

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

URBAN VIOLENCE

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(President Jesper Hjortenberg)
Strasbourg

***Conceptualizing and
designing prevention strategies
on urban violence***

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Road map

- 1 - Preliminary remarks
- 2- “Something” is happening? (definition, indicators, typologies)
- 2- Typology. Contrasted examples: UK, Greece, France, Turkey...
- 3- Epidemics and social media

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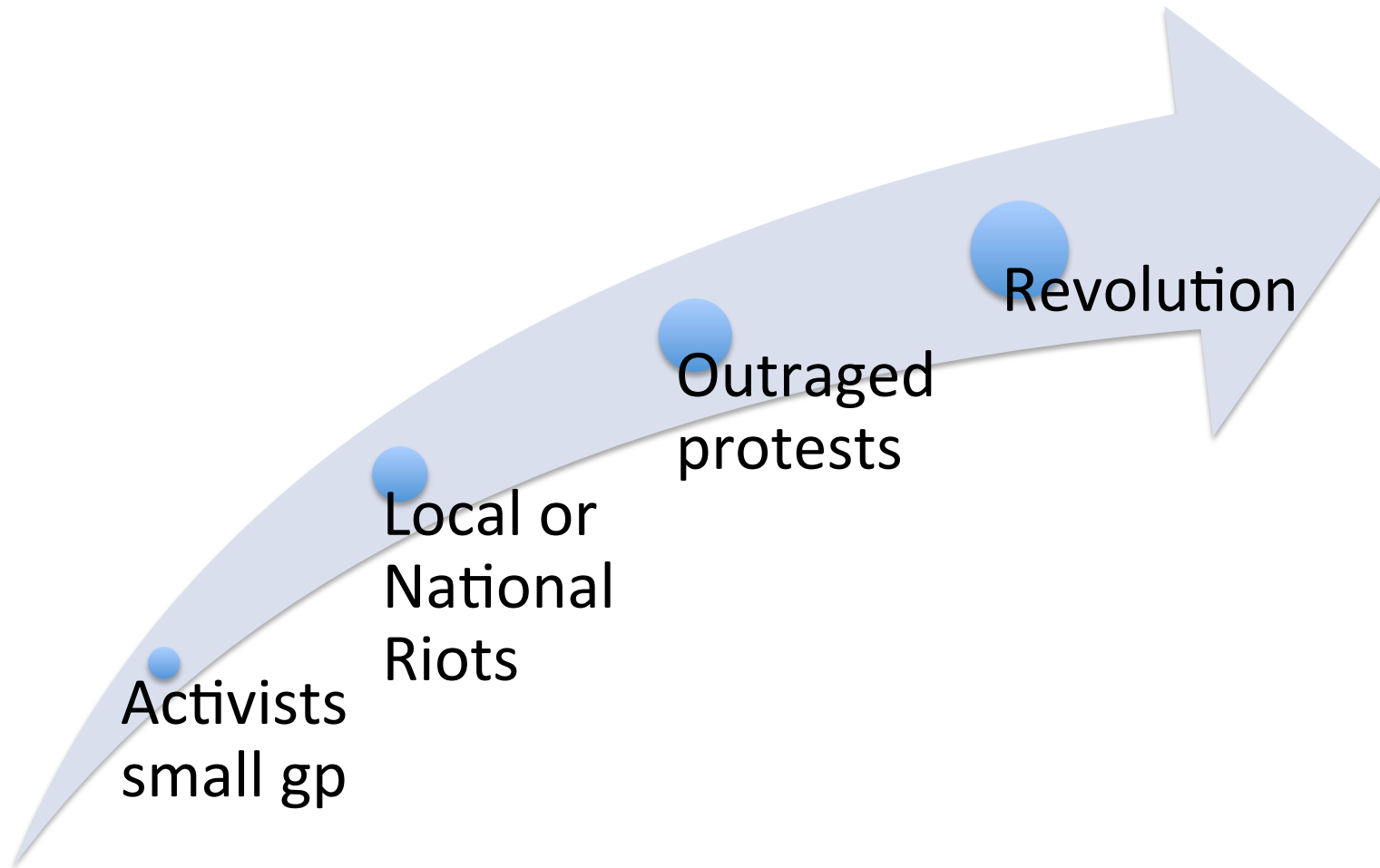
**Preliminary remarks:
overall European
context**

Police in European Context

- “National political models” imbalance (cohesion)
- Riots, urban collective violence, mass protests
- Terrorism (home grown / international), civil war,
- Rise of poverty (“banlieues”)
- Financial crisis

=> Police are in contradiction: too big for them /
more demands from gvts

Challenge of comprehending current range of events / trends



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**Is “something”
happening at
Western level and
beyond?**

Various events

- Turkey, 2013, Gezi Park
- Spain, 2011-2012, (15-M / Indignants / Takethesquare)
- UK, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool, Gloucester (August 2011)
- Greece, National Level (2008)
- Montreal, Canada (2008)
- Malmö (Rosengård), Finland (April 2007)
- Utrecht (Ondiep), Netherlands (2006-7)
- France, Chlichy-sous-bois (+hundred cities), 2005
- Genova, Italy (anti G8 meeting)
- UK (1981) -> Bradford (2001), Ramadan Rioting in Windsor (5 Oct. 2006),
- Spain, Almeria (El Ejido, 2000 Roquetas de Mar)

Difficult to be sure...

- Lack of common definition(s), riot, “urban violence”, upheaval etc...
- Lack of simple and robust typology, => mixing collective violence for defending one’s rights *versus* individual liability for crimes
- Lack of reliable data (within one country across years / across countries)
- Lack of analysis of few available data

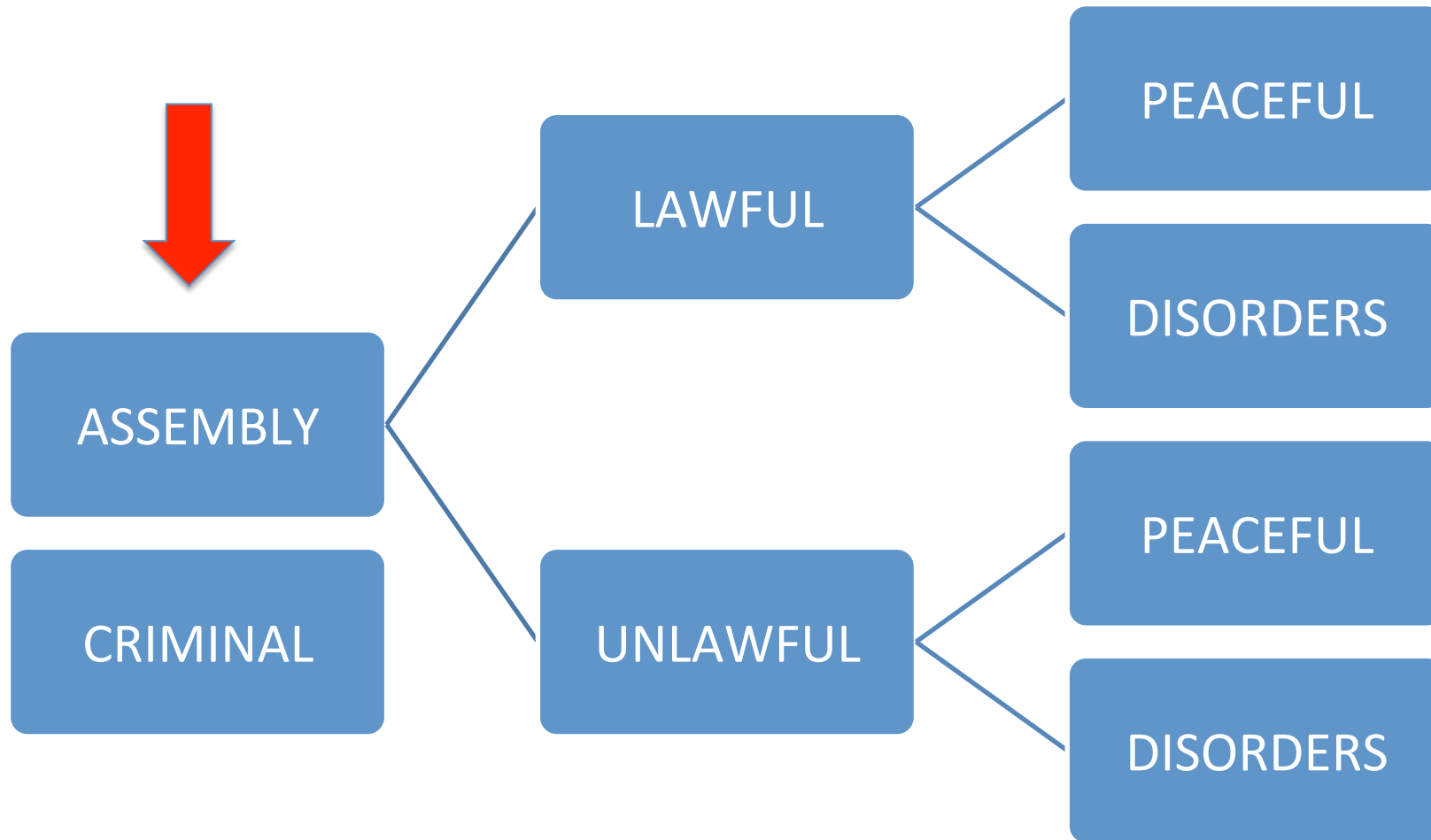
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**Typology, definition
& indicators**

2 issues at stake

- (3A) Legal definition of behaviors / events
- (3B) Social and political definition / events

Legal elements of definition



Legal definition & classification of events

Main classification key:

**Political and social action
versus Criminal action**

RECENT EXAMPLES of DEMONSTRATIONS

- SPAIN 2012
- TURKEY 2013
- = Nation wide, massive protests
- = Large scale social or political events
- = Banners, slogans, demands

Puerta del Sol, Madrid, SPAIN (movement starts 15 May 2011)



Social movement > 58 cities



Demands of people, millions of protestors (6 to 8 millions)



Istanbul, Taksim square, TURKEY



Gezi Park



Worker unions, NGOs, student organizations...



Public transportation are blocked,
people walk



LAWFUL / UNLAWFUL **DEMONSTRATIONS**

- Notion of “unlawfulness”s not necessarily in line with the guarantee of HR and liberties.
- Dilemma n°1 for police:
- => Police are legally bound entities,
- => Constitution and internal treaties guarantee freedom of assembly = duty of police,
- => what ground for action if a demonstration is peaceful? But if government orders dispersal?
- => What powers are needed? And be used legally?

Ombusman reservations/ Critics

- For example, **Parliamentary ombudsman of Finland after "Smash Asem" demonstration (September 2006) stated that** police acted unlawfully:
 - - « a considerable amount of emphasis on effective action, whereby quite little weight had been accorded the personal liberty of those present at the scene »,
 - No justification of checking persons being allowed to leave the cordoned-off area,
 - Issued a reprimand to one Senior Constable for taking 2 demonstrators into custody solely on the ground that they had consumed alcohol
 - Length of time for which persons were arrested.

VIOLENCE in DEMONSTRATION

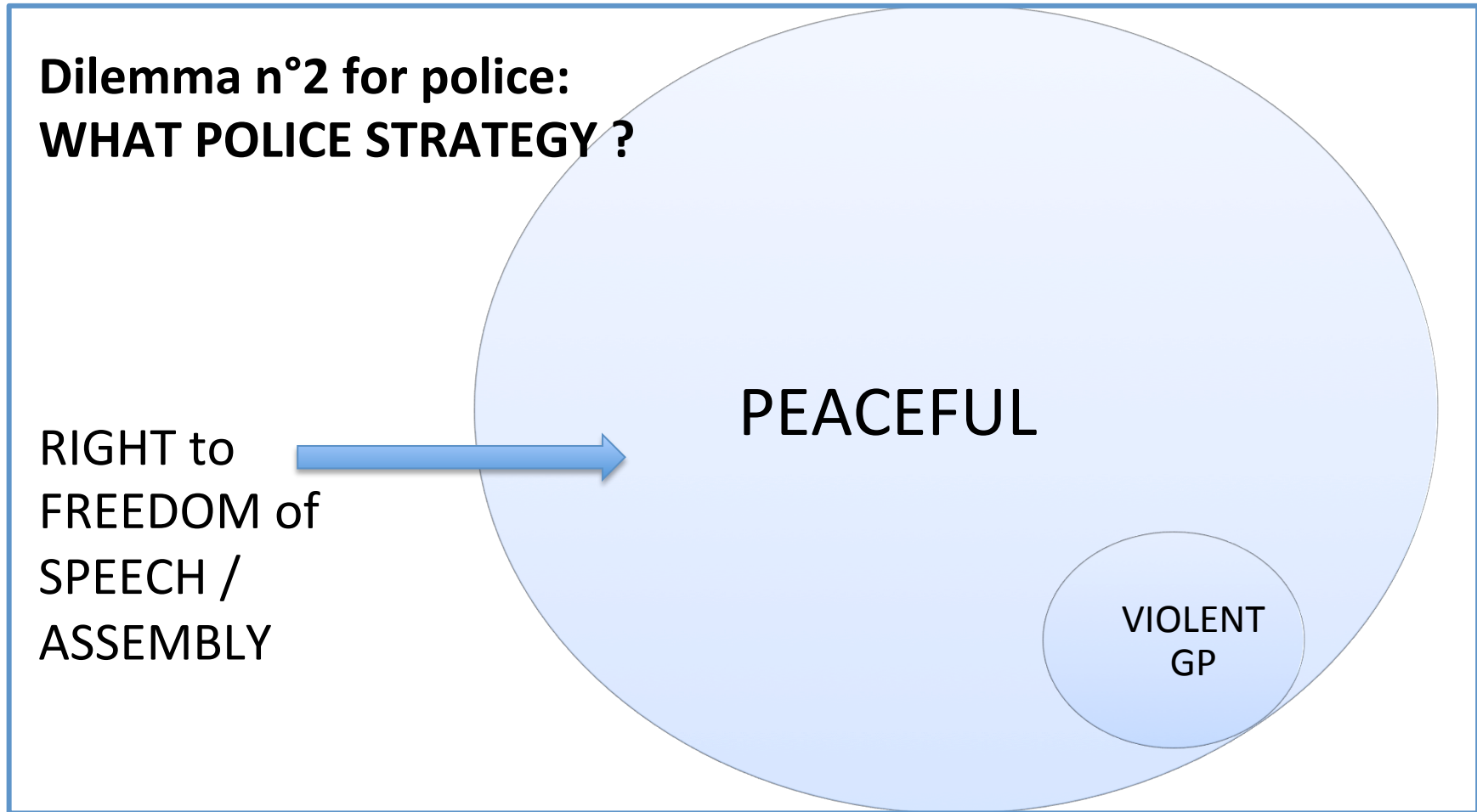
**Dilemma n°2 for police:
WHAT POLICE STRATEGY ?**

RIGHT to
FREEDOM of
SPEECH /
ASSEMBLY



PEACEFUL

VIOLENT
GP



Ex of Lyon, France, Nov 2014



Lyon, 29 Nov. 2014



Violent groups against protest



2 main legal conclusions

- (1) Ensure that existing national legislation:
 - - is CoE compatible regarding « lawfulness » of demonstrations,
 - - is holding police accountable for protecting peaceful demonstrations,
- (2) Ensure that police have powers/ capacity:
 - - to prevent disorders
 - - to track perpetrators of disorders

Legal definition & classification of events

Main classification key:

Collective criminal actions

Different issue at stake with definition

- (1) Legality of police actions i.e. detection and arrest is clear,
- (2) Public discussion is about the causes of rioting/ legitimacy of anger,
- At stake: definition of the nature of the phenomenon for preventing / reducing its negative impact,

Definitions of collective events made of criminal activity

- Rioting, urban unrest, upheaval, quarrel
- “urban violence” (RG, French Info Police)
- No European definition...

Proposed definition for rioting

- Concentration in time and space of destructions and attacks
- A collective action made of illegal acts only (\neq violence as a means in a larger strategy)

Preventing... what?

- Defining problems is a must for preventing them:
- => symptoms, proximal and root causes etc...
- However:
- A) Heterogeneity of symptoms in one event,
- B) Similarity of symptoms across different types of event

What does rioting consists of?

- **arsons, trash can
& cars set alight,**
- **shooting,**
- **explosions**
- **confrontations
with police,**
- **looting,**
- **assaults,
fatalities**

What you see doesn't tell you what it is

- Slotervaart



Montreal



Almeria, Spain



Clichy, France



Tottenham 2011



Police look on as a bus burns during the Tottenham riots. Photograph: Leon Neal/AFP/Getty Images

More descriptors of a riot

- Scale of upheavals (local /national)
- Sparked by police violence?
- Protestors' profiles and actions
- Localization (poor / rich districts)
- Politicization

Main types

	Organized	Not organized (clear leadership, structure)
With a cause (ideology)	G7/G8 meetings Riga (Janv 2009), anti gov.	Race riots (Spain) Gezi Park (Turkey)
No ideology	Mafias => Anti police/ judiciary	-1/ Urban upheavals -2/ Food riots => Weak organization, no sponsorship

Ex # 1: Greece

- Student killed by police ([Andreas Grigoropoulos](#))
- Rioting: Nov-Dec 2008
- Student Neighborhood,
- City center,
- Slogans (Caramanlis resignation),
- Strike, marches, protests on street

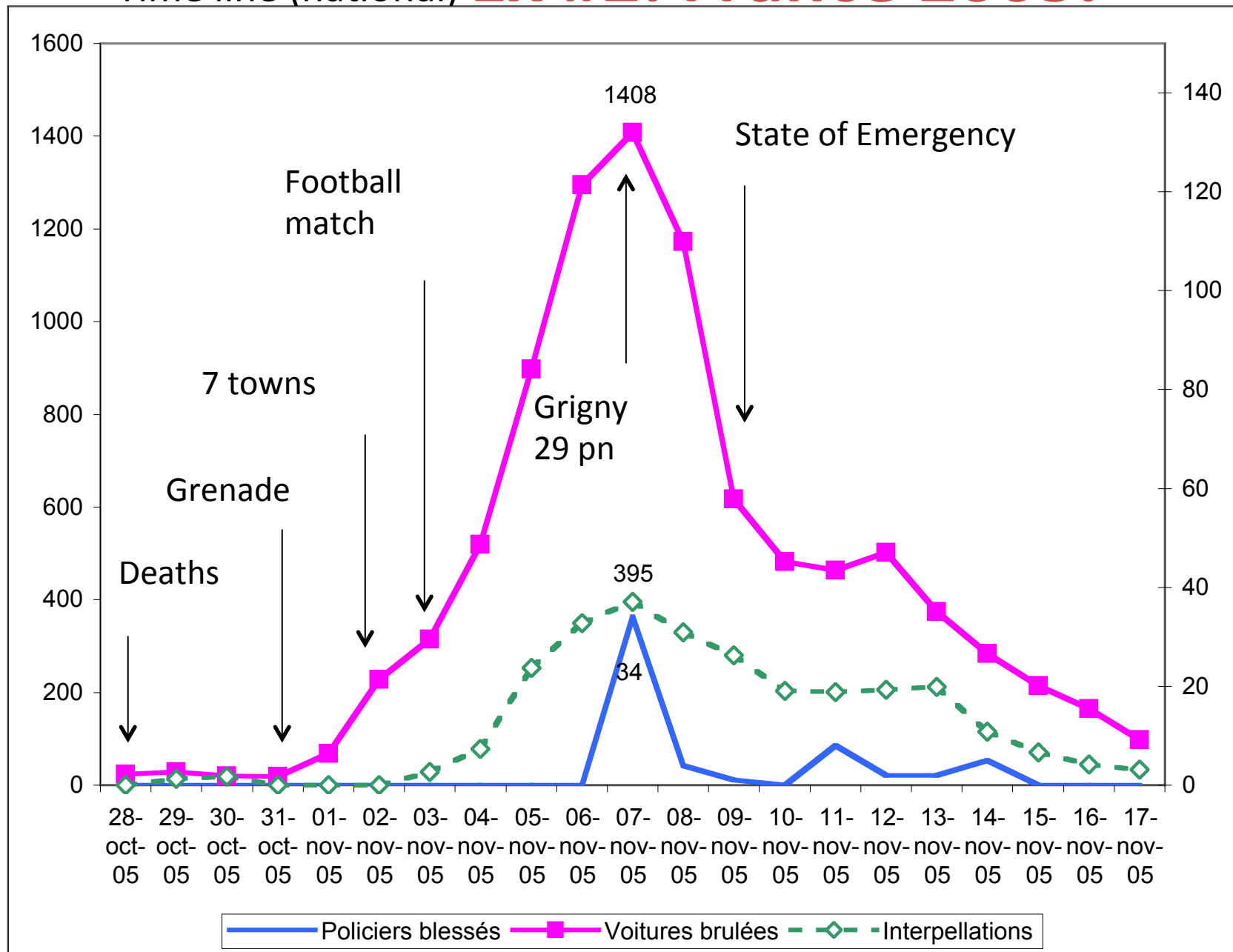








Time line (national) Ex #2: France 2005.



Riots not as a political movement?

- Grievances, enemy designation
- Symbols of power under attack
- Target specificity: low
- Day / Night
- Claims / silence
- Leader (no new “Cohn Bendit” ?)

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Demonstrations / riots as epidemics

Examples:

France 2005

UK 2011

Turkey 2013

How does a small event become multiple big events?

- (1) Spark
- (2) Conducive environment
- (3) Vectors (social media and others information exchange)

What can be a spark?

- Police violence
 - Feeling of injustice / something is wrong
 - Identification and anger
 - Vengeance
-
- Only one element of more complex process

What can be a conducive environment?

- City level characteristics: population, poverty, immigration
- Ideology of group: beliefs, desire to change the political order

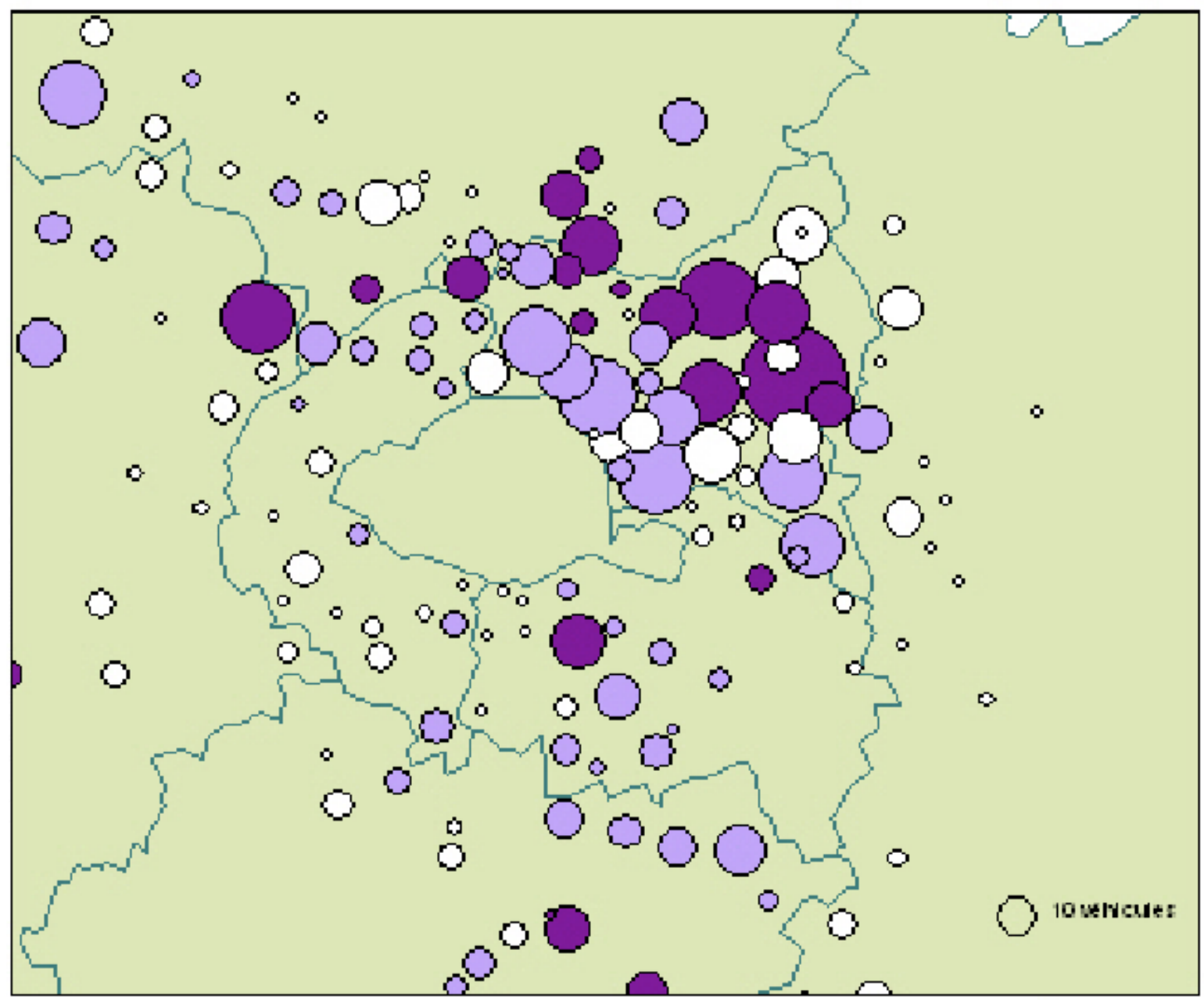
What can be a vector?

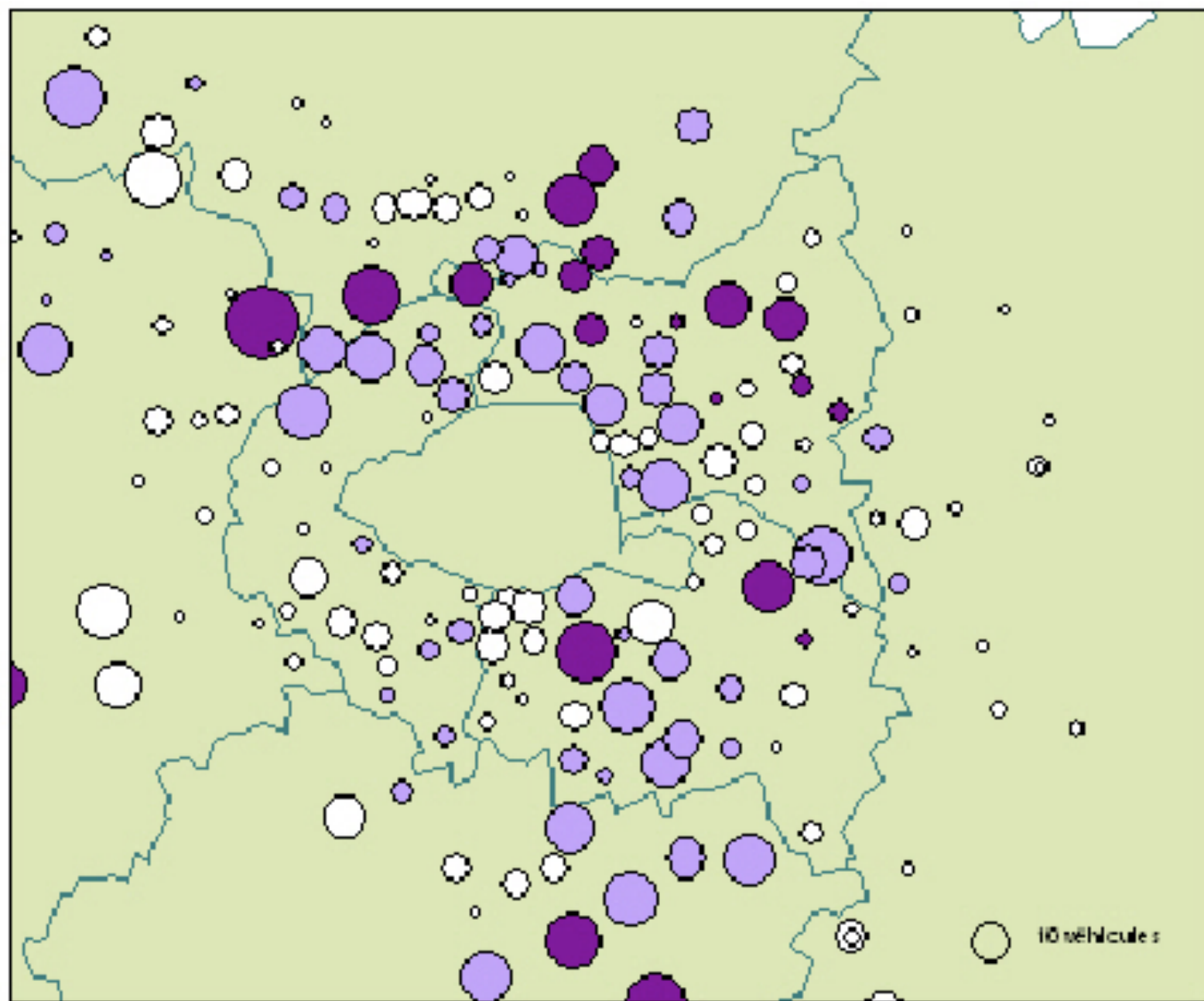
- Face to face interaction,
- Telephone,
- Social media
- = any means for transferring information

French riots from the US

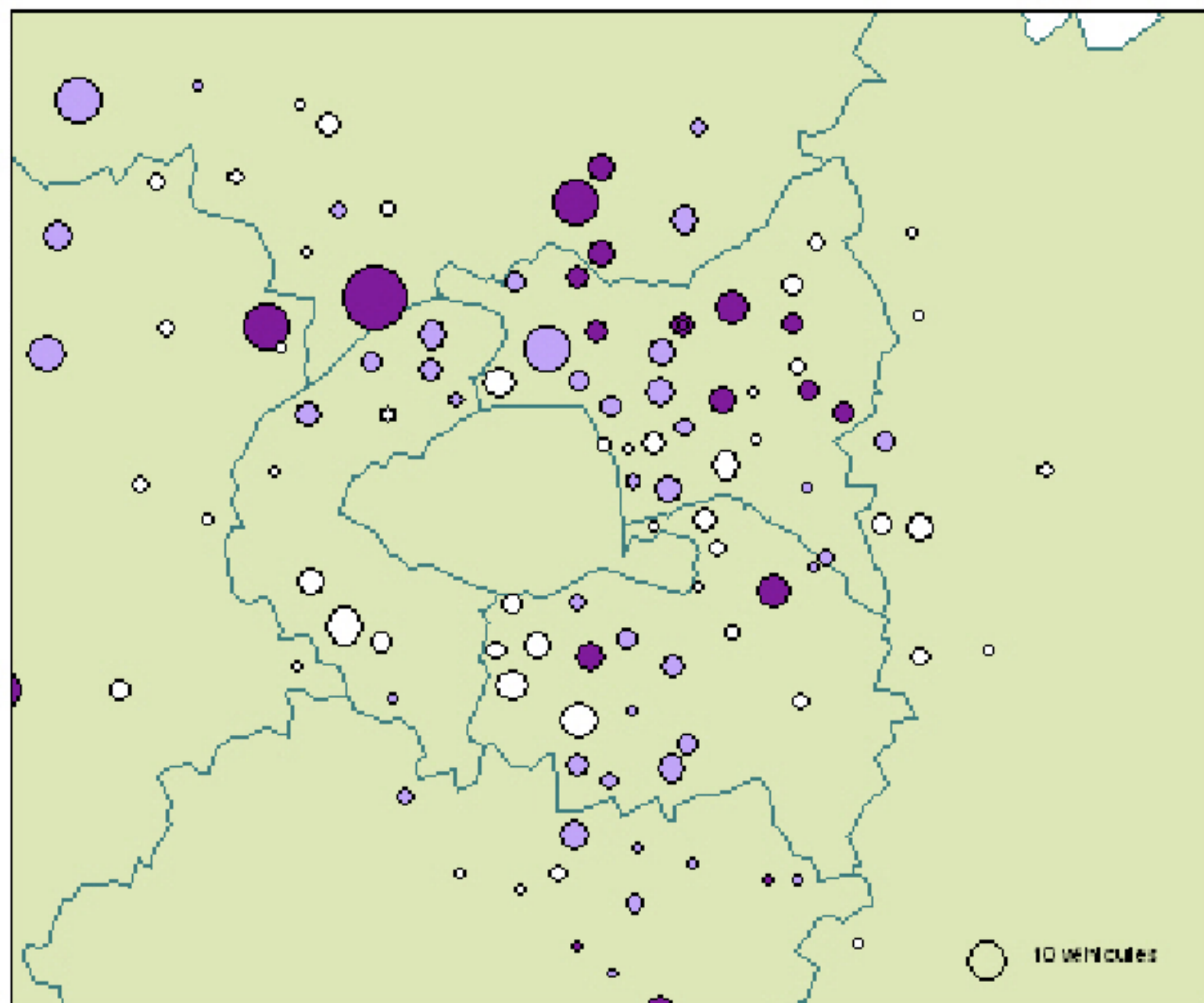


Période du 27 oct au 4 nov 2005

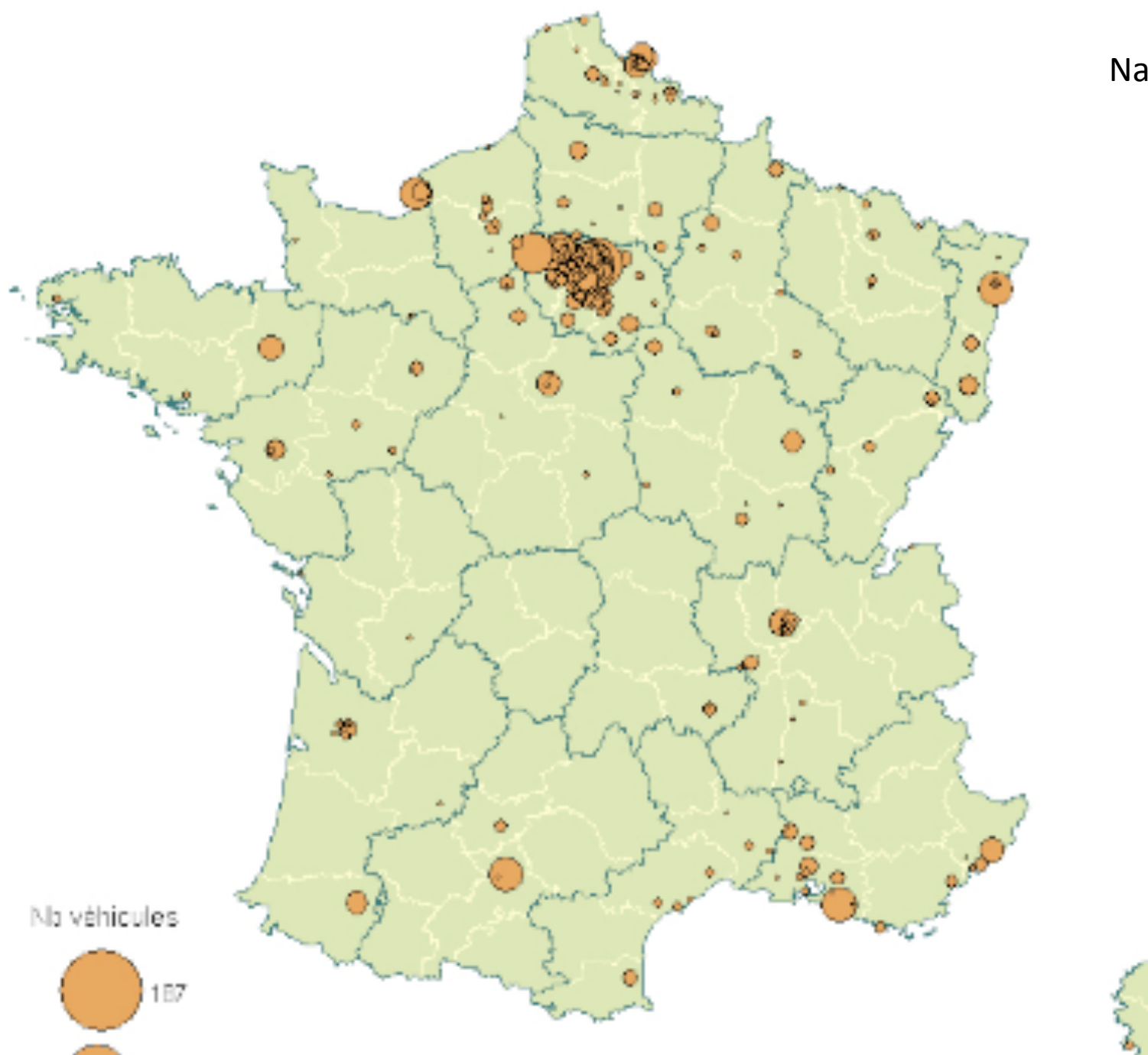




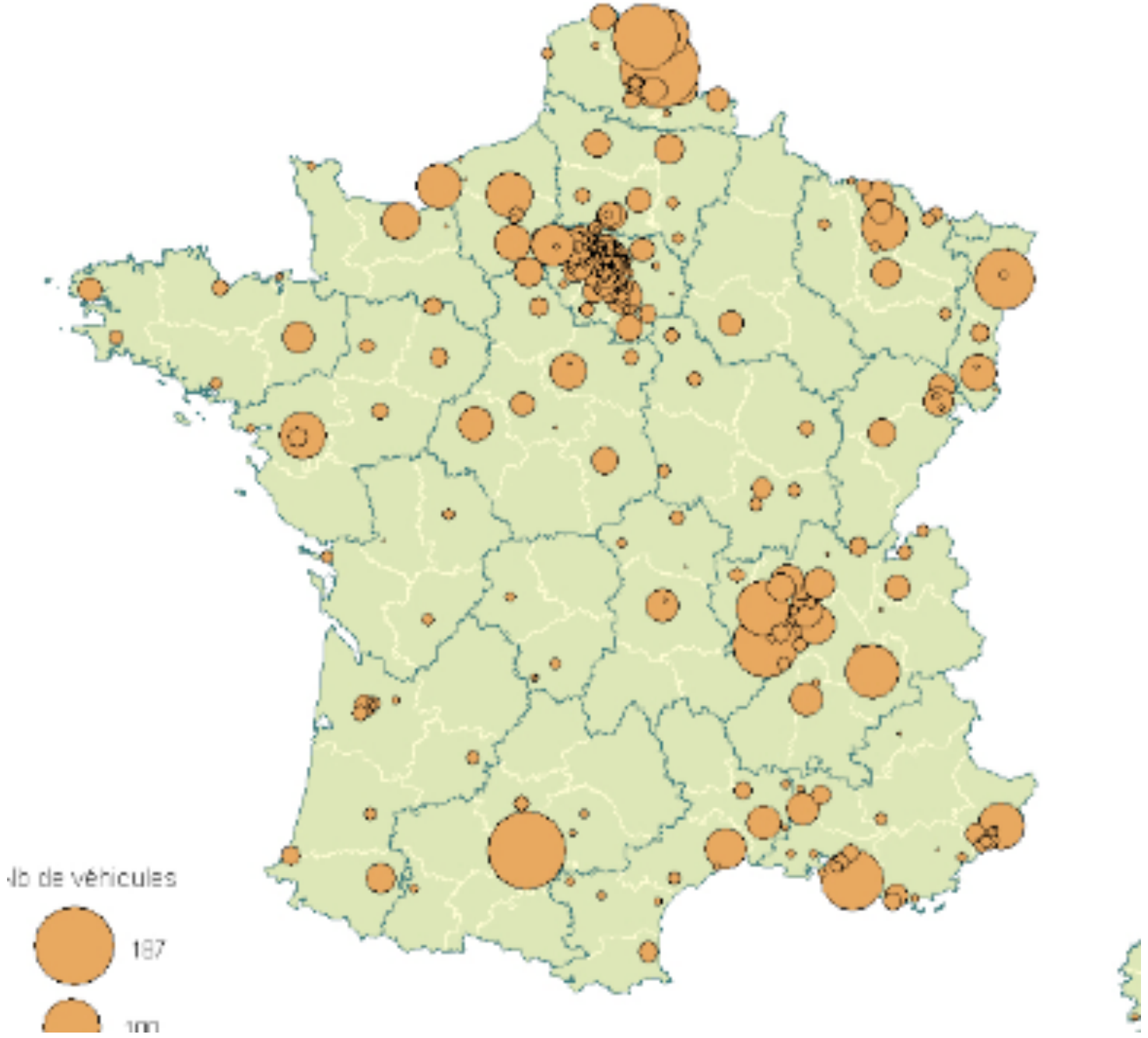
Période du 10 au 19 nov 2005



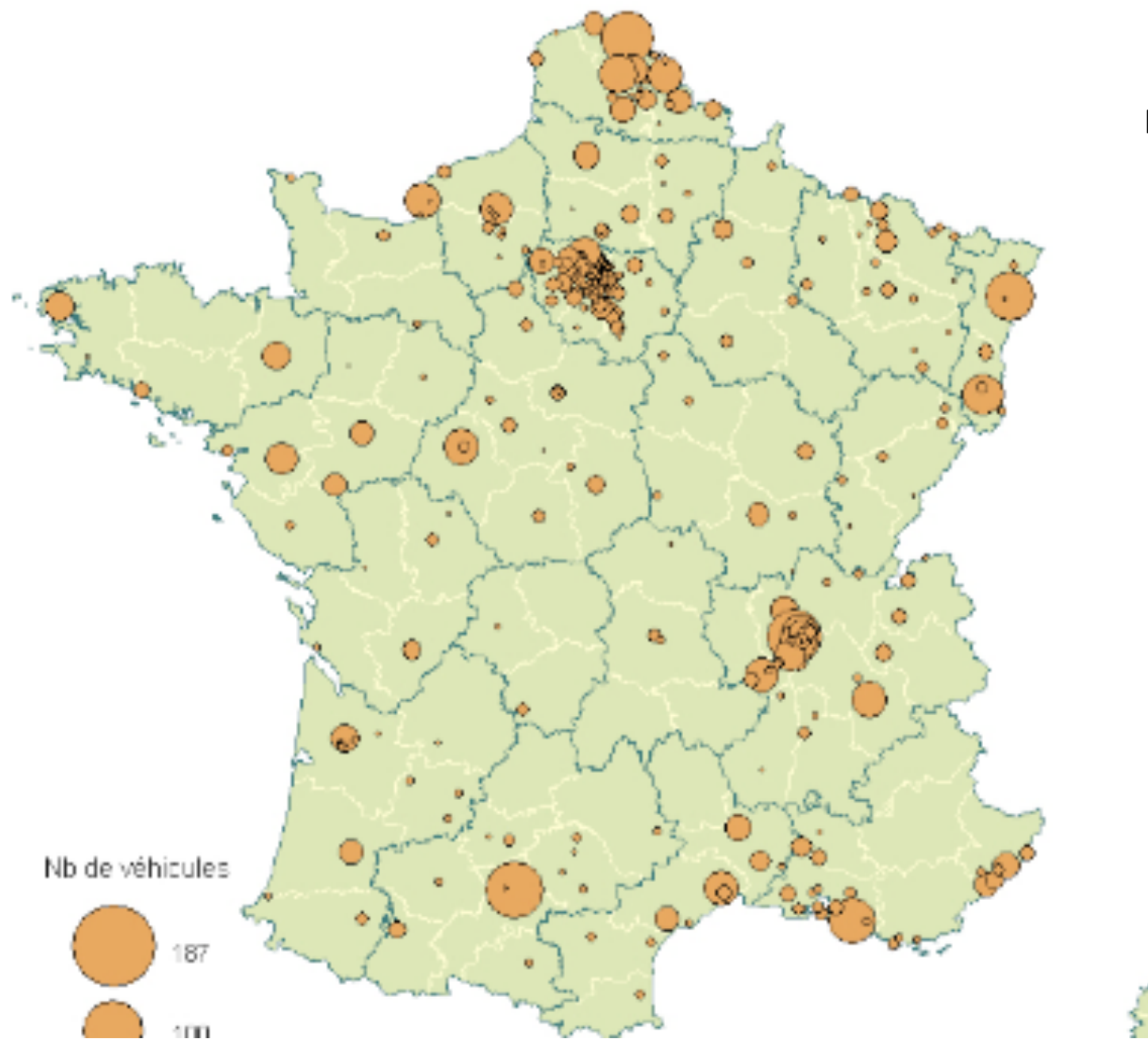
Nat 1



Nat 2



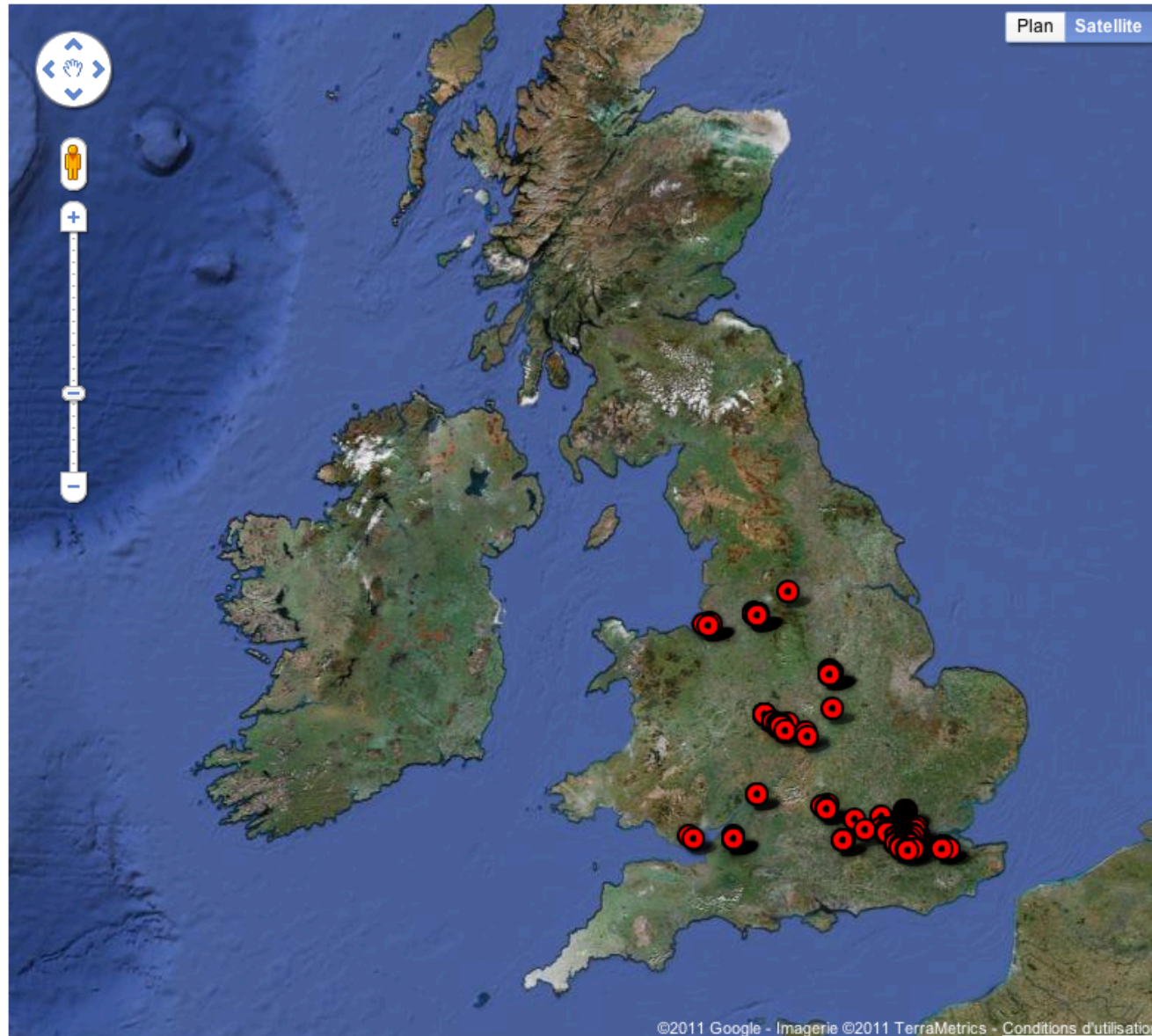
Nat 3



Ex #3: UK, 2011

- Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool, Gloucester (August 2011)
- **4 days**
- 5 people dead
- 2000 arrests

UK, 2012

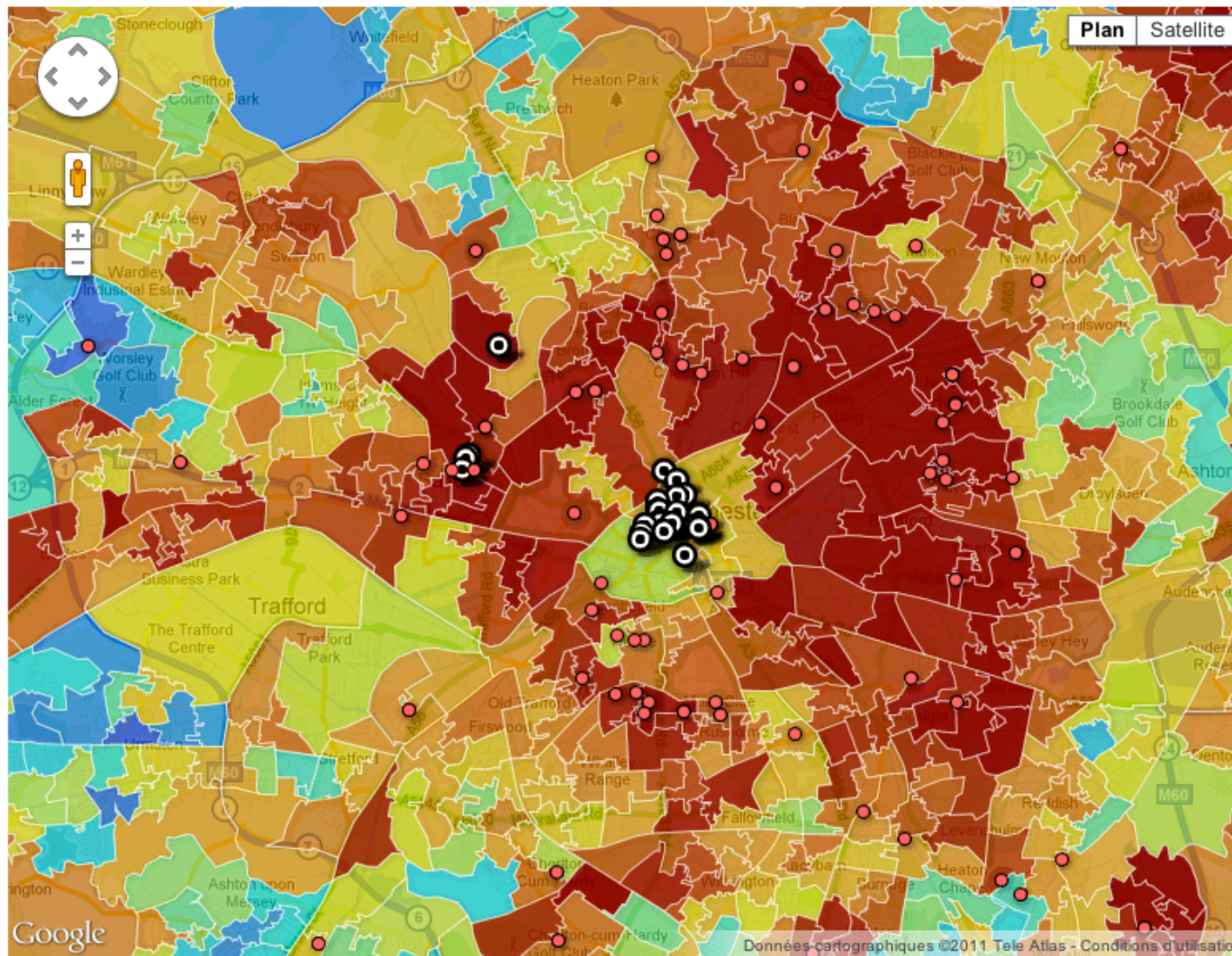


(2) Conducive factors

- Poverty
- Liverpool University (urban planning lecturer Alex Singleton):
- => The majority of areas where suspect live are deprived - and 66% of them got poorer between 2007 and 2010 (last survey)
- => 41% of suspects live in the 10% most deprived places in England

Indices of Multiple deprivation, blue (richest) to red (poorest)

KEY
● Riot location ● Suspect address



Ethnic composition

- The ethnic composition of court defendants in Haringey in north London : 55% were black.
- 3 postcodes of N15, N17 and N22, where ethnic minorities are shown as 60%-70% of the local population in the ward statistics on Haringey council's website

Justice Secretary, Kenneth Clarke

- "hardcore of the criminal classes" were involved in the riots, with 73% of those put before the courts having previous criminal convictions – and one third of that number having served a prison sentence before.

Summary

	UK	France	Greece
Location riots	City centers	ZUS	City centers
Geog orgin	Very poor	Very poor	student
Public protest/ sit in	no	No	yes
Spark	Death by police shooting	Death involving police pursuit	Death by police shooting
Participants	Mix of young people, (with crim.record & not) minority gps	Mix of young people (with crim.rRecord & not) Minority gps	Politicized youth
Politicized mov	No	No	yes
MoJ / Mol	Rioters as criminals	Rioters as criminals	?
MoJ/Mol preferred spread explanation	copycat rioting, gangs/ twitter	ZUS competition, gangs, cell phones	?

(3) VECTORS / DIFFUSION

-2 distinct questions:

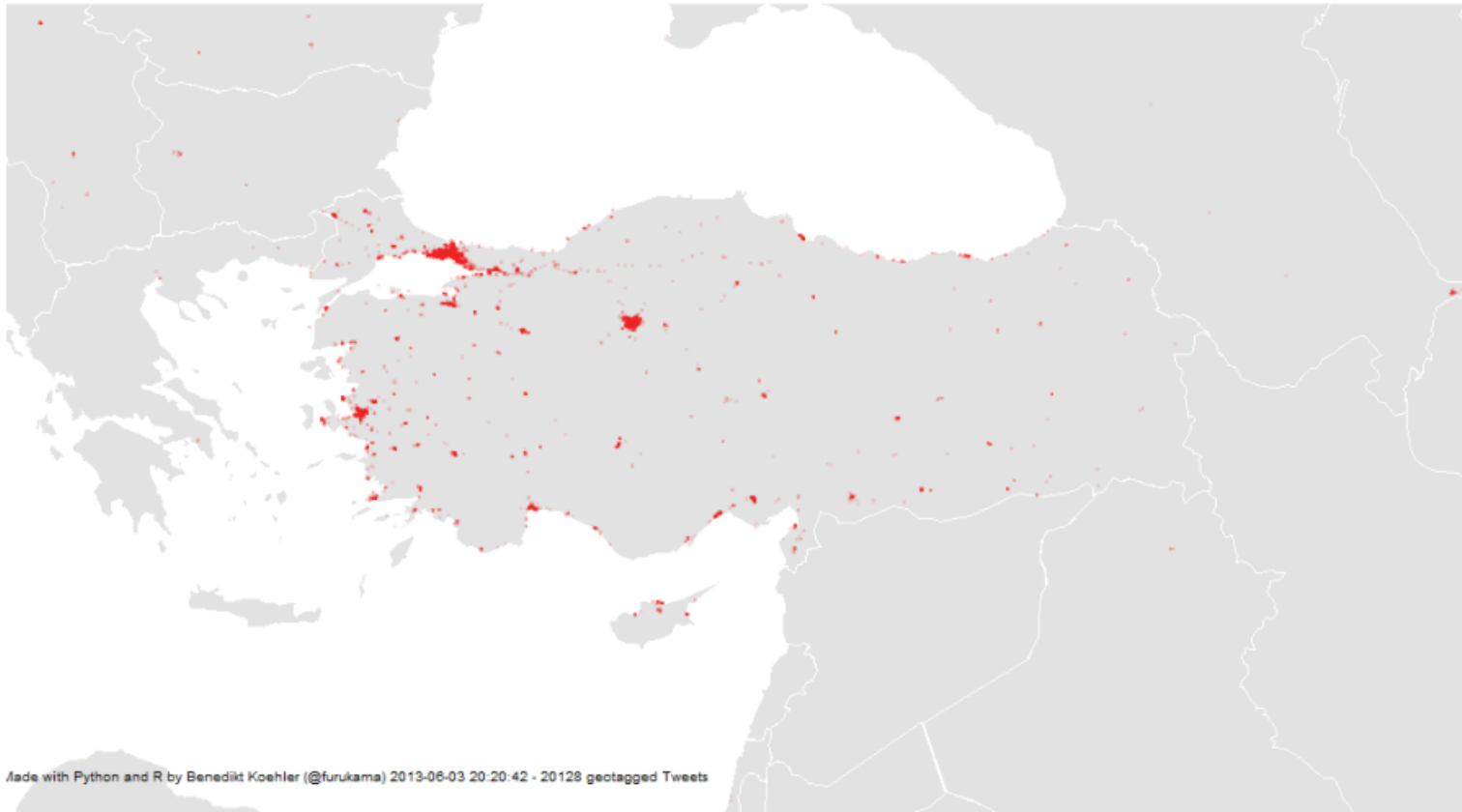
-A: What causes the first riot?

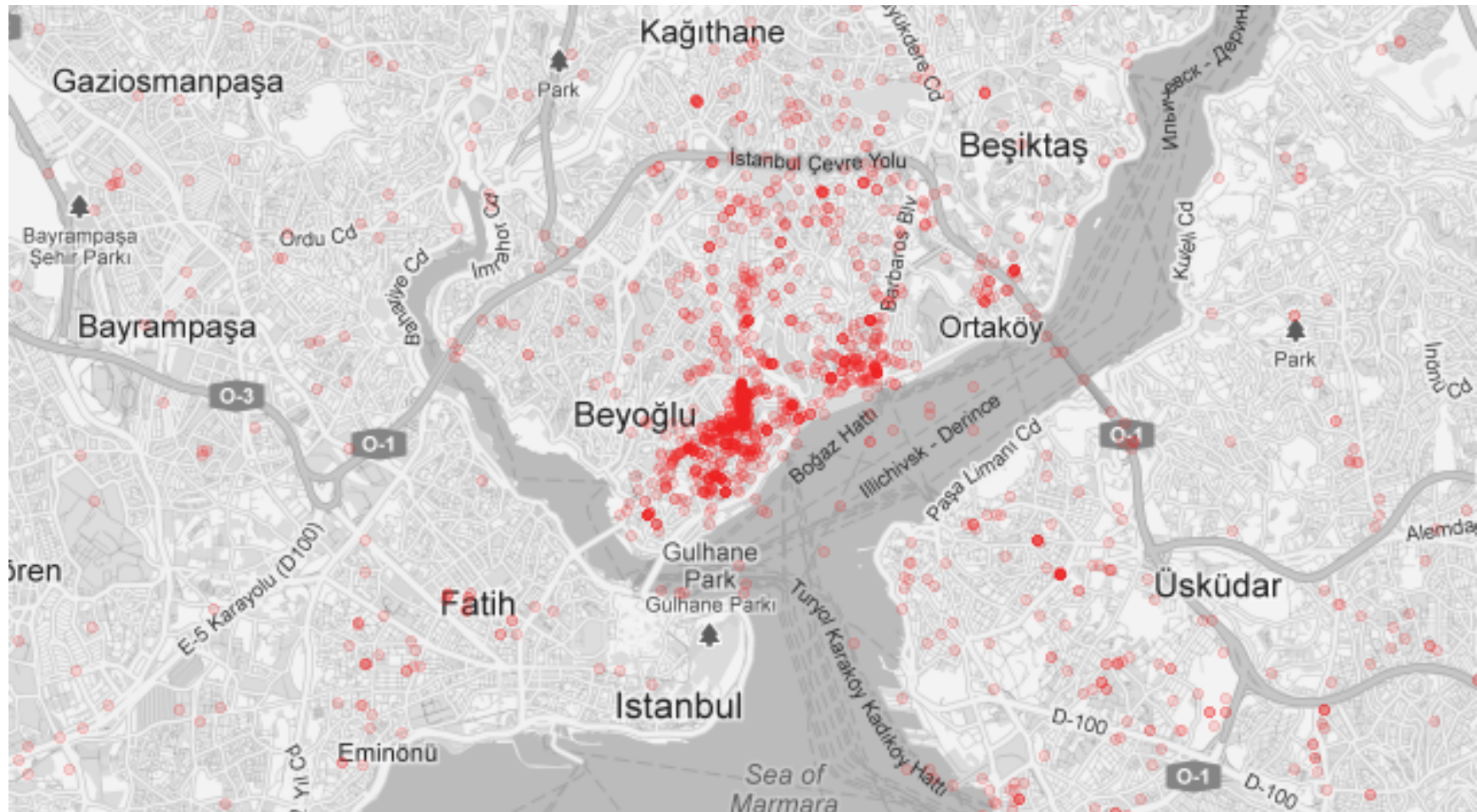
- B: why is there a second, third, fourth etc... riot? (diffusion)

=> What are the “transmitters” of rioting

On June 3rd, the activity has spread across the country

Tweeting about a revolution (Tweets sent from Turkey)



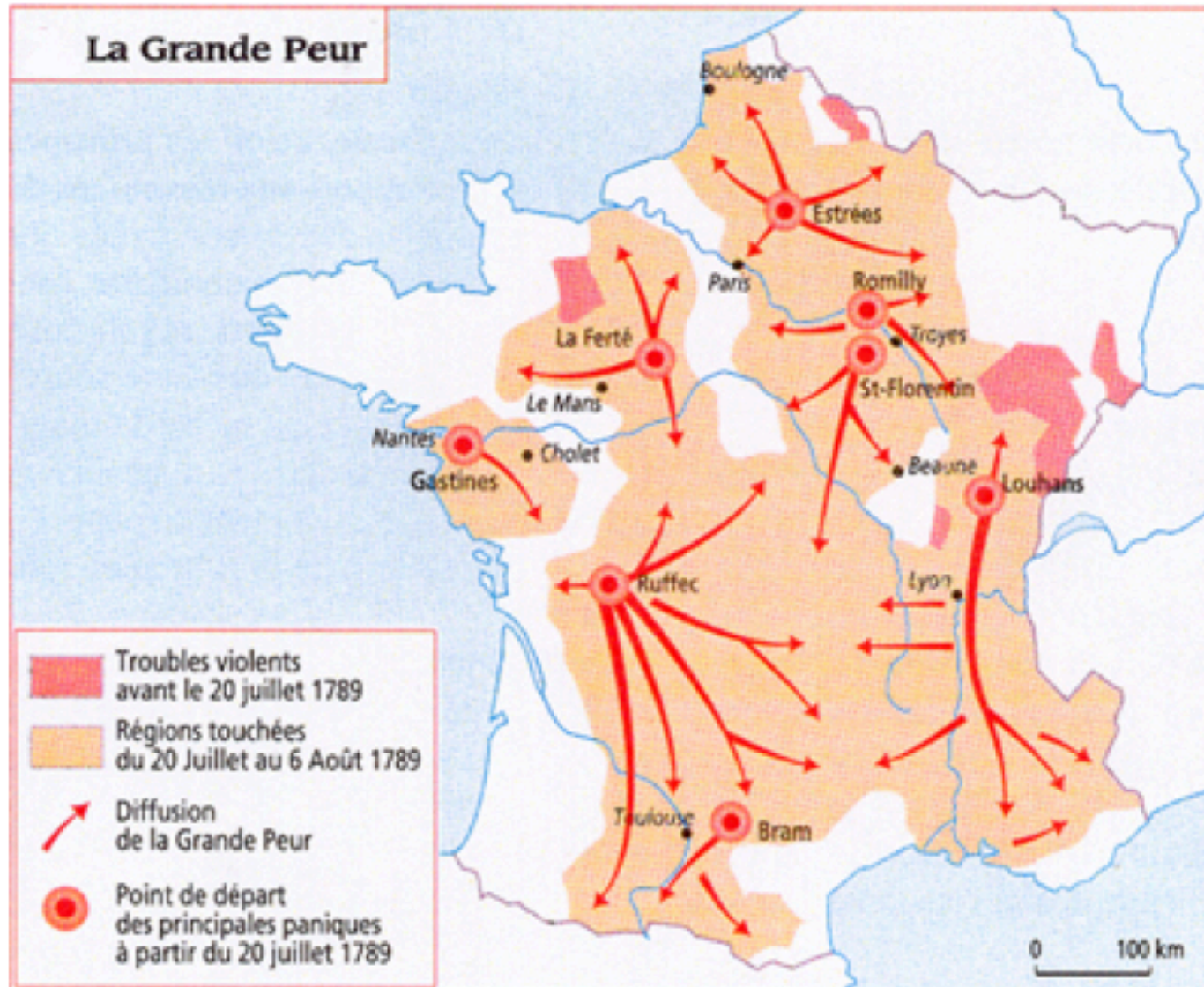


Social Media and Political Participation Lab (New York University)



Tweets in the first day of the Turkish protest
90% of all geolocated tweets were sent from Turkey

National riots without twitter...



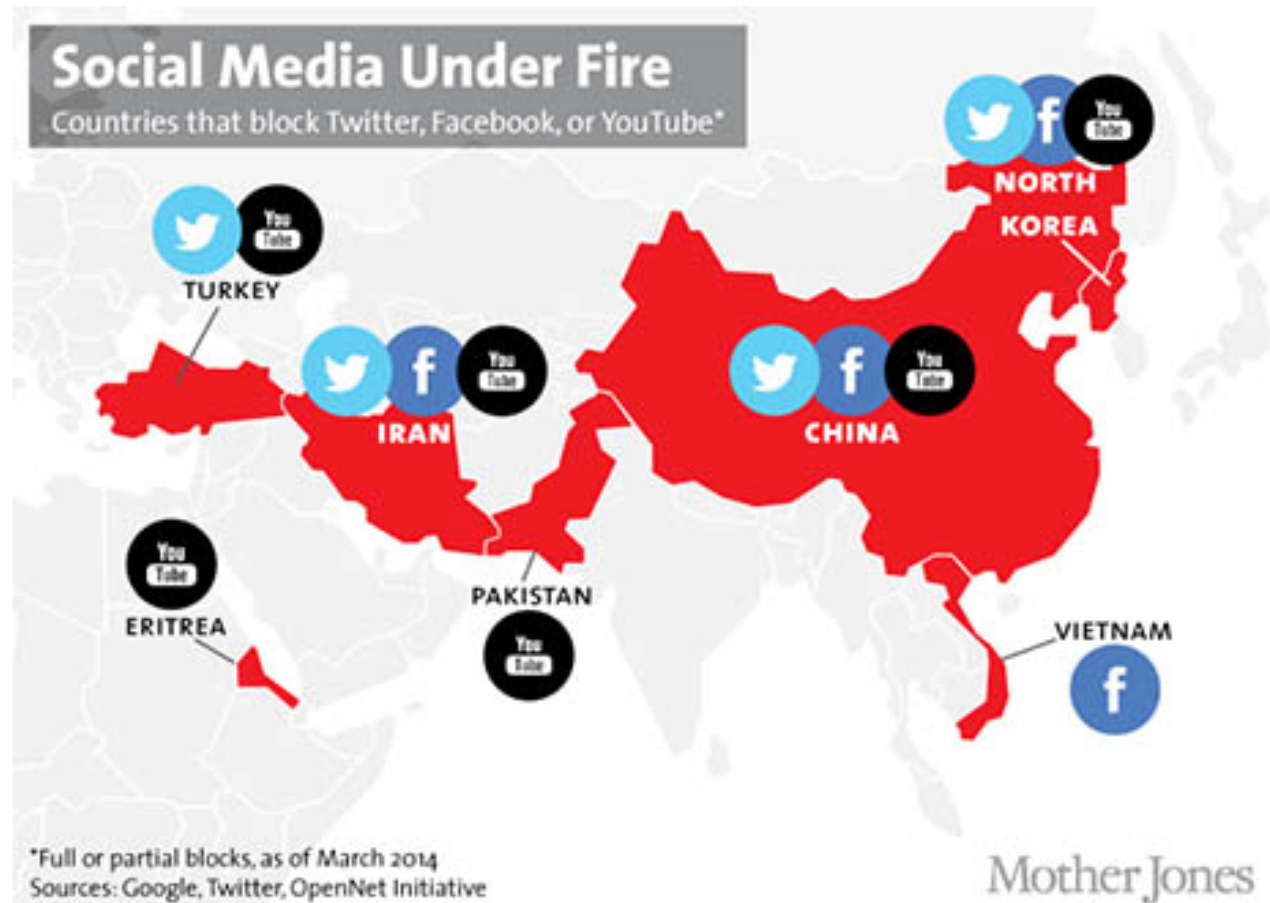
Chiefs of government

- Tend to discard the « conducting factors »
- Ex: David Cameron : "These riots were not about poverty," " That insults the millions of people who, whatever the hardship, would never dream of making others suffer like this."

Media: new usual suspect

- **French President:** role of cell phones in riot spreading
- **UK Prime Minister:** 25 of Aug. invites Twitter, Facebook, Blackberry to discuss their role in rioting.
- **Turkish Prime Minister:** « The worst menace to society »
- 25 people were arrested because of their use of Twitter
- Decision to censor the social media

Countries censoring social media



Vectors

- Social media are NOT the causes of riots/ demonstrations
- Use of social media correlated with involvement in real life situations
- Social media increase the speed of diffusion of a message
- Legal and proportionate monitoring of social media / internet by police for preventing disorders but global prevention strategies & intervention doctrines are a must.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Prevention of riots: global approach

- = Infectiousness of spark (emotion+severity of initial riot) / containment by police
- = Vectors / speed (dissemination means),
- = susceptibility of cities and individuals,
- = adequate government/ police management
- = the environment (weather etc...),

However, Police cannot solve legitimacy problem of governments

Thank you for your attention