Soft Data and Public Policy: Twitter Data for ESPON Policymakers

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Amel Feredj, UMS RIATE, CNRS

1. Applied research: The ESPON project “Analytical Tools based on Big Data”

2. From the research to the field: interviews of ESPON policy makers

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The starting point

ESPON Feasibility Study on Analytical Tools based on Big Data

- Partners: Université Paris Diderot, Université de Lille 3, University of Amsterdam, CNRS
- Coordinator : M. Severo
- Participants: N. Douay, T. Giraud, C. Grasland, M. Nielsen, H. Pecout, R. Rogers, M. Texier

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The ESPON Programme

European Territorial Observatory Network

Mission statement : grow the provision and policy use of pan-European, comparable, systematic and reliable territorial evidence to ease policy making.

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The objective

Assessing the possibility to use **social media** data along with official data in territorial analysis ?

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How and to what extent ?

- “explore innovative possibilities to analyse **open source data from the Web, such as social media** (Facebook, Google+, Twitter, blogs, etc.)”

- “bring new and interesting opportunities to support policy development”.

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The promises of “New” Data

Traditional data	“New” data
Too long delay of publication	Shorter delay of publication useful for action
Insufficient coverage of some topics of interest for territorial cohesion	Coverage of new topics of interest
The focus of official statistics on count data related to NUTS units	Availability of data at new geographical levels
The top-down definition of data of interest	Bottom-up elaboration & tailor-made information

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Deliverables

- Assess which types of data
- Identify how new data can be implemented in practice and integrated into ESPON analysis by proposing a practical methodology
- Provide 2 practical examples

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Real-time follow up of city brand and governance on Twitter communication

Tweets including the name of the city	Tweets geo-tagged in the metropolitan areas	Tweets of city's influencers
International recognition of the city	Elements of city branding at local level	Real-time follow up of the governance of the city

Sample: Marseille, Bologna, Edinburgh, Brussels
Period: 2 June – 29 June 2014

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Issue 1: variety of uses of Twitter

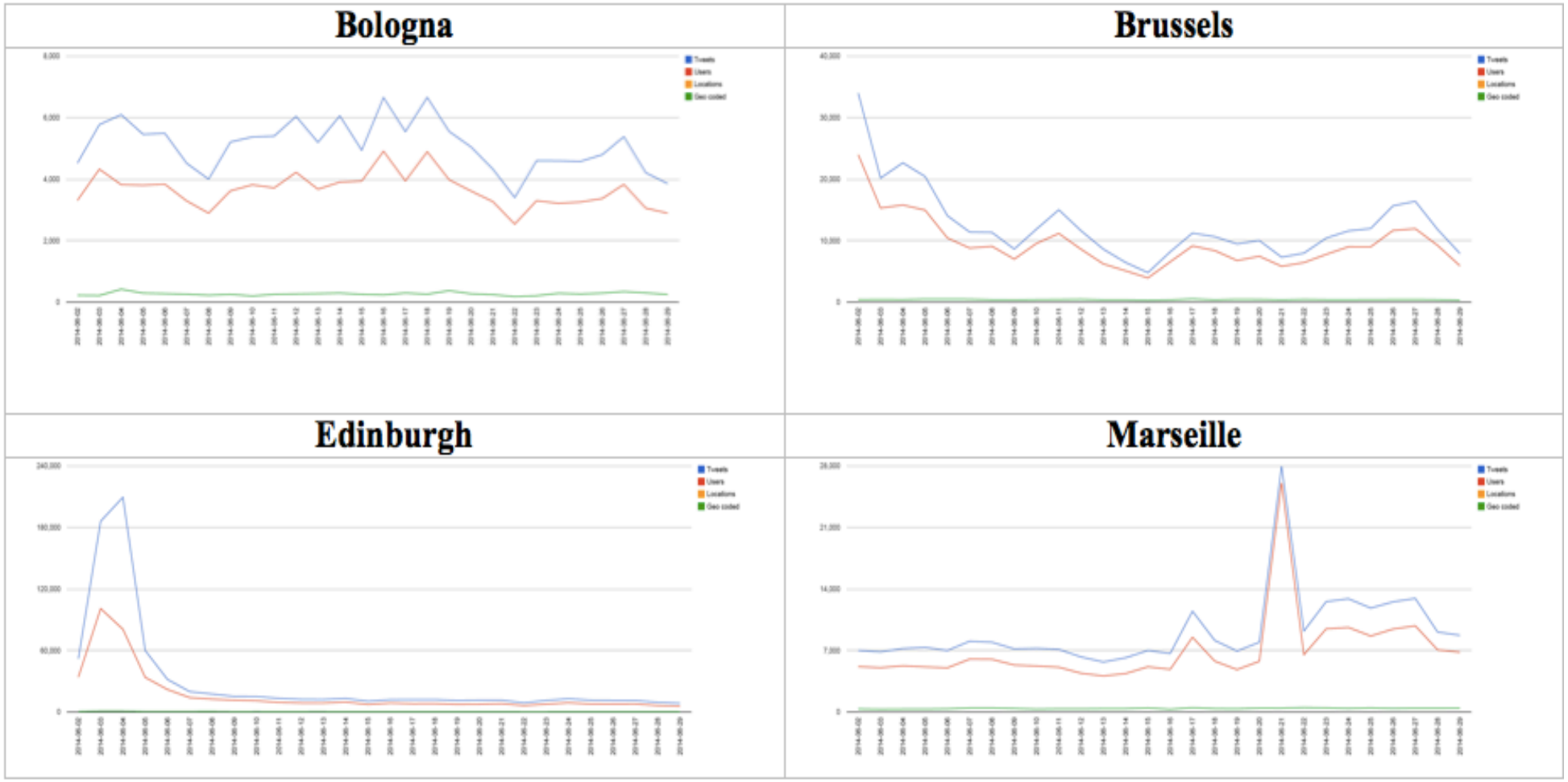

Figure 12. Time series of tweets mentioning the city from 2nd June to 29th June 2014

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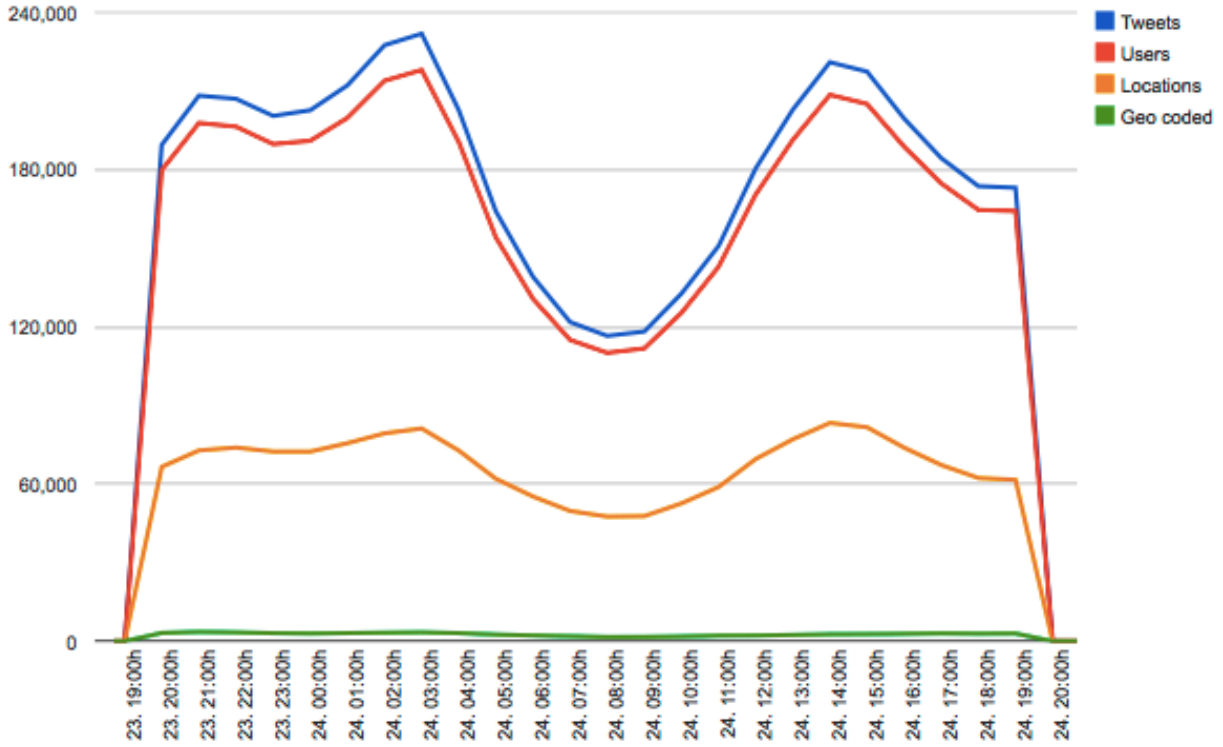
Issue 2: small amount of geotagged tweets



C. Gerlitz et B. Rieder, 2013

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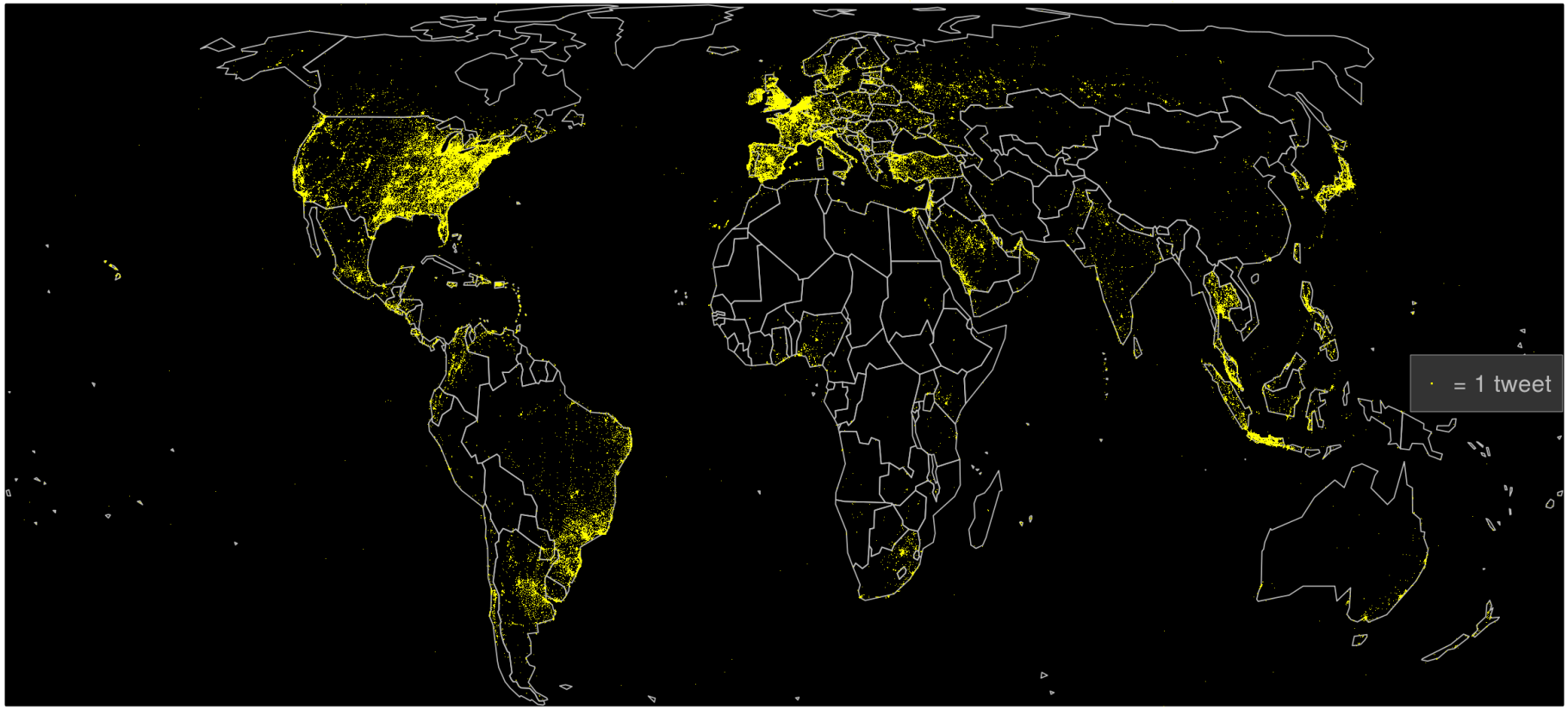
1) Tweets about the city: international recognition of the city



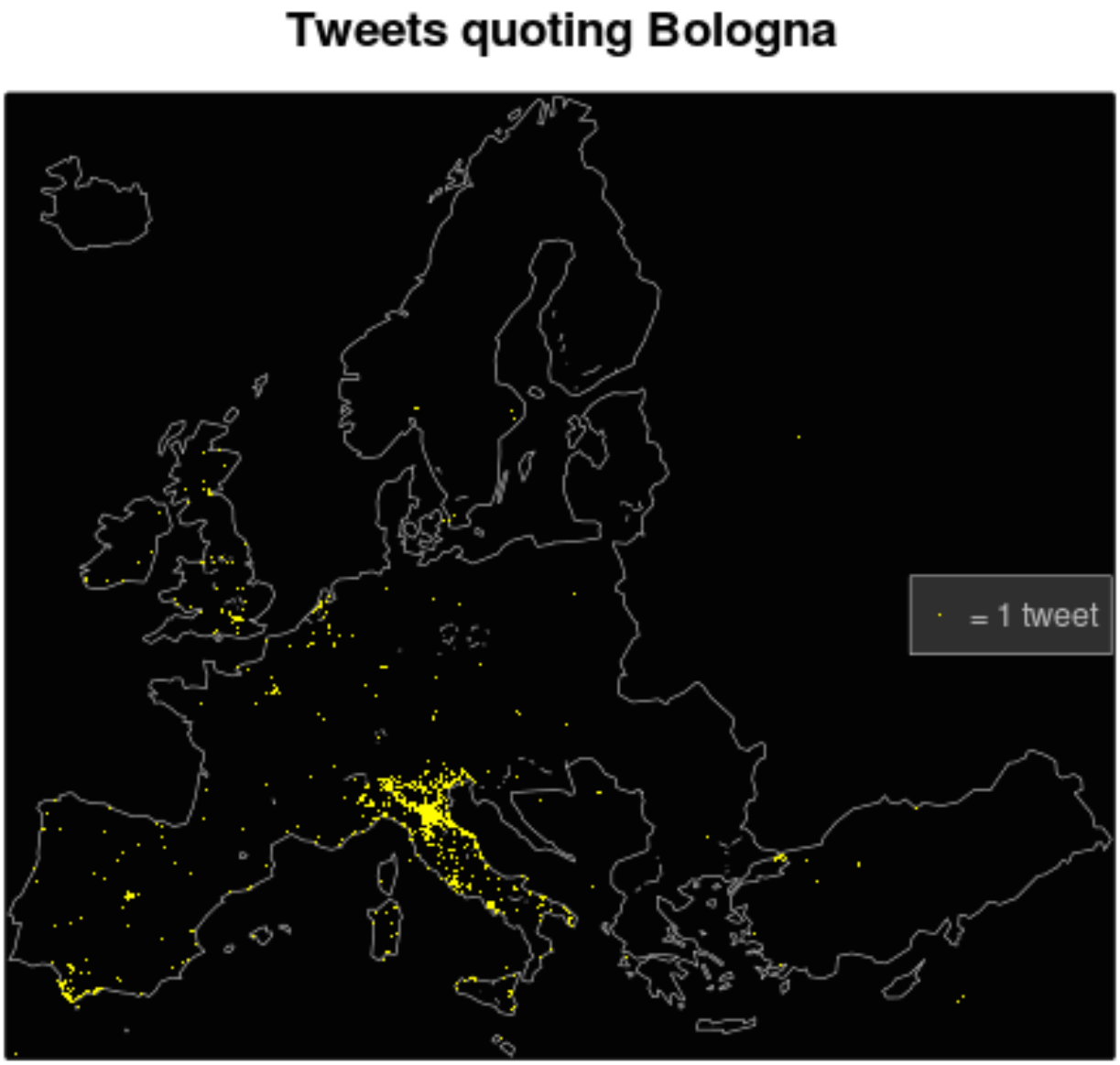
A week of geo-tagged tweets

1) Tweets about the city: international recognition of the city

City	Total tweets	Geo-tagged tweets	Ration
Bologna	233 899	12089	5.17 %
Brussels	739 150	20183	2.73 %
Edinburgh	1 064 735	21583	2.03 %
Marseille	430 824	18344	4.26 %

Tweets and geo-tagged tweets mentioning the four cities from the 21st May and the 6th July

1) Tweets about the city: international recognition of the city



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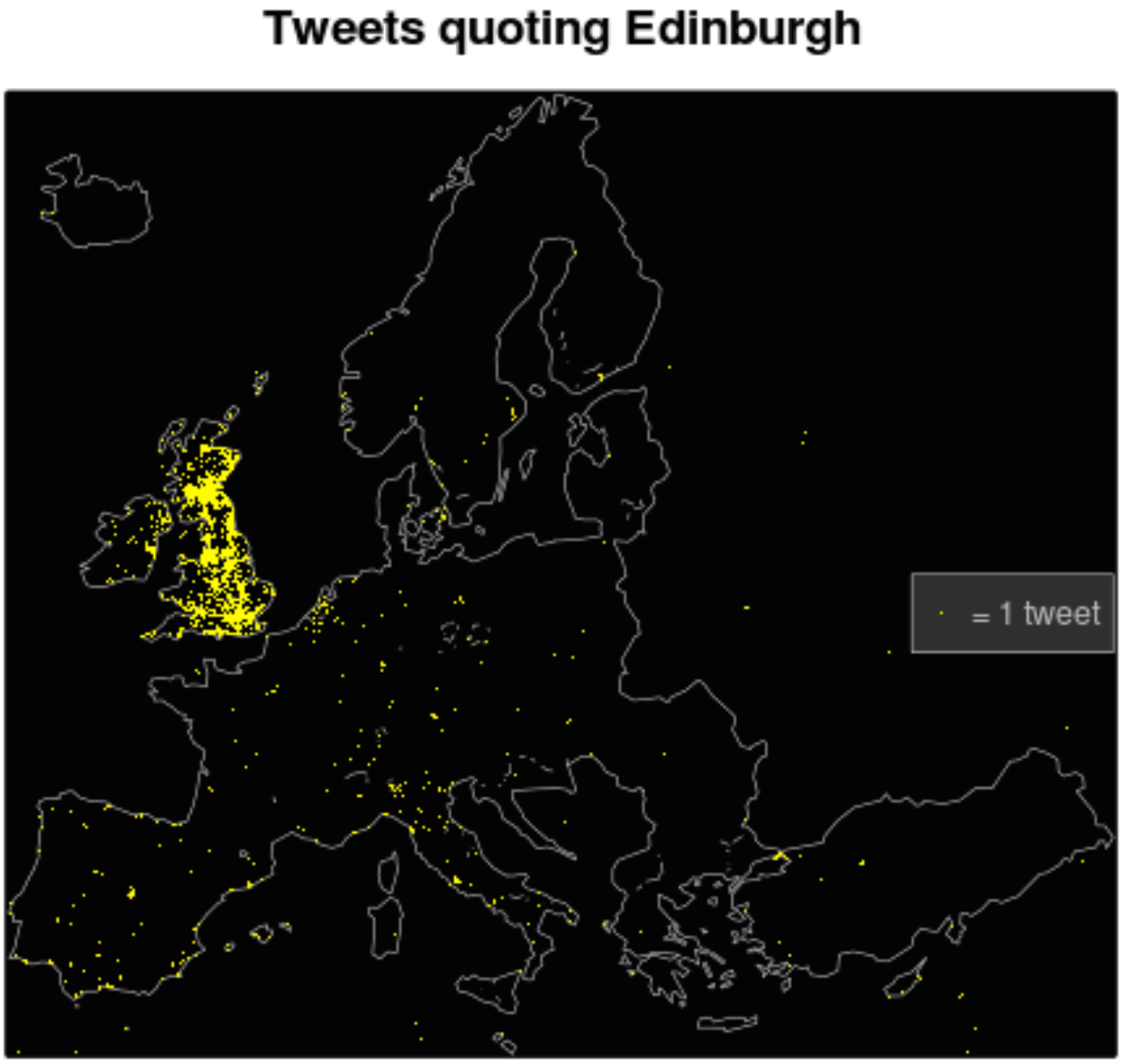

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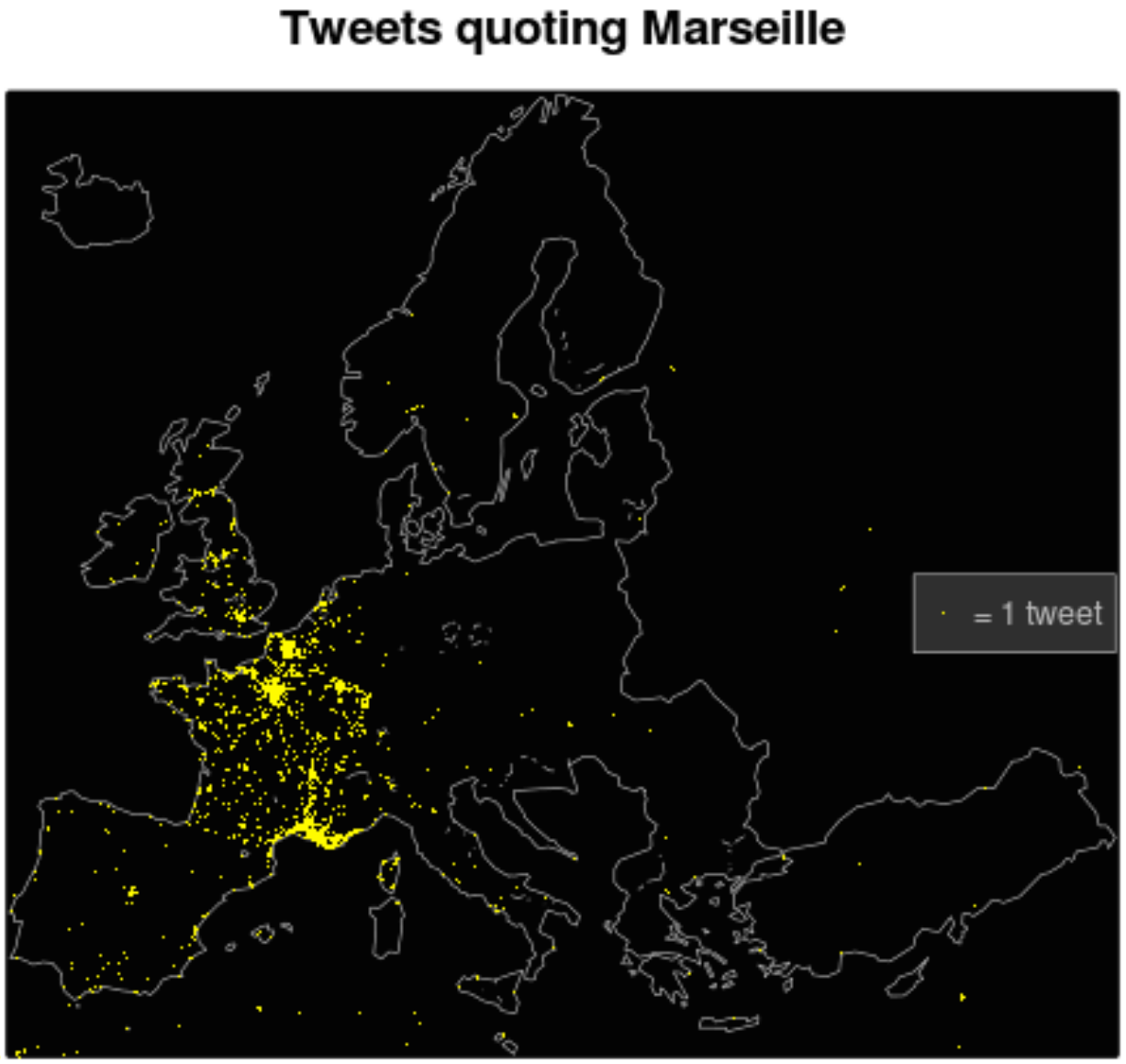

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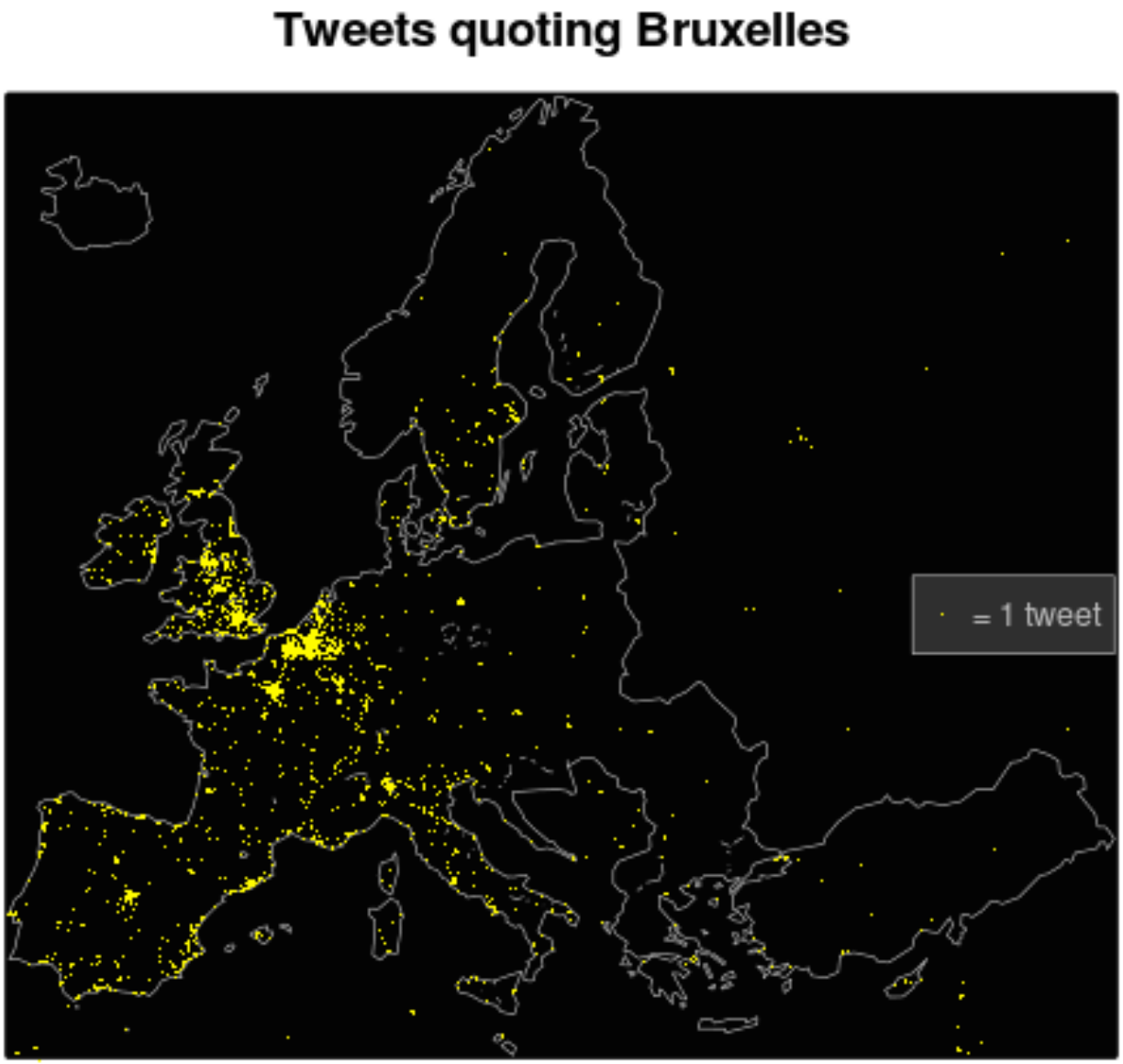

1) Tweets about the city: international recognition of the city

Level of internationalisation :

Geographical distribution of over-quotations of the four cities at European level

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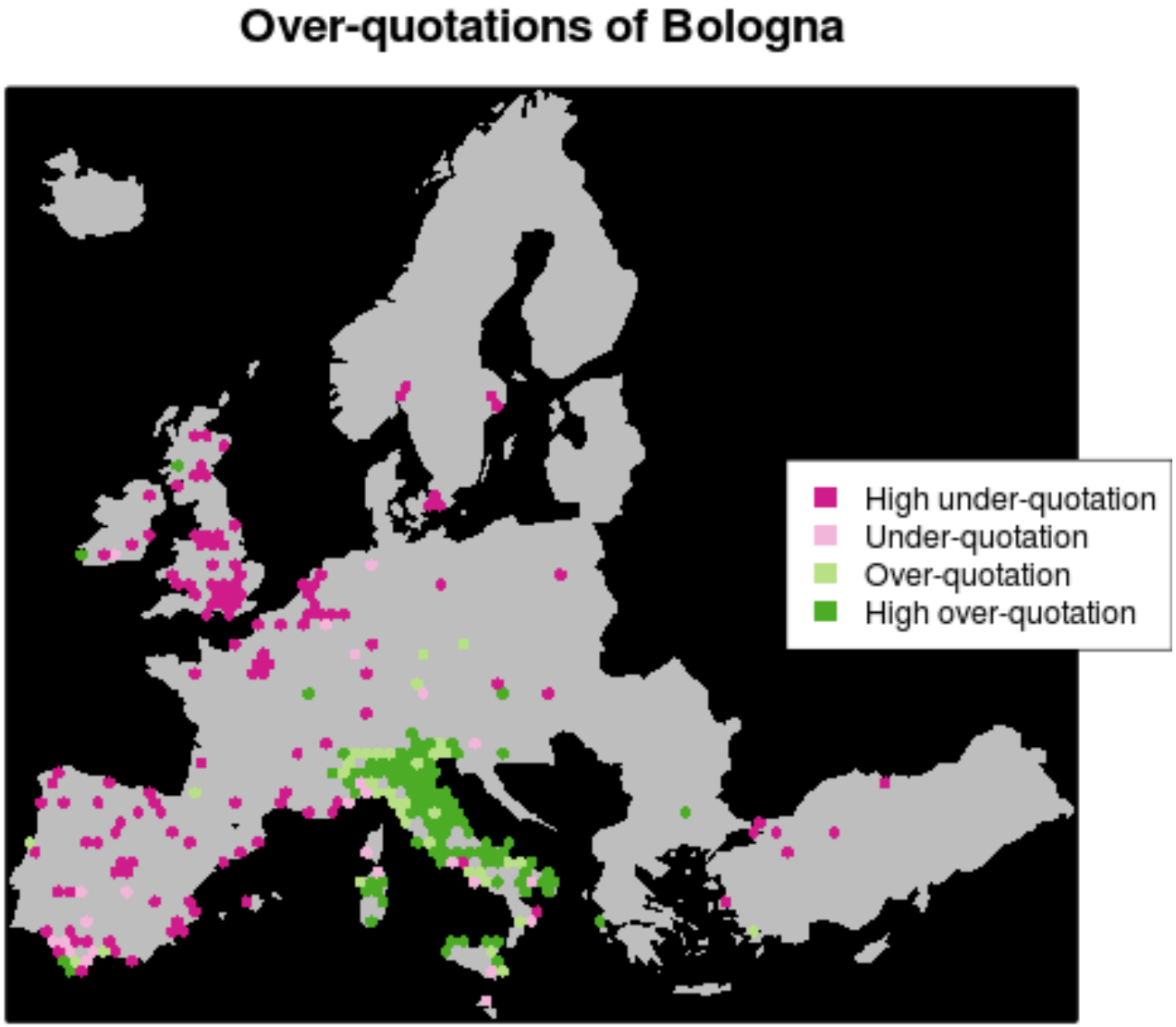

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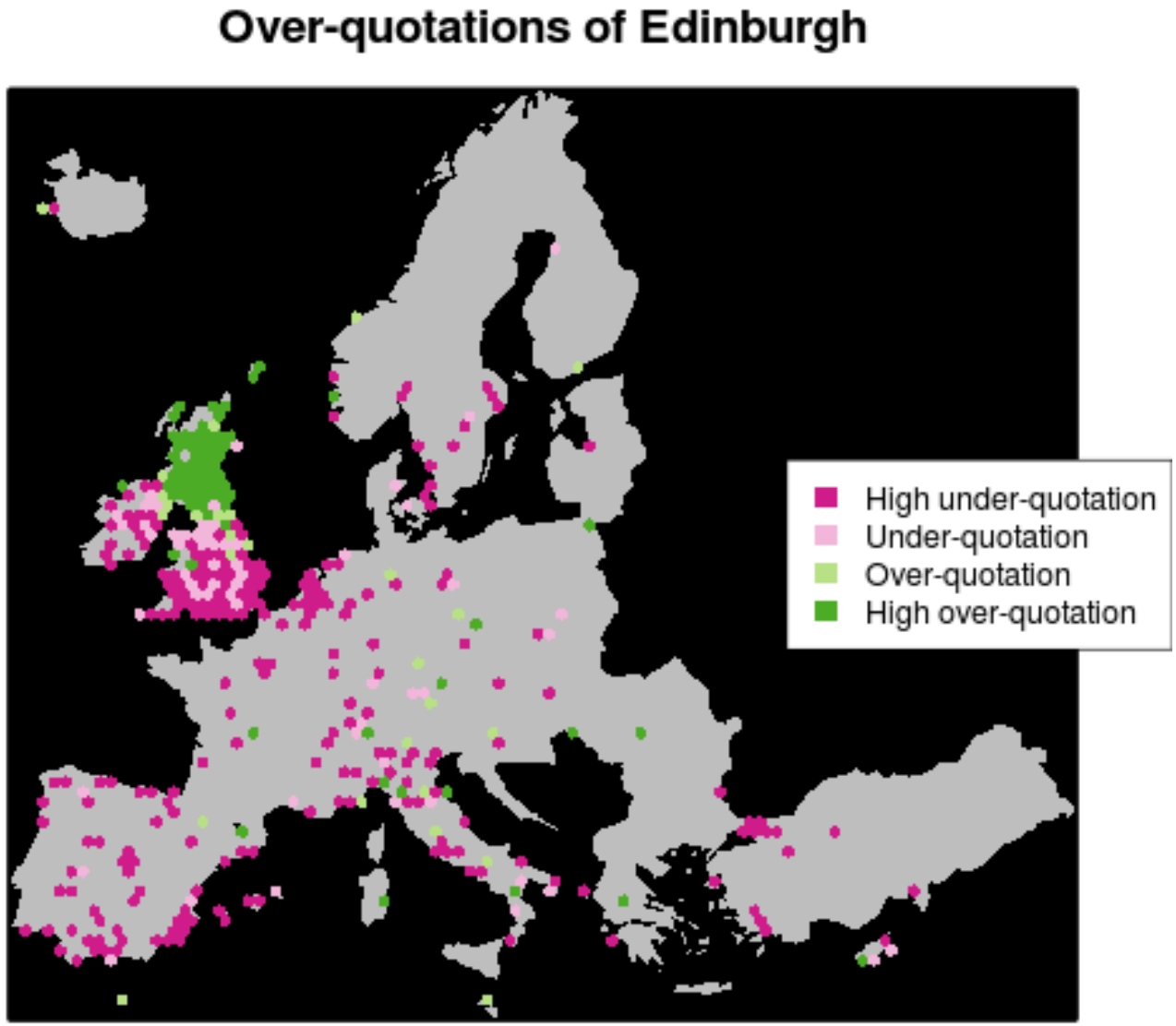

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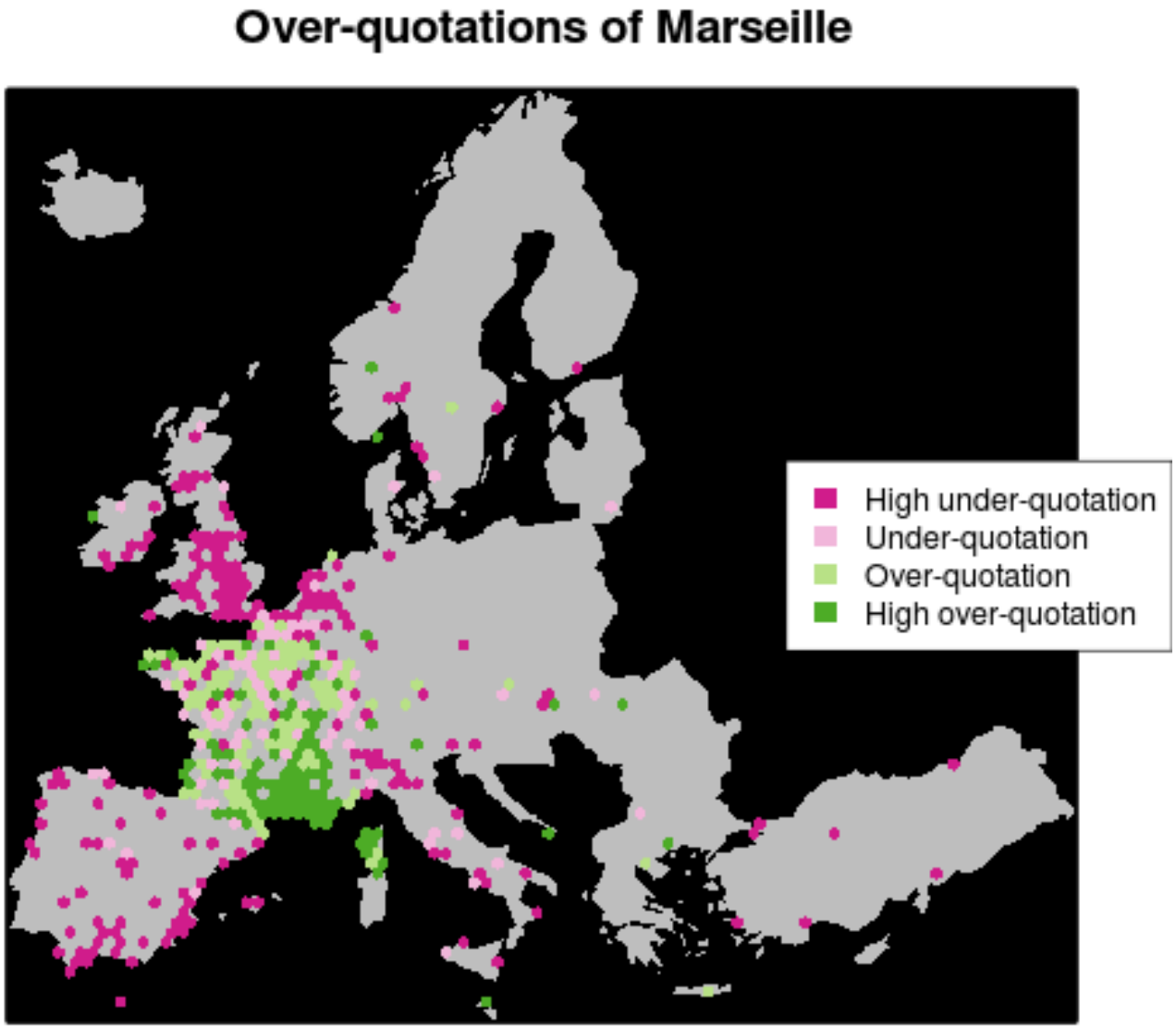

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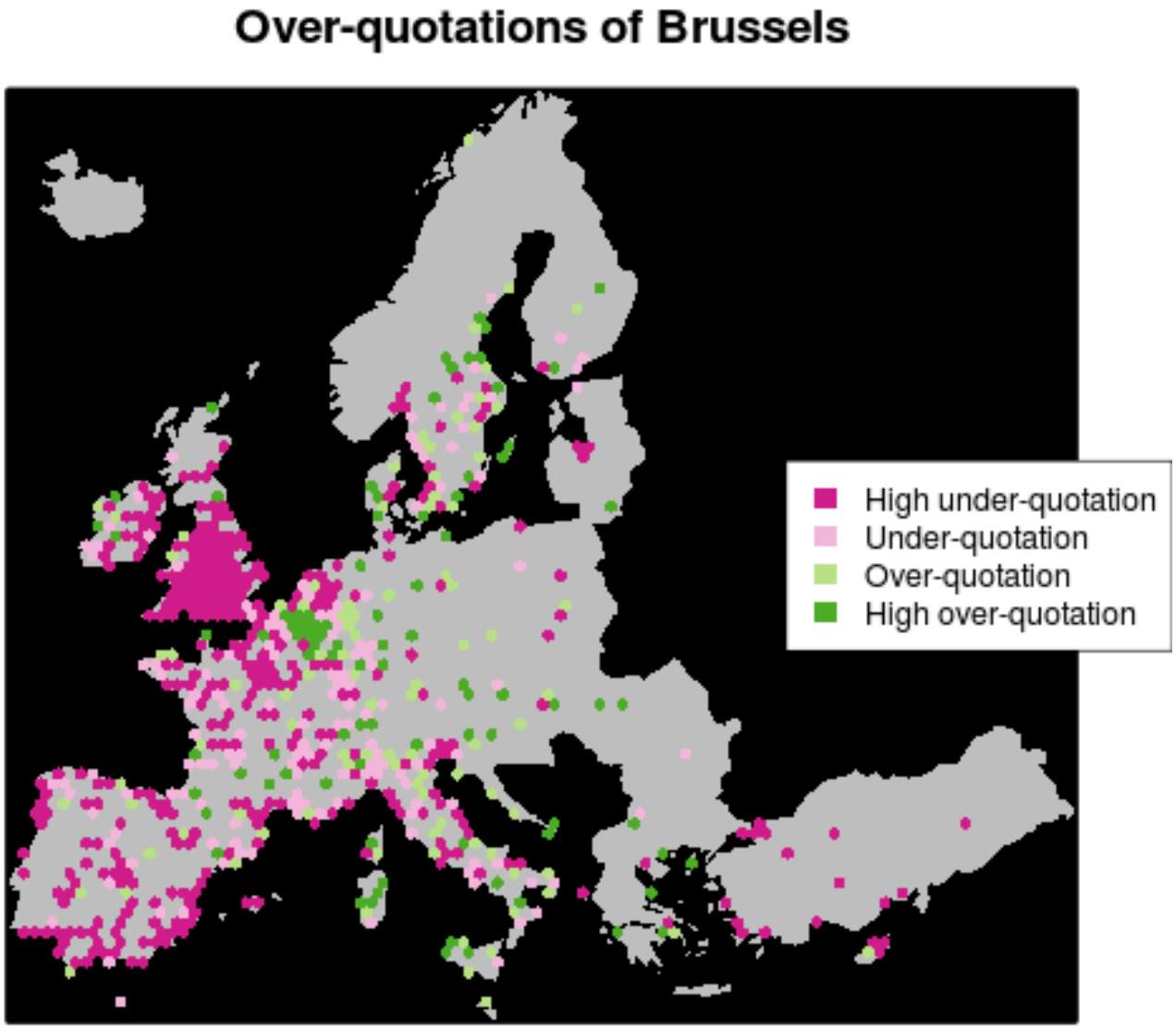
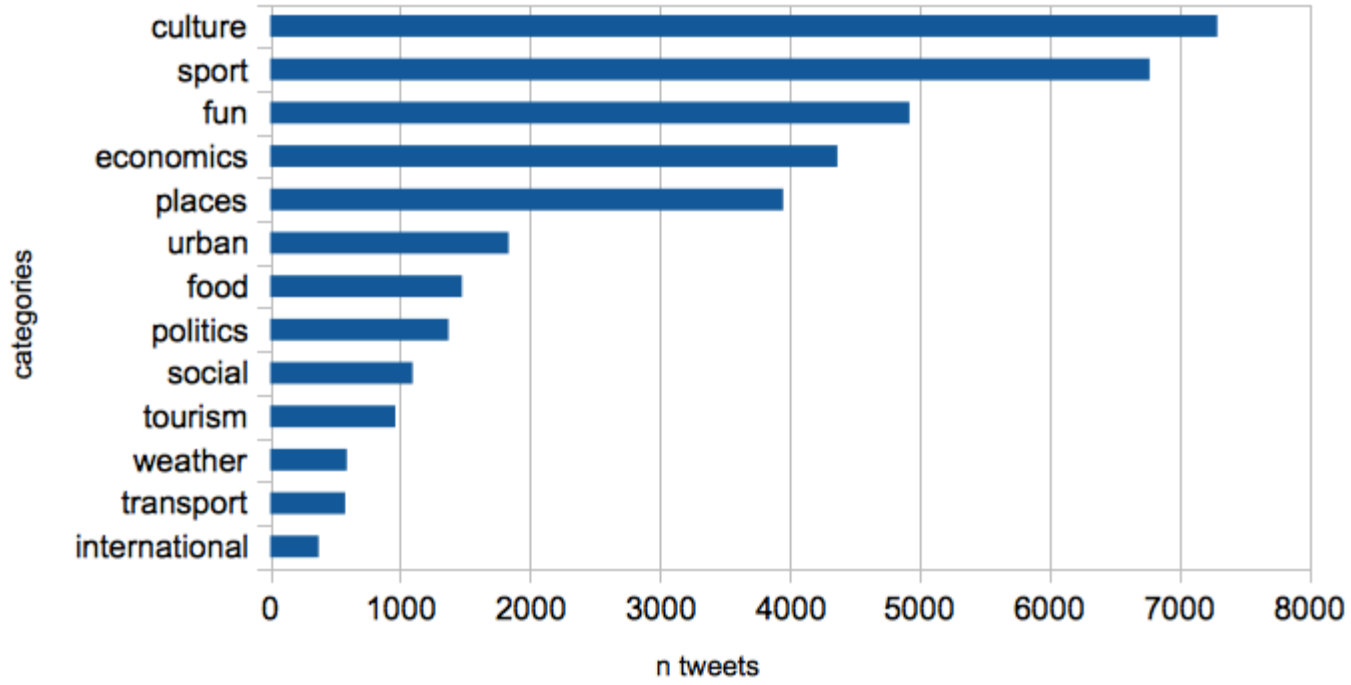
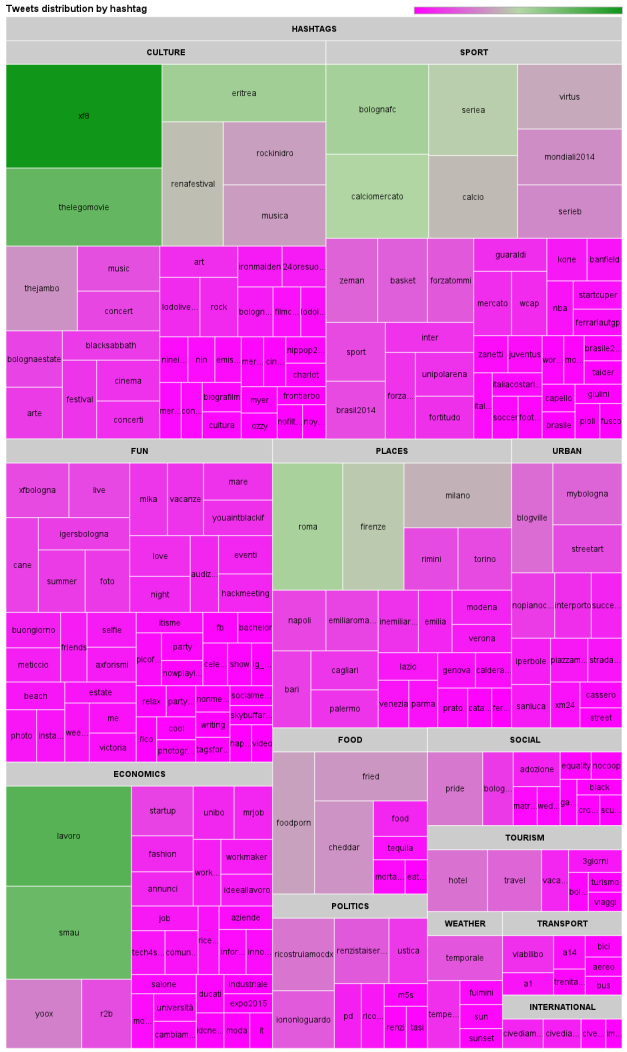


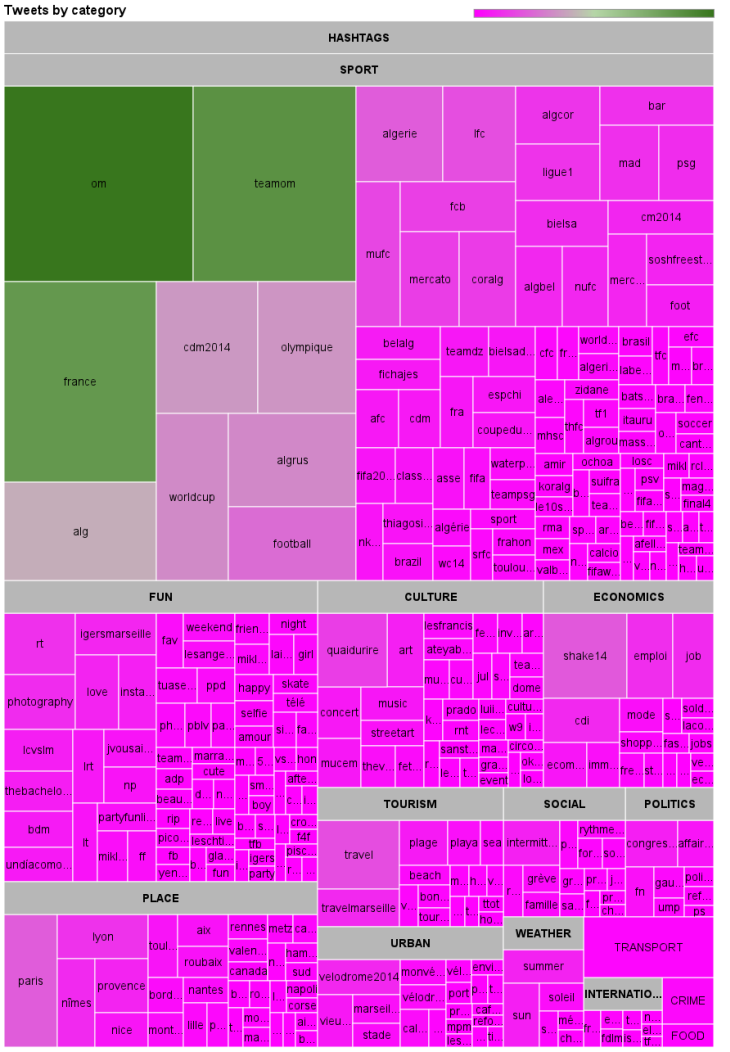
1) Tweets about the city: the city brand



Distribution of hashtag in tweets mentioning Bologna between the 2nd and the 29th June 2014

1) Tweets about the city: the city brand



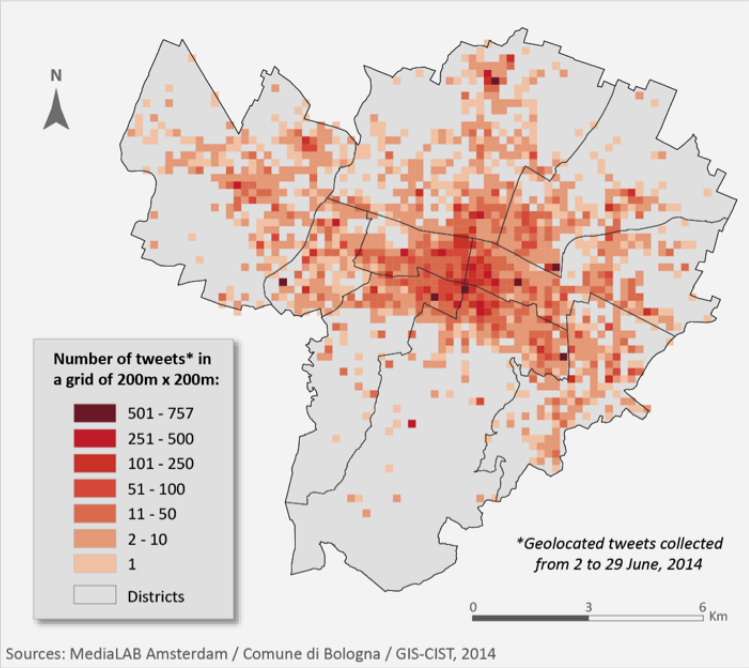


Bologna **Marseille**

2) Tweets inside the city: local follow up

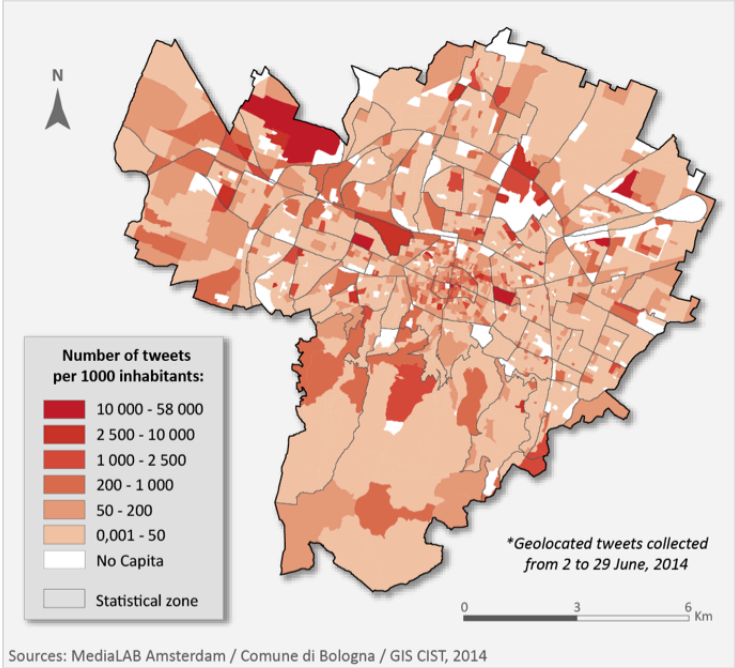
Geographical distribution of tweets inside the city and of tweets per capita

Geolocated tweets in Bologna



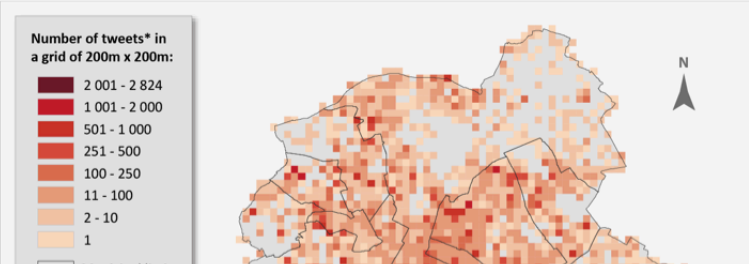
Sources: MediaLAB Amsterdam / Comune di Bologna / GIS-CIST, 2014

Tweets per capita by census area in Bologna

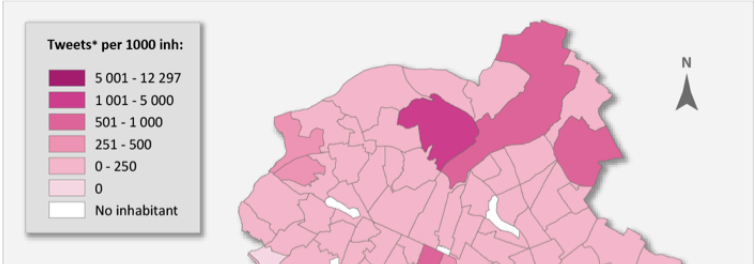


Sources: MediaLAB Amsterdam / Comune di Bologna / GIS CIST, 2014

Geolocated tweets in Brussels



Tweets per capita by Brussels districts



3) Influencers of the city: real-time follow up

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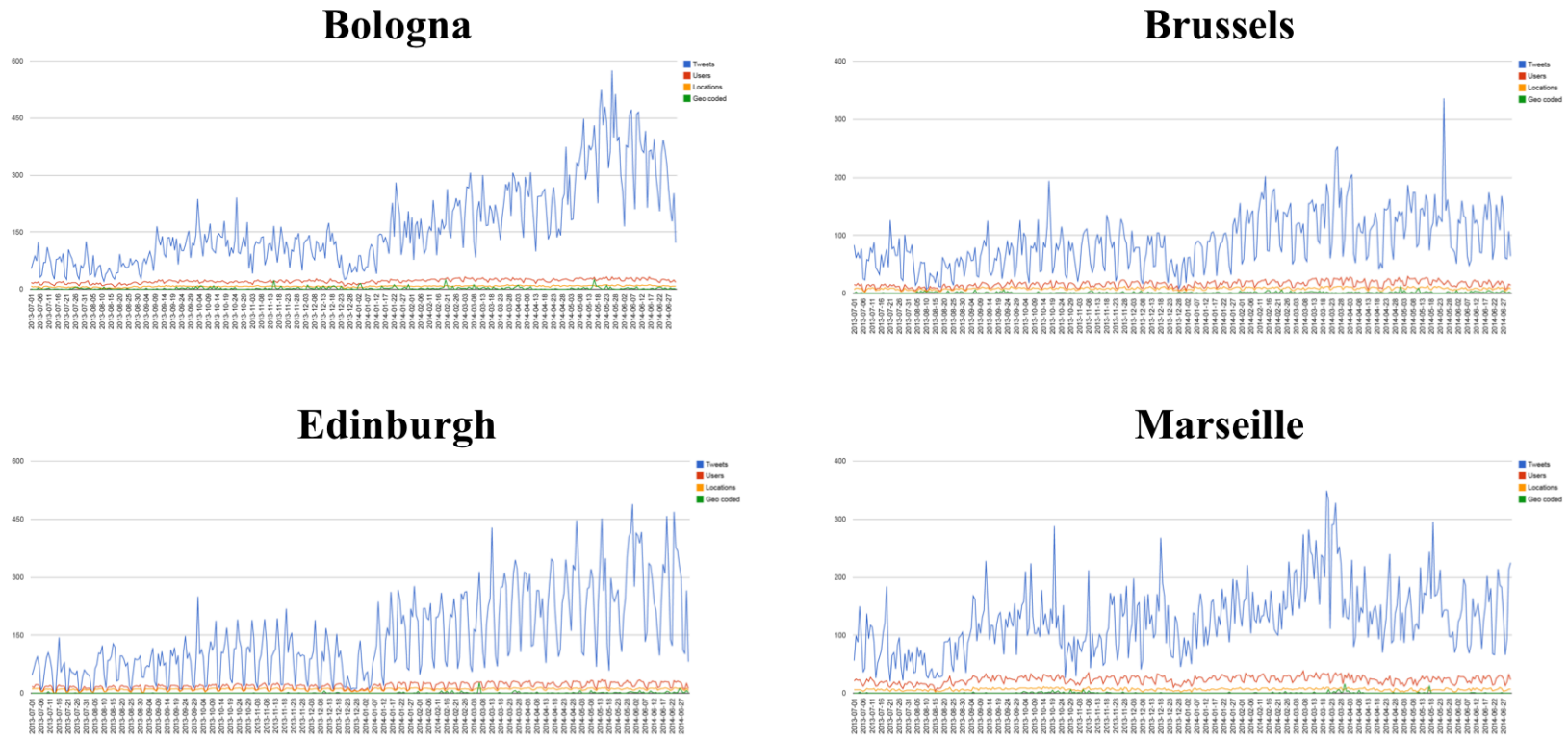
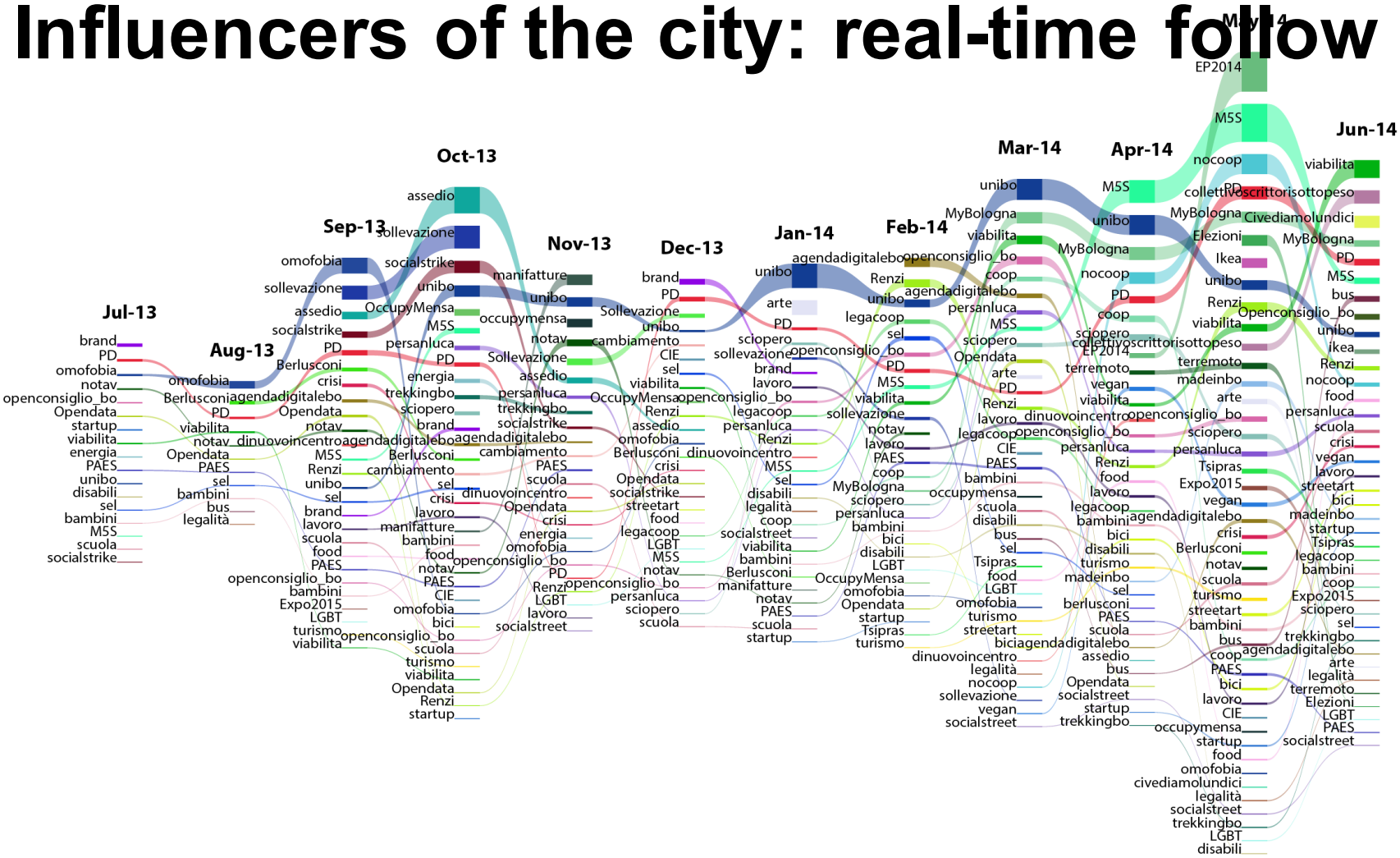


Figure 32. Time series of tweets sent by influencers in the four cities between the 1st July 2013 and the 30th June 2014

3) Influencers of the city: real-time follow up



Top hashtags (excluding sport) per month in tweets of Bologna's influencers

3) Influencers of the city: real-time follow up

How influencers from Bologna speak about the crisis and austerity ?

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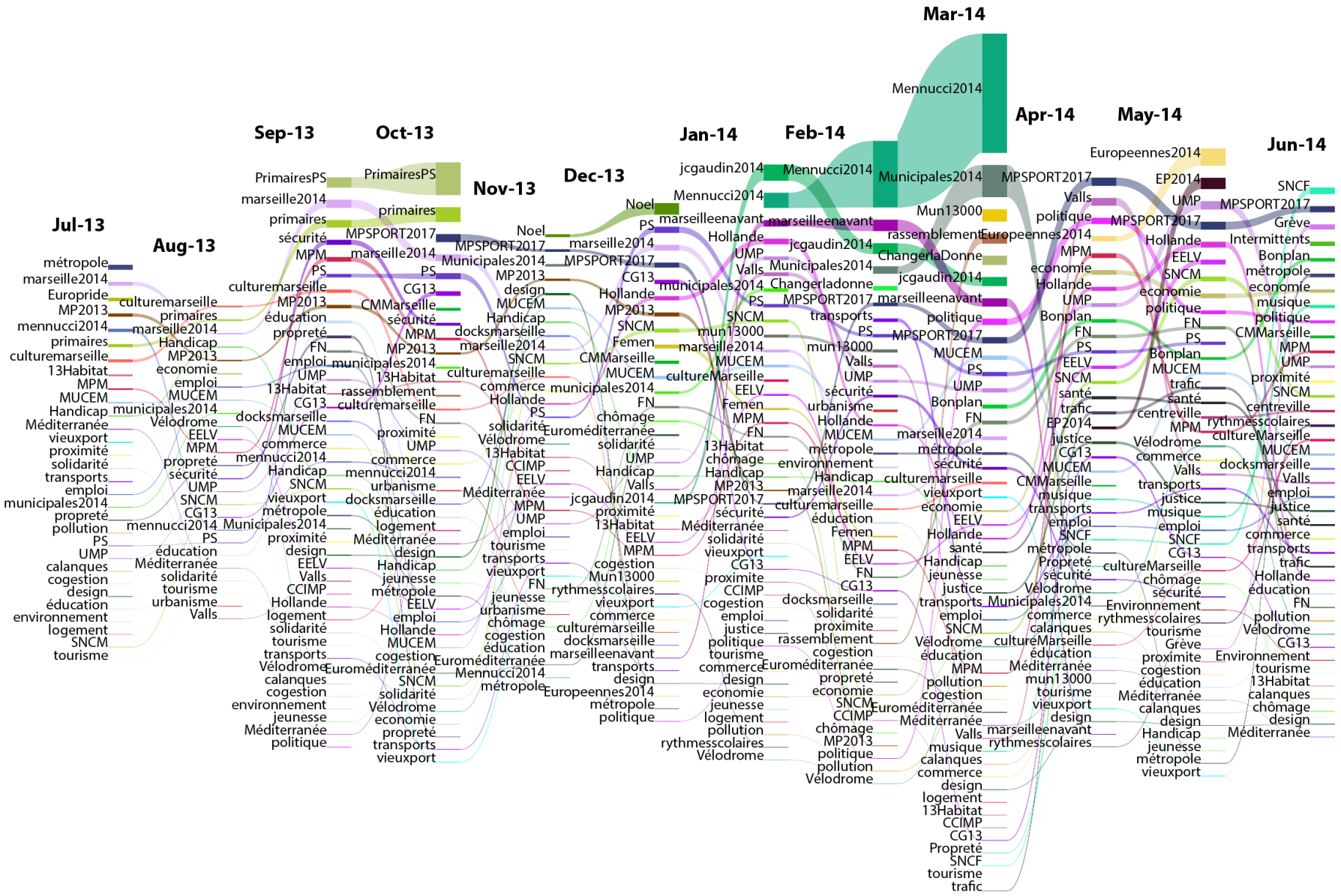
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3. From the research to the field

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Research protocol

- 9 semi-directif elite interviews
- Questionnaire:
  - Actual use of soft data
  - Perception of soft data

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Results

1. Penetration trends of Internet data in public policies
2. Need and supply of the use of Internet data
3. Perception of the Internet data by institutions
4. Perspectives for the use of Internet data in the decision-making process

Thank you for your attention !

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