School of Applied Linguistics

Interdisciplinary Energy Research Board ZERB

Common Grounds of the Energy Transition

How Public Discourses Shape Our Democratic Future

Swiss-US Energy Innovation Days, 6-9 October 2019

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Swiss Federal Office of Energy

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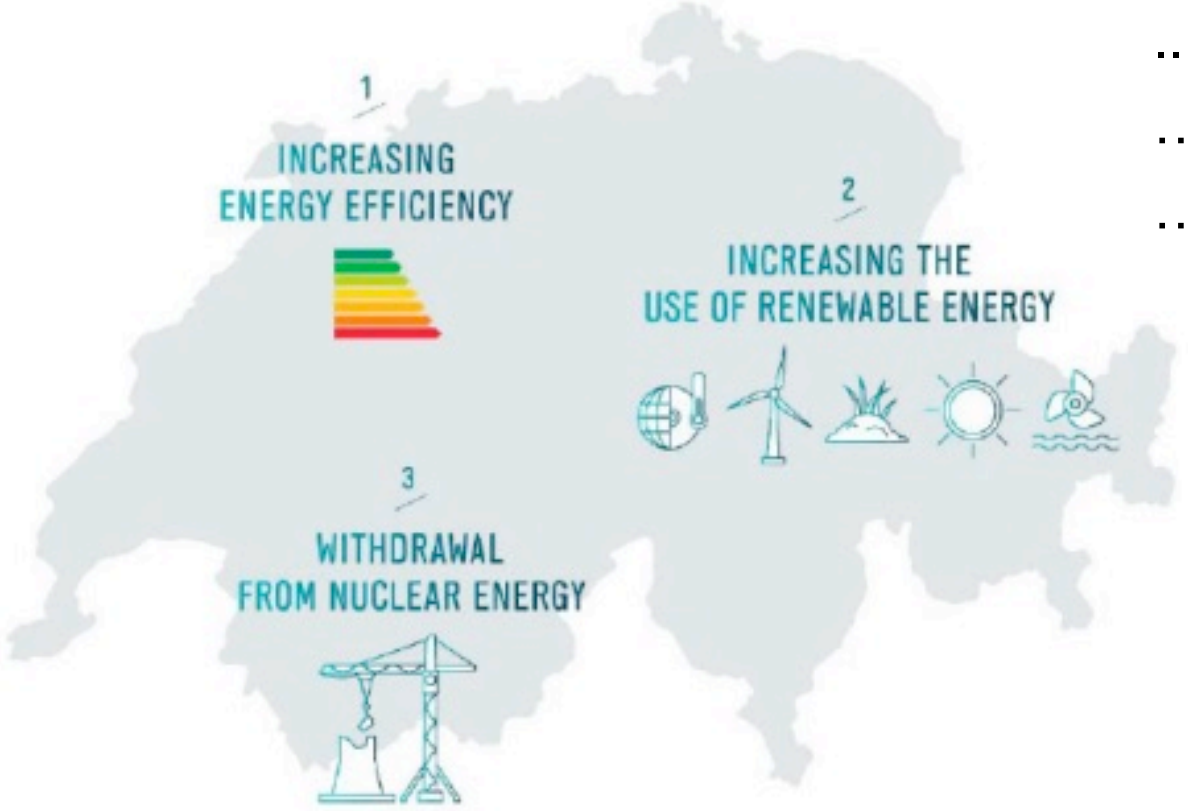
What are we talking about?
Public discourses and the energy transition

Public discourses about energy policies play a key role in the successful implementation of the energy transition, especially for …

... decentralized markets

… multi-level democracies

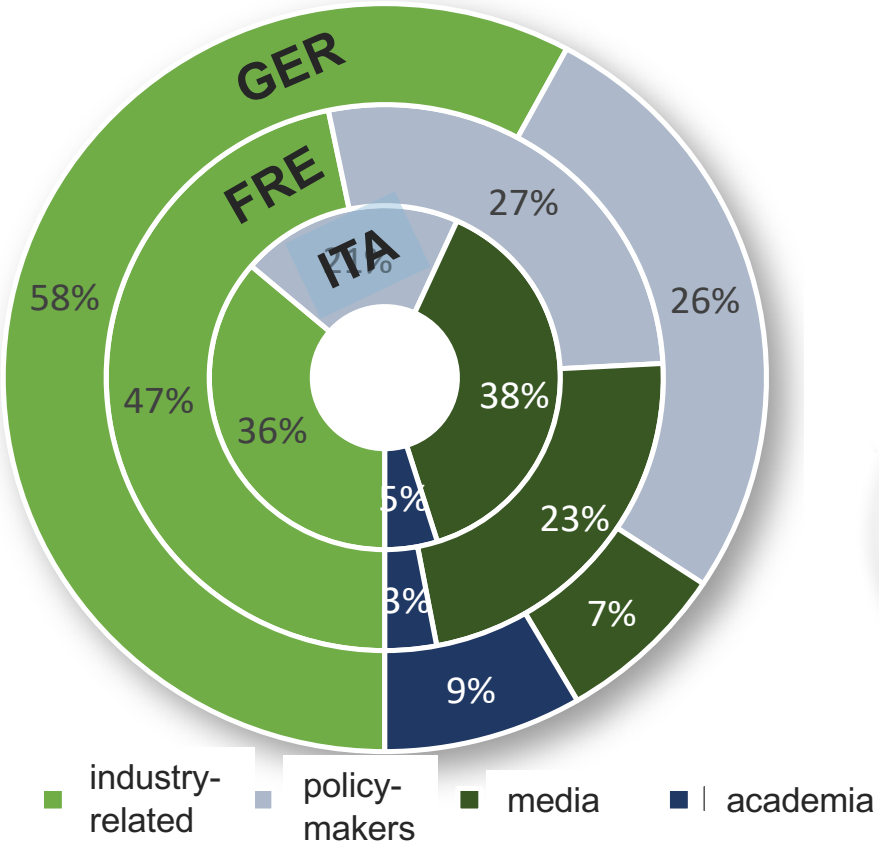
… inter-/transdisciplinary innovation systems



Visualization of main objectives of the Swiss energy strategy 2050.

How do we deal with this?
Modelling multilingual public discourses

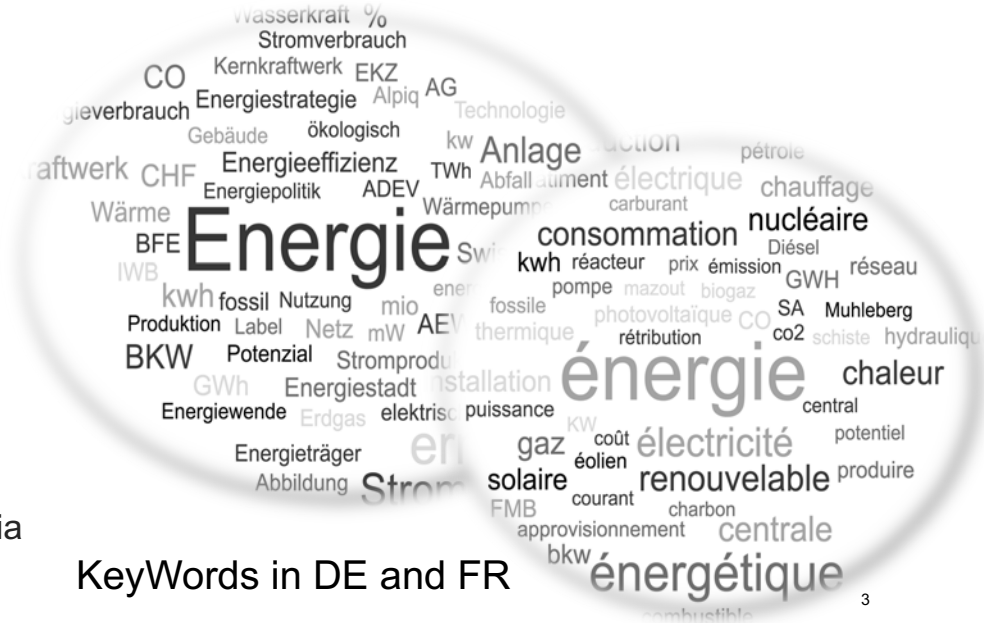
The project *Energy Discourses in Switzerland* focuses on the patterns of language use related to energy policy, based on a multilingual corpus (Swiss-AL-C) with …



… over 300 sources

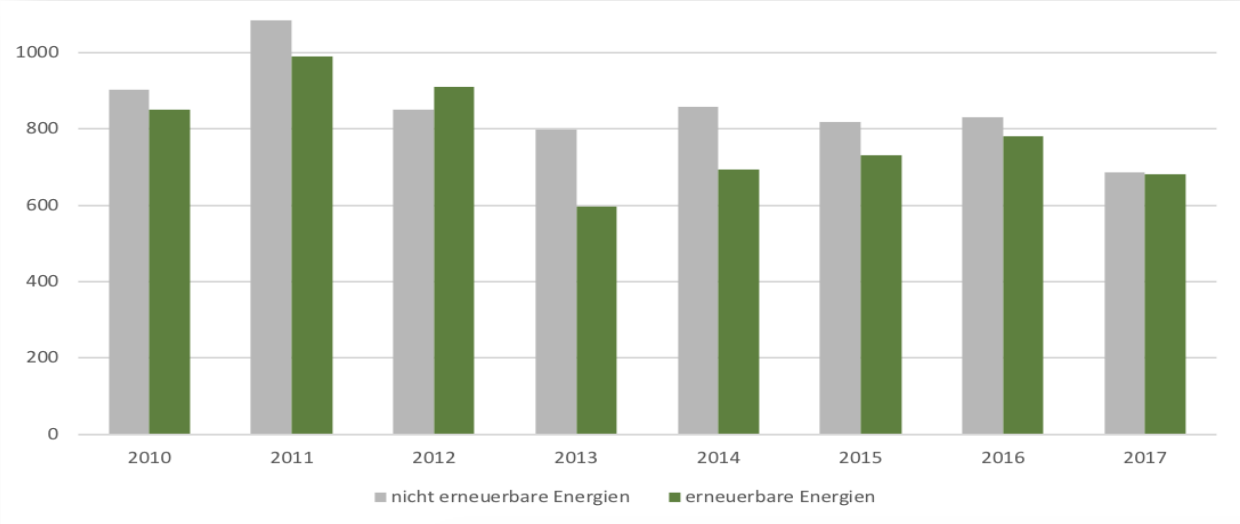
… 3.75 million texts (since 2010)

… linguistic annotations

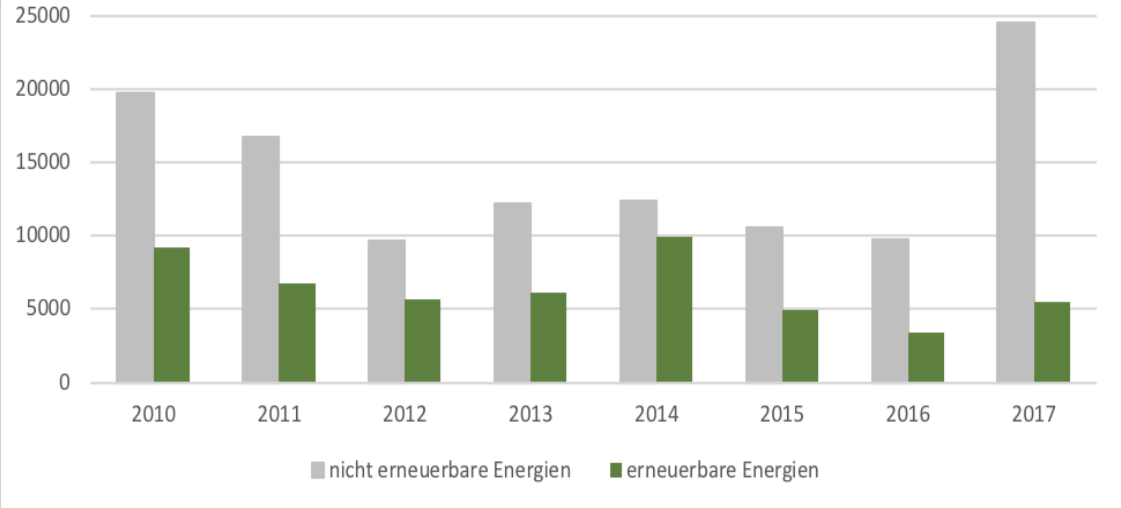


KeyWords in DE and FR

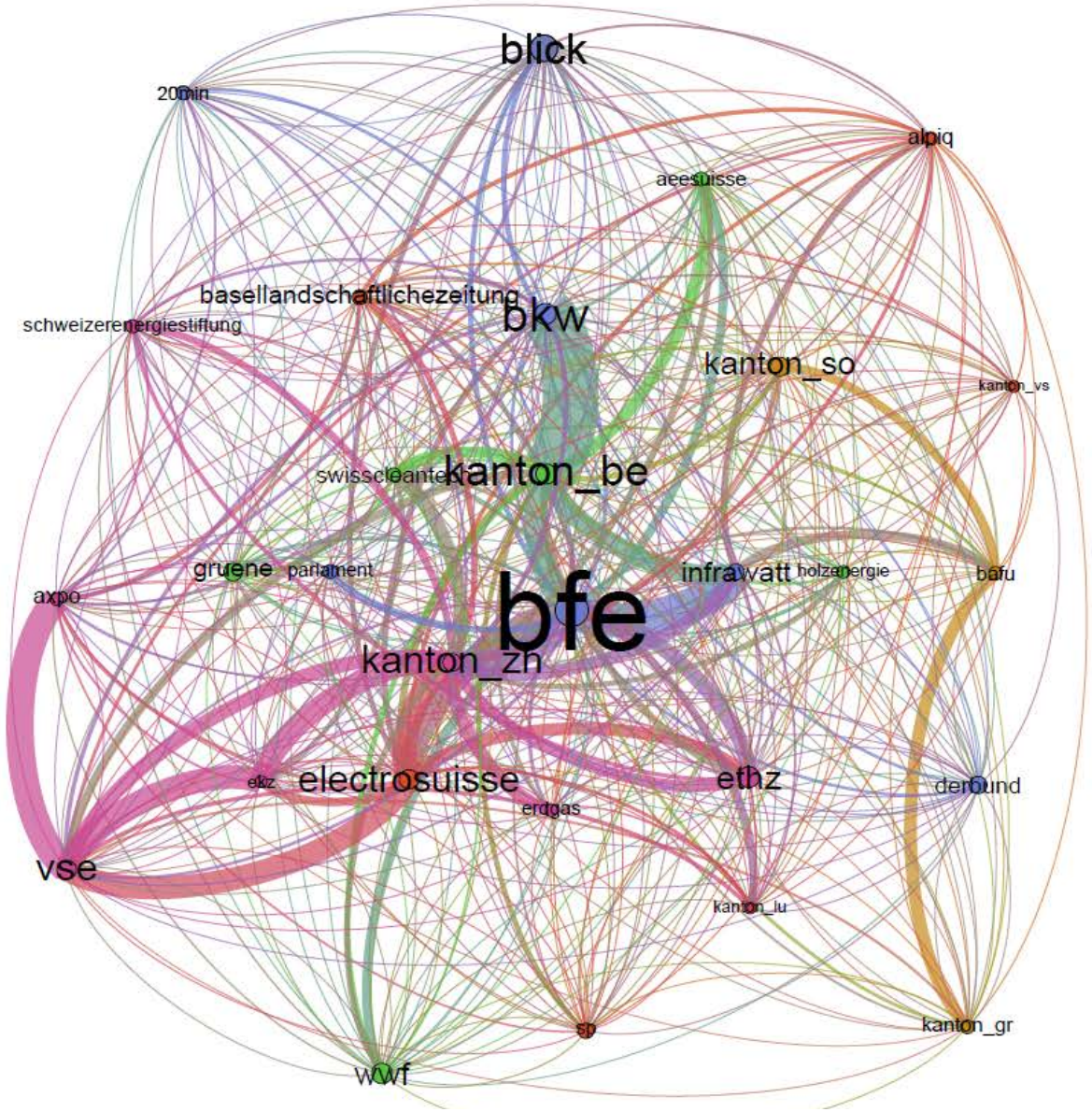
What are the findings so far?
Marking contexts of non-renewables / renewables



Relative frequencies of referencies to non-renew-ables and renewables in GER and FRE

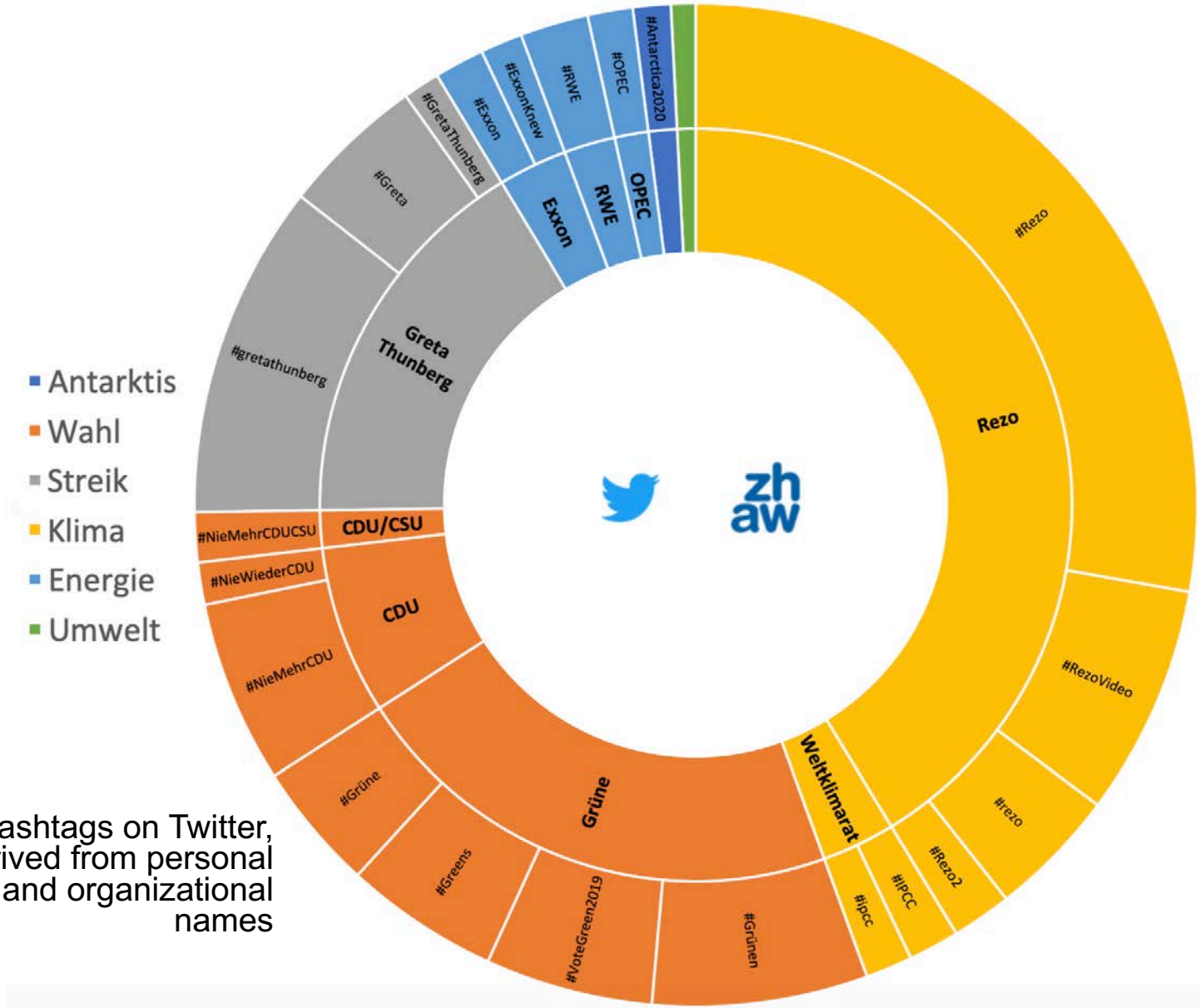


What are the findings so far?
Actor Network constituted by named references



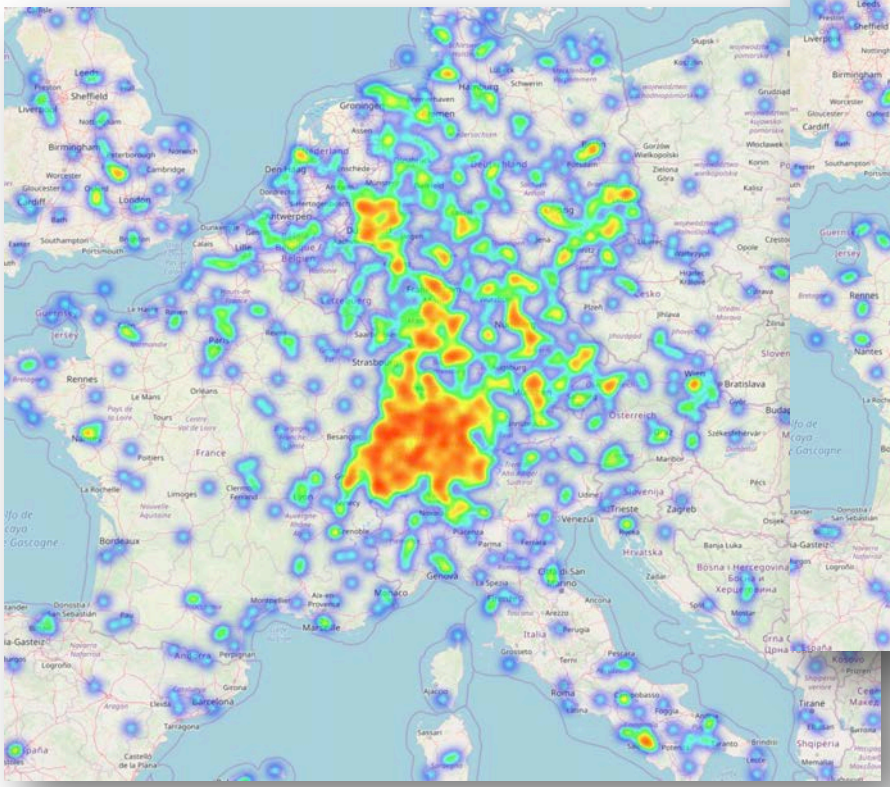
Mutually named references in GER
(cluster >80)

What are the findings so far?
Hashtags on climate, environmental, energy policy

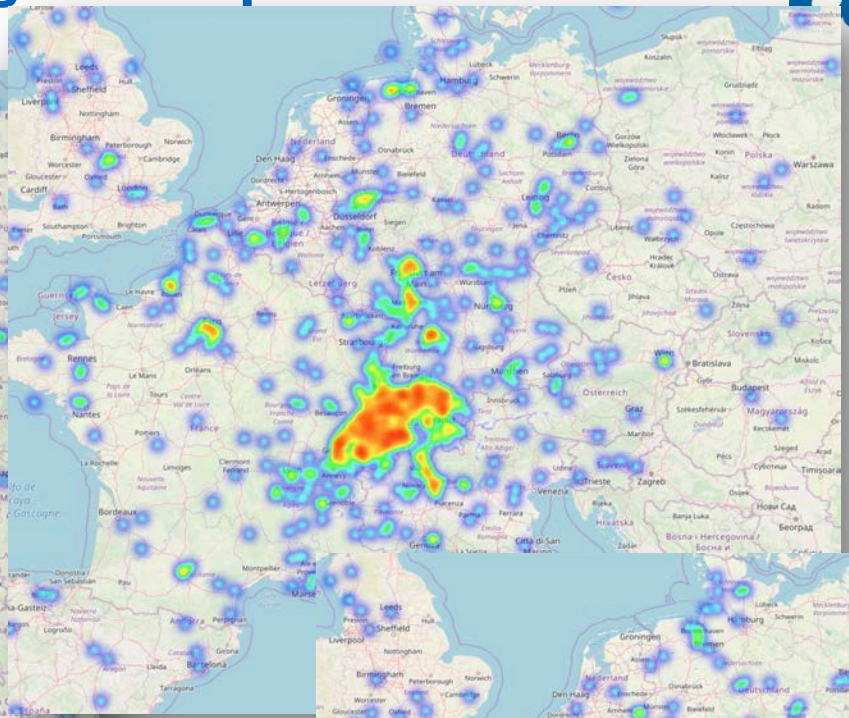


#Hashtags on Twitter, derived from personal and organizational names

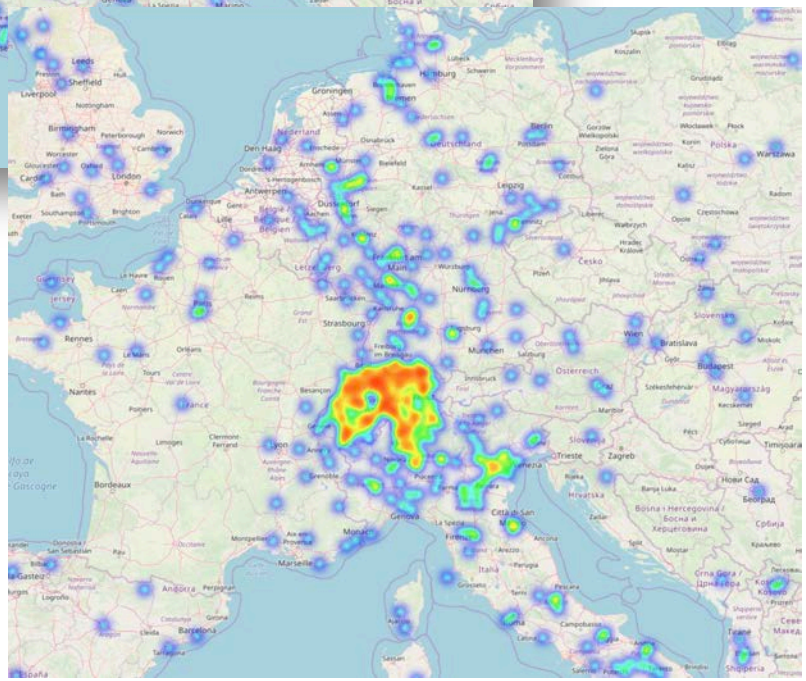
What are the findings so far?
Toponyms across languages and political borders



GER



FRE



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What conclusions can we draw?
Tasks and strategies to manage the transition

- ✓ The dependence on the common ground of public discourses has increased by leaps and bounds.
- ✓ Adequate practical tasks of observation and analysis of the environment have become core tasks for the energy industry and policy-makers.
- ✓ Strategies for the acceptance of innovations and for discursive positions and coalitions play a key role in the governance and strategic management of the energy transition.

Project team

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Project website: www.zhaw.ch/energy-discourses