



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Honors thesis

Master of Science in Architecture Construction City

Abstract

INSTA-TURIN

**Revising the notion of space, community and proximity in the
contemporary city through Instagram social urban data**

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by

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In the broad context of the social urban data mining applied in the study of the city, Instagram and its geotagged posts are used in this dissertation to understand urban dynamics, and to produce new visual representations and insights in relation to the city of Turin.

The idea of “community” and “city” as they adapted to the Information age are introduced in the first chapter as premises to validate the decision of using geotagged Instagram posts as a source of potential knowledge in the field of urban studies. The research starts from the idea of community in the contemporary society and outlines its major characteristics that reflect on the city and its planning. Later, the “eloquence” of geotagged Instagram posts is found in its intrinsic characteristics of social media where users filter through the selection of pictures the reality around them, making them a powerful proxy to understand the contemporary city in its complexity.

The user of the platform is a flaneur, experiencing and recording the everyday life of the city. His/her record is not a simple representation, but it is embedded of the meanings and the projections the user place in a venue. The geotagging is also a social action, shaping the user’s identity. Geotagged Instagram posts are therefore an act through which an individual construct his/her social and individual identity through the reference to a physical space s/he immortalizes and sublimates.

A dataset of over 350 thousand geotagged posts has been collected with reference to 1071 venues in the city of Turin, insisting on a period of time of a year. Quantitative evaluations allowed to develop insights, confirming the validity of the data as indicators of the behavior of citizens in the city. A clustering of the venues according to the social affinity calculated in relation to the recurrence of same users in different locations permitted to rethink the notion of proximity and centrality beyond the border of the physical space.

The outcomes of this work of research consist in the depiction of the city with the paradigm of the network, defining element of contemporary society and tool to understand, visualize and plan the city and invite to rethink the city as an evolving organism, whose meaning is defined by its users.

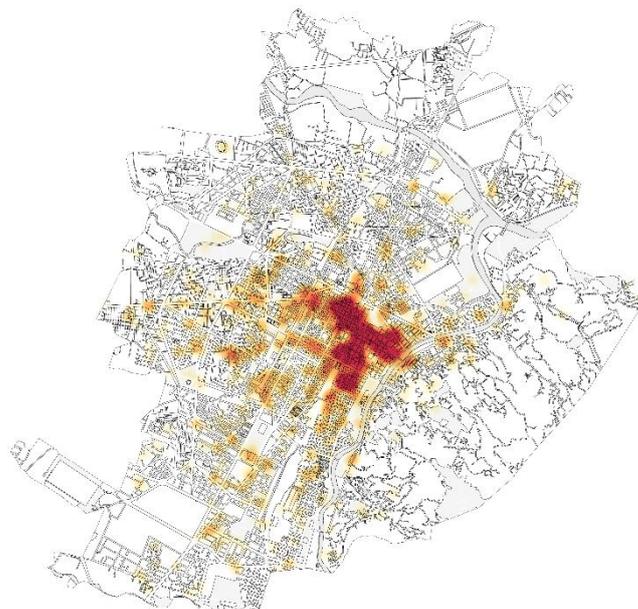


Figure 1 – Density map of geotagged venues in the city of Turin

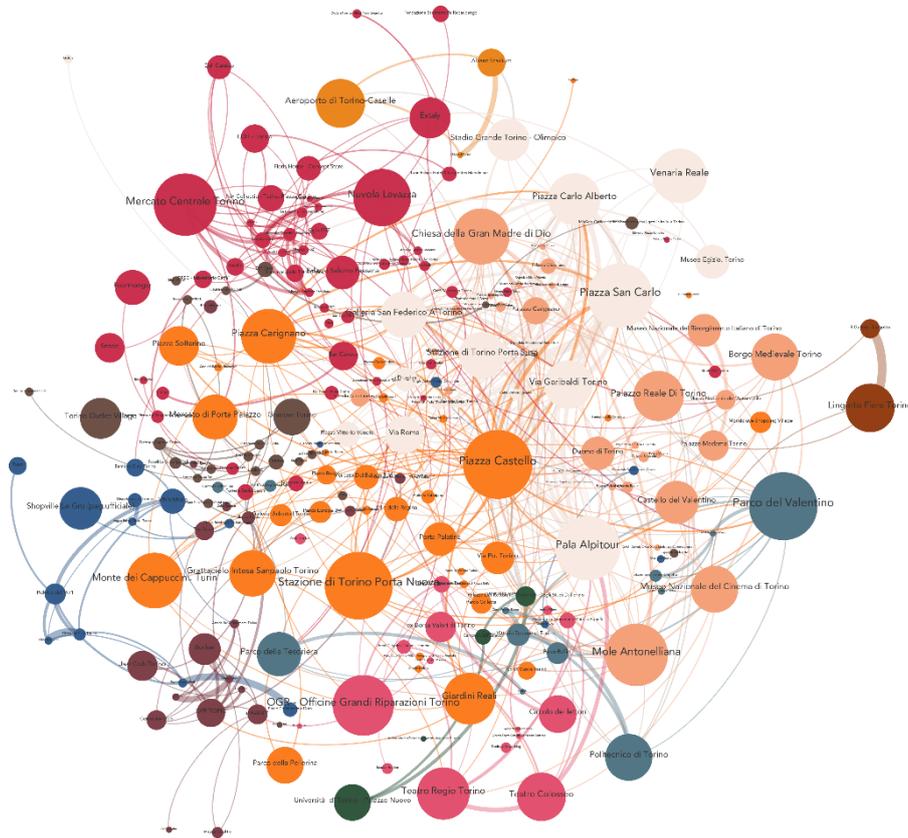


Figure 3 – Venues organized in a network based on social affinity with 12 communities detected

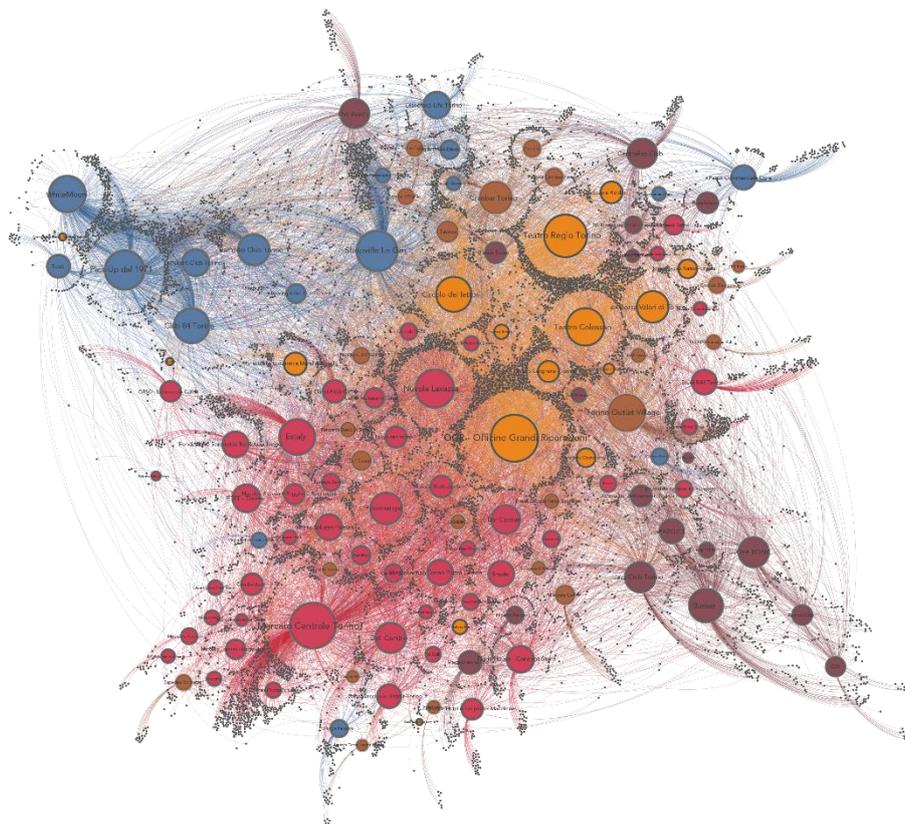


Figure 2 - Organization of individual users around the venues connected to "Leisure"