Applying Model-Based Clustering for Analysis of Community Atmospheric Model Output

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Introduction

Modern Community atmosphere models (CAM5) run at high spatial and temporal resolution, effectively producing hundreds of terabytes of climate output. The size of these datasets impedes application of advanced statistical analysis such as model-based clustering, which can be used for extracting data features based on finite mixture models. We develop a parallel version of expectation and maximization (EM) algorithm to enable model-based clustering on such large datasets. We apply the technique to CAM5 output, isolate clusters corresponding to weather systems, and use a variety of visualization techniques to display the clusters and the correlations between selected climate variables.

Dataset

CAM5 produces about 200 terabytes of simulating weather and climate from 1979 to 2004. Data selected for clustering analysis include extreme precipitations and relevant covariates (Q, T, and OMEGA) which are high dimensional multivariate data consisting of daily averaged variables in 3D physical space.

Parallel Model-Based Clustering

The model-based clustering utilizes finite mixture modes and assumes multivariate Gaussian distributions with unstructured dispersions for each component. The model parameters are estimated by parallel EM algorithms which are implemented in a released R package `pmclust`. In order to deal with large distributed datasets, the package is designed in a single program multiple data (SPMD) programming model. Several efficient EM-like algorithms are also implemented in the package to reduce computing time and convergent iterations.

Result

We cluster data in the feature space, and display cluster areas of extreme precipitation by seasons on maps. The relevant variables associated with clusters are also illustrated on parallel coordinate plots. We determine the number of clusters by the consistence analysis based on adjusted Rand indices comparing different number of clusters and random initializations.

Reference

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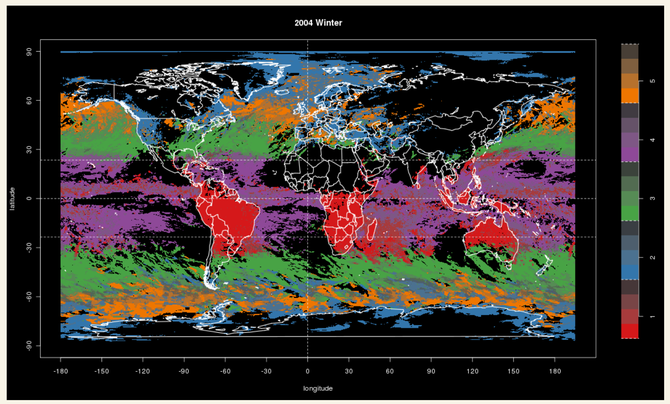

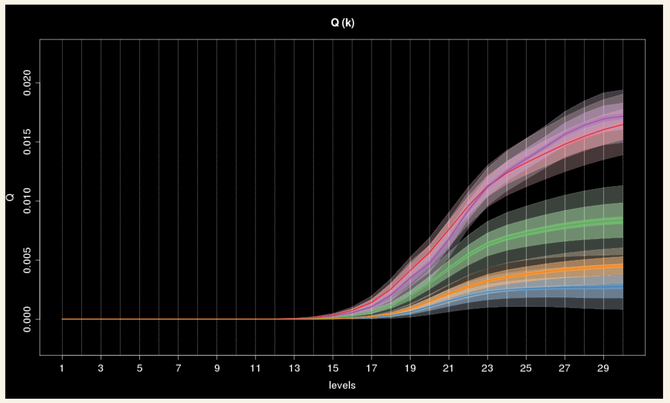

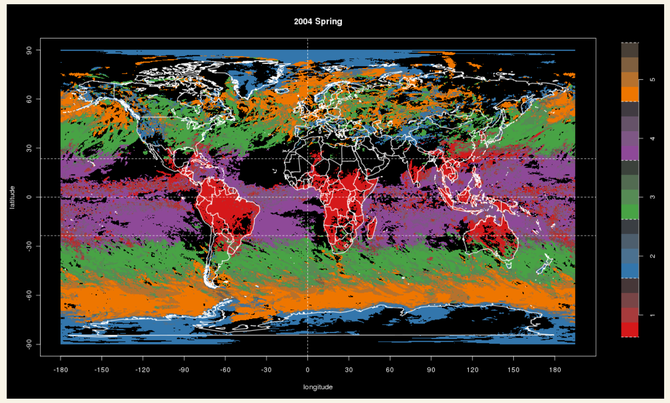

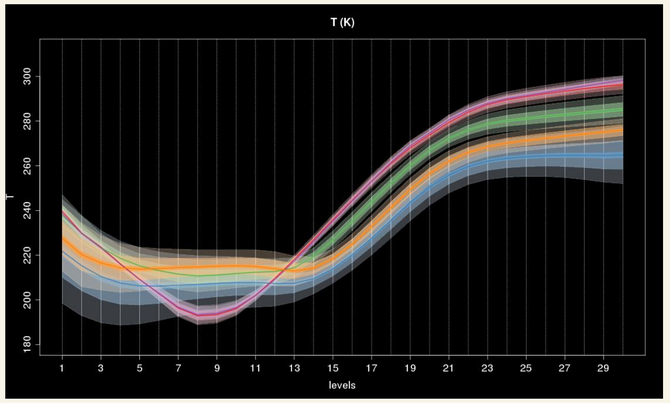

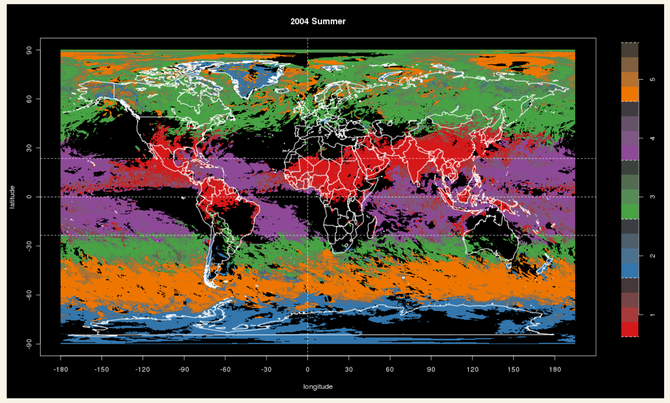

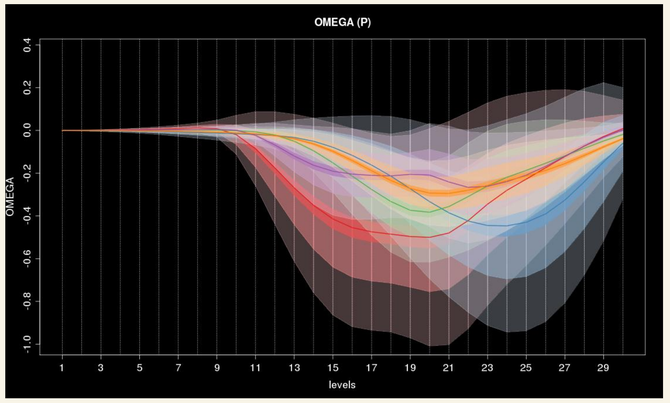

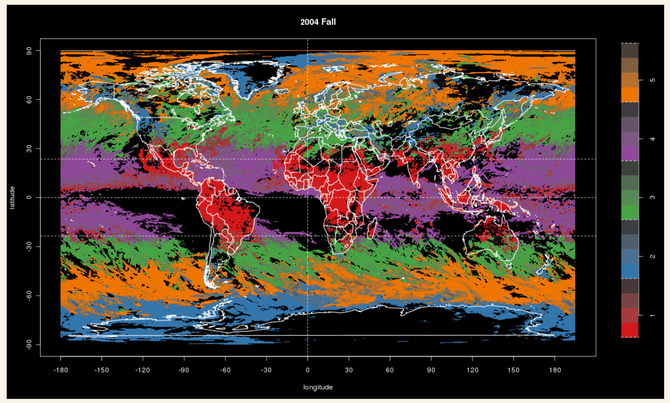

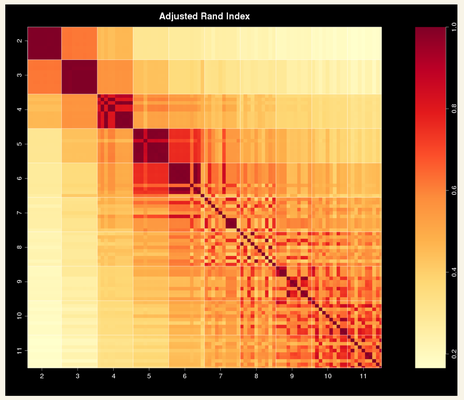

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