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Abstract

Airborne measurements within the urban mixing layer (360 m) over Greater London are used to quantify CO_2 emissions at the meso-scale. Daytime CO_2 fluxes, calculated by the Integrative Mass Boundary Layer (IMBL) method, ranged from 46 to 104 µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} for four days in October 2011. The day-to-day variability of IMBL fluxes is at the same order of magnitude as for surface eddy-covariance fluxes observed in central London. Compared to fluxes derived from emissions inventory, the IMBL method gives both lower (by -37%) and higher (by 19%) estimates. The sources of uncertainty of applying the IMBL method in urban areas are discussed and guidance for future studies is given.

Capsule: CO_2 airborne-derived fluxes by Boundary Layer Mass balance are an independent measure of meso-scale urban fluxes complementing urban eddy-covariance fluxes and emissions inventory

Key words: carbon dioxide; urban fluxes; aircraft surveys; eddy covariance; megacity, emissions inventory

1 Introduction

Urban areas are responsible for 70% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions despite covering only 2% of the world's surface (IEA 2008). Knowledge of both concentrations and fluxes are needed to understand how urban emissions affect regional carbon exchanges (Duren and Miller 2012).

Measurements of urban atmospheric CO_2 concentrations are becoming a common means to study local GHG emissions and urban carbon cycles (Velasco and Roth 2010; Christen 2014). An enhancement of the CO_2 concentration of the urban canopy layer (UCL) is consistently observed in cities (e.g. Idso et al. 1998). However, urban CO_2 concentrations can show a high degree of spatial and temporal variability due to different local sources, atmospheric stability and observation locations (e.g. Pataki et al. 2006).

Observations of CO_2 fluxes by eddy covariance ($F_{CO2,EC}$) systems in urban areas have been proven to be a reliable tool to assess carbon exchanges at the neighbourhood or local-scale when conducted above the roughness sublayer (RSL) (e.g. Grimmond et al. 2002; Nemitz et al. 2002; Feigenwinter et al. 2012). Urban areas are a net source of CO_2 (positive fluxes) due to emissions from road traffic, electricity production and local heating with natural gas, oil or coal. Daytime fluxes can be reduced by uptake from vegetation during the growing season, but the nocturnal respiration source remains (Kordowski and Kuttler 2010; Crawford et al. 2011; Ward et al. 2013). Where vegetation is scarce in cities, biogenic fluxes contribute little to the total net flux.

Diurnal concentrations of CO_2 vary within the boundary layer (BL) as a response to changes in surface emissions, boundary layer growth, entrainment processes and horizontal transport (advection). Taking into account the changing boundary layer (BL) volume and exchanges at its vertical and horizontal 'boundaries', meso-scale fluxes (10^2-10^4 km^2) can be inferred from diurnal changes in CO_2 concentrations observed in the BL, using the Integrative Mass Boundary Layer (IMBL) method (McNaughton and Spriggs 1986; Raupach et al. 1992; Denmead et al. 1996; Strong et al. 2011; Christen et al. 2014). The IMBL method has been applied over heterogeneous areas to calculate the mean regional CO_2 surface flux across, for example., the Amazonian basin (Lloyd et al. 2001, 2007) or an agricultural area in Spain (Font et al. 2010), while urban applications include nocturnal CO_2 and CH_4 emissions for Krakow (Poland) (Zimnoch et al. 2010) and turbulent sensible and latent heat fluxes in Sacramento (California, USA) (Cleugh and Grimmond 2001).

The aim of this study is to estimate top-down CO_2 emissions at the urban boundary layer (UBL) scale by the IMBL method using airborne observations taken in the UBL of Greater London (GL). This approach assumes that a representative urban CO_2 concentration can be calculated from a transect across a large area of the city or downwind of it. Results of the IMBL method are presented for four case study days, with a sensitivity analysis of the influence of different assumptions being made, and then compared to neighbourhood-scale eddy-covariance measurements and bottom-up emission inventory estimates. Conclusions from this study highlight the applicability of such airborne observations to quantify CO_2 exchanges of a large city and also highlight the methodological challenges encountered.

2 Methods

2.1 Instrumentation and survey design

The NERC-ARSF aircraft provided the BL observations between the 12 and 25 October 2011 over South-East England (Table 1). The plane instrumented with an AIMMS-20 Air Data Probe (Aventech Research Inc.) measured temperature, barometric pressure, three components of wind speed and horizontal wind direction, with an instrument accuracy of 0.05°C (temperature), 0.1 kPa (pressure), 0.5 $m \cdot s^{-1}$ (horizontal wind) and 0.75 $m \cdot s^{-1}$ (vertical wind) (Beswick et al. 2008). Atmospheric CO_2 dry mole fractions were measured with a non-dispersive infrared (NDIR) portable instrument, the CO_2 Airborne Analyzer System AOS Inc., at a frequency of 0.5 Hz with a mean precision and accuracy of ±0.23 ppm and ±0.28 ppm, respectively (Font et al. 2008 provide further details). CO_2 concentrations were traceable to the International Standards (WMO-X2007 scale). An isokinetic aerosol intake fed the GRIMM 1.129 Sky-optical particle counter that measured particle mixing ratio in the size range 0.25-32 µm at a frequency of 0.17 Hz.

Flights passed over GL at a height of ~360 m above ground level. The air security authority permitted two paths: SW to NE and SSE to NNW (Fig. 1). Flight path directions were chosen from these options to be best aligned with the prevailing wind direction on the respective day. Vertical profiles (up to 2200 m) were undertaken: just after take-off, before landing and on the perimeter of GL (Fig. 1).

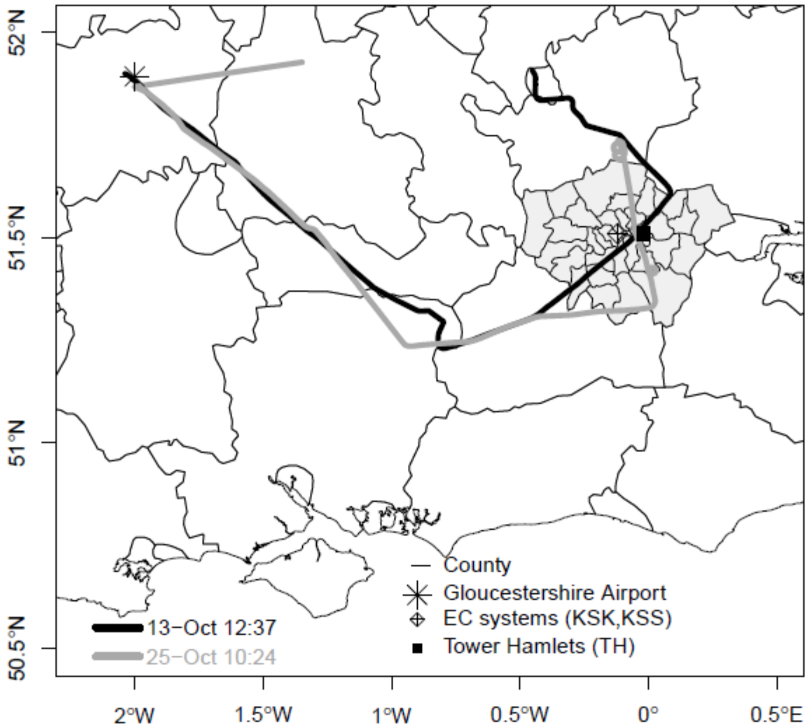

Figure 1. Flight tracks for 13 and 25 October 2011. GL is shaded and symbols indicate site locations of relevant surface stations.

UCL CO_2 mixing ratios were observed at Tower Hamlets ('TH'; 51.51°N, 0.02°W, 9.2 m agl) (Fig. 1) every 15 minutes from the LiCOR-820 NDIR analyzer. Two-point calibrations are carried out every 15 days with a zero-scrubber (soda lime) and a CO_2 span gas referenced to the International Scale (WMO-X2007).

Neighbourhood-scale turbulent surface fluxes ($F_{CO2,EC}$) were measured at two long-term eddy covariance (EC) sites in central London ('KSS' and 'KSK'; 51.51°N, 0.12°W). Measurement towers (KSS: Aluma T45-H triangular tower; KSK: single tube mast, Clark Masts CSQ T97/HP) had sensors at 49 m (KSS) and 39 m agl (KSK), about 2.2 x and 1.9 x mean building height in the flux source area, respectively. At both KSS and KSK, the EC system consisted of a CSAT3 sonic anemometer (Campbell Scientific) and a Li7500/Li7500A open path infrared gas analyser (LiCOR Biosciences). The data were sampled at 10 Hz and fluxes calculated for 30 minute intervals. Data processing and quality control are described in Kotthaus and Grimmond (2012, 2013a).

2.2 Surface fluxes from aircraft observations

The Integrative Mass Boundary Layer (IMBL) method, used to calculate spatially and temporally integrated urban CO_2 surface fluxes from the aircraft observations, treats the BL as a box with conserved scalars

(Denmead et al. 1996; Guenther et al. 1996). The variation of the mean mixed-layer CO_2 concentration (expressed in μmolCO_2 m^{-3}, [CO_2]) in time ($\partial[CO_2]/\partial t$) at the measurement height (*h)* within the BL, also known as storage flux (F_{stg}), is the result of the surface flux ($F_{CO2, IMBL}$), entrainment (F_e) and advection (F_{adv}):

$$h\frac{\partial[CO_2]}{\partial t} = F_{CO_2,IMBL} + F_e + F_{adv} \quad (1)$$

F_e is a function of the difference in concentration in the air entrained from above ($[CO_2]_+$), as the BL height (h_L) changes in time ($\partial h_L/\partial t$), under a vertical velocity (w_+), and within the BL ($[CO_2]$):

$$F_e = \left(\frac{\partial h_L}{\partial t} - w_+\right)([CO_2]_+ - [CO_2]) \quad (2)$$

F_{adv} is the product of the horizontal wind speed U and the spatial CO_2 gradient ($\partial[CO_2]/\partial x$) at height h:

$$F_{adv} = -h\left(U\frac{\partial[CO_2]}{\partial x}\right) \quad (3)$$

Reorganizing and integrating Eq. (1) in time, the surface flux can be calculated according to:

$$F_{CO_2,IMBL} = \langle h\rangle\frac{[CO_2]_2-[CO_2]_1}{t_2-t_1} - \left(\frac{h_{L2}-h_{L1}}{t_2-t_1} - w_+\right)([CO_2]_+ - \langle[CO_2]\rangle) + \langle h\rangle\langle U\rangle\langle\frac{\Delta[CO_2]}{\Delta x}\rangle \quad (4)$$

where ‹› denotes temporal and spatial mean values, i.e. $\langle[CO_2]\rangle$ is the mean concentration over the whole spatial and temporal domain, $[CO_2]_2$ and $[CO_2]_1$ are the concentrations measured at times t_1 and t_2, respectively, with the respective mixing heights h_{L1} and h_{L2}, and w_+ and $[CO_2]_+$ refer to h_{L1} and t_1. $\langle\frac{\Delta[CO_2]}{\Delta x}\rangle$ is calculated via linear regression fit to [CO_2] measured at time t_1 with distance when the plane track was perpendicular to the main wind direction.

[CO_2] is calculated from CO_2 mixing ratios, temperature and barometric pressure measurements by the ideal gas law. Equation 4 is applied in two ways. The first approach assumes that the same temporal changes in emission rates occur at different locations so that the relative spatial distribution of CO_2 is constant in time. In this case temporal profiles of [CO_2] measured during the horizontal transects are used. Vertical profiles of CO_2, particulates, temperature, wind speed and direction at take-off and landing were used to examine the depth of the BL and its changes in time. The second approach, the "column model" (Jacob, 1999), quantifies differences in [CO_2] within vertical columns upwind and downwind of the city, both observed along vertical profiles. The composition of the well-mixed column varies while travelling across the surface due to emissions within the observational footprint.

2.3. Spatial representativeness of the measurements

To determine the likely source area of the BL observations used to calculate $F_{CO2,IMBL}$, the Lagrangian Particle Dispersion Model FLEXPART (Stohl et al. 2005) was used in backward mode. Using urban roughness values, FLEXPART is driven by the ECMWF meteorological model with 0.2° x 0.2°, 91 vertical levels and 3 h resolution. Ten thousand particles were released from a box defined by the aircraft track (longitude, latitude and altitude) for each transect or profile. Each simulation runs back to midnight at the start of the flight day. Analysis at 5 min intervals (0.05° x 0.05° spatial resolution) allows estimation of the mean residence time of the air in the layer 0 to 300 m agl that potentially influences the CO_2 concentrations.

The source area for the local-scale $F_{CO2,EC}$ is calculated for both flux towers for every 30 min period using the Kormann and Meixner (2001) footprint model. Sources located within a radius of about 1000 m around the KSS site contribute to the turbulent fluxes, with the closest 300 m responsible for 50% of the impact (Kotthaus and Grimmond, 2013b). The source area at KSK is a bit smaller, and individual roughness elements can impact the observations at times when the EC system is within the RSL. The source areas of both sites are dominated by road surfaces and buildings, with only very little contribution from vegetation. Kotthaus and Grimmond (2012) provide further details on micro-scale emissions within the EC source areas.

The source area for the concentration observations within the RSL are not formally calculated, but it is known that the integration area is larger for concentrations than flux measurements (Schmid, 1994) and within the RSL individual roughness elements and sources/sinks are more influential than at larger scales. It can be assumed that the local-scale $F_{CO2,EC}$ footprints are larger than the concentration source areas in the RSL and that flow channelling may elongate the latter along the streets.

2.4 Emissions inventory for Greater London

The Department of Energy and Climate Change reported annual CO_2 emissions by Local Authority (LA) for 2011 (DECC, 2014), segregated into four main categories: industrial and commercial; domestic; transport; and land use change and forestry. The uncertainty of the inventory for the LAs in GL ranges from 1.6 to 2.6% (MacCarthy, 2014).

To compare $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ with bottom-up fluxes ($F_{CO2,inv}$), the annual flux for GL in 2011 was scaled for the footprint area that influenced the airborne measurements as:

$$F_{CO2,inv} = \frac{E_{LA} * R_{t,LA}}{A_{GL} * \sum R_{t,LA}} \quad (5)$$

where E_{LA} are annual emissions for each LA (ktCO_2 y^{-1}), $R_{t,LA}$ is the residence time of air masses in each LA based on the FLEXPART analysis, and A_{GL} is the area of influence over London. Temporal profiles accounting for diurnal, day-of-week, and monthly variations of industrial and domestic emissions were calculated from energy demand statistics. Variations of transport emissions were calculated from temporal variations of roadside NO_X increments in London. Further details on how temporal profiles were calculated are given in Appendix A.

3 Results

3.1 CO_2 mixing ratio observations

The spatial variability of CO_2 within and beyond the GL UBL during each flight is shown in Fig. 2. For lower wind speed conditions (<8 m s^{-1} at 360 m), higher CO_2 mixing ratios were measured over central London, with peaks at 400.5 ppm (12 October 2011), 421.5 ppm (13 October) and 399.1 ppm (25 October), compared to ~394-398 ppm outside the GL area (Figure 2). With higher wind speed conditions (>8 m s^{-1}), the differences in average mixing ratio within and surrounding GL were within the instrument noise (e.g. 17, 24 October) (Table 1). However, for these conditions the maximum measured CO_2 mixing ratio in the mixing layer (407.2 and 409.5 ppm for 17 and 24 October, respectively) was registered downwind of GL at a distance of 29 km (17 October) and 48 km (24 October) from central GL (Fig. SB1).

Table 1. Mean wind speed (U), mean (±1 standard deviation σ), maximum and inter-quartile range (IQR) of CO_2 mixing ratios measured onboard the NERC-ARSF aircraft during the transects across GL (inGL) in October 2011 and surrounding GL (outGL) below 400 m.

Date, time of flight (UT)	U inGL (m s^{-1})	CO_2 ±1σ inGL (ppm)	Max CO_2 inGL (ppm)	IQR CO_2 inGL (ppm)	CO_2 ±1σ outGL (ppm)
12 Oct 10:46	7.7	396.1 ± 1.6	400.5	1.9	392.8 ± 1.1
13 Oct 13:14	4.4	404.4 ± 3.3	411.4	1.2	397.5 ± 3.4
13 Oct 15:26	6.0	405.1 ± 7.5	421.8	12.6	398.2 ± 3.3
17 Oct 09:39	9.9	395.1 ± 2.8	399.2	5.1	394.9 ± 3.5
17 Oct 10:21	8.5	392.8 ± 1.4	396.1	2.3	393.5 ± 3.4
19 Oct 12:52	8.8	392.8 ± 0.9	395.9	0.9	392.3 ± 1.6
19 Oct 15:33	9.1	392.1 ± 0.9	396.6	1.1	391.3 ± 0.7
24 Oct 10:25	11.0	404.4 ± 1.6	407.9	2.7	404.4 ± 1.9
25 Oct 11:03	6.9	395.3 ± 1.7	399.1	2.6	394.3 ± 0.9
25 Oct 13:59	7.0	394.9 ± 1.0	397.0	1.3	393.7 ± 0.8

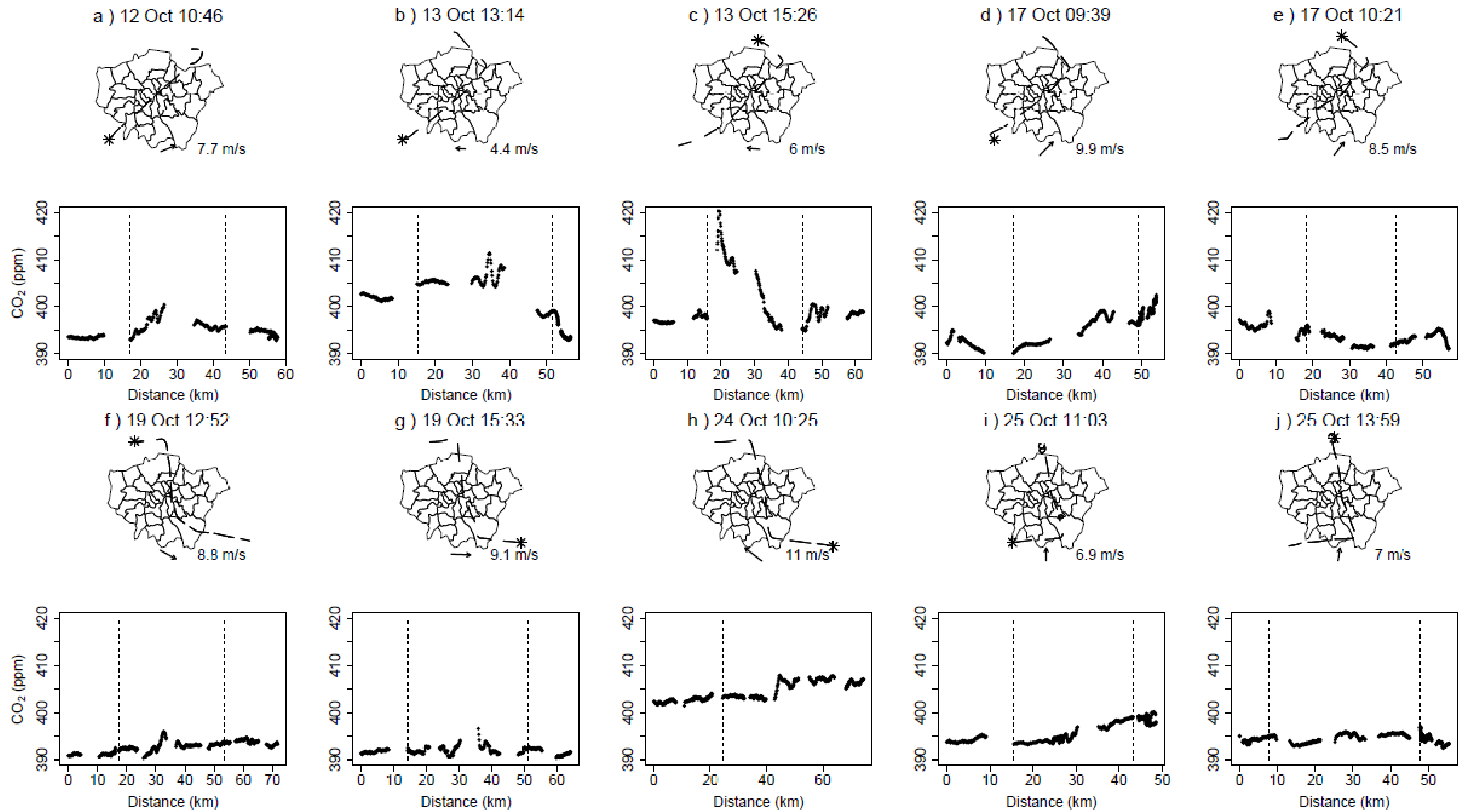

Figure 2. (Upper) Aircraft flight path over GL starting at location marked by *, with mean wind speed and direction (arrow) measured over GL. Time indicates the start of the transect over GL. (Lower) Measured CO_2 mixing ratios with distance from the indicated start point; vertical dashed lines indicate locations of GL boundary.

3.2 IMBL CO_2 fluxes in Greater London

Time and space integrated $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ for GL were calculated for 13, 17, 24 and 25 October when all terms of the IMBL budget could be identified and quantified. The two IMBL approaches outlined (Section 2.2) were each applied for two of the case study days. First, temporal variations of the mean [CO_2] measured along the transects over GL were used to calculate surface fluxes on 13 and 17 October. Second, downwind profiles were compared to upwind references on 24 and 25 October. Given sufficient data were not available, the IMBL method could not be applied to 12 October (only one transect measured), and 19 October (advection could not be quantified as the flight track was perpendicular to the main wind direction under high wind speeds, see Fig. 2).

3.2.1 CO_2 fluxes calculated from horizontal transects

The mean wind speed at 360 m over GL on 13 October was 4.4±1.1 m s^{-1} (morning) and 6.0±1.2 m s^{-1} (afternoon). Visual inspection of vertical profiles showed a well-mixed BL reaching up to a height of 735 m (morning) and at 1180 m (afternoon; Fig. SC1). The flight track flew over the TH site. Mixing ratios measured within the UCL were similar to those measured at 360 m: 405.6 ppm (TH) and 404.4 ppm (aircraft) at 13:15 UTC; 407.7 ppm (TH) and 405.1 ppm (aircraft) at 15:30 UTC, suggesting efficient mixing between the ground and flight altitude. The $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ estimate for this period (13:15 UTC to 15:30 UTC) was 50.7 µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}. According to the FLEXPART model, the probable source area of the airborne observations covered 71% of GL and included the east (residence time of air 60-80 s) and central boroughs (~20 s) (Fig. 3a,b).

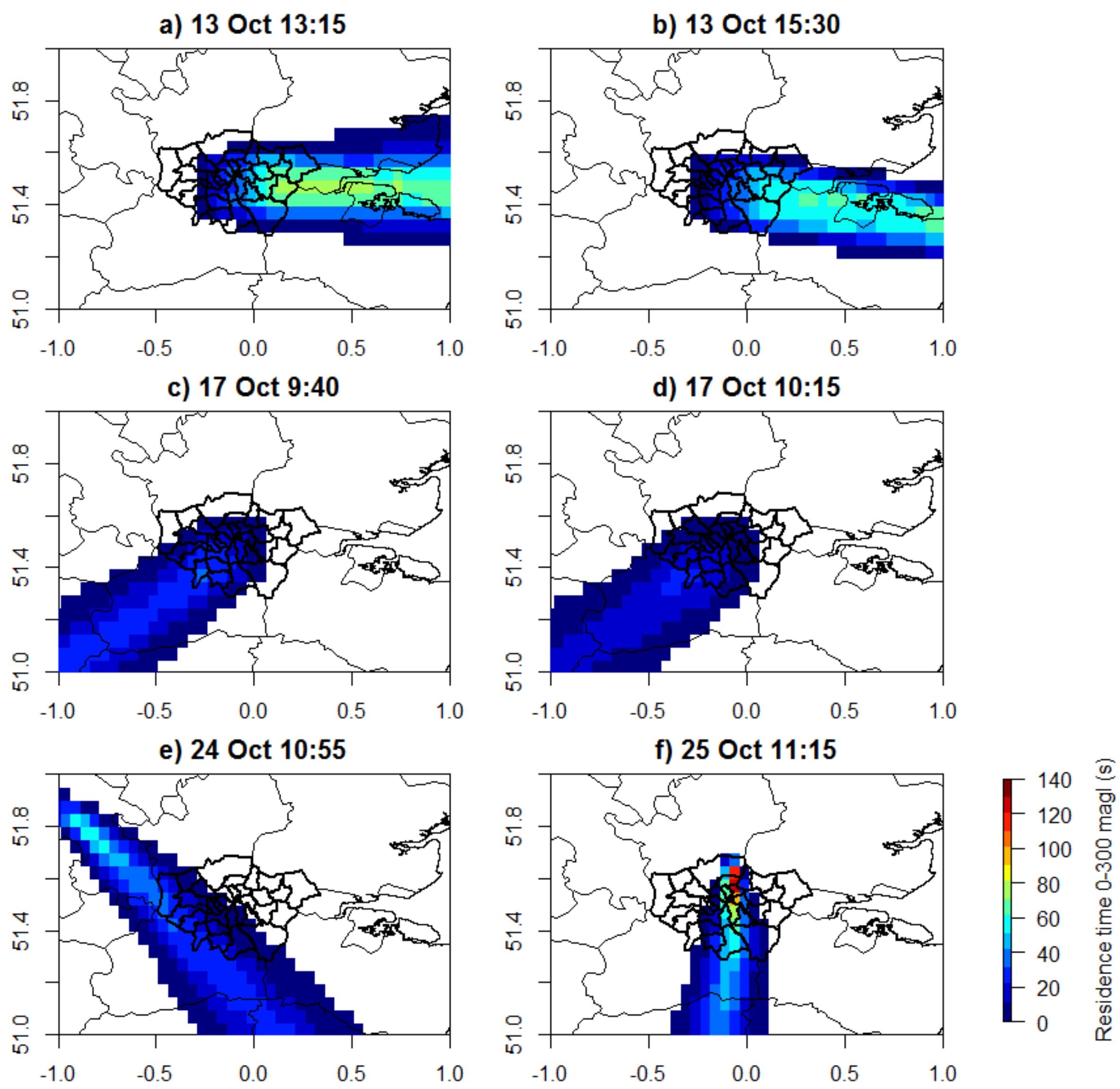

Figure 3. Air residence time in the layer 0-300 m above ground level (agl) estimated by FLEXPART for flights used in IMBL calculations (Table 2).

Table 2. Values used to calculate the space and time integrated CO_2 urban-regional scale flux ($F_{CO2,IMBL}$) in GL using the IMBL budget method. F_{stg} is the storage flux, F_e the entrainment flux and F_{adv} the advection term. $F_{CO2\ inv}$, is the emissions estimated by DECC (2014).

	13 Oct	17 Oct	24 Oct	25 Oct
t_1 (UTC)	13:15	9:40	10:15	11:05
t_2 (UTC)	15:30	10:15	10:55	11:15
CO_2 (t_1) (ppm)	404.4	394.8	401.4	394.6
CO_2 (t_2) (ppm)	405.1	392.8	406.7	398.7
CO_{2+} (ppm)	391.3	390.0	401.0	394.1
$\langle CO_2 \rangle$ (ppm)	404.7	393.7	401.4	394.6
h_1 (m)	735	400	410	450
h_2 (m)	1180	1130	480	450
w_+ (mm s^{-1})	-2.5	-0.18	-2.2	-5.6
$\langle U \rangle$ (m s^{-1})	4.5	9.9	---	---
$\langle \frac{\Delta[CO_2]}{\Delta x} \rangle$ (µmol CO_2 m^{-2})	---	$1.1 \cdot 10^{-2}$	---	---
F_{stg} (µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})	0.3	-21.5	25.7	103.3
F_e (µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})	-50.4	-29.5	-11.6	-1.1
F_{adv} (µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})	---	-37.9	---	---
$F_{CO2,IMBL}$ (µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})	50.7	46.0	37.2	104.3
$F_{CO2\ inv}$ (µmol CO_2 $m^{-2}s^{-1}$)	42.7	54.5	60.4	145.1
Area GL covered (%)	71	56	50	30

Vertical profiles of temperature in the morning of 17 October indicated inversion layers at 390-436 m and at 460-500 m (Fig, SC2). This translated into a decrease in the CO_2 mixing ratios with altitude: ~401.5 (TH) and 395.1 ppm (aircraft). Later that day (11:56 UTC) the UBL attained 1130 m so that CO_2 mixing ratios were observed to be vertically homogenous below the cruise altitude (392.3 ppm at TH, 392.8 ppm at 360 m). Given the strong wind speed conditions and the flight track parallel to the main wind flow (Fig. 2), the 17 October was the only case study day when it was possible to calculate $\langle \frac{\Delta[CO_2]}{\Delta x} \rangle$ from Eq. 3 and F_{adv} (Table 2). F_e was negative as air masses with less concentration than below were entrained and CO_2 was lost by advection. F_{stg} was negative due to the expansion of the UBL in time. At 46.0 µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ was in the same order of magnitude as on 13 October. The source area coincides with large parts of GL (65%), encompassing areas in central and south-west GL (Fig. 3c,d).

3.2.2 CO_2 fluxes calculated from upwind and downwind vertical profiles

On 24 and 25 October, strong wind speed conditions and the prevalent wind direction allowed Lagrangian observations of two vertical profiles, one upwind and the other downwind of GL. An increase of the CO_2 mixing ratio was observed in the downwind profiles compared to those upwind by 4-5 ppm (Fig. SC3, SC4).

Strong winds from the SE (12 m s^{-1}) were measured over GL at 360 m altitude on 24 October. Both the vertical profiles upwind and downwind of GL revealed large CO_2 mixing ratios of >400 ppm at low altitudes (<500 m), with a sharp decrease to lower values (391 ppm) above a capping inversion. The strong inversion conditions on that day might have resulted in a residual layer with large CO_2 mixing ratios. The height of the lowest inversion layer increased from 410 m (upwind) to 460 m (downwind). The derived flux $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ was similar in range to 13 and 17 October (37.2 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} between 10:10 and 10:57). The probable source area covered is 60% of GL with an emphasis of western parts (Fig. 3e).

On 25 October wind speeds were 7 m s^{-1} with a prevailing flow from the south. Given no strong inversion was present, absolute mixing ratios were lower than on the preceding day and remained below 400 ppm. There was an increase of ~4 ppm from the upwind to the downwind locations but the very low entrainment flux as no changes in the UBL height were considered (Fig. SC4), translated to a very high $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ estimate of 104.3 μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} between 11:05 and 11:15. The source area was estimated to be smaller than on the other case study days, covering only 30% of the GL including areas in north, central and south London (Fig. 3f).

3.2.3 Sensitivity analysis of $F_{CO2,IMBL}$

Sensitivity analyses allow quantification of the impact of values used within $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ calculations. Assuming uniform temporal changes, the spatial variability of [CO_2] at 360 m across GL relates to the differences in emissions at different locations (Table 1, Fig. 2). On one case study day (13 October), the standard deviation of [CO_2] measured along the transects were as high as 7.5 ppm and the inter-quartile range (IQR) reached up to 12.6 ppm. This spatial variation in mixing ratio suggests that there may have been a series of internal BL across GL and horizontal mixing did not have enough time to create a representative spatial pattern at the flight height (360 m). Standard deviation and IQR were generally lower for the other case studies (Table 1). As the [CO_2] values used to calculate $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ are critical, the variation of CO_2 along the transect was used to assess the accuracy of the flux calculated. Other variables that are used for the $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ calculations are: mixing layer height, vertical velocity at the top of the UBL and temporal and spatial homogeneity of the background concentration. The impact of potential uncertainties in these components on the total uncertainty of the integrated boundary layer CO_2 flux are assessed from the horizontal transects over the urban area and both upwind and downwind vertical profiles (Table 3).

Table 3. Sensitivity of $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ to data used in the analysis. *mean* $[CO_2]_a$: average mixing ratio from aircraft observations; *mean* $[CO_2]_{a+s}$ average mixing ratio from aircraft and urban canopy layer; $5^{th}p$ $[CO_2]_a$: 5th percentile mixing ratio from aircraft observations; $95^{th}p$ $[CO_2]_a$ 95th 95th percentile mixing ratio from aircraft observations; *h+50m* and *h+100m* refer to mixing layer height determined from visual inspection from profiles carried outside GL plus 50 and 100 m, respectively; *no* w_+ and $2 \cdot w_+$ refer to zero and double vertical wind speed above the mixing layer, respectively; $F_{adv,t2}$ refers to advection term calculated using the spatial gradient at t_2. The median value and range (maximum-minimum) for the fluxes for each day are also given.

	$F_{CO_2,IMBL}$ (μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})			
Method	13 Oct	17 Oct	24 Oct	25 Oct
mean $[CO_2]_a$	50.7	46.0	37.2	104.3
mean $\{[CO_2]_a + [CO_2]_s\}$	49.2	34.9	---	---
5^{th} *p* $[CO_2]_a$	30.7	41.6	34.5	133.8
95^{th} *p* $[CO_2]_a$	82.3	70.7	33.6	89.0
h + 50 m	56.1	48.0	42.8	136.8
h + 100 m	61.4	50.0	51.4	171.7
no w_+	47.5	46.0	33.6	100.8
$2 \cdot w_+$	54.0	46.0	45.2	146.3
F_{adv} t_2	---	24.7	---	---
Median F_{CO_2}	52.4	46.0	37.2	133.8
Range F_{CO_2}	51.6	46.0	17.8	82.7

To evaluate the impact of horizontal spatial variability of $[CO_2]$ on $F_{CO2,IMBL,}$ the mean values are replaced with the 5th and 95th percentile of $[CO_2]$, respectively (Table 3). The resulting $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ varied from 30.7 to 82.3 μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (13 October) and from 41.6 to 73.0 μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (17 October). Use of these extreme $[CO_2]$ values generates a difference of up to 60% in the flux relative to that calculated from the mean $[CO_2]$.

Aircraft measurements at 360 m might not capture the vertical gradient within the whole UBL. CO_2 mixing ratios measured at TH were used to calculate $F_{CO2,IMBL}$. $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ decreased from 50.7 (aircraft) to 49.2 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (aircraft+TH) (13 October), and from 46.0 (aircraft) to 34.9 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (aircraft+TH) (17 October). Heterogeneity in the vertical domain in the UBL represent a change of 3% (13 October) and 25% (17 October) from $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ calculated from the mean $[CO_2]$ in the transects.

Similarly, to evaluate the impact of the variability of the $[CO_2]$ in the air column for fluxes calculated from upwind-downwind profiles, the 5th and 95th percentile values of $[CO_2]$ were used. This resulted in an increase of $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ to 33.6 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (using the 5th percentile) and to 34.5 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (95th percentile) on 24 October (increase of ~56%). Whereas on 25 October, using the 5th percentile values of [CO_2] fluxes were 89.0 (decrease of 15%) but the 95th percentile resulted in a higher flux of 133.8 µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (increment of 28%). Unfortunately, UCL measurements of CO_2 directly below the vertical profiles were not available. However, the comparison of observations within the UCL with aircraft measurements near TH reveals that CO_2 mixing ratios hardly differed: 400 ppm (TH) and 400-402 (aircraft) on 24 October; 396 ppm (TH) and 395 ppm (aircraft) on 25 October. This indicates the CO_2 field below the aircraft was well-mixed, so little variation in $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ would be expected.

The advection term can be an important part of the CO_2 budget. Without transects parallel to the main wind direction (13 October) the spatial variability of CO_2 and therefore advection could not be quantified. Assuming that the spatial gradient measured on 17 October was the same as on 13 October, the estimated advection flux is 1.6 µmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} or a probable error in $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ of 4% from omitting advection for that day. However, for days with higher wind speeds (e.g. 17 October), omission of the advection term could represent an error of ~80%.

The uniformity in time of the spatial gradient might also be a source of uncertainty for the advection term. If the spatial gradient on 17 October was calculated at time t_2, the $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ would decrease by ~50% calculated to 24.7 µmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}.

BL heights were estimated from profiles outside of London. Spanton and Williams (1988) found that the BL height in London could be 50-100 m higher than at a rural site. This in accordance with the difference found between the BL heights from the ceilometer at central London and from vertical profiles for the 24 October (day when backscattered data from ceilometer were clearly detected, Appendix C). $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ calculated with a BL 100 m higher resulted in larger fluxes by 21% (13 October), 5% (17 October), 38% (24 October) and 68% (25 October) compared to previous calculations. This test underlines the critical impact of the mixing height on CO_2 exchanges within the UBL.

As the small vertical velocity at the BL height is difficult to measure reliably from aircraft (Stull, 1988; Beswick et al. 2008), the sensitivity of $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ to errors in w_+ were examined assuming w_+=0 and doubling the observed w_+. Using the former (w_+ =0) $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ decreases by 6.4% (13 October), 0.1% (17 October), 10% (24 October), 3.3% (25 October). Whereas the latter (doubling) increases $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ by 6.4% (13 October), 21% (24 October) and 40% (25 October).

The entrainment flux is also be affected by the determination of $[CO_2]_+$. In this study we have used the concentration just above the mixing layer in vertical profiles undertaken outside GL, assuming that this concentration is spatially homogenous for the area between the city and the location of the vertical profile, and also for the integration time used in the IMBL calculations. Ideally, measurements of the entrainment concentration above the UBL would be used.

The range of $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ was lower (50-80% the median value) for fluxes calculated from upwind-downwind profiles compared to the range of fluxes from horizontal transects over the city (100%). However, this is as expected as single pairs of vertical profiles sample a limited area of the urban region (30-50%) compared to the area covered by horizontal transects (60-70%).

Our sensitivity analysis suggests that horizontal variability of the CO_2 field in the UBL, observed here by transects, is the most critical factor affecting $F_{CO2,IMBL}$. The determination of the BL height and vertical wind speed has more impact on $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ from upwind-downwind profiles.

3.2.4 CO_2 surface fluxes in Greater London

Aircraft-based $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ and tower-based $F_{CO2,EC}$ have complementary spatial and temporal resolutions and limitations (Lloyd et al. 2007; Desai et al. 2011). With two EC systems in central London, the intra-site variability in the $F_{CO2,EC}$ could be assessed (Fig 4a). The lower KSK site (smaller source area) is expected to be dominated by processes at the building-scale, while the taller KSS site is representative of the neighbourhood-scale (Kotthaus and Grimmond, 2013b) and $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ represent a larger area (10^2-10^4 km^2) and integrate processes at the city-scale.

Although direct comparison of $F_{CO2,EC}$ and $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ is not necessarily warranted given the lack of immediate correspondence, Levy et al. (1999) argue that results should be within the same range and show similar variation day-to-day. On 17 and 24 October, $F_{CO2,EC}$ and $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ have similar magnitude at the times when IMBL were calculated (Figure 4a), while the $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ is higher than the observed surface flux on 13 October and even more clearly so (by at least 20 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}) on 25 October. These discrepancies may be explained partly by the uncertainties inherent in the IMBL method (Table 3), but the EC measurements may also underestimate the turbulent flux (as noted by Kotthaus and Grimmond 2013b). In terms of day-to-day variations, the EC and IMBL method both indicate similarly strong fluxes on 13, 17 and 24 October and also agree in estimating the largest fluxes on the 25 October.

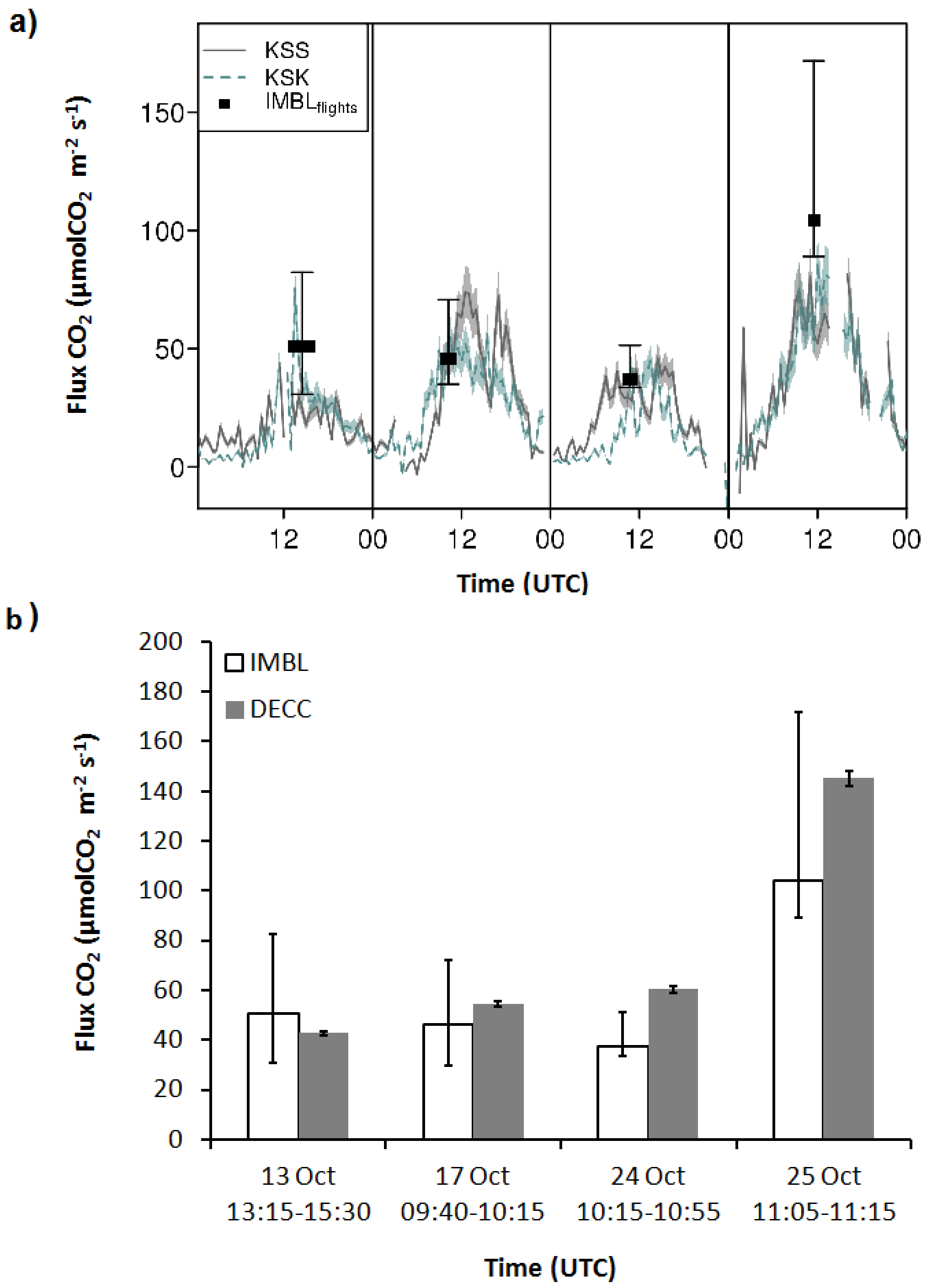

Figure 4 (a) Time series of turbulent fluxes of CO_2 as observed at eddy covariance sites KSS and KSK in central London (lines) and estimates from the aircraft observations (rectangles). The EC errors are shaded assuming $\pm$ 15% error on the 30 mins fluxes based on Euster et al. (1997), Dragoni et al. (2007) and Richardson et al. (2012) (b) Comparison of the surface fluxes calculated from aircraft observations (IMBL) against spatially integrated emissions as calculated from the DECC emissions inventory. Error bars on IMBL fluxes denote maximum and minimum values.

The annual CO_2 emissions for GL in 2011 were 18.3 μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1} (DECC, 2014). Scaling the footprint area for temporal variations of the emissions, IMBL fluxes are within -37% (24 October) and 19% (13 October) of the DECC emissions. The differences between the $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ and $F_{CO2,inv}$ on 24 October may relate to the $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ footprint area encompassing large areas outside GL (Fig. 3e) and/or the uncertainty in the temporal scaling.

Day-to-day differences in $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ are partly attributed to variations in the flux source area given that IMBL fluxes were calculated for similar times (except for 13 October). The DECC annual $F_{CO2,inv}$ has a concentric pattern: central GL boroughs have emissions of 50-350 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}, surrounding centre boroughs 25-50 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}, and outer boroughs <25 μmol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}. The highest $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ (October 25) was found when the footprint area encompassed the high emission central boroughs. Although the 17 October footprint also sampled central London, the calculated air residence times were shorter (10-30 s, Fig. 3c,d) (25 October, 70-140 s, Fig. 3f) and the probable footprint included the lower emission area of south-west GL. On 24 October the probable footprint extended over the outer boroughs to the west and south-west of GL (average annual emissions <25 μmolCO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1}).

4 Discussion and conclusions

Here we have presented four airborne surveys that measured CO_2 mixing ratios in the UBL of GL in October 2011 that were used to estimate urban-scale emissions by quantifying boundary layer growth, entrainment processes and horizontal transport. The top-down inverse IMBL method infers temporally and spatially integrated fluxes that can be used to evaluate emissions inventories at policy-relevant scales such as cities, megacities, and oil and gas fields. Previously, this approach has been used to infer nocturnal fluxes of GHG with a single ground-level measurement site (Zimnoch et al. 2010), but inclusion of anthropogenic emissions for critical daytime activities was missing. Entrainment and advection fluxes are usually not considered in the calculations based on ground-level observations due to a lack of measurements at the top of the BL and the spatial gradient of CO_2. However, as shown in this study, the entrainment term (13 October) and advection (17 October) terms can be large fractions of the urban carbon budget. Observations from light aircraft characterize different parts of the budget to permit calculation of integrated regional surface CO_2 fluxes at larger scales than ground-level observations. Complementary aircraft surveys characterizing entrainment, vertical mixing and spatial heterogeneity in the UBL add value to continuous measurements at ground-level (Strong et al., 2011). However, aircraft observations are time-limited (e.g. plane time, flight path access) and weather-biased, so represent case studies.

The IMBL fluxes had similar day-to-day variability to both the central London eddy-covariance observations and the scaled (temporal, spatial) emissions inventory data. The IMBL fluxes are the same order as the eddy-covariance observations and within -37% to 19% of the emissions inventory. Thus the IMBL method appears to provide an additional independent estimate of city-scale fluxes to complement neighbourhood-scale eddy-covariance fluxes and emissions inventory data.

The sensitivity tests undertaken suggest differences of the order of 100% in $F_{CO2,IMBL}$ consistent with other city-scale fluxes derived from aircraft measurements using mass–balance approaches (e.g. for GHG Mays et al. 2009; Turnbull et al. 2011, NO_X emissions Trainer et al. 1995). However, changes in UBL CO_2 concentration along large city transects may challenge city-wide emission quantification as this was the main source of uncertainty for IMBL fluxes. Atmospheric transport and surface exchange are continuous, creating a dynamic, complex picture in large cities that can hardly be resolved in short-term airborne campaigns (Gioli et al. 2014). This suggests that in a megacity such as London it may be necessary to consider internal boundary layers (IBL) within the city. The atmosphere above the outer boroughs, which are more extensive and typically have shorter roughness elements (e.g. buildings), may be well mixed, but over the central business district areas where the buildings are much taller the BL at the flight height may be the IBL for that area rather than the fully mixed UBL. Thus more detailed knowledge of the BL dynamics over urban areas is critical. Moreover, the rate of emission along a transect may temporally vary producing spatial variations of CO_2 within the UBL.

Downwind [CO_2] enhancements above the background concentration are more representative of the mix of emissions taking place in the urban environment. A single pair of upwind-downwind profiles does not sample the entire urban area (Fig. 3e,f). In order to overcome this, multiple downwind profiles should be sampled in future surveys.

Footprint analysis allows identification of the areas potentially contributing to CO_2 concentrations in the UBL. Emissions from the inventory have been scaled for the footprint of airborne measurements and it might be a source of uncertainty. For better comparison of emissions and IMBL fluxes, meso-scale modelling such as the proposed by Brioude et al. (2013) could enhance better spatial scaling of the fluxes.

Anthropogenic and biogenic fluxes are inherently included in $F_{CO2,EC}$ and $F_{CO2,IMBL}$, whereas biogenic fluxes are missing from the $F_{CO2,\,inv}$ fluxes. The role of vegetation varies with amount (e.g. Helfter et al. 2011), but generally in urban areas it plays a small role in the CO_2 budget (Crawford et al. 2011, Strong et al. 2011;

Newman et al. 2013). In London the vegetation varies by size (age) and type across the city (Lindberg and Grimmond 2011). By October the role of vegetation is likely small during the daytime relative to urban sources even in suburban areas with a large amount of vegetation (Ward et al. 2013). To distinguish the anthropogenic signal, fast-response measurements of urban pollutants (e.g. NO_X, CO) as tracers of traffic-related emission and isotopic analysis of carbon (e.g. $^{13}C/^{12}C$-CO_2, $\Delta^{14}CO_2$) would aid interpretation. An emissions ratio approach (e.g. Turnbull et al. 2011) would allow apportionment and identification of the sectors emitting more CO_2 into the atmosphere and thus facilitate evaluation of policy effectiveness to reduce the contribution of GHG emissions from urban areas.

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Figures

Fig. 1: B&W (print version)

Fig. 2: B&W (print version)

Fig. 3: B&W (print version), Colour (web version)

Fig. 4: B&W (print and web version)

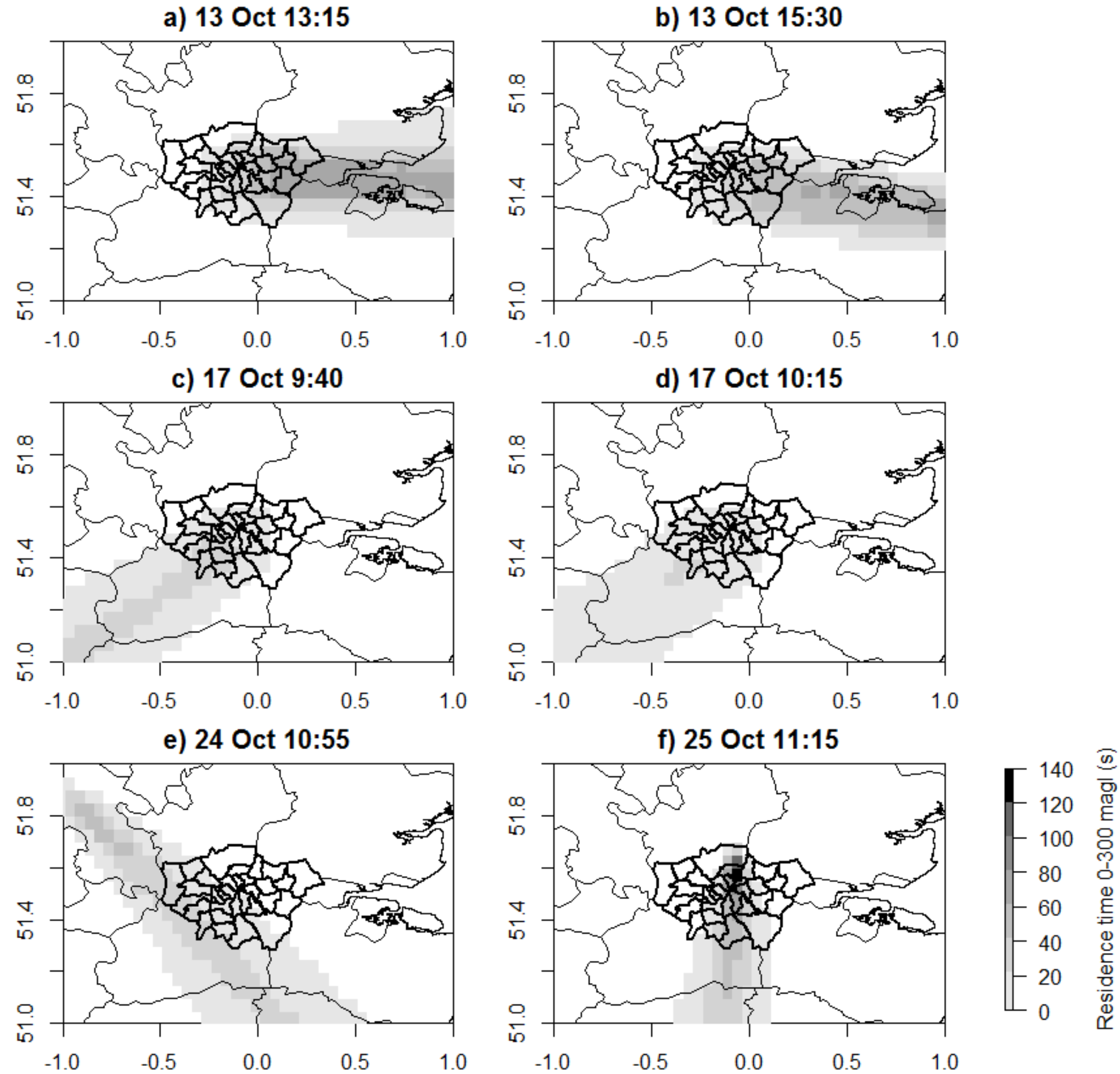

Figure 3 in B&W for print version

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