

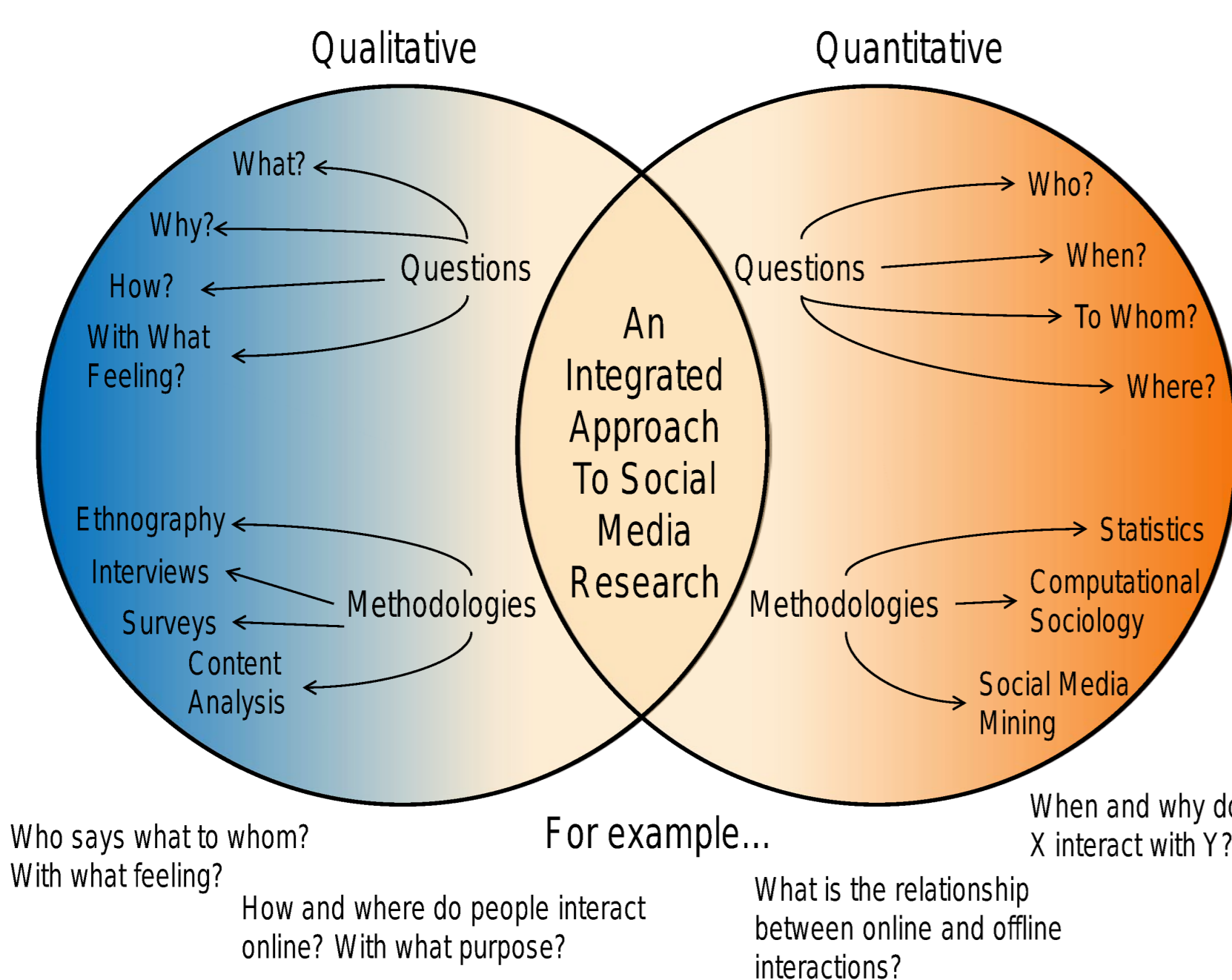
# Bridging the Gap: A Reflection on an Interdisciplinary Approach to Social Media Research

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## The Social Media Group at Barcelona Media

- **Interdisciplinary team** reconciling two distinct research approaches.
- **International researchers** with cross-disciplinary profiles: including physicists, mathematicians, computer scientists, sociologists, and communications scholars.
- Objective: **combine qualitative and quantitative methods** to generate knowledge about the interplay of social behaviour and “Social Media”.

## Interdisciplinary Approach to Social Media Research



- Only by answering both sets of questions posed by the different disciplines can a comprehensive picture of Social Media be drawn.

## Qualitative Research Line

### Grounded theoretical approaches

- Using qualitative and grounded theory-guided analysis to explore social media practices, attitudes and motivations [1].

### Study social and cultural emergence of Social Media

Analysis of ongoing trends in Social Media [2]:

- **Hypercapitalism**: representing the driving force of globalisation.
- **Hypertecnification**: individuals living an abstract life, cloistered in new technologies.
- **Hyperindividualism**: centred on premises like self-realization and subjective autonomy.
- **Hyperconsumerism**: favouring comfort and convenience above any other thing.

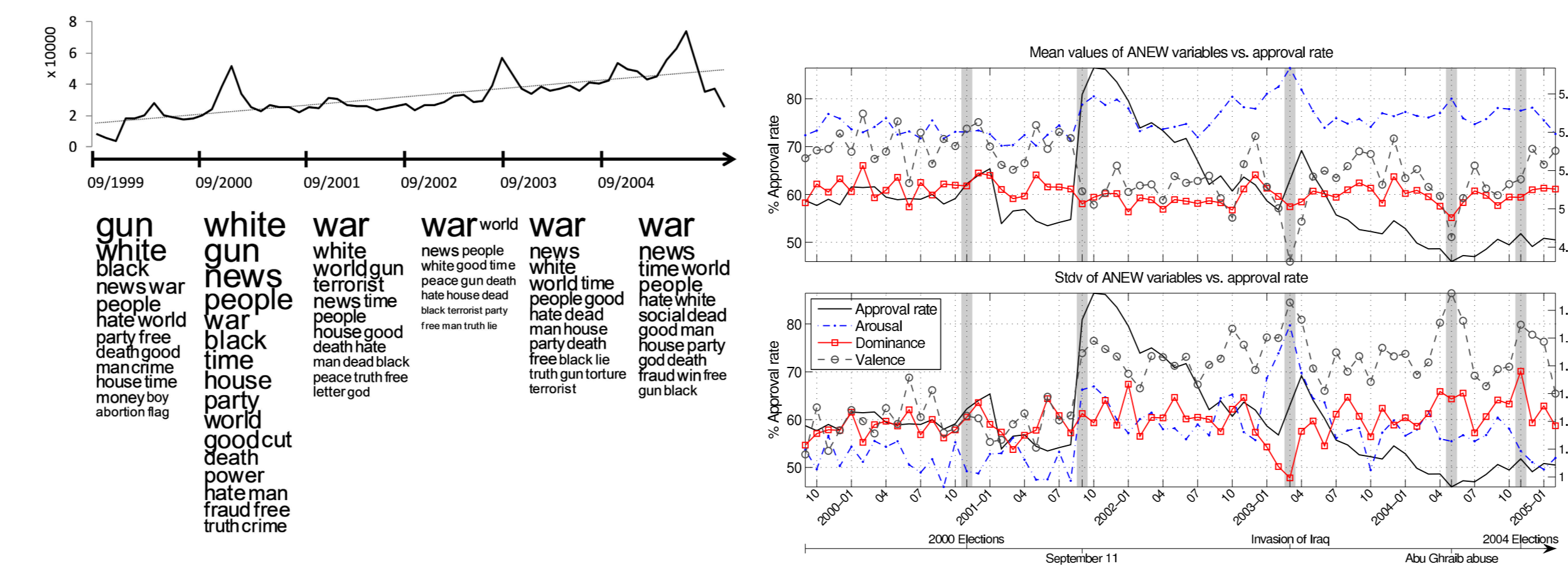
### Survey Research

Surveying industry experts about Social Media trends in:

- Value of information derived from Social Media.
- Monetisation.
- Role of Big Data.
- Impact of Social Media on the workplace.
- Interactions between the online and off-line worlds.
- Adoption and acceptance of Social Media across various sectors.

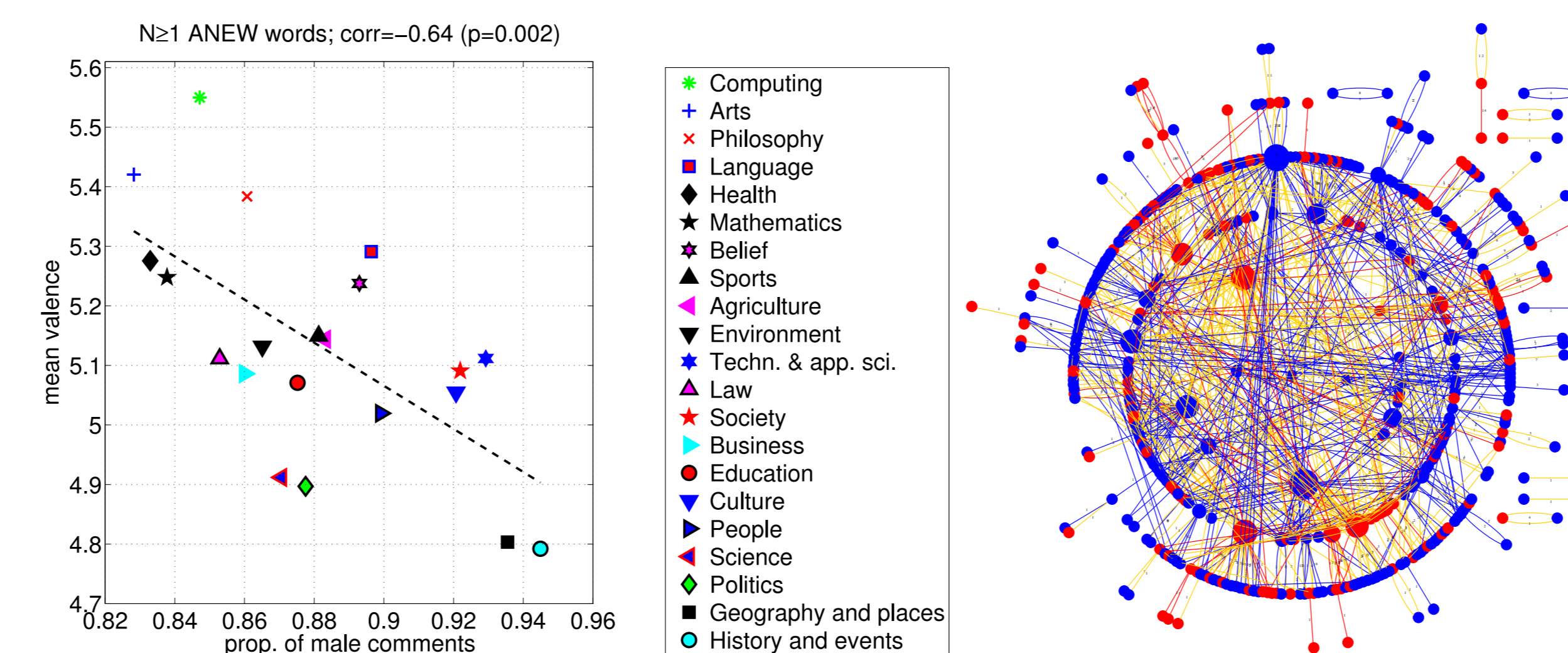
## Integrated Research Line

### Discussion Structure and Sentiment



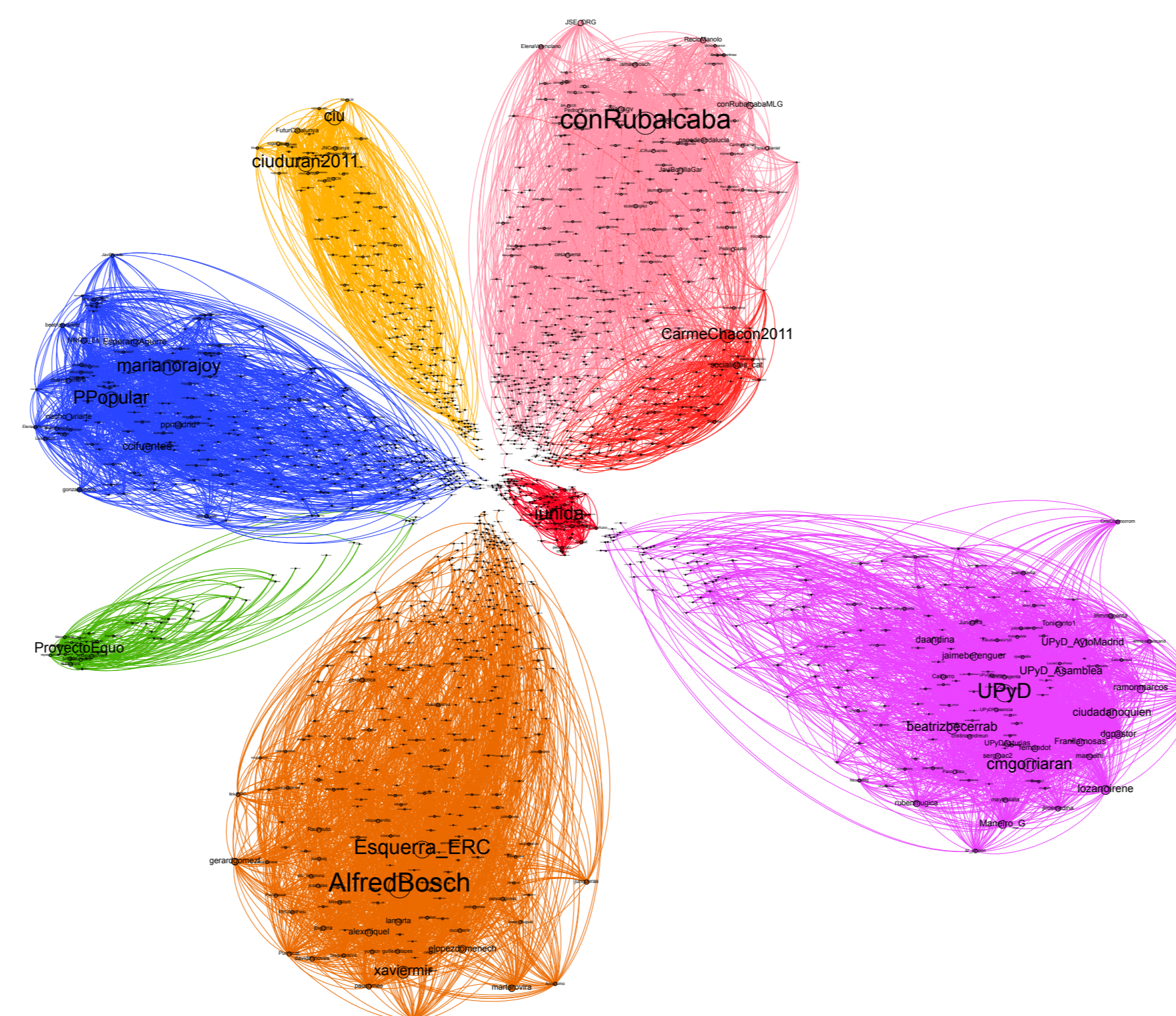
- Analysing temporal evolution of the emotional load of USENET discussions about politics.
- Study finds relation between emotions and public opinion (Presidential approval rates) [3].

### Interactions on Wikipedia



- Emotions in discussions on Wikipedia.
- Relations with topic and gender [4].
- Interactions between Democrats and Republicans in Wikipedia discussions [5].

### Political Interactions on Twitter



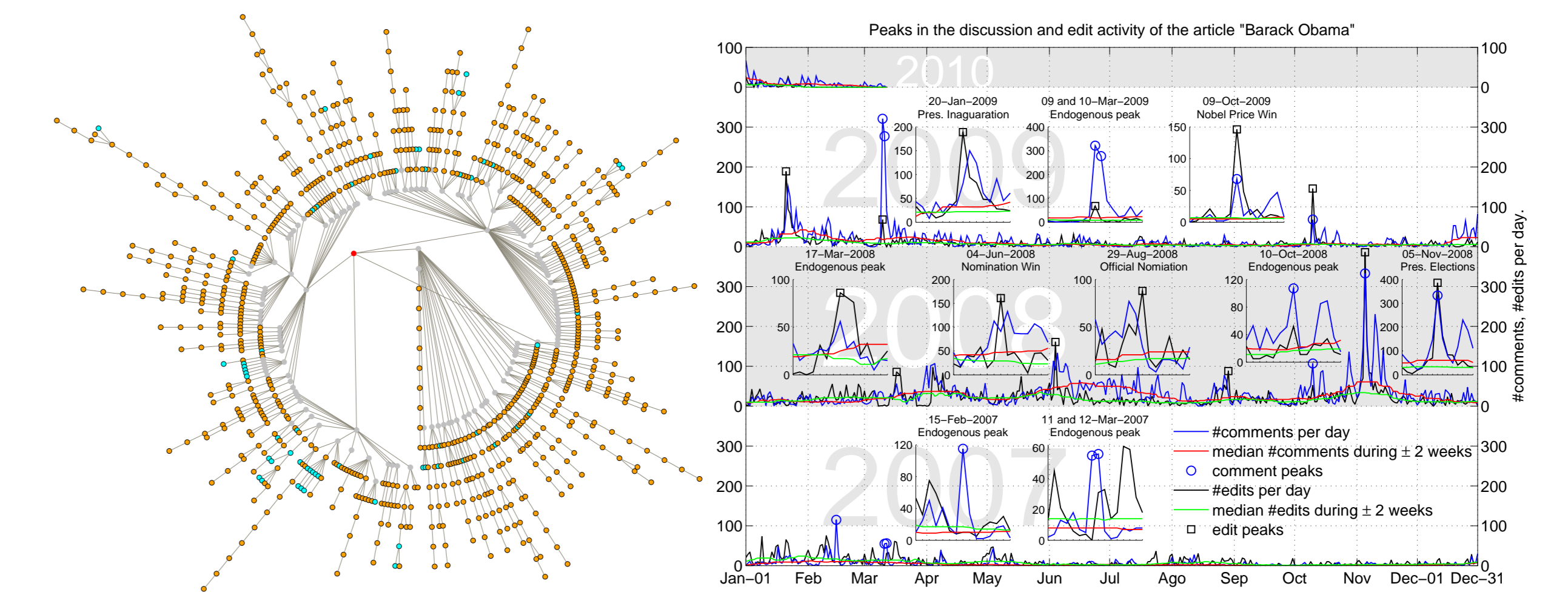
- Analysis of the Spanish Twittersphere during the 2011 Election Campaign [6].

## Future Directions

- Develop tools to enable sociological studies of big data.
- Design and develop a methodology for Social Media experiments.
- Study Adoption and use of enterprise Social Media.
- Social Media for a cause (Serious Social Media) [7].

## Quantitative Research Line

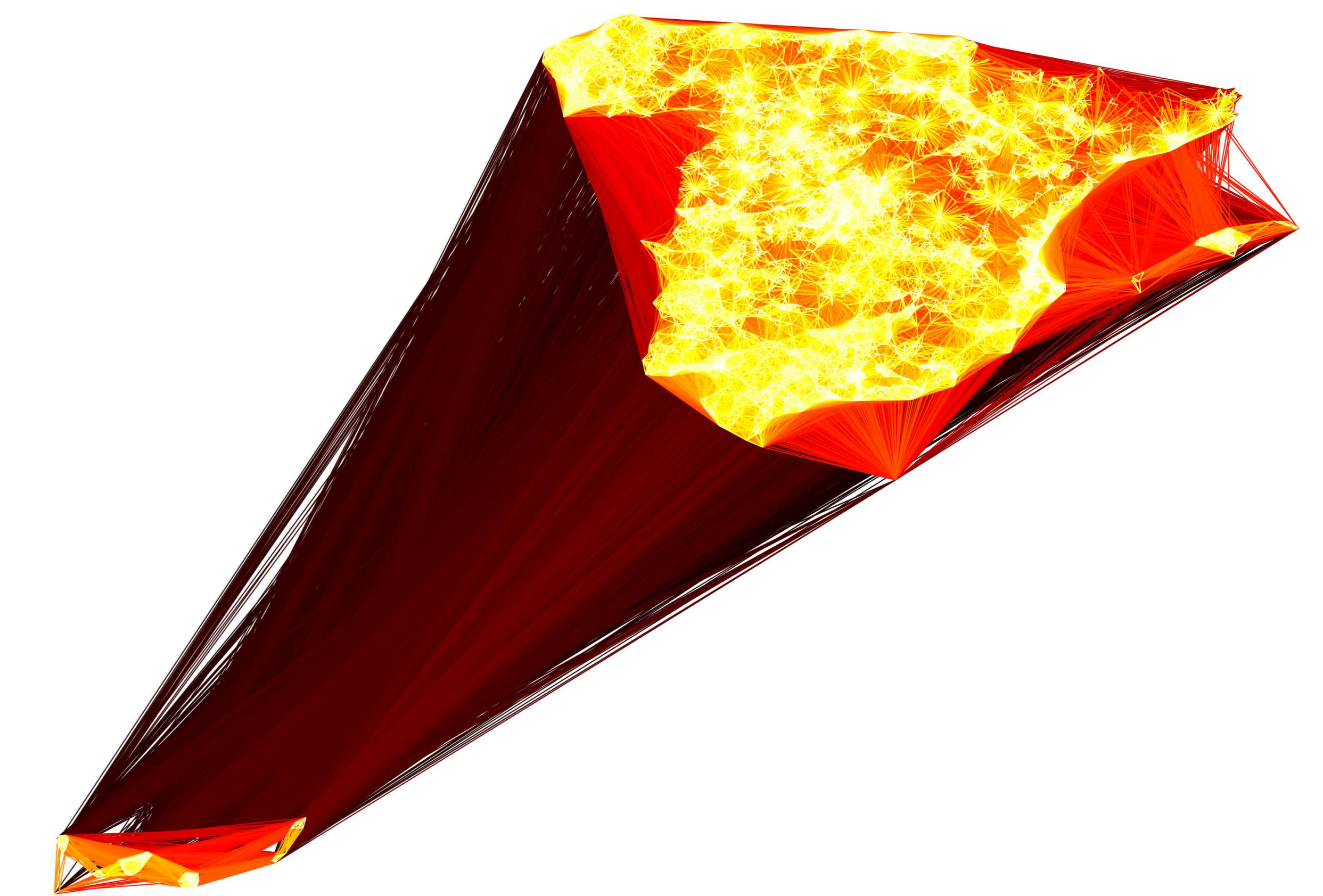
### Study of forum conversations



Discussion tree about “Presidency of Barack Obama” on Wikipedia.

- Analysis of discussions on Wikipedia Talk pages to identify the most discussed articles [8].
- Measure peaks and growth in complexity in the time evolution of Wikipedia discussions [9].
- Generative Model for such discussion cascades to parametrise discussion spaces [10].

## Social Network Analysis



- Geo-spatial map of friendship connections on Tuenti (a Spanish social networking site).
- Part of a study done for the Spanish government about Social Media usage in Spain [11].
- Extended to study influence of distance and tie-strength in social networks [12].

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