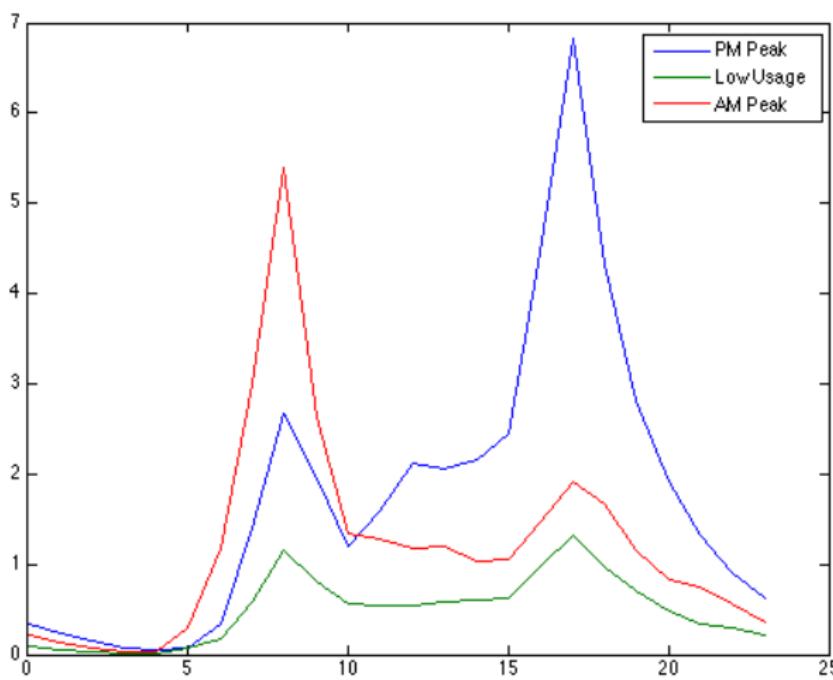
- Month of November 2013

Clustering Hubway rentals

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- Consider weekdays only

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Clustering Hubway rentals (cont.)

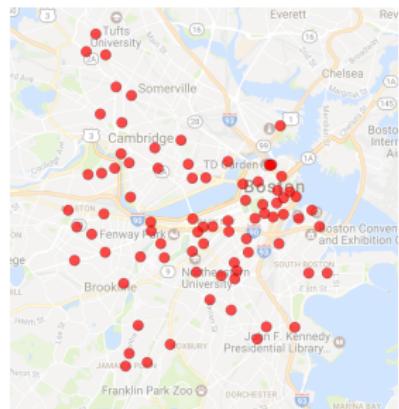
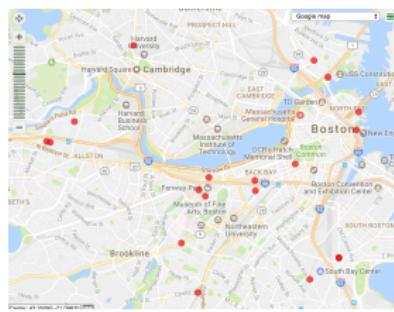
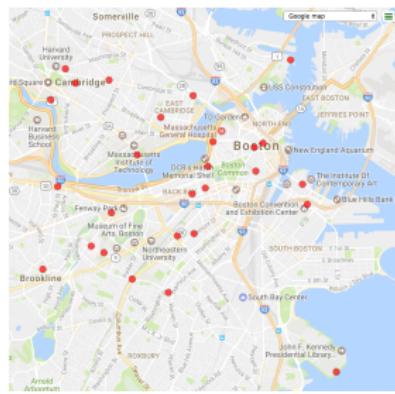


Figure: AM Peak, PM Peak, Low Usage docks

Choice of K

Which K would you choose?

- Having to pre-specify K is one limitation of the K -means approach

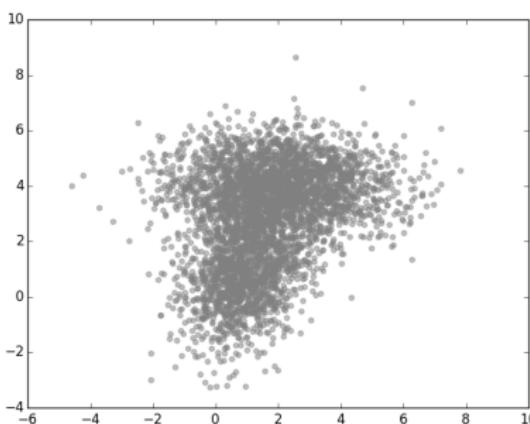
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- However, several statistics can be used to choose the best K , e.g. gap statistic (Tibshirani et al., 2001; ESL p. 519)
- An alternative is hierarchical [agglomerative] clustering (HAC), which gives a tree-based representation of the dataset

Mixture models for clustering

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where $N_k = \sum_{i=1}^N r_{ik}$ is the effective number of points assigned to cluster k .

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- Ultimately,

$$\boldsymbol{\mu}_k = \frac{1}{N_k} \sum_{i=1}^N r_{ik} \mathbf{x}_i \quad (10)$$

where $r_{ik} \in \{0, 1\}$ indicates hard assignment of point i to cluster k .

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$$D(U, V) = \frac{d(S, V) + d(T, V)}{2}, \quad U = S \cup T \quad (12)$$

- Single linkage method

$$D(U, V) = \min d(u_i, v_j) \quad (13)$$

- Complete linkage method

$$D(U, V) = \max d(u_i, v_j) \quad (14)$$

- Ward's method

$$D(U, V) = \frac{|U| \cdot |V|}{|U| + |V|} \|\bar{u}_i - \bar{v}_j\|^2 \quad (15)$$

Hierarchical Clustering: Linkage

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- **Single linkage:**

minimum distance or nearest neighbor (2 closest border points)

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Hierarchical Clustering: Linkage

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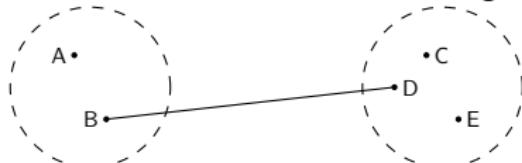
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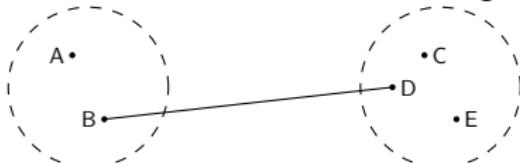
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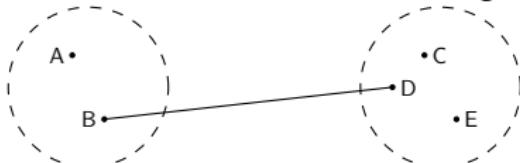
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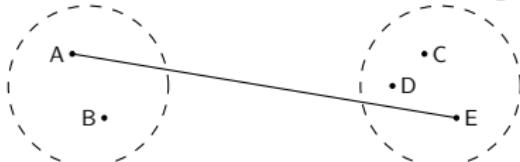
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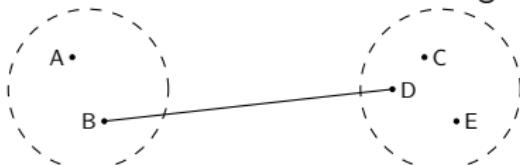
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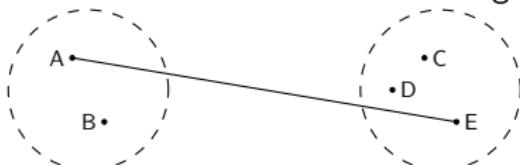
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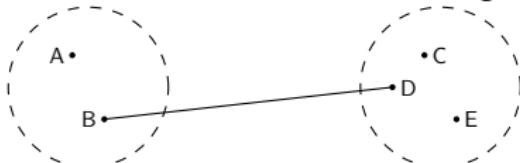
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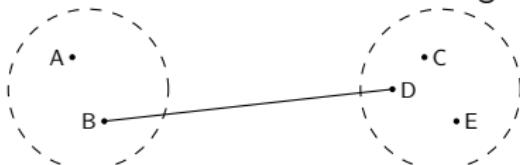
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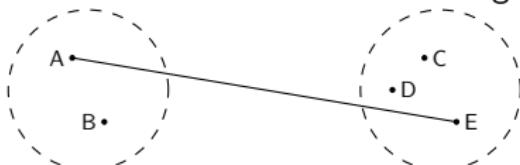
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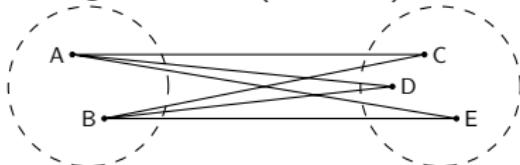
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Agglomerative clustering algorithm

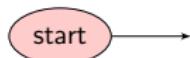
Agglomerative clustering algorithm

Example:

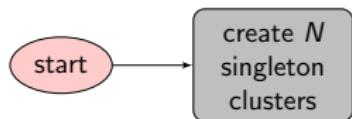


Agglomerative clustering algorithm

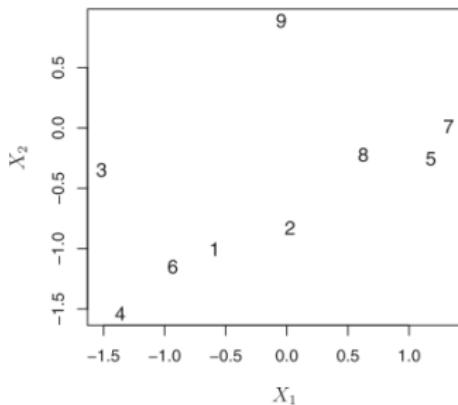
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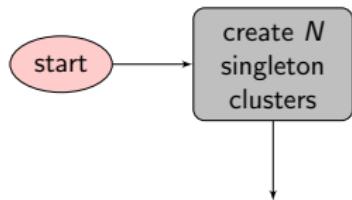
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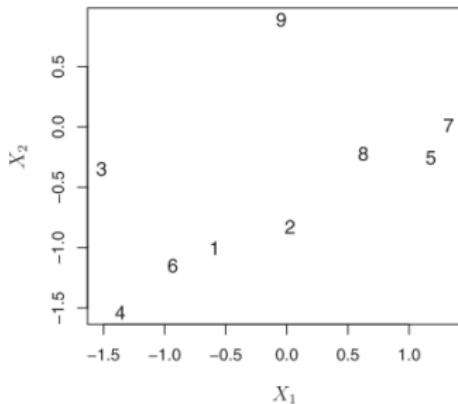
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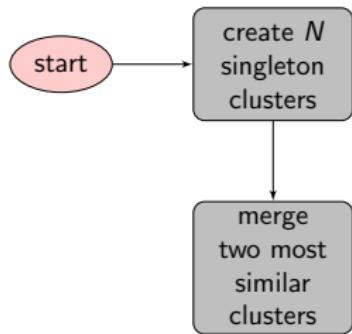
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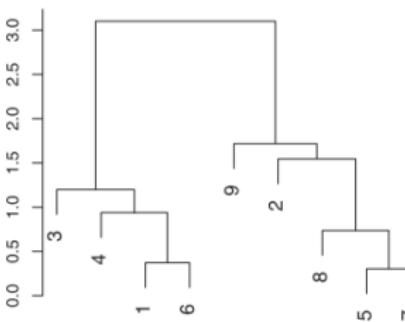
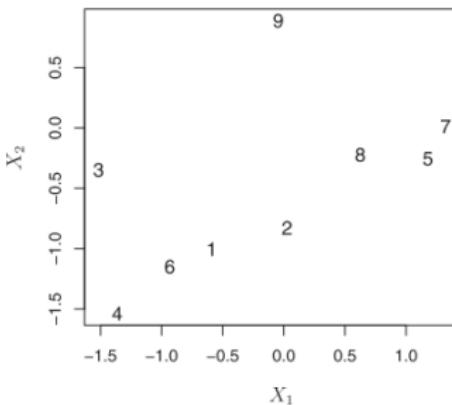
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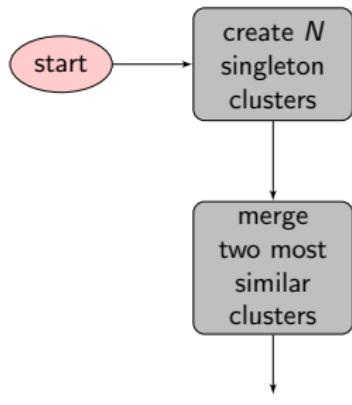
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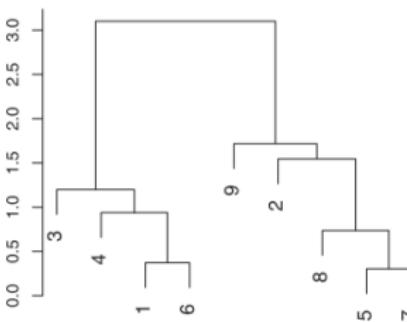
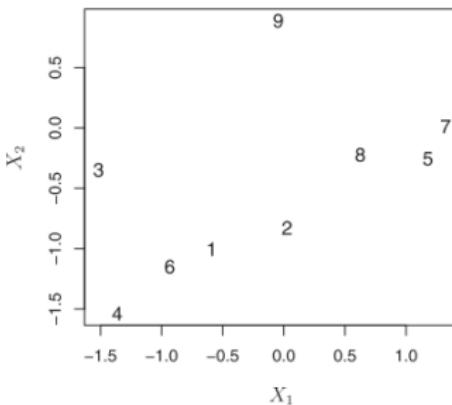
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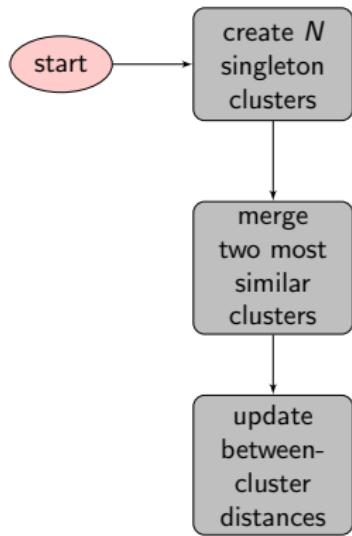
Agglomerative clustering algorithm



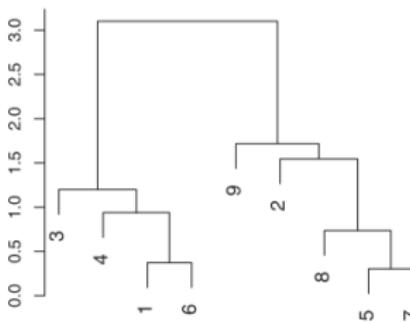
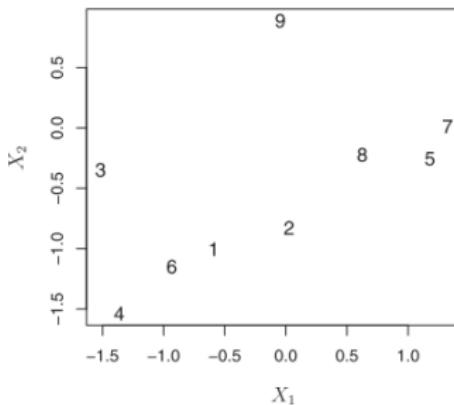
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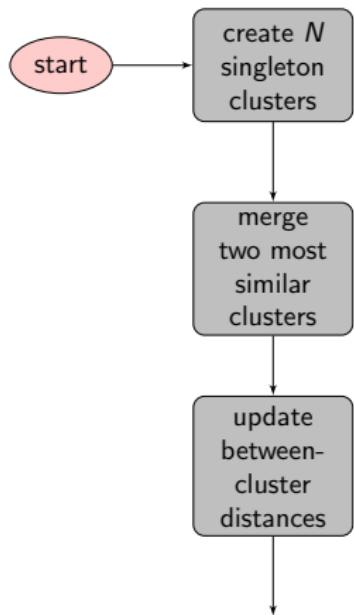
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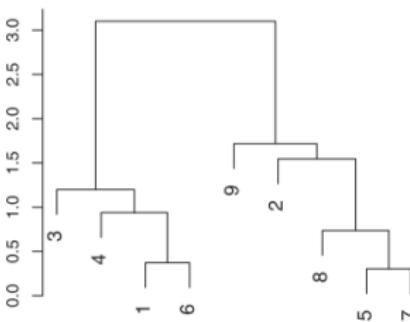
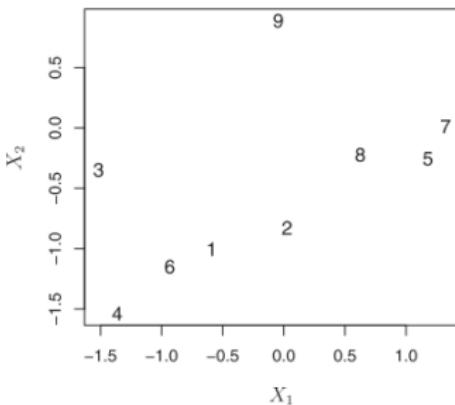
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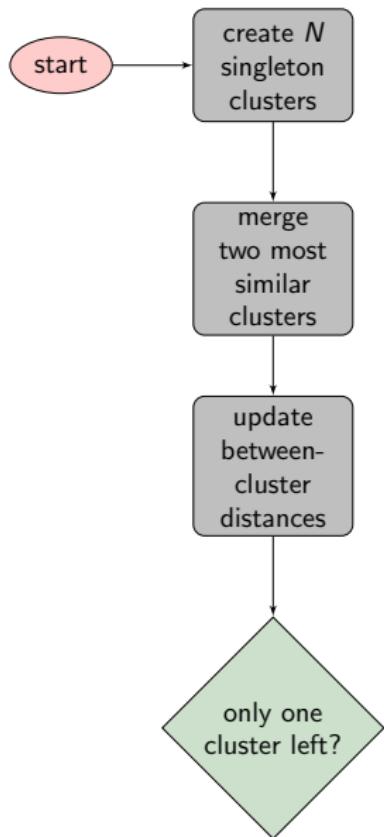
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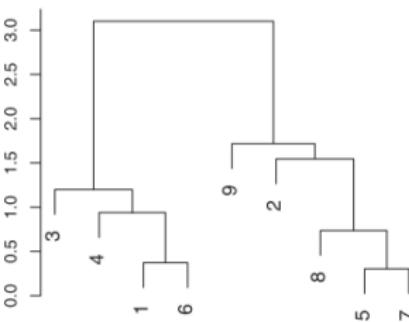
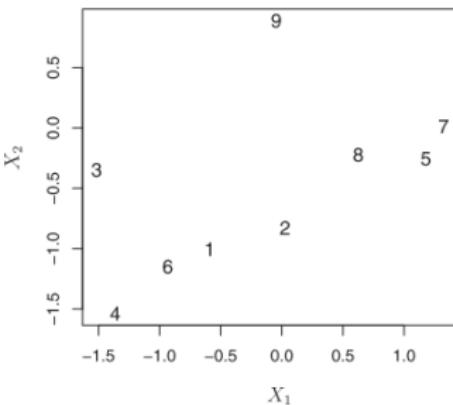
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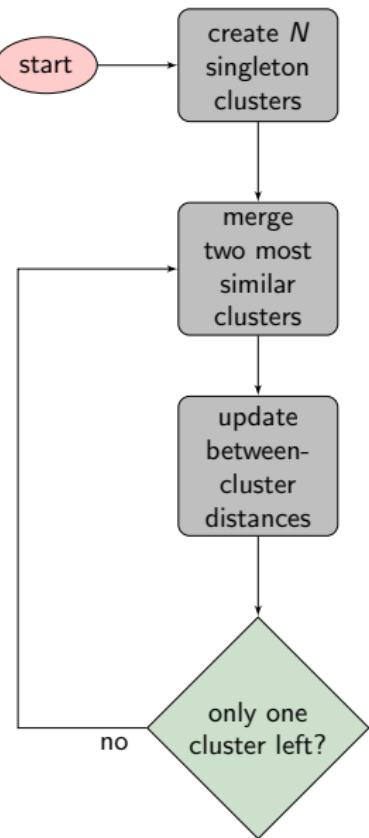
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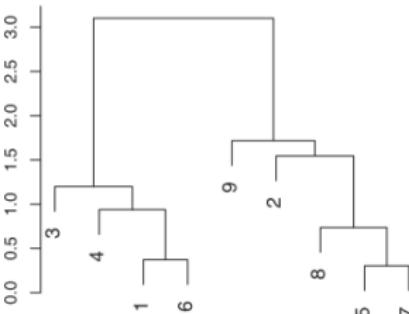
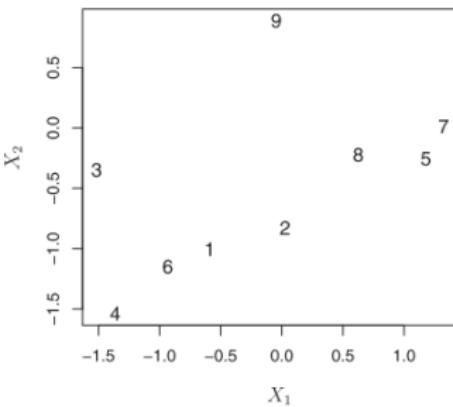
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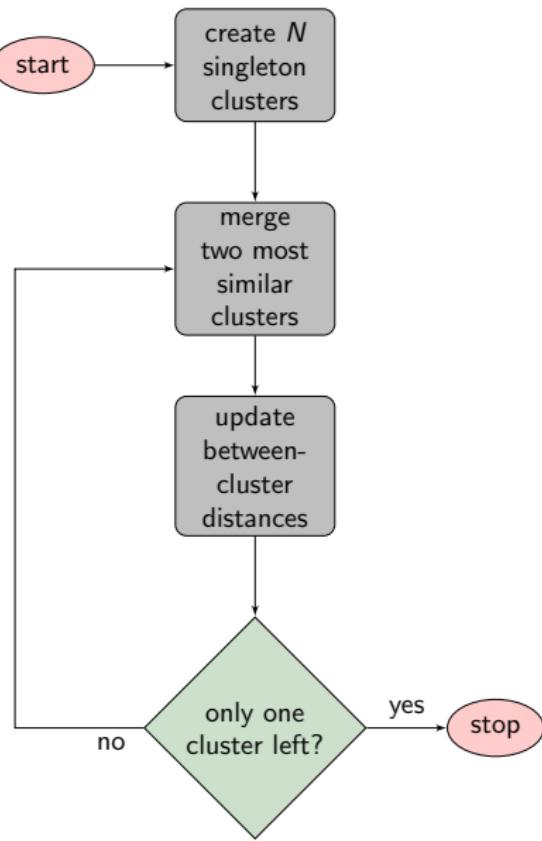
Agglomerative clustering algorithm



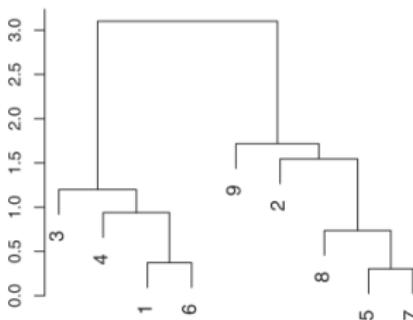
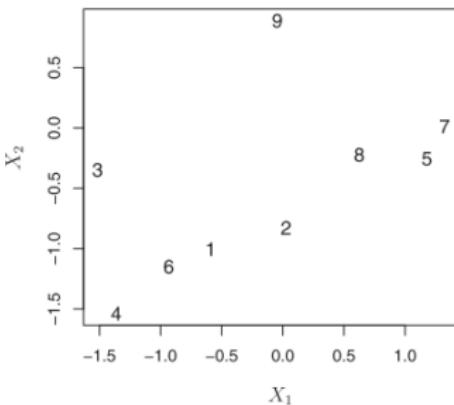
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Agglomerative clustering algorithm

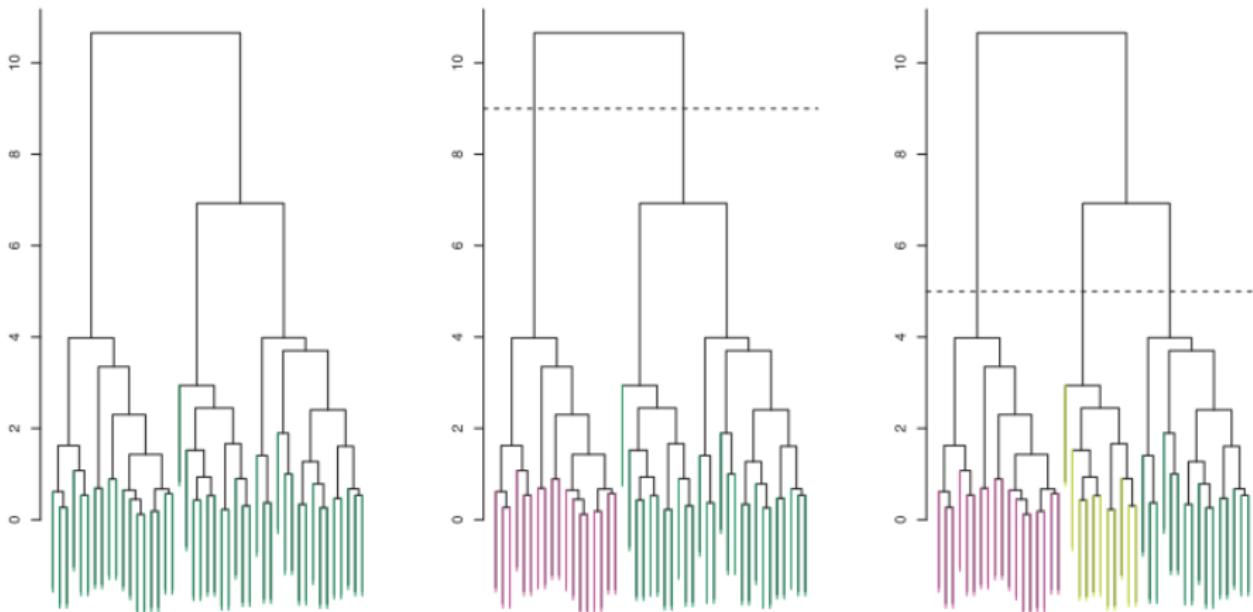


Example:



Choosing the clusters

We decide a **Cut**



Source: James et Al., Introduction to Statistical Learning

Practical Considerations

Advantages

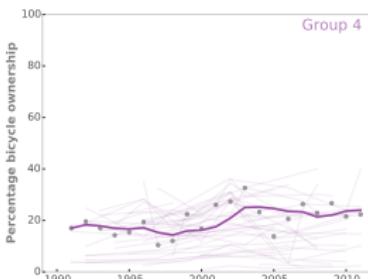
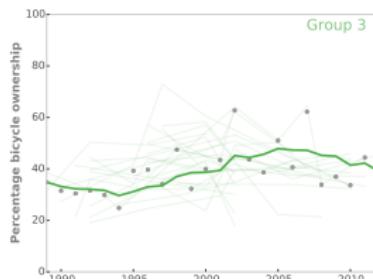
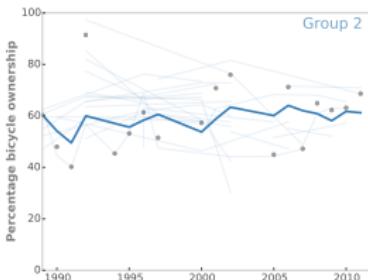
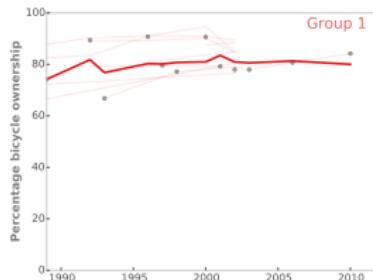
- No apriori number of clusters required
- Simple algorithms
- Self-organized structural view of data

Disadvantages

- Dendrogram often difficult to visualize
- Sometimes the inherent clusters in our data are not hierarchical by nature
(K-means performs better in these cases)

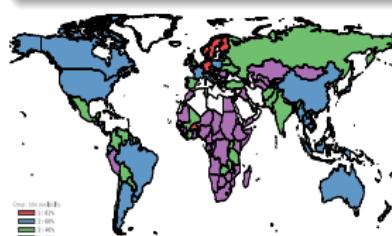
HAC example: Bicycle ownership trends

Pattern discovery from survey data in 150 countries spanning 30 years ¹



Key findings

- To cluster time-series data of varying lengths, the dynamic time warping (DTW) algorithm can be used to compute the dissimilarity matrix



¹Oke et al., 2015

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214140515006787>

Density-based clustering

Density-based clustering approaches are based on these hypotheses:

- Clusters are dense spatial regions
- Clusters are separated by low-density regions
- The density of points in a cluster are greater than a given minimum

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Examples of density-based clustering algorithms:

- DBSCAN
- OPTICS

Density-based spatial clustering of applications with noise

²<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.121.9220>

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Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep34406>

Figure: Example of clusters generated by DBSCAN on a dataset

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Similarity measures
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K-means clustering
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Mixture models
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Hierarchical clustering
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DBSCAN
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Silhouette
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Summary
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DBSCAN: key definitions

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- Epsilon neighborhood, N_ε : set of all observations within distance ε
- Core point: has at least `minPoint` observations within its N_ε
- DDR: An observation j is **directly density reachable** from a core point i if $j \in N_\varepsilon$
- DR: Two observations are **density reachable** if there exists a chain of DDR observations linking them
- Boundary/border points: these are DDR but not core points
- Noise/outlier points: do not belong to any observations N_ε

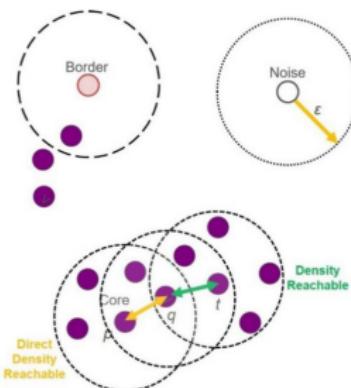
Source: Giacoumidis et al. (2019)

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3417/9/20/4398/htm>

Figure: DBSCAN example with `minpoints = 4`

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DBSCAN serial algorithm

DBSCAN serial algorithm

```
1: procedure DBSCAN( $X, \varepsilon, \text{minPoints}$ )
2:   for each unvisited point  $x \in X$  do
3:     mark  $x$  as visited
4:      $N \leftarrow \text{FINDNEIGHBORS}(x, \varepsilon)$ 
5:     if  $|N| < \text{minPoints}$  then
6:       mark  $x$  as noise
7:     else
8:        $C \leftarrow \{x\}$ 
9:     end if
10:    for each point  $x' \in N$  do
11:       $N \leftarrow N \setminus x'$ 
12:      if  $x'$  is not visited then
13:        mark  $x'$  as visited
14:         $N' \leftarrow \text{FINDNEIGHBORS}(x', \varepsilon)$ 
15:        if  $|N'| \geq \text{minPoints}$  then
16:           $N \leftarrow N \cup N'$ 
17:        end if
18:      end if
19:      if  $x'$  is not yet a member of any cluster then
20:         $C \leftarrow C \cup \{x'\}$ 
21:      end if
22:    end for
23:  end for
24: end procedure
```

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DBSCAN example: stop detection

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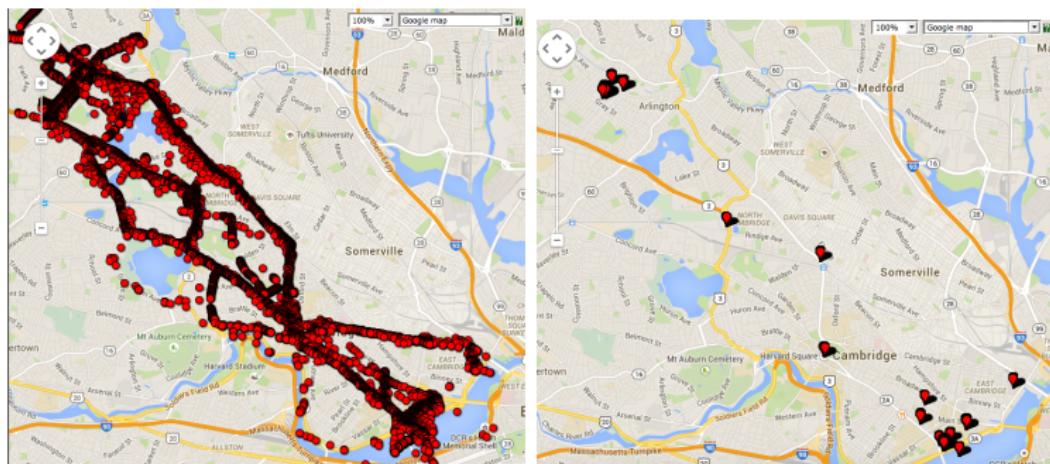
- Stop detection using smartphone data.

DBSCAN example: stop detection

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DBSCAN considerations

DBSCAN considerations

- Performs well on geographical data
- Requires careful selection of two parameters (can be computationally intensive)
- Several improvements and updates to the original DBSCAN algorithm have been made (e.g. OPTICS: “Ordering points to identify the clustering structure”)

Fitness of clustering solution

Good clustering should:

- Minimize **within-cluster** (inter-cluster) variability (**W**)
- Maximize the **silhouette** (Rousseeuw, 1987)
- Several other goodness-of-fit measures can be used:
 - Krzanowski-Lai (KL) index
 - Gap statistic (Tibshirani et al., 2001)
- We consider the silhouette metric in detail

Silhouette

- Silhouette of observation \mathbf{x}_j , $s(\mathbf{x}_j)$:

$$s(\mathbf{x}_j) = \frac{b(\mathbf{x}_j) - a(\mathbf{x}_j)}{\max\{a(\mathbf{x}_j), b(\mathbf{x}_j)\}} \quad (16)$$

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- Measures how well an observation fits a cluster

$$-1 < s(\mathbf{x}_j) < 1 \quad (17)$$

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$$-1 < s(\mathbf{x}_j) < 1 \quad (17)$$

- We want $a(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be small and $b(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be large:

$$a(\mathbf{x}_j) \ll b(\mathbf{x}_j)$$

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$$-1 < s(\mathbf{x}_j) < 1 \quad (17)$$

- We want $a(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be small and $b(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be large:

$$a(\mathbf{x}_j) \ll b(\mathbf{x}_j)$$

Silhouette

- Silhouette of observation \mathbf{x}_j , $s(\mathbf{x}_j)$:

$$s(\mathbf{x}_j) = \frac{b(\mathbf{x}_j) - a(\mathbf{x}_j)}{\max\{a(\mathbf{x}_j), b(\mathbf{x}_j)\}} \quad (16)$$

- $a(\mathbf{x}_j)$ = average distance between \mathbf{x}_j and *all* other elements of its cluster (intra-cluster distance)
- $b(\mathbf{x}_j)$ = average distance between \mathbf{x}_j and *all* elements of the second nearest cluster.
- Measures how well an observation fits a cluster

$$-1 < s(\mathbf{x}_j) < 1 \quad (17)$$

- We want $a(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be small and $b(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be large:

$$a(\mathbf{x}_j) \ll b(\mathbf{x}_j) \implies$$

Silhouette

- Silhouette of observation \mathbf{x}_j , $s(\mathbf{x}_j)$:

$$s(\mathbf{x}_j) = \frac{b(\mathbf{x}_j) - a(\mathbf{x}_j)}{\max\{a(\mathbf{x}_j), b(\mathbf{x}_j)\}} \quad (16)$$

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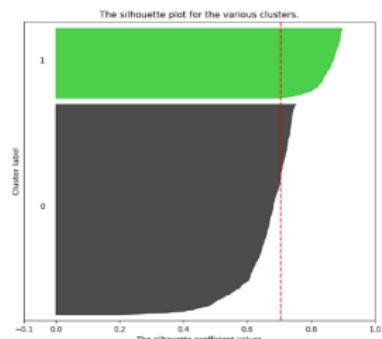
$$-1 < s(\mathbf{x}_j) < 1 \quad (17)$$

- We want $a(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be small and $b(\mathbf{x}_j)$ to be large:

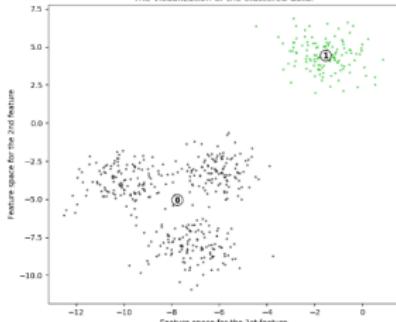
$$a(\mathbf{x}_j) \ll b(\mathbf{x}_j) \implies s(\mathbf{x}_j) \rightarrow 1 \quad (18)$$

Silhouette: visualization

Silhouette analysis for KMeans clustering on sample data with n_clusters = 2

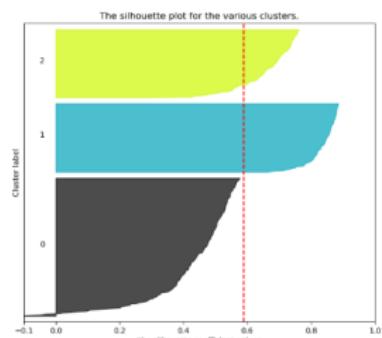


The visualization of the clustered data.

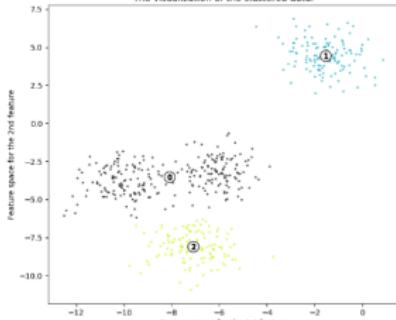


source: Scikit-learn: scikit-learn.org/stable/auto_examples/cluster/plot_kmeans_silhouette_analysis.html

Silhouette analysis for KMeans clustering on sample data with n_clusters = 3



The visualization of the clustered data.



Outlook

Outlook

- Assigned reading: ISLR 10.3, 10.4

Outlook

- Assigned reading: ISLR 10.3, 10.4
- Further recommended reading: ESL 14.3