

# Using shape, proximity and functionality to define neighborhoods with morphologically similar buildings

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Unil | Université de Lausanne

Institut de géographie  
et durabilité



## Introduction

### Quick theoretical overview

#### Urban Morphology

#### Building shapes

### Methodology

#### Case study

#### Data used

#### Process overview

### Early results

### Conclusions

### References

# What, how, and why ?

- ▶ Trying to cluster morphologically similar buildings in an urban context
- ▶ Using features derived from simple building representations
- ▶ Clustering using a geo-constrained Self-Organizing Map (geo-SOM)
- ▶ Find (in-)homogeneous places in cities, compare internal morphologies of cities, etc.

# Approaches

Literally the *study of urban form*, with several approaches (Kropf, 2017)

- ▶ Typo-morphological (evolution of building types)
- ▶ Configurational (topological relations, influence of spatial configuration)
- ▶ Historico-geographical (townplan study, hierarchy of elements)
- ▶ Spatial analytical (complex systems, physical and socio-economical dynamics)

## Similar works

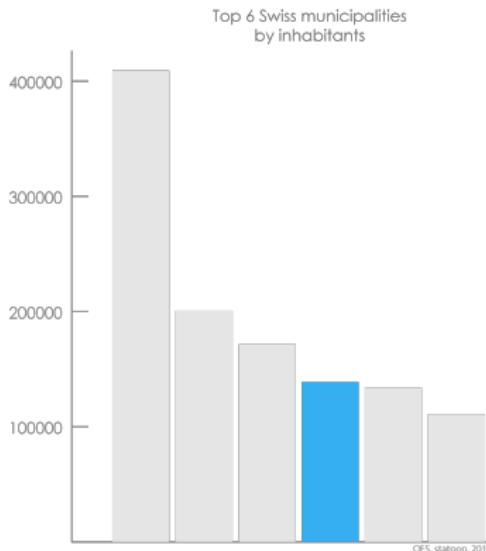
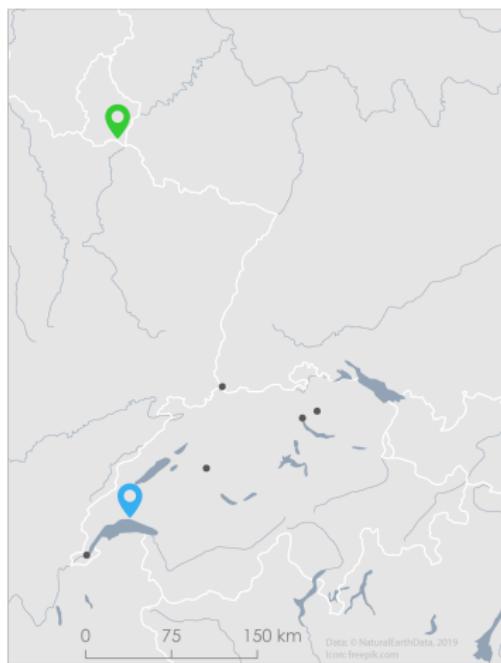
- ▶ Schirmer and Axhausen (2015;2019) proposed a set of features at multiple scales on which to apply clustering. They used it to quantitatively describe the urban morphology
- ▶ Steiniger *et al.* (2008) morphologically characterized building geometries and classified them for cartographic generalization
- ▶ Fan, Zipf, and Fu (2014)

## Similar works

- ▶ Schirmer and Axhausen (2015;2019)
- ▶ Steiniger *et al.* (2008)
- ▶ Fan, Zipf, and Fu (2014) used a turning function to find similar footprints of buildings. They tried to classify the morphologies into (functional) types. They also developed a rule-based approach to estimate the type of a building according to its characteristics

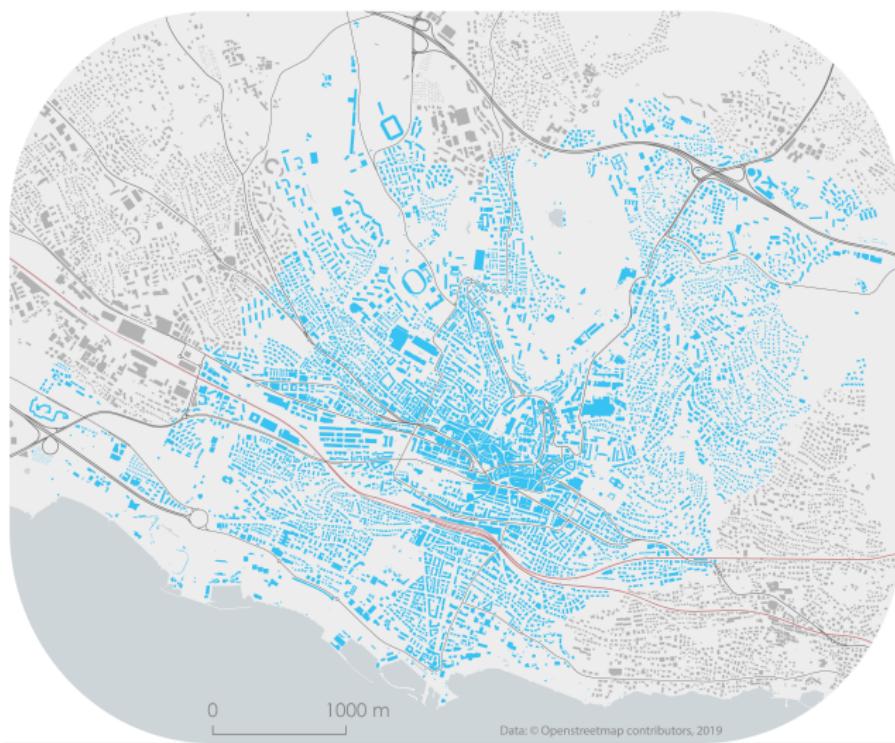
## Case study

# Lausanne, Switzerland



## Case study

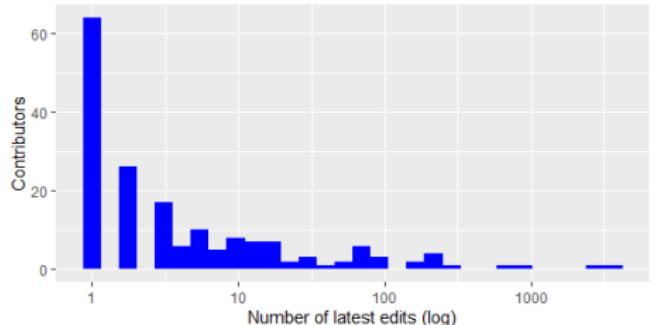
# Lausanne Municipality



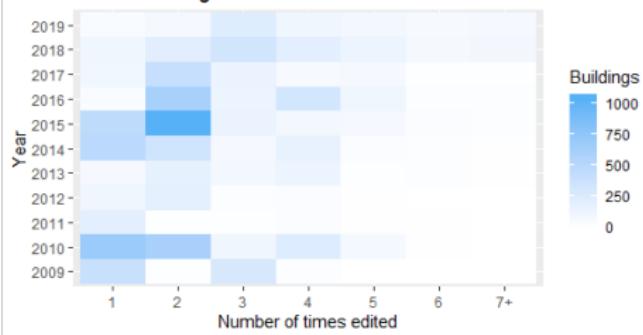
# OpenStreetMap data - Gathering footprints

- ▶ Open data generated by multiple contributors
- ▶ Available on a global scale but unevenly distributed
- ▶ Quality depending on several factors (available imagery, familiarity of the cartographer, etc.)

### Contributors statistics on buildings



### Latest building edition



### Selected features overview

OSM buildings in Lausanne	9850	
height specified	3	0.03%
number of levels specified	549	5.57%
type specified	2089	21.21%
levels and type specified	451	4.58%

Data used

# OpenStreetMap data - Gathering footprints

- ▶ Open data generated by multiple contributors
- ▶ Available on a global scale but unevenly distributed
- ▶ Quality depending on several factors (available imagery, familiarity of the cartographer, etc.)
- ▶ Limits: High geometrical variability, features of interest not sufficiently filled

Data used

## Swisstopo data - Computing height

- ▶ Digital Elevation Model, 2016, 2m resolution, 0.5m accuracy
- ▶ Digital Surface Model, 2016, 2m resolution, 0.5m accuracy
- ▶ Compute the difference and assign mean value of cells intersecting each building
- ▶ Gives a sufficient approximation of the building height

Data used

## Buildings and housing registry - Retrieving categories

- ▶ Central registry maintained by the Federal Statistical Office
- ▶ Data input by the municipalities
- ▶ General categories (6) and specific classes (26) adapted from EUROSTAT
- ▶ Quality assurance ?

## Indicators derived - Feature creation

- ▶ Features based on the footprint geometry and the height
- ▶ Inspired by Schirmer and Axhausen (2015) with several additions (oriented envelope, compactness)
- ▶ Quite correlated and redundant
- ▶ how to select the most suitable ones

# Model-based clustering

- ▶ Using the method implemented by Ceuleux *et al.* (2014)
- ▶ Simultaneously selects the number of clusters and a set of *relevant* features
- ▶ Gives a clustering based on features

# (Geo-)SOM

The Self-Organizing Map was proposed by Kohonen (2001)

- ▶ From a high-dimensional dataset to a simpler (2D) output/representation
- ▶ Initialisation of neurons with a weights vector corresponding to the dimensions of the dataset
- ▶ Competitive and adaptive learning

# Geo-SOM

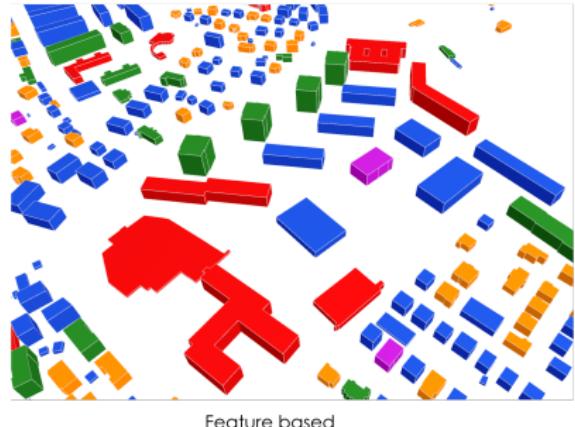
A SOM with a geo constraint (Baçao *et al.*, 2005)

- ▶ Take the data point
- ▶ Find the (spatially) closest neuron
- ▶ Look into it and its neighbours to find the most similar
- ▶ Adjust the BMU and its neighbours and repeat with the next data point
- ▶ Different adaptable parameters: size of the map, neighbourhood type, number of searchable neighbours,

# Input

Example of result with 15 hand-picked features, reduced to:

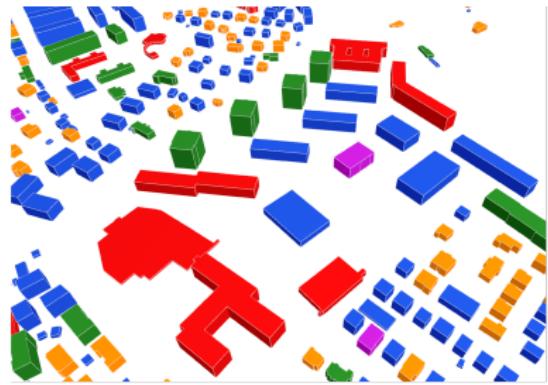
- ▶ Perimeter
- ▶ Area
- ▶ Ratio volume to facade
- ▶ Maximal length of edge
- ▶ Height
- ▶ Ratio area to convex hull area
- ▶ Ratio perimeter to convex hull perimeter
- ▶ Ratio width/length of oriented envelope
- ▶ Number of skeleton deadends



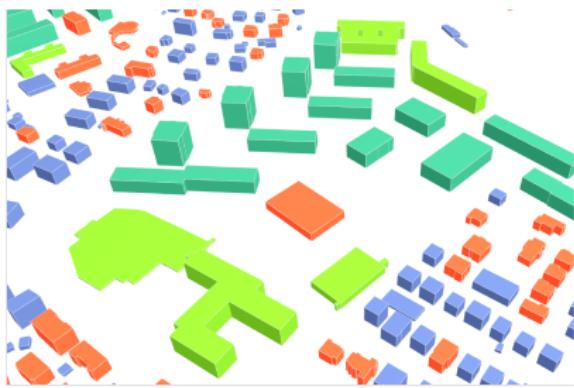
Feature based



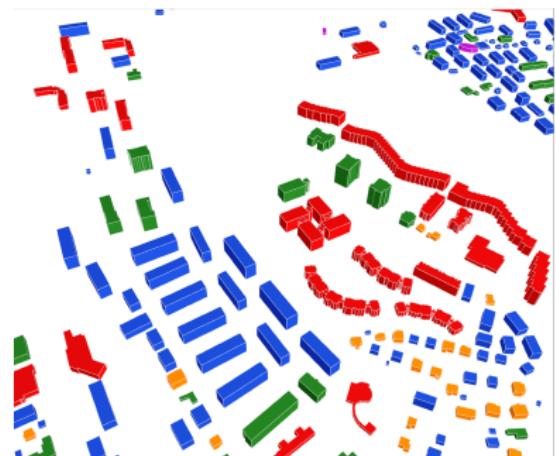
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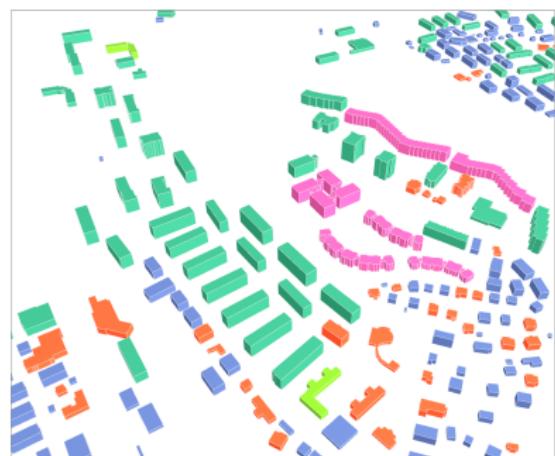
Feature based



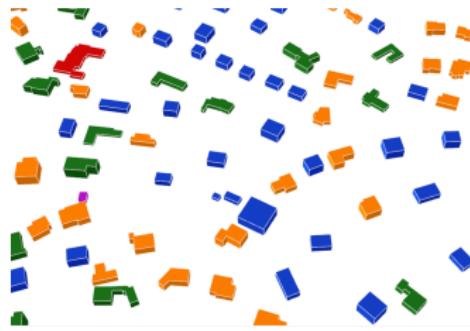
Geosom based



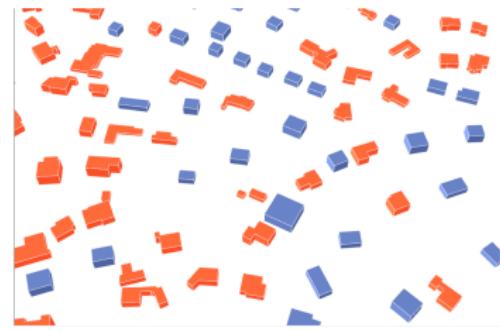
Feature based



Geosom based



Feature based

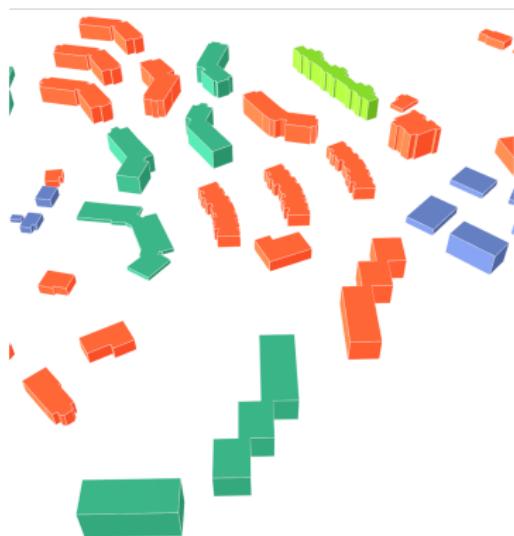


Geosom based

# Still progress to be made



Feature based



Geosom based

## Difficulties and open questions

- ▶ Clustering and lack of results comparisons
- ▶ Can the features allow relevant results
- ▶ *What is a building ?* (garages, sheds, stadiums, etc.)

## Future works

- ▶ Experimenting with the geo-SOM parameters
- ▶ Switch from the centroids to a distance-based relation
- ▶ Incorporate the functions of buildings in a meaningful way
- ▶ Try an approach based on computer vision

Thanks for your attention

Slides, routines (and more) will be available on *GitHub*  
<https://github.com/Raphbub/>

For any further questions, remarks or suggestions  
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Bação, F., Lobo, V., & Painho, M. (2005). The self-organizing map, the Geo-SOM, and relevant variants for geosciences. *Computers & Geosciences*, 31(2), 155-163.

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## Geo-SOM

### A Self-Organizing Map with a geographical constraint

Data normalized into range  $[0, 1]$

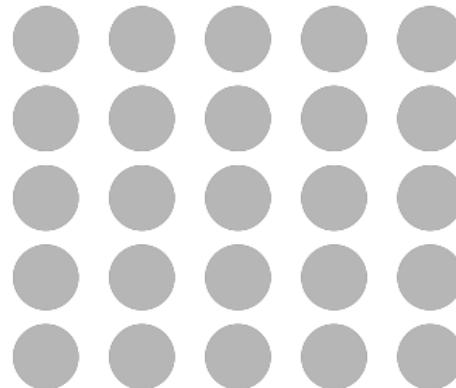
Data as  $n$ -dimensional vectors  $d$

$$d = [x_{coord}, y_{coord}, \xi_1, \dots, \xi_n]^T$$

Initialisation of a map with

$l \times m$  neurons  $n$

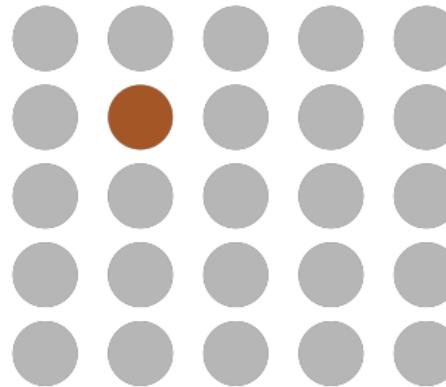
$$n = [x_{coord}, y_{coord}, \mu_1, \dots, \mu_n]^T$$



## Geo-SOM

For each  $d$ , find the most  
spatially similar neuron

$$Geo_{BM} = \min_i ||d_{xy} - n_{xy}||$$



## Geo-SOM

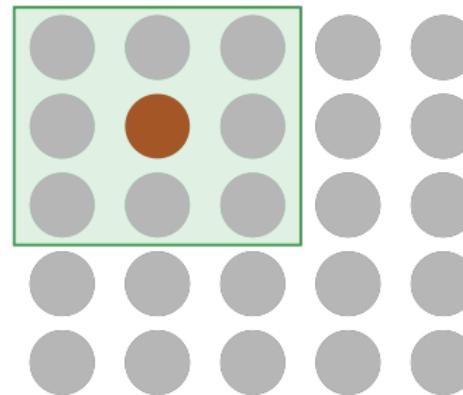
For each  $d$ , find the most spatially similar neuron

$$Geo_{BM} = \min_i ||d_{xy} - n_{xy}||$$

Then, find the most similar neuron in its neighbours

$$BMU = \min_j ||d - n||$$

with  $n \in Geo_{BM}$  neighbours



# Geo-SOM

The BMU and its neighbours  
are updated

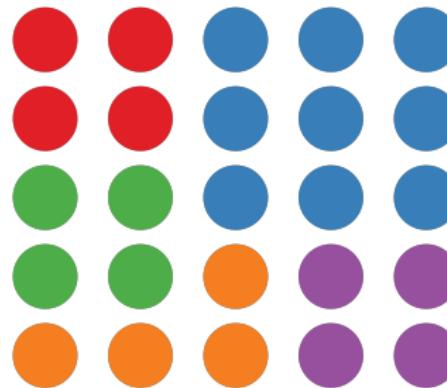
$$n_i(t+1) = n_i(t) + h_{ci}(t)[d(t) - n_i(t)]$$

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K-Means is applied on the  
final SOM (Flexer, 2001)



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final SOM (Flexer, 2001)

Data vectors are assigned  
groups using the previous steps

