

1
2

4
5

Rainfall intensity patterns derived from the urban network of Barcelona (NE Spain)

6
7
8

Xavier Lana¹ · C. Serra¹ · M. C. Casas-Castillo¹ · R. Rodríguez-Solà¹ · A. Redaño² · A. Burgueño²

9
10

Received: 7 July 2016 / Accepted: 4 June 2017
 © Springer-Verlag GmbH Austria 2017

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

Abstract An analysis of the normalised rainfall intensity curves in Barcelona (NE Spain) has been undertaken from 41 selected rain rate episodes recorded by an urban network of tipping buckets applying a 5-min integration time along the years 1994–2009. These curves, based on cumulative amount and time distributions, are modelled by a power law, this fact suggesting fractal behaviour. Four parameters characterise these curves. One of them is the exponent of the power law. Another one quantifies the intermittency of the rainfall along the episode. The other two are the coordinates of cumulative amount and time distribution from which the power law fits well the normalised curve. The total rainfall amount of the episode, its length and the coefficient of variation of the 5-min amounts are also considered as complementary parameters. Taking advantage of these seven parameters, patterns of rainfall intensity are determined for every episode. These patterns, together with the statistical distribution of 5-min amounts, maximum intensity and rainfall intermittence, should increase the knowledge on the urban rainfall regime with the aim of improving drainage design. In addition to present results, flood prevention should be complemented with extreme value analyses and quantification of return periods.

1 Introduction 35

Cumulative amount and time distributions of rainfall intensity permit the derivation of the normalised rainfall intensity curve, NIC, which characterise the rainfall intensity regime. In the present manuscript, NICs are obtained for the rain rate gauges pertaining to the urban network in Barcelona (NE Spain), a large city on the western Mediterranean coast (Lorente and Redaño 1990; Casas et al. 2010; Rodríguez et al. 2013a). The rainfall intensity is recorded by tipping bucket gauges, with an integration time depending on the rain rate. To permit a common uniform integration time, the measured intensities are converted to amounts recorded in 5-min intervals. The concept of the NIC is similar to the normalised rainfall curves, NRC, which relate the cumulative amount and time distributions at daily, monthly and annual rainfall amounts. These curves have been applied to different regions in the world (i.e. Ananthakrishnan and Soman 1989; Soman and Krishna 1990; Martín-Vide 2004; Burgueño et al. 2004, 2005; Alijani et al. 2008; Burgueño et al. 2010; Martínez et al. 2012), as well as at a global scale (Monjo and Martín-Vide 2016).

The main objectives of this research are the following: First, NIC are generated, and their properties are analysed for every one of the 23 rain rate gauges of the network. A power law is found to describe the relationship between cumulative 5-min rain amount distribution, $X(I)$, and the cumulative number distribution of these 5-min intervals, $Y(I)$. Significant correlations are established among several parameters of every rain rate episode and the respective NIC. These are the coefficient of variation, CV_I , of the 5-min rain amounts of every episode, the exponent κ of the power law concerning every NIC and coordinates X_m and Y_m defining the shortest percentages of $X(I)$ and $Y(I)$ from which an empiric NIC curve

✉ Xavier Lana
 francisco.javier.lana@upc.edu

¹ Departament de Física, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

² Departament de Física Aplicada—Meteorologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Q1

fits well a power law. Additionally, the percentage Y_0 of 5-min intervals, with rain amounts null or below the rain measurement resolution, is also taken into account as a quantification of the rain intermittency along the episode. Two descriptive parameters, total rain amount, R , and episode length, L , have been also considered.

Second, as a complementary point of view of the obtained NIC patterns, whatever the rain rate gauge considered, it is verified that 5-min rain amounts are statistically well fitted to a Weibull distribution, with parameters estimated for every rain rate gauge by means of L-moments, taking advantage of their unbiased estimation and robustness to the presence of outliers in the dataset (Hosking and Wallis 1997). The respective scale, shape and location parameters are slightly different for every rain rate gauge. Then, local scale effects of topographic and geographic patterns on the rainfall intensity regime, such as vicinity of some gauges to the littoral chain or to the coast line, should not be discarded. Additionally, different synoptic situations associated with rainfall episodes could lead to slightly different rain rate patterns. Likely, distinctions could be made among the different meteorological situations producing the rainfall episodes, as eastern advections, frontal passages and convective phenomena.

The results derived from the NIC analysis and the statistical distribution of 5-min rain amounts, complemented with analysis based on space–time behaviour of intensity maxima, should be useful for improvements on the drainage system of Barcelona City and the surrounding metropolitan area, diminishing in this way the risk of floods. It should be remembered that this area has a Mediterranean rainfall regime, with an annual average of 617.7 mm/year and a standard deviation of 150.3 mm/year, in agreement with Fabra Observatory records (Barcelona) for the period 1917–2009. Nevertheless, the number of heavy rainfall episodes is not negligible, usually linked to very active eastern advections in autumn or convective phenomena in summer, and sometimes characterised by notable peaks of rainfall intensity. For example, after a close look at Fabra Observatory records within the mentioned recording period, close to 100 daily episodes ranging from 60.0 to 173.7 mm/day are detected. More details concerning the Fabra Observatory rainfall regime at annual, monthly and daily scale can be found in Lana et al. (2003, 2005), Burgueño et al. (2004), Casas et al. (2004, 2011) and Rodríguez-Solà et al. (2016), among others. It is also worth mentioning that a complete statistical analysis on quasi-instantaneous rainfall intensity in Fabra Observatory was achieved some years ago from measurements obtained with a Jardí rain rate gauge along 49 years (Burgueño et al. 1987, 1988, 1990; Vilar et al. 1988, 1991), with the aim of contributing to the design of microwave communications in terrestrial or earth–space radio links, where rain rate attenuation is meaningful. These statistics included the 5-min integration time rain rate distribution (Burgueño et al. 1988).

The contents of the paper are organised as follows. Section 2 (Database) briefly describes the instrumental characteristics of the urban network and its spatial distribution. The main characteristics of the selected 41 rainfall episodes are also summarised. Section 3 (Normalised Curves theory) introduces the concepts and mathematical formulation concerning the NIC, as well as the set of parameters characterising every one of the NIC. In the same section, the L-moments are introduced, which permit a straightforward selection of the best statistical model, and the Weibull distribution function is briefly introduced. Section 4 (Results) summarises the results obtained for the 41 episodes. A more detailed description of results concerning two rainfall episodes, as an example of possibilities offered by the analysis of intensity peaks, is also developed. Section 5 (Conclusions) summarises the main results and suggests new points of view for future studies of return periods concerning extreme intensities, with the main objective of reducing risks associated with floods in urban domains.

2 Dataset

Nowadays, the urban area of Barcelona, of 100 km² approximately, has a dense network of 23 tipping bucket rain rate gauges, brand Geónica S. A., with a 400-cm² collector funnel and a rain rate resolution of 0.1 mm/5 min (Casas et al. 2010; Rodríguez et al. 2013a), in operation since 1994 (Fig. 1; Table 1). From the recordings of this network until 2009, 5-min rainfall series have been derived for every gauge. The topography of the urban area (Fig. 1) is characterised by a low hill (150 m a.s.l.) close to the harbour, with a steep slope faced to the coast, and a relatively flat area extending from the coast line to the foot of the littoral chain, which gets altitudes of up to 500 m a.s.l.

All the selected rainfall episodes have been recorded on at least one rain rate gauge of the urban network, satisfying the additional constraints:

- The rainfall amounts have return periods longer than or equal to 1 year for any of the durations ranging from 5 min to 24 h (Casas et al. 2004, 2010).
- Given that NIC analysis requires a high number of 5-min amounts, only episodes with lengths longer than or equal to 2 h have been considered.

After applying these two constraints, 41 episodes have been chosen. Conditions to define the recording length of an episode at every gauge of the network are also applied in order to consider the different start and ending times for the same episode at the different gauges. These conditions are as follows:

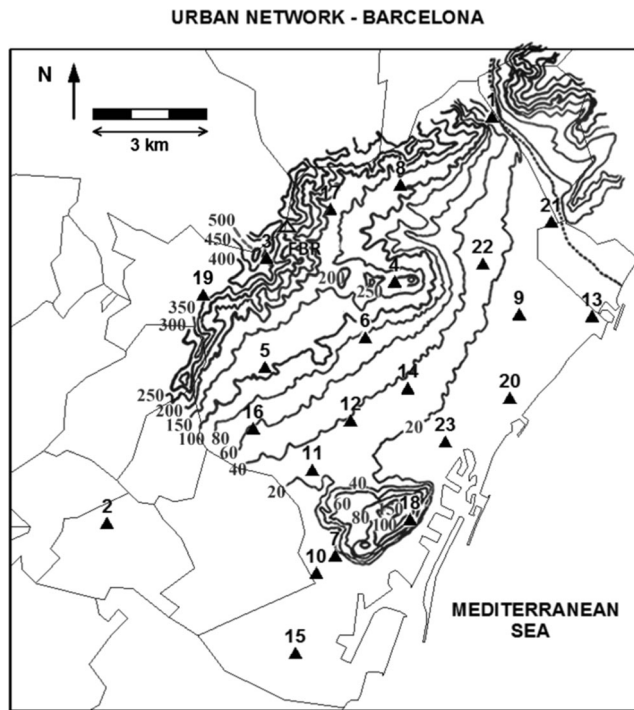


Fig. 1 Urban network of 23 tipping bucket rain rate gauges of Barcelona (solid triangles). The Jardí rain rate gauge of Fabra Observatory is indicated by an open triangle. Topographic contour lines for the urban area are also included

NIC for integration times longer than 5 min would be also possible. Nevertheless, a relevant shortcoming has to be considered: the number of samples to build up the NIC of a rainfall episode decreases with longer integration times. Consequently, the accuracy of empiric NIC at longer than 5-min integration time would be debatable.

As a description of the selected 41 episodes measured by the urban network, their dates and coefficients of variation, obtained as the quotient of the standard deviation and the average of 5-min amounts, together with the average total amount and average length, are summarised in Table 2. The sample of rainfall episodes includes relatively short (148.0 min) as well as long (1445.5 min) episodes, with a wide range of rain amounts ranging from a small amount of 6.2 mm to a high amount of 102.0 mm. Most of CV_I are constrained to a narrow range of values close to 1.0, suggesting a moderate dispersion of 5-min rain amounts. Nevertheless, five episodes are associated with CV_I exceeding 2.0, being detected in these cases a higher irregularity of the 5-min amounts. Data included in Table 2 permit the assignment of 10 episodes to spring, 3 to summer, 18 to autumn and 10 to winter.

The variety and complexity of the 5-min rain amount patterns are illustrated with two examples in Fig. 2. Both examples correspond to the beginning of autumn (September 29, 1994, and October 17, 1999), recorded at gauges 2 and 1, respectively. A straightforward revision of Fig. 2 evidences the very different profiles of both episodes. Whereas the first episode is characterised by an amount of 66.4 mm and a length of 425 min, the second achieves an amount of 24.3 mm and a shorter length of 250 min. Time evolutions of both episodes are very different. The first one is characterised by a low degree of precipitation intermittency and a moderate set of intensity peaks, never exceeding 3.3 mm/5 min. Conversely, the rainfall amount of the second episode is basically generated by a narrow and isolated intensity peak achieving 7.4 mm/5 min and a high degree of rainfall intermittency. In agreement with daily surface and 500-hPa charts obtained from www.meteoffice.gov.uk and www.netweather.tv, the first episode

Then, episodes recorded in a rain gauge can include several 5-min intervals with amounts below the rain rate resolution, shorter than 1 h. These intervals are named rainfall intermittences. It is also worthy of mention that the recorded rain amount of an episode in a gauge is not a criterion to accept or reject these rain rate data.

Table 1 Altitude above sea level, Z, and universal transverse mercator, UTM, coordinates for the 23 gauges of the urban network and the Fabra Observatory, FBR

Gauge	Z (m)	X (UTM)	Y (UTM)	Gauge	Z (m)	X (UTM)	Y (UTM)
1	18	432572	4590189	13	5	435184	4584975
2	15	422530	4579549	14	32	430373	4583077
3	450	426690	4586494	15	3	427443	4576149
4	162	430034	4585878	16	67	426341	4582030
5	120	426648	4583627	17	206	428357	4587775
6	86	429270	4584410	18	146	430431	4579649
7	9	428485	4578698	19	293	425042	4585529
8	148	430181	4588414	20	3	433035	4582822
9	7	433279	4585023	21	14	434117	4587439
10	4	427987	4578247	22	26	432334	4586332
11	27	427879	4580946	23	8	431351	4581678
12	37	428911	4582279	FBR	415	426783	4585860

Table 2 Basic characteristics of every one of the 41 rainfall episodes recorded at 23 rain gauges

Y/M/D	CV _I	R (mm)	L (min)	Y/M/D	CV _I	R (mm)	L (min)	Y/M/D	CV _I	R (mm)	L (min)
94/09/29 (1)	0.87	63.6	425.4	98/01/27 (15)	1.63	18.0	342.4	06/01/30 (29)	1.37	7.9	406.9
94/10/19 (2)	1.66	48.8	322.5	98/09/23 (16)	1.42	13.0	250.9	06/08/15 (30)	2.12	18.3	148.3
96/01/29 (3)	1.42	43.6	1445.5	98/12/02 (17)	0.96	102.0	1231.1	06/09/12 (31)	2.23	10.7	167.4
96/04/17 (4)	0.76	49.0	357.3	99/10/17 (18)	2.16	33.2	257.5	06/09/14 (32)	1.56	16.3	286.5
96/05/11 (5)	0.66	8.4	255.5	00/09/28 (19)	1.60	25.3	208.0	07/04/02 (33)	1.47	20.5	400.5
96/05/11 (6)	1.43	31.3	517.4	02/07/31 (20)	1.65	85.3	483.6	07/04/02 (34)	1.71	33.1	450.2
96/06/02 (7)	0.96	51.0	675.9	02/10/08 (21)	1.49	92.8	663.7	07/10/26 (35)	1.91	35.2	595.0
96/10/13 (8)	1.35	11.0	230.7	04/09/03 (22)	2.30	19.9	204.4	08/05/09 (36)	0.84	11.9	291.2
96/10/14 (9)	1.74	90.1	1388.5	05/10/12 (23)	1.08	85.6	333.1	08/05/09 (37)	0.86	6.2	306.2
97/01/28 (10)	1.32	32.7	406.8	05/11/09 (24)	1.39	20.0	338.0	08/05/10 (38)	1.35	38.2	725.0
97/04/19 (11)	1.41	31.0	598.4	05/11/13 (25)	1.76	23.2	493.6	09/09/20 (39)	1.66	20.3	211.9
97/04/20 (12)	1.25	12.4	676.8	06/01/27 (26)	0.60	22.5	661.0	09/10/21 (40)	1.21	17.0	285.7
97/12/16 (13)	1.73	36.8	427.6	06/01/28 (27)	0.66	6.7	294.3	09/10/22 (41)	1.47	53.8	386.8
98/01/26 (14)	1.35	9.9	256.9	06/01/29 (28)	2.26	21.2	459.8				

CV_I, R, and L design the coefficient of variation, averaged amount and averaged length for every episode. Y/M/D refers to year, month, and day, respectively, of the data beginning for every episode. Together with dates, episode numbers are included within parentheses

would be generated by low pressures at the south of the Iberian Peninsula and north of Africa, together with an anticyclone covering Azores Islands and central and eastern Europe. Under these synoptic conditions, the littoral coast in Barcelona and surrounding areas would be submitted to an eastern advection, being recorded a notable daily amount, partially favoured by conditions at the 500-hPa level. The second episode, less relevant than the first, would be a consequence of a low-pressure nucleus on the Atlantic Ocean, close to the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Relatively cold air masses in the vicinity of the Mediterranean coast, in agreement with the 500-hPa-level chart, would contribute to this episode with a non-negligible daily rain amount.

Notable differences among the 41 episodes are found from the viewpoint of rain amounts, length, rain intermittency and intensity peaks. Nevertheless, relationships between NIC parameters, as well as the existence of a single mathematical formulation (a power law) for all the episodes, permit the establishment of common patterns on the rainfall intensity regime, whatever the season and synoptic situations related to the rainfall episodes.

3 Mathematical formulation and concepts

3.1 Normalised rainfall intensity curves

The NIC for every rainfall episode are based on two empirical distributions. The first one is the cumulative amount distribution, X(I), which is defined as

$$X(I) = Prob(i \leq I) = \frac{\text{Rain amount due to 5-min intervals with intensities} \leq I}{\text{Total rain amount of the episode}} \quad (1)$$

where i represents the set of 5-min rain amounts less than or equal to a threshold I. The second is the cumulative time distribution, Y(I), which is defined as

$$Y(I) = Prob(i \leq I) = \frac{\text{Number of 5-min intervals with intensity} \leq I}{\text{Total number of 5-min records}} \quad (2)$$

It has to be taken into account that Eqs. (1) and (2) may include null records (due to rainfall intermittency) and inappreciable intensities due to rain rate gauge resolution. According to Ananthakrishnan and Soman (1989), Jolliffe and Hope (1996) and Burgueño et al. (2004), a possible mathematical relationship between X(I) and Y(I) to describe the NIC would be

$$X(I) = Y(I) \exp\{-b[1-Y(I)]^c\} \quad (3)$$

Nevertheless, some previous tests have proved that, conversely to NRC, NIC do not fit well with Eq. (3), and a better solution is to consider a power law with some constraints and new parameters, with respect to those derived from Eq. (3). The power law proposed is

$$Y(I) \propto X(I)^\kappa; \quad X(I) \geq X_m \quad (4)$$

with X_m being the lowest percentage of 5-min rain amount for which Eq. (4) is accomplished, and Y_m ∝ X_m^κ, the corresponding percentage of 5-min intervals. After revising the results for the 41 episodes, it is observed that Y_m includes 5-min intervals with records below the rain rate gauge resolution, corresponding to rainfall intermittence, Y₀, and a few 5-min records slightly exceeding the rain rate resolution of 0.1 mm/5 min. Consequently, it is expected that X_m usually reaches small values.

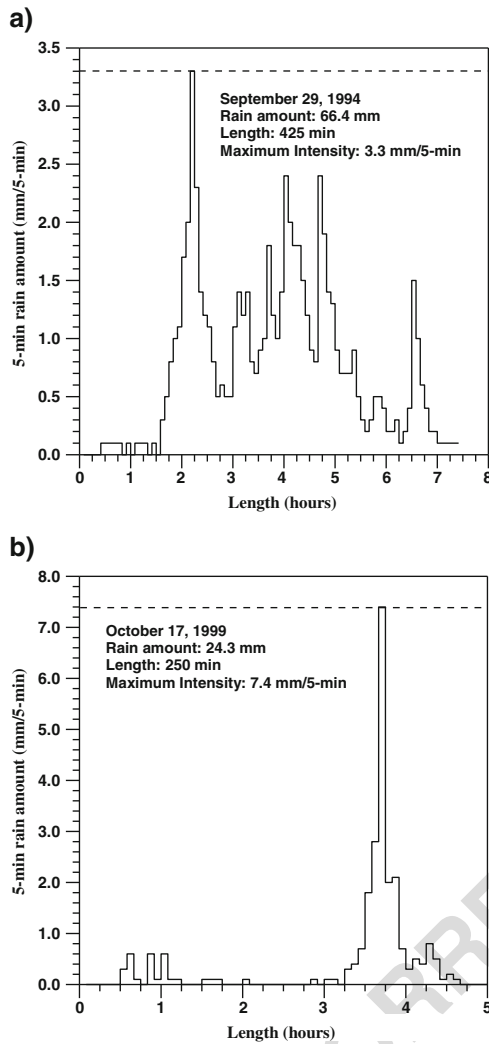


Fig. 2 **a** The 5-min rain amounts recorded in gauge number 2 on September 29, 1994, with notable rain collected and several intensity peaks. **b** The 5-min rain amounts recorded in gauge number 1 on October 17, 1999, with a moderate rain amount but with a single intensity peak

278 A rainfall episode will be described by the following param-
 279 eters: on the one hand, three basic magnitudes which quantify
 280 rain amount R (mm), length L (min) and CV_I of the episode; on
 281 the other hand, four additional parameters directly related to NIC.
 282 They are the exponent κ of the power law of Eq. (4), the coordi-
 283 nates (X_m, Y_m) defining the lowest percentage of rain amount
 284 and 5-min intervals for which the power law is valid and, finally,
 285 the coordinate Y_0 , established as the percentage of 5-min intervals
 286 with records below the rain rate gauge resolution, thus quantifi-
 287 ing the degree of intermittency of the rainfall episode. The expo-
 288 nent κ can be determined by a linear regression of empiric data
 289 representing Eq. (4) at logarithmic scale. The algorithm proposed
 290 by Malamud and Turcotte (1999) is applied for a more accurate
 291 estimation of κ . After that, X_m , Y_m and Y_0 are immediatly der-
 292 ived. Parameters R , L and CV_I are also found for every episode
 293 at the different gauges.

3.2 L-moments and Weibull distribution of 5-min rain amounts 294
295

Besides description and quantification of every rainfall epi- 296
 297 sode in terms of the NIC, additional valuable information
 298 can be obtained by analysing the statistical distribution of all
 299 the 5-min rain amounts recorded on every rain rate gauge for
 300 the 41 episodes. In this way, it can be established if there are
 301 relevant differences on the 23 rain rate gauges of the urban
 302 network, perhaps as a consequence of their vicinity to the
 303 littoral chain or to the Mediterranean coast.

The best theoretical distribution function has been chosen 304
 305 following three steps. First, the L-moments (Hosking and
 306 Wallis 1997) are applied to select a theoretical distribution
 307 function. This theoretical function has to offer the best fit
 308 between empiric L-skewness, τ_3 , and L-kurtosis, τ_4 , moments
 309 and those corresponding to the chosen function. In agreement
 310 with this requirement, the best function for the 5-min amounts
 311 would be the Weibull distribution

$$F(x) = 1 - \exp\left[-\left\{\frac{x - \zeta}{\theta}\right\}^\delta\right] ; \quad \zeta \leq x < \infty \quad (5) \quad 314$$

Second, location, ζ , scale, θ , and shape, δ , parameters are 313
 316 given by Hosking et al. (1985) as

$$\delta \approx \{7.8590C + 2.9554C^2\}^{-1} = 1/\mu \quad (6a) \quad 319$$

$$C = \frac{2}{3 + \tau_3} - \frac{\log 2}{\log 3} \quad (6b) \quad 318$$

$$\theta = \frac{\lambda_2}{(1 - 2^{-\mu})\Gamma(1 + \mu)} \quad (7) \quad 320$$

where λ_2 is the second-order L-moment and $\Gamma(\cdot)$ the complete 321
 322 gamma function, and

$$\zeta = \lambda_1 + \theta \Gamma(1 + \mu) \quad (8) \quad 323$$

with λ_1 being the first-order L-moment. Then, a specific 324
 325 Weibull distribution is obtained for every set of 5-min empiric
 326 data. And third, the goodness of fit between empiric and the-
 327 oretical distribution functions is assessed by means of the
 328 Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (Benjamin and Cornell 1970). If
 329 the empiric distribution function is within 95% confidence
 330 bands determined by this test, the Weibull model is finally
 331 accepted. 332

4 Results 339

NIC are obtained taking advantage of the 41 selected rainfall 340
 341 episodes recorded at 23 rain rate gauges of the urban network,
 342 being noticeable that in all cases, the power law given by Eq. 4
 343 is accomplished, with square regression coefficients above
 344 0.96. The same rainfall episodes used as examples in Fig. 2

345 have been considered as examples of the fitting of the empiric
 346 NIC to a power law in Fig. 3. The first example (September
 347 29, 1994, recorded by gauge number 1) is characterised by
 348 short intermittency and moderate intensity peaks.
 349 Additionally, its NIC is modelled by a parameter κ equal to
 350 0.374 (with square regression coefficient of 0.99), with 72.5%
 351 of 5-min intervals ($Y_m = 0.275$) fitting well the NIC power law

and contributing to 97.0% of the total rainfall of the episode
 ($X_m = 0.030$). In short, this would be an example of a rainfall
 episode with short intermittency (Y_0 close to 0.06) and then a
 relatively small number of records below the resolution of the
 rain rate gauge. The second example (October 17, 1999, re-
 corded by gauge number 2) is quite different with respect to
 the percentage of 5-min rain amounts, given that only 35.4%
 of 5-min intervals fit well the NIC power law ($Y_m = 0.646$) but
 explain 93.9% of episode amount ($X_m = 0.061$). As expected,
 its parameter κ (0.175) is smaller than that corresponding to
 the first example, but the square regression coefficient is also
 very acceptable (0.98). Conversely to the first episode, larger
 intermittency (Y_0 close to 0.40) is detected, and higher inten-
 sity peaks are expected to explain a quite similar percentage of
 the episode amount, with less than half of 5-min rain amounts
 exceeding the resolution level of the rain rate gauge.

A global overview of the NIC behaviour is obtained by
 revising the most remarkable correlations between pairs of
 the parameters $\{CV_I, R, L, X_m, Y_m, Y_0, \kappa\}$. In agreement with
 Table 3, only pairs of parameters with cross-correlation ex-
 ceeding 0.5 are taken into account. Additionally, in order to
 extract some conclusions and physical interpretations, the
 plots of Fig. 4 represent these correlations for the set of 41
 rainfall episodes. Thus, correlations between parameters have
 to be interpreted as very probable behaviours of the 5-min rain
 amounts, but not as an exact relationship for every rainfall
 episode.

It has to be remembered that an almost absolute depen-
 dence of normalised curves on parameter CV_I is true for
 NRC but discarded for NIC after some empirical tests. In
 spite of this, some dependence of these normalised curves
 on CV_I is observed through the decreasing tendency of κ
 with increasing values of CV_I . Consequently, CV_I indi-
 rectly models the normalised curves. Figure 4a describes
 signs of κ depending on the logarithm of CV_I . According
 to this fact, modelling NICs in terms of the scaling expo-
 nent κ , in agreement with the well-known fractal scaling
 behaviour of rainfall intensities (Rodríguez et al. 2013b),
 would be more evident and useful than an interpretation

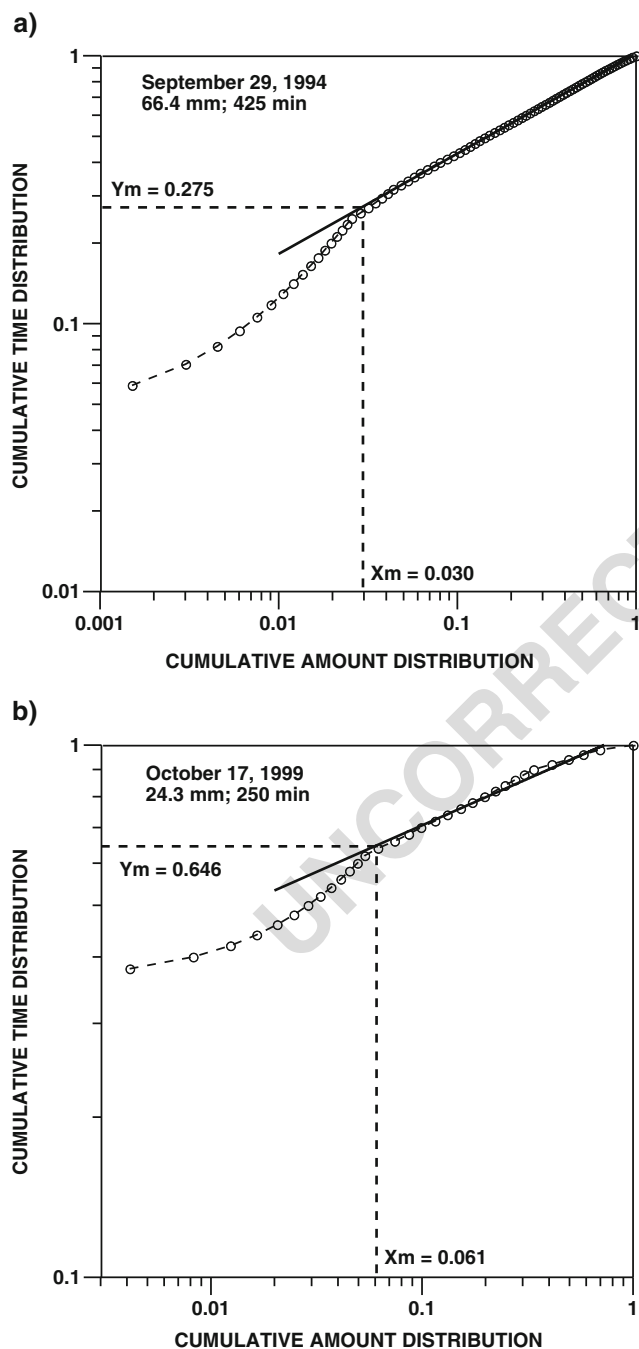
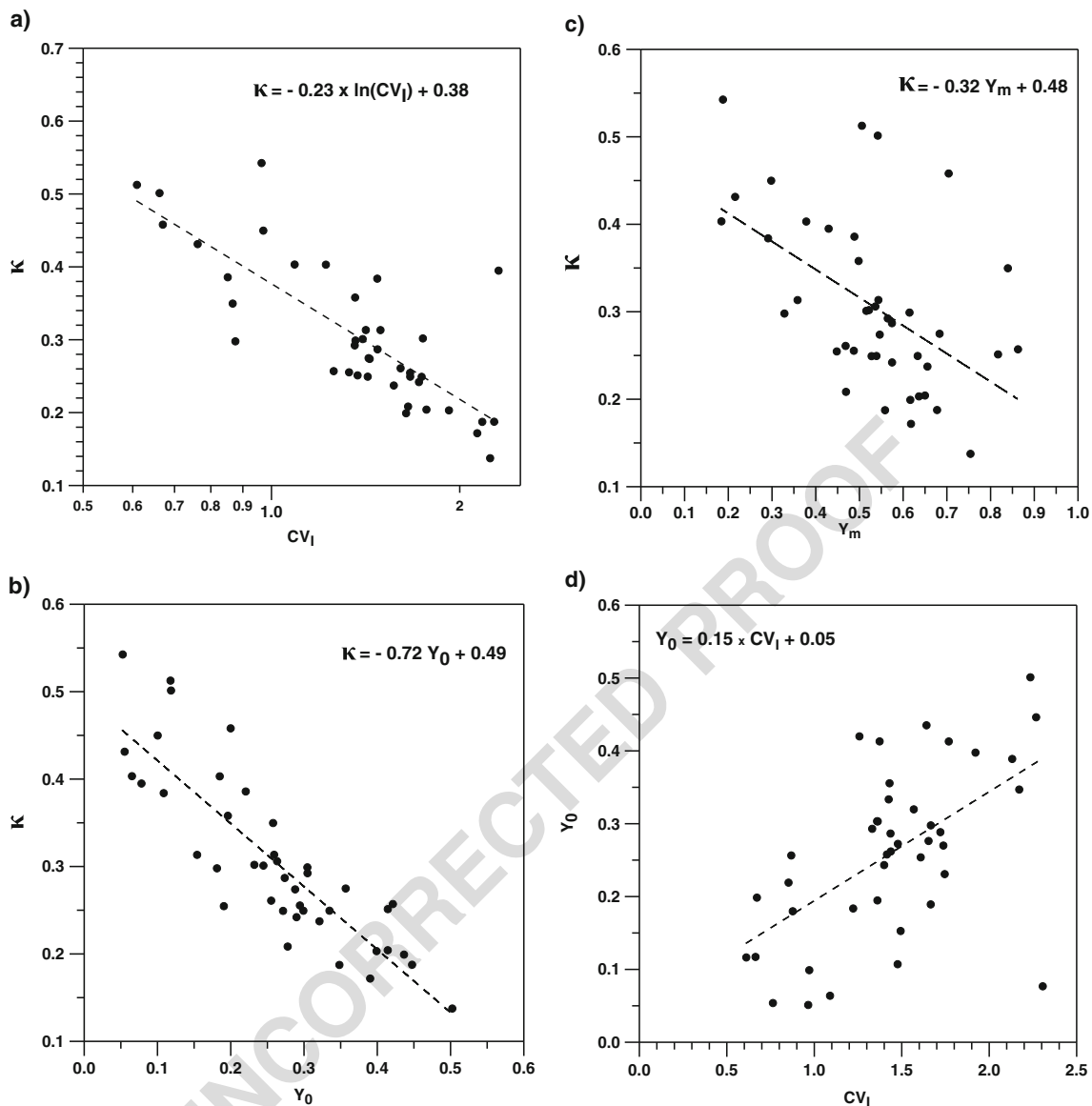


Fig. 3 Empiric NIC satisfying a power law for $X(I)$ above X_m for **a** September 29, 1994 (rain gauge number 2), and **b** October 17, 1999 (rain gauge number 1). Open circles represent empiric NIC, the straight line the power law fit in logarithmic scale and the dashed lines the (X_m, Y_m) coordinates

Table 3 Covariance between pairs of parameters describing the set of 41 rainfall episodes

	CV_I	R	L	X_m	Y_m	Y_0	κ
CV_I	1.0						
R	-0.049	1.0					
L	-0.122	0.573	1.0				
X_m	-0.361	-0.527	0.004	1.0			
Y_m	0.263	-0.682	-0.110	0.713	1.0		
Y_0	0.567	-0.477	-0.120	0.238	0.806	1.0	
κ	-0.764	0.204	0.210	0.128	-0.529	-0.858	1.0

Pairs in italic type correspond to cross-correlations exceeding 0.5



Q8 **Fig. 4** Relationships between pairs of parameters characterising 5-min rain amount episodes. Only pairs of parameters with clear signs of dependence between them (bold characters in Table 3) have been

considered. *Dashed lines* represent the different functions fitting roughly the observed values of the selected parameters

391 in terms of CV_I . Additionally, it is also worth mentioning
 392 the linear decreasing trend of κ with parameters Y_0 and Y_m
 393 (Fig. 4b, c). In this way, κ would be partially conditioned
 394 by rainfall intermittency.

395 The relationships (increasing linear trends) of Y_0 with CV_I
 396 and Y_m are represented in Fig. 4d, e. In agreement with these
 397 plots, an increase of the rainfall intermittency would be in
 398 concordance with an increase of CV_I or, in other words, with
 399 the dispersion of 5-min rain amounts. Once again, the linear
 400 behaviour is not well-accomplished for some CV_I close to
 401 2.2–2.3. Taking into account the definition of coordinates
 402 (X_m, Y_m), associated with 5-min intervals with null or small
 403 rain amounts, an increasing trend of Y_0 for increasing Y_m
 404 was also expected.

The possible relationship between X_m , Y_m , L and R is
 shown in Fig. 4f. Instead of negligible rain amount and rainfall
 intermittency concepts, quantified by X_m and Y_m , their complementary
 quantities scaled to L and R have been plotted. The
 relationship between L and R would be described by a power
 law with an exponent equal to 0.58.

Figure 4g shows Y_m decreasing following a power law,
 while R increases. In other words, the higher the rainfall
 amount, the lower is the number of 5-min rain amounts out
 of the power law. Nevertheless, departures from this rule are
 observed for episodes achieving rain amounts above 50 mm.
 Similarly, in agreement with Fig. 4h, X_m decreases with R . In
 this case, the decreasing trend would be given by a power law
 (almost equivalent to a dependence on $1/R$). Finally, Fig. 4i

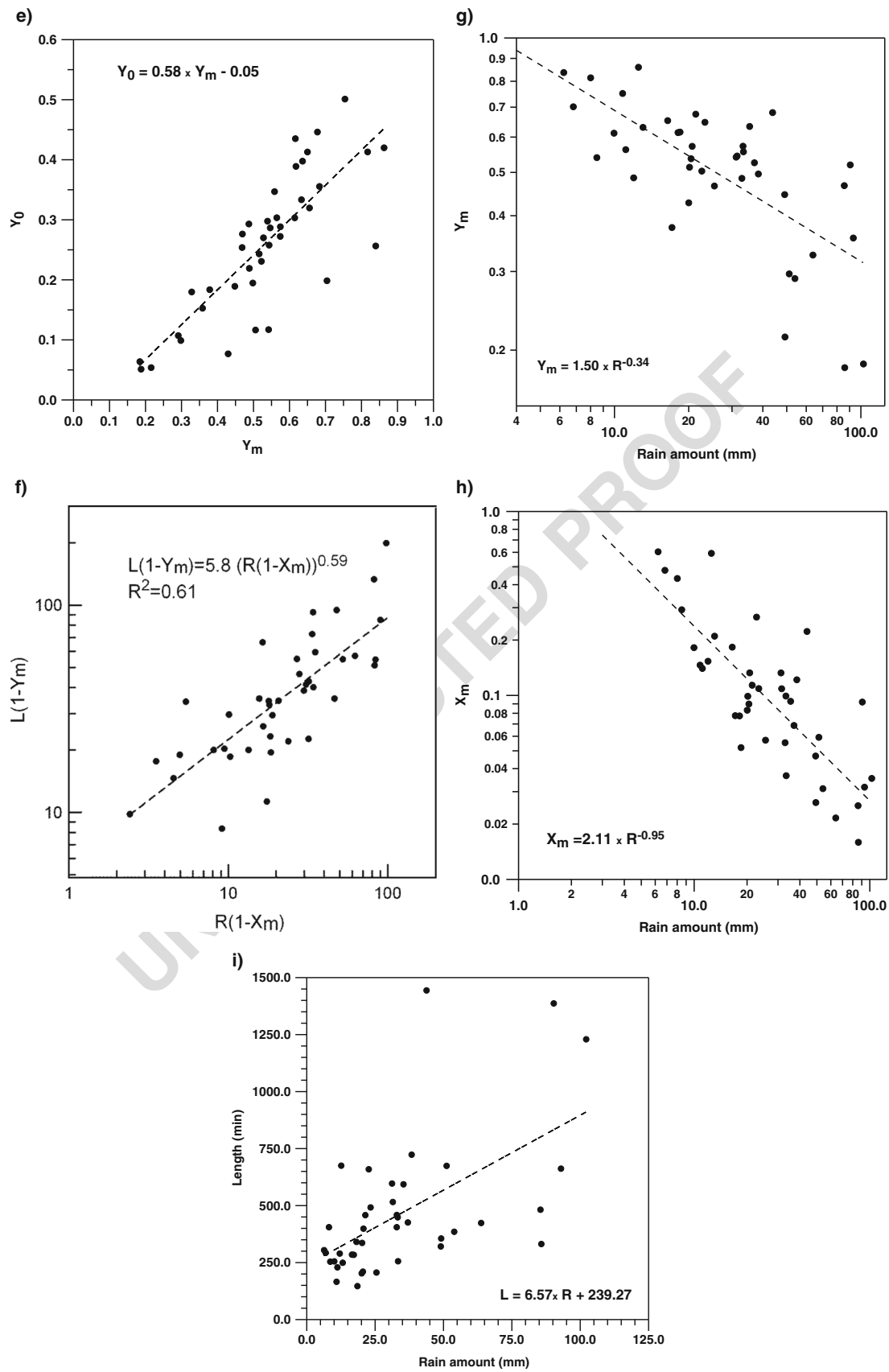


Fig. 4 (continued)

419 schematises another expected and quite evident dependence
 420 of R on L . The evolution is more or less linear, except for the
 421 longest episodes, with empiric values of R in disagreement
 422 with the expected mathematical model.

423 Pairs of empiric points are many times notably scattered
 424 around the mathematical function proposed to explain a
 425 possible relationship among them. Consequently, these
 426 functions can be assumed as mathematical models describ-
 427 ing increasing or decreasing tendencies between pairs of
 428 parameters. A more detailed description is given by the
 429 histograms for the different parameters plotted in Fig. 5
 430 for the whole set of episodes and gauges. Most of the
 431 NICs have lengths L ranging from 180 to 480 min and

amounts R within the 5.0–40.0-mm range. Most of the 432
 irregularity degree, quantified by CV_I , fluctuates from 0.6 433
 to 2.0, with a few very irregular episodes. According to the 434 Q10
 X_m histogram, most of the 5-min amounts are characterised 435
 by percentages below 15%, not accomplishing the NIC 436
 model. From the Y_m histogram, between 35 and 75% of 437
 5-min intervals do not fit well the NIC model. Even though 438
 the upper limit of 75% seems to be excessively high, it has 439
 to be remembered that Y_m includes intermittence given by 440
 Y_0 . Most intermittences are characterised by percentages 441
 between 0 (null intermittence) and 45% (very high inter- 442
 mittence). Finally, most of the power law exponents κ are 443
 within a narrow range from 0.20 to 0.35. 444

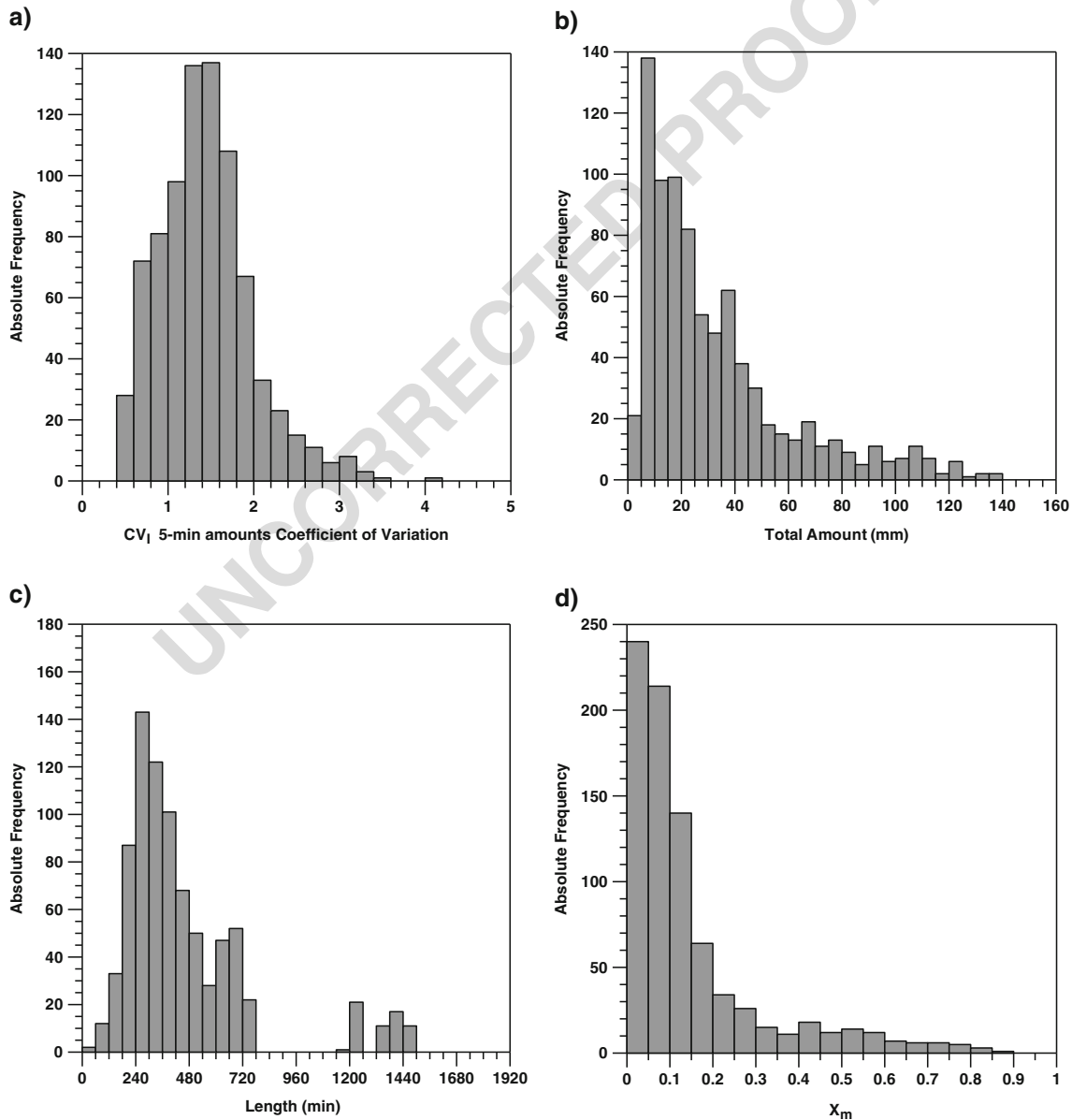


Fig. 5 Histograms of parameters **a** CV_I , **b** R , **c** L , **d** X_m , **e** Y_m , **f** Y_0 and **g** κ derived for the 41 episodes recorded at the different gauges. Dashed lines in Y_m and κ histograms correspond to gaussian distributions

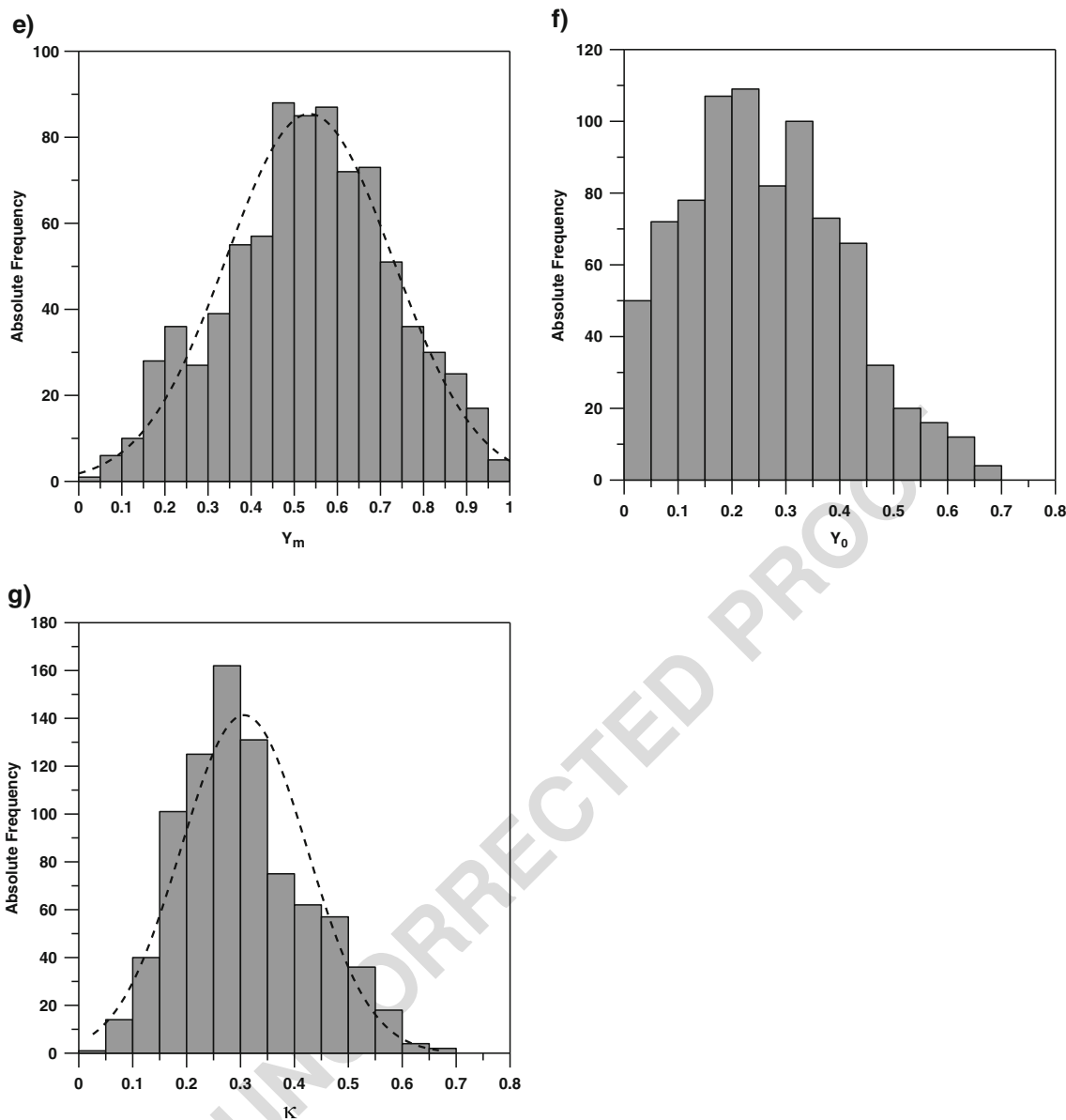
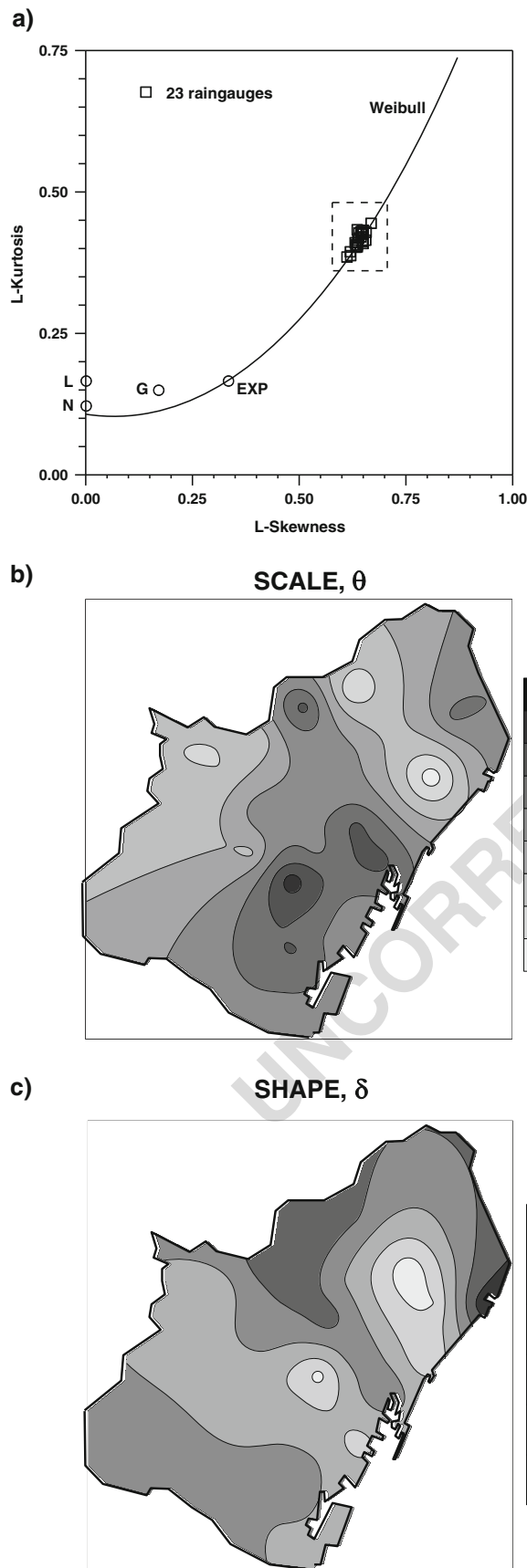


Fig. 5 (continued)

445 With respect to the cumulative amount distribution $X(J)$, the
 446 L-skewness–L-kurtosis graph of Fig. 6a shows evident signs
 447 of close vicinity to the Weibull function. The 23 empiric sam-
 448 ples of L-skewness and L-kurtosis, taking into account all the
 449 5-min rain amounts of the 41 episodes recorded at every rate
 450 rain gauge, are constrained to a narrow range (0.37–0.40 for
 451 L-kurtosis, 0.65–0.70 for L-skewness) close to the Weibull
 452 distribution line. Consequently, with minimum uncertainty,
 453 the hypothesis that 5-min rain amounts for every gauge are
 454 well-fitted to a single Weibull model can be assumed.
 455 Nevertheless, after applying Eqs. 6a–8, every one of the 23
 456 sets of records is characterised by slightly different location,
 457 scale and shape parameters. Figure 6b, c describes the spatial
 458 distribution of scale, θ , and shape, δ , parameters. With respect
 459 to θ , three differentiated areas are detected. One of them, at the

460 west of the urban area, is characterised by low values of θ . A
 461 similar pattern depicts a spatial fringe towards the NE of the
 462 urban area. Conversely, besides a small nucleus of high values
 463 of θ at the north, the main concentration of these high values is
 464 found at the south of the urban area, very close or inside
 465 Barcelona’s harbour. The spatial distribution of δ depicts some
 466 differences with respect to θ . In spite of a concentration of low
 467 values of δ , again at the NE, similar places with high values of
 468 θ are now characterised by the lowest values of δ . A clear
 469 relationship between the spatial distribution of these Weibull
 470 parameters and the vicinity of rain gauges to the coast or to the
 471 littoral chain has not been found. In spite of this, a general
 472 agreement can be observed between the spatial patterns of
 473 both Weibull parameters (especially shape, δ) and the spatial
 474 clustering patterns for short rainfall durations obtained by



◀ **Fig. 6** a L-skewness–L-kurtosis diagram for the 23 series of 5-min rain amounts. *L*, *N*, *G*, and *E* correspond to logistic, normal, Gumbel and exponential cumulative distributions, respectively, whereas the *solid line* corresponds to the Weibull distribution. **b** Spatial distribution of the Weibull scale parameter. **c** Spatial distribution of the Weibull shape parameter

Rodríguez et al. (2013a), who studied the correlation among the intensities recorded by the different gauges of the urban network. Nevertheless, given that the recording period is relatively short and the number of episodes is not very high, these spatial patterns should be simply assumed as an approach to their spatial distributions. Finally, Fig. 7 shows an example of an empiric data fitting well the Weibull distribution for recordings of gauge number 1, showing the resulting Weibull distribution and the 95% confidence band according to the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Taking into account the high number of samples derived by 5-min intervals recorded for 41 episodes, the 95% confidence band has been quantified as $1.36/N^{1/2}$, with *N* being the number of samples (Benjamin and Cornell 1970). It has to be mentioned in this example of Weibull distribution that some discrepancies between theoretical and empiric data distributions are detected up to intensities close to 1.0 mm/5 min. Nevertheless, the empiric distribution is always within the Kolmogorov–Smirnov confidence band, and the fit could be assumed as almost perfect for intensities exceeding or equalling 1.0 mm/5 min. A very similar behaviour has been found for the remaining 22 Weibull distributions.

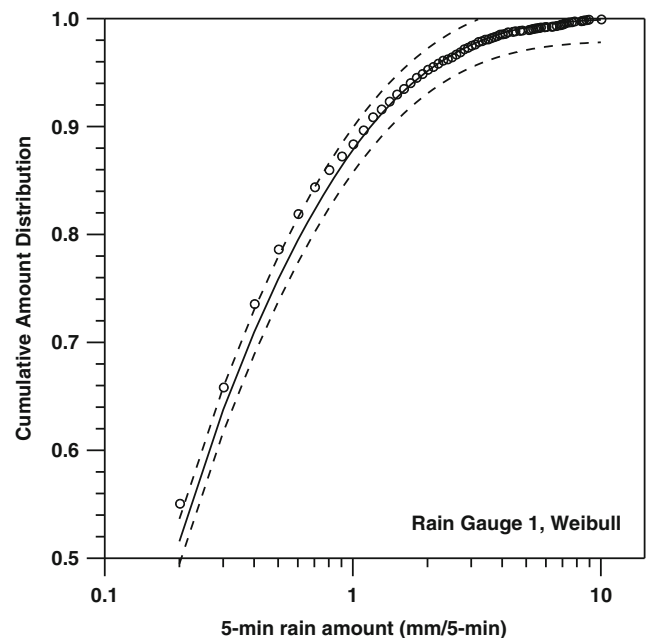


Fig. 7 An example of 5-min rain amounts cumulative distribution. *Open circles* and the *solid line* represent empiric and Weibull distributions, respectively. *Dashed lines* correspond to 95% confidence bands according to the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test

497 Patterns of rainfall intensity recorded at the urban network
 498 are also complemented with some characteristics of 5-min rain
 499 amounts. The maximum intensity along an episode has been
 500 selected every 5 min from the 23 rain rate gauges, with $I_{5\text{-min}}$
 501 being then generated as a series of maximum intensities for
 502 every episode. From these series, it is straightforward to obtain
 503 the maximum 5-min rain amount of every rain episode, I_{max} ,
 504 the average, I_m , of $I_{5\text{-min}}$ series and its standard deviation, I_σ , as
 505 well as the corresponding coefficient of variation, $CV_{I_{\text{max}}}$, for
 506 every episode.

507 Figure 8a–c shows clear linear increasing tendencies of
 508 I_{max} for increasing values of average, standard deviations
 509 and $CV_{I_{\text{max}}}$ of $I_{5\text{-min}}$. As expected, it is confirmed that I_{max}
 510 would be larger for episodes with high I_m . Nevertheless, the
 511 linear increasing tendency with I_σ or $CV_{I_{\text{max}}}$, implying that

512 wider ranges of I_m favours higher I_{max} , was not so evident a
 513 priori. In agreement with the three previous figures, Fig. 8d
 514 also depicts a clear linear increasing trend for I_m in terms of I_σ .
 515 The two examples of maximum profiles are described in
 516 Fig. 9. In agreement with Fig. 2a, the example of September
 517 29, 1994, is characterised by a relatively moderate but contin-
 518 uous level of I_{max} , with several secondary maxima and I_{max}
 519 slightly exceeding 4.0 mm/5 min along approximately 150–
 520 160 min after the beginning of the episode. These character-
 521 istics would be in agreement with the profile of intensity re-
 522 corded on the gauge number 2 of the urban network. The
 523 example of October 17, 1999, is characterised by low values
 524 of I_{max} except for the beginning of the episode (elapsed time
 525 close to 20 min and a maximum exceeding 5.5 mm/5 min) and
 526 the absolute maximum (a notable value exceeding 11.0 mm/

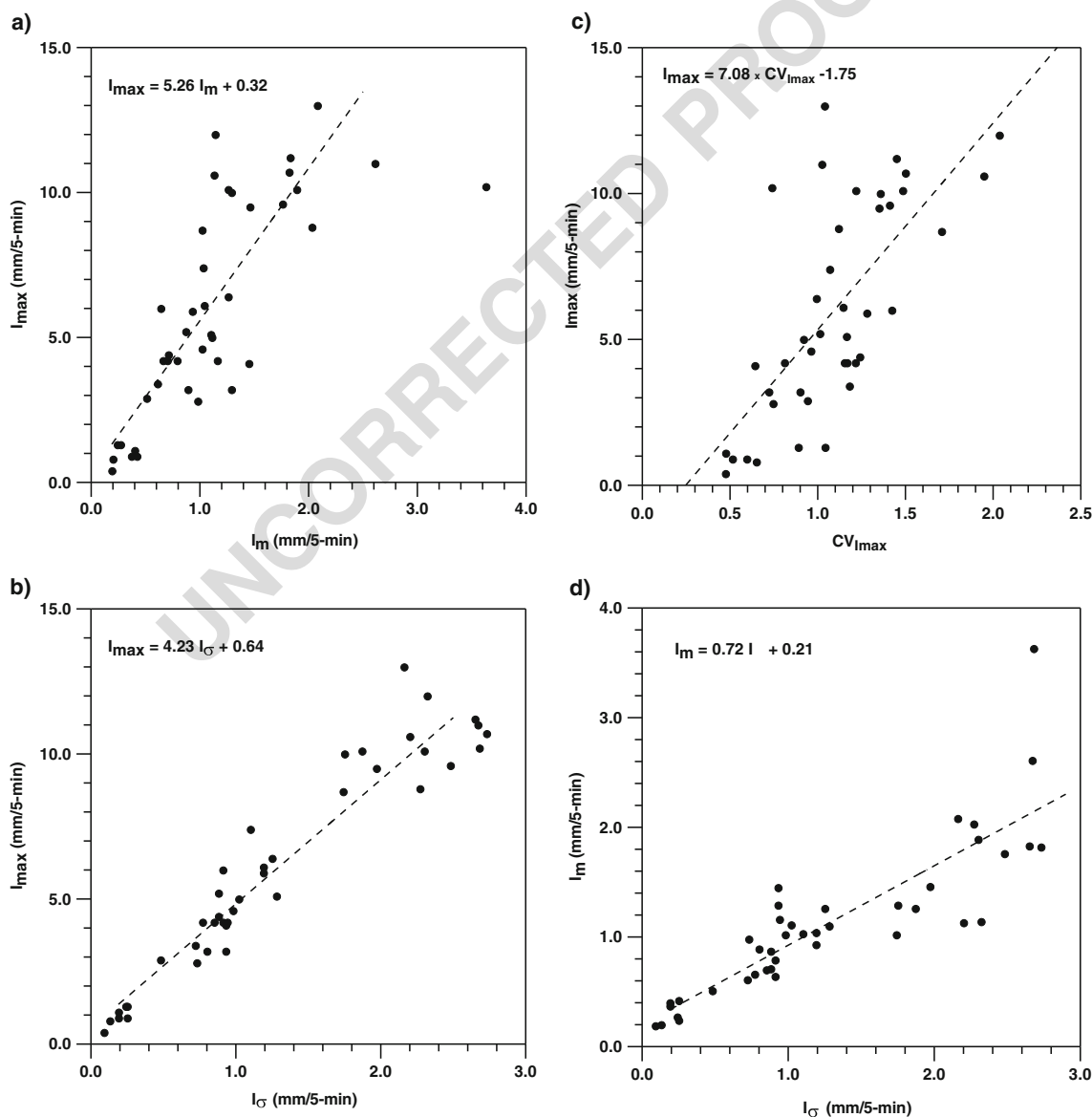


Fig. 8 Dependence of the maximum 5-min rain amount, I_{max} , for every episode on **a** the average intensity, I_m ; **b** the standard deviation, I_σ and **c** the coefficient of variation, $CV_{I_{\text{max}}}$. **d** Relationship between I_m and I_σ

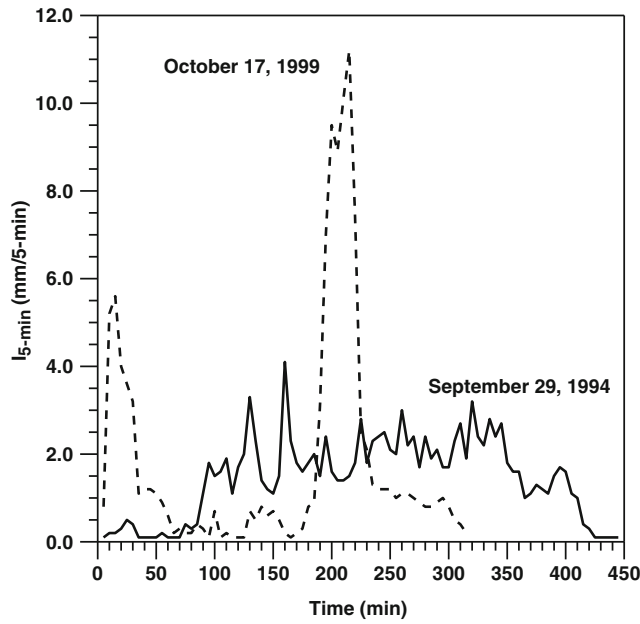


Fig. 9 Two examples of 5-min profiles on the *September 29, 1994*, and on the *October 17, 1999*, episodes

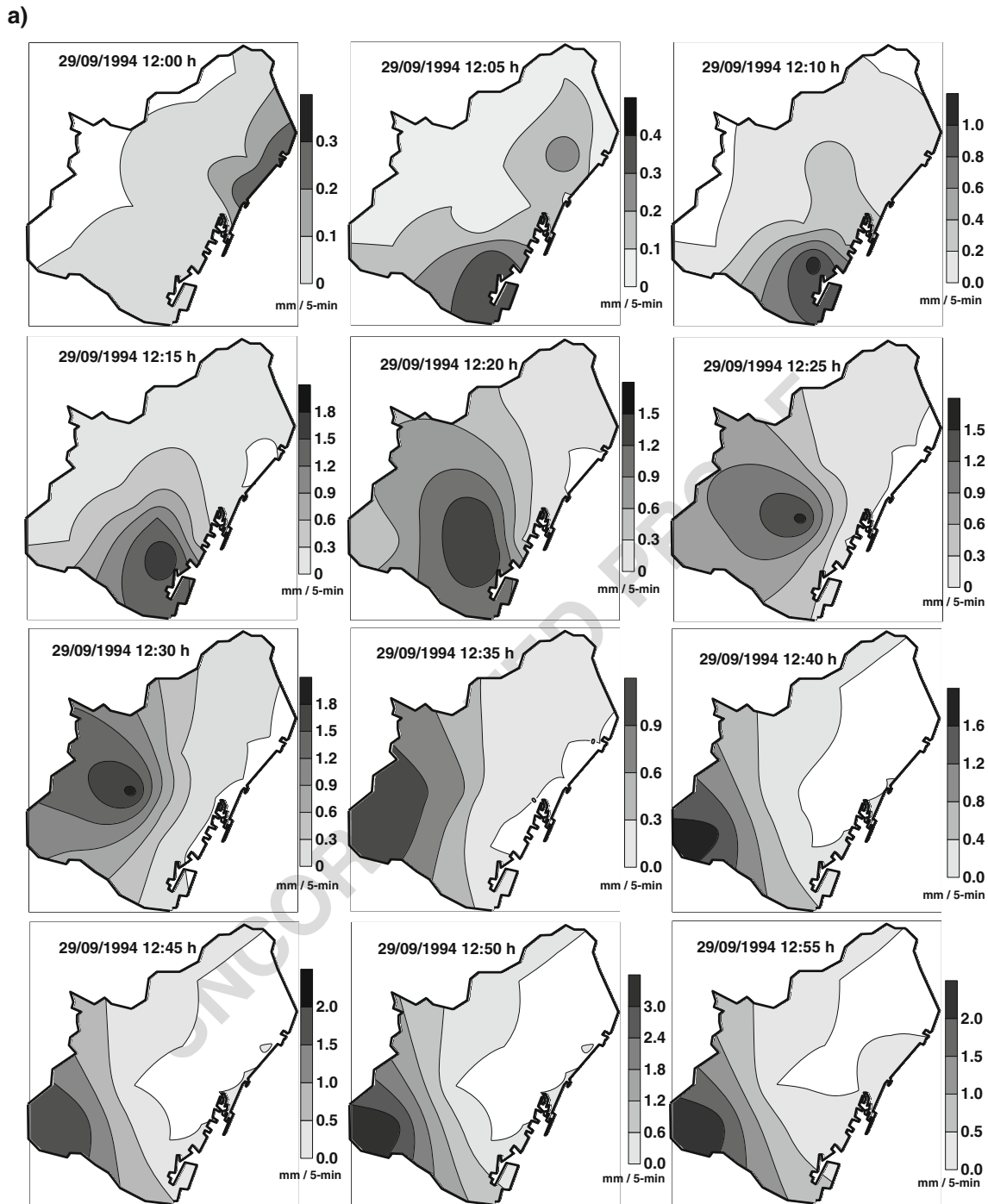
527 5 min for an elapsed time of approximately 210 min). This
 528 profile would agree with that of rain rate gauge number 1.
 529 Nevertheless, the early I_{max} observed in Fig. 9 is not detected
 530 in rain rate gauge number 1. This lack of recorded peaks could
 531 be a consequence of time shifts on the starting time of the
 532 rainfall episodes at the different rain rate gauges. In agreement
 533 with Fig. 1, and mentioned in Sect. 2, the urban network
 534 covers a non-negligible area of approximately 100 km². The
 535 size of this area would be sufficient to distinguish time shifts
 536 among rain rate gauges, a consequence of several atmospheric
 537 dynamic processes, such as eastern advections, frontal pas-
 538 sages or convective phenomena.

539 For a better description of the profiles shown in Fig. 9,
 540 the time evolution and the spatial propagation of the out-
 541 standing peaks detected for September 29, 1994, and
 542 October 17, 1999, episodes are shown in Fig. 10. Given
 543 that September 29, 1994, is characterised by a set of rel-
 544 atively similar intensity peaks, the spatiotemporal evolu-
 545 tion has been analysed for 5-min intervals covering two
 546 lengths of 55 min after the beginning of the episode. In
 547 this way, several peaks close to 3.0 mm/5 min and another
 548 slightly exceeding 4.0 mm/5 min can be detected.
 549 Figure 10a describes the track of I_{max} for the first chosen
 550 length of 55 min. I_{max} are displaced from north-east to
 551 south-west of the Barcelona urban area, with signs of a
 552 clockwise rotation of maxima emplacements, with a mod-
 553 erate I_{max} being detected, slightly exceeding 3.0 mm/
 554 5 min. It is worth mentioning that, at the same time that
 555 intensity peaks moved towards south-west, 5-min
 556 amounts close to the littoral are null. All these patterns
 557 would suggest an eastern advection process in agreement

with surface pressure and 500-hPa charts. I_{max} maps for
 the other length of 55 min (Fig. 10b) depict a not-so-clear
 track. Nevertheless, signs of a counter-clockwise trajec-
 tory of I_{max} can be detected. It is also worth mentioning that
 I_{max} only exceed 3.0 mm/5 min for a short period and a
 very small area in the coast line. Additionally, as for the
 length described in Fig. 9a, nuclei of I_{max} occupy places
 in the urban network spatially opposed to those corre-
 sponding to null or almost null 5-min rain amounts. In
 short, patterns derived from both figures could be two
 pictures of spatial rainfall distribution generated by an
 eastern advection favoured by relatively cold air masses
 in altitude, in agreement with surface and 500-hPa charts.

Figure 10c, d describes the evolution of the two inten-
 sity peaks detected in Fig. 9 for October 17, 1999. The
 first one is monitored at 5-min intervals, being clearly
 observed that the nucleus of outstanding rainfall intensity
 arrives from the south and in a few minutes achieves its
 highest value (exceeding 5.0 mm/5 min). Just after, this
 nucleus shifts parallel to the coast line, splitting later into
 two nuclei of notably lower intensity. These nuclei follow
 different tracks towards the north-west (littoral chain) and
 the north-east along the coast line. In agreement with syn-
 optic surface and 500-hPa charts, the evolution of this
 nucleus of rainfall intensity would correspond to a con-
 vective process characterised by short periods (about 25–
 30 min) of notable intensity. This hypothesis would be
 reinforced by Fig. 10d, where the track of a second peak
 of intensity is monitored. The scheme is quite similar to
 that of Fig. 10c. The track of the intensity peak nucleus is
 very similar and the length is again close to 25–30 min.
 Nevertheless, the highest intensity is achieved in this sec-
 ond track at the end of the process, but not at the begin-
 ning, close to 11.0 mm/5 min, with outstanding high
 values all along the track. These patterns would not be
 contradictory in comparison with those observed for the
 first nucleus. Two consecutive convective cells, with a
 time delay between them of a few minutes, similar tracks
 and lengths, and belonging to the same episode, but with
 quite different rain, can be explained as a consequence of
 similar atmospheric conditions of previous cases.

Another remarkable example of rainfall episode is
 shown in Fig. 10e. Surface and 500-hPa charts strongly
 suggest that this episode corresponds to a typical summer
 storm, characterised by heavy rainfall amount (close to
 60 mm), localised high intensity along 30 min and with a
 W-E trajectory. In contrast with the two previous epi-
 sodes of Fig. 10a–d, maximum intensity values from
 11.0 to 12.0 mm/5 min are detected along a short period
 of 20–30 min. Although nuclei of high intensity do not
 cover the entire urban domain, this kind of episode could
 be associated with flood risks due to their outstanding
 intensities.



Q13 **Fig. 10** Spatiotemporal evolution of the 5-min rain amounts recorded in the urban network on **a, b** September 29, 1994, and **c, d** October 27, 1999. Isolines are given in mm/5 min

611 Finally, the absolute maximum of 5-min rain amounts
 612 recorded at every one of the 23 rain gauges along 1994–
 613 2009 is shown in Fig. 11. In spite of the relatively small
 614 dimension of the analysed area, the distribution of maxi-
 615 ma intensities is not homogeneous. Whereas absolute
 616 maximum intensity varies from 10.0 to 13.0 mm/5 min
 617 for a great part of the area, three nuclei reaching or

618 slightly exceeding 19.0 mm/5 min are found. These three
 619 nuclei and surrounding areas should be taken into account
 620 with the aim of preventing the generation of floods caused
 621 by very high intensities. Even though these results
 622 concerning spatial distribution of high intensities are
 623 based on a short recording period of 16 years, signs of
 624 flood risk become evident. In order to quantify this kind

b)

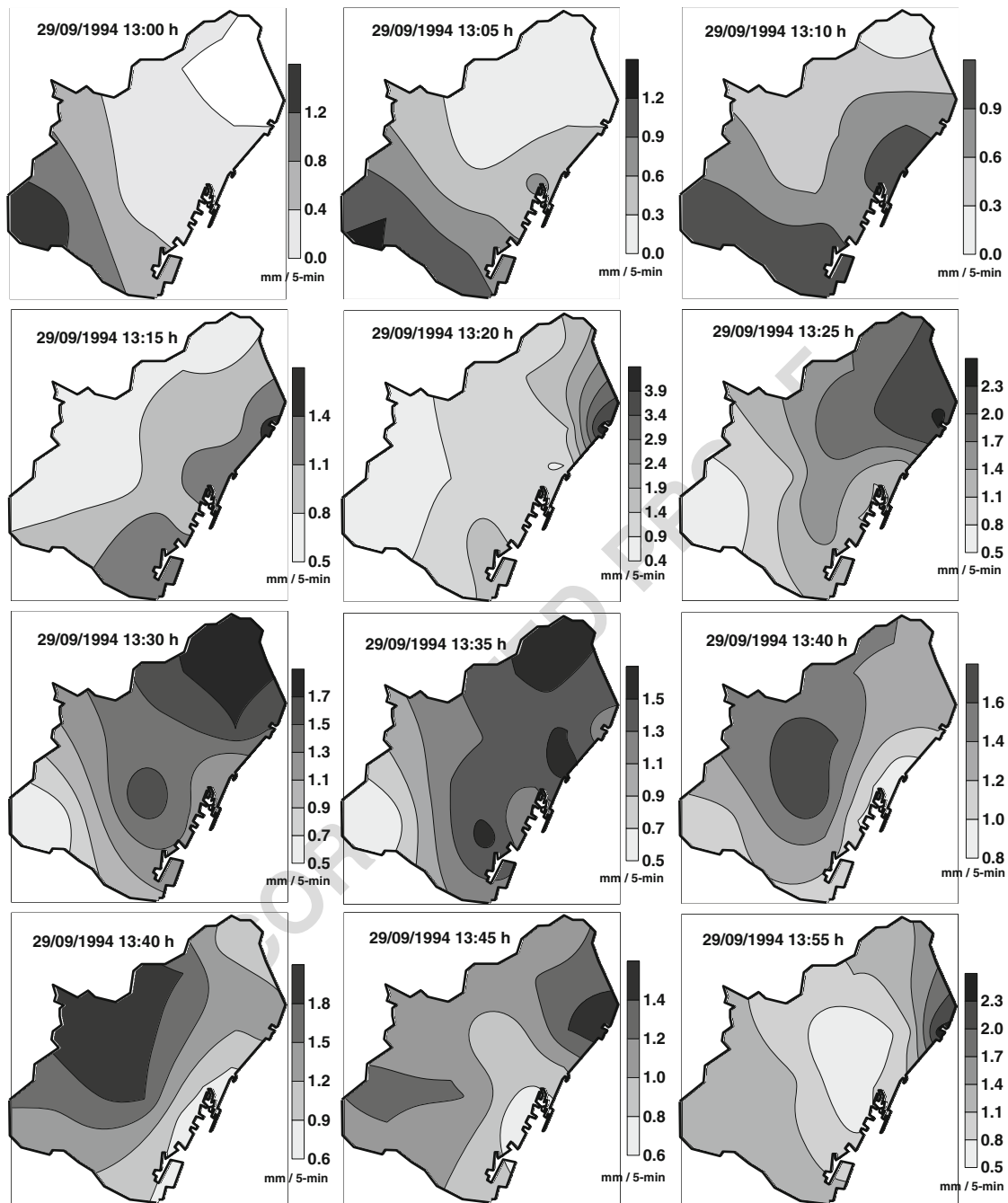


Fig. 10 (continued)

625 of risk, a future step should be an analysis of 5-min
 626 amount extremes, including statistical models, return pe-
 627 riods and spatial distribution of extremes. This strategy
 628 would take advantage of an increased number of samples
 629 for the same recording period, because rainfall episodes
 630 would not be restricted to those with lengths longer than
 Q14 631 2 h. Conversely, all 5-min amounts would contribute to
 632 obtain reliable series of empiric extremes.

5 Conclusions

The concept and mathematical formulation of NIC has been
 applied to analyse 41 selected rain rate episodes in an urban
 network, related to different synoptic situations, with different
 lengths and rain amounts, from the viewpoint of 5-min
 amounts. In contrast with the dependence of NRC on the
 coefficient of variation of the series (daily and monthly

633

634

635

636

637

638

639

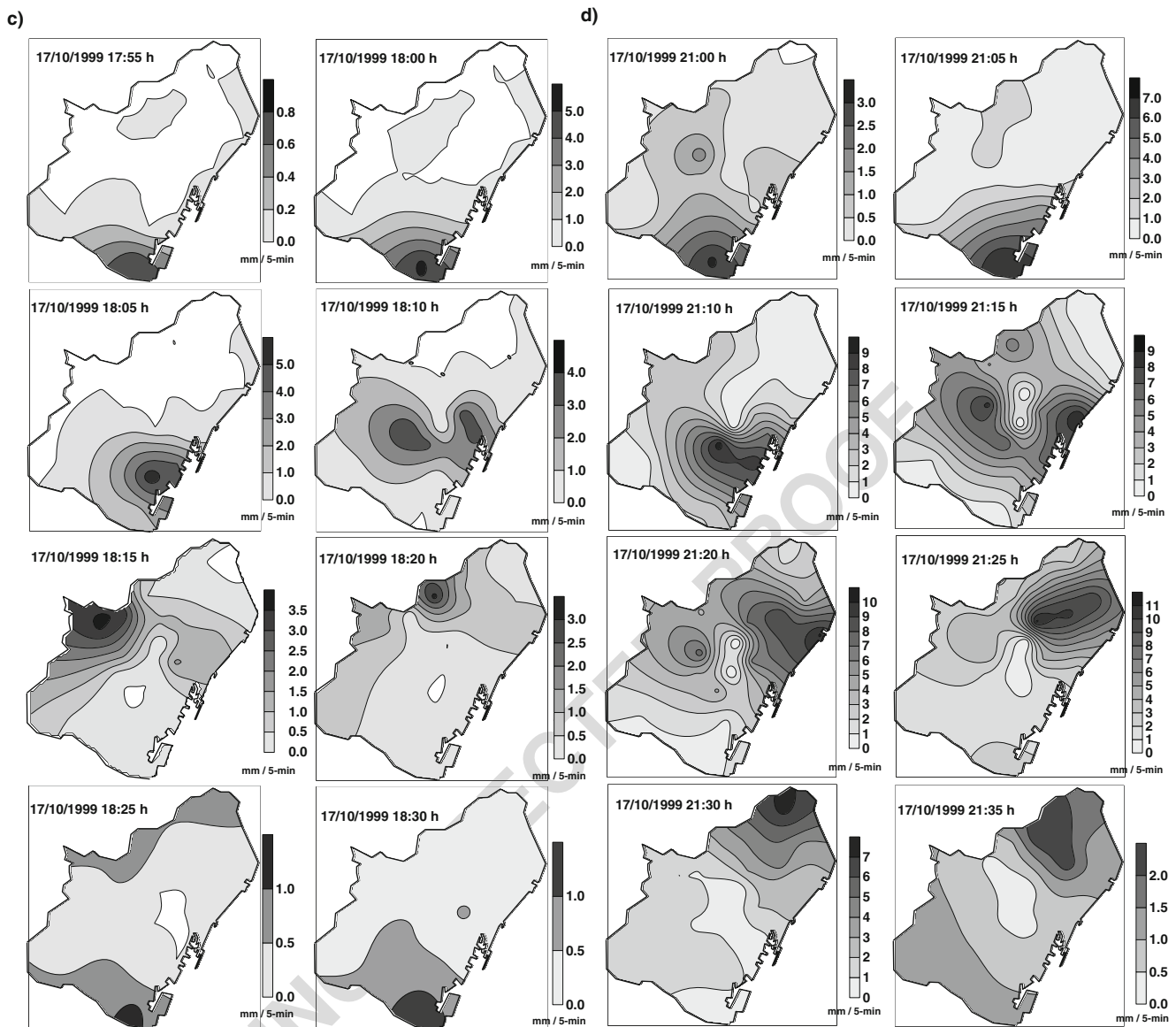


Fig. 10 (continued)

640 amounts, for instance), the NICs are clearly described by power
 641 laws characterised by their exponents κ . Nevertheless, some
 642 signs of dependence of κ on CV_I are also detected. In conse-
 643 quence, NICs are also in some way governed by the CV_I or, in
 644 other words, by the spreading of 5-min rain amounts.

645 It is also worthy of mention that the power laws exclude 5-
 646 min rain amounts below the resolution of rain rate gauges, due
 647 to intermittencies in the rainfall episode. As a result of all these
 648 characteristics of the NIC and the power law properties, seven
 649 parameters have been finally assumed, describing a specific
 650 rain rate episode. On the one hand, two of them, R and L , are
 651 basic. On the other hand, the intermittency parameter Y_0 and
 652 the coordinates (X_m, Y_m) are three new parameters. Even
 653 though certain relationships may be detected between them,
 654 κ and CV_I should be considered as different parameters. The
 655 mentioned relationship is not a mathematical function exactly

relating them, but just suggesting a decreasing evolution of κ 656
 with CV_I modelled by an exponential law. The other relationships 657
 between pairs of different parameters also contribute to a 658
 better knowledge of the relationship among different features 659
 of the rainfall episodes. These relationships can be interpreted 660
 as increasing/decreasing tendencies on one parameter when 661
 this is compared with increasing/decreasing values of another, 662
 but not as an accurate and exact dependence of one parameter 663
 on another. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that what- 664
 ever the rain amount, length and synoptic chart associated 665
 with a rainfall episode, the same relationships between 666
 pairs of parameters are valid for the 41 episodes. This 667
 result is outstanding, taking into account that these epi- 668
 sodes belong to the four seasons and they are due to such 669
 varied processes as eastern advectons, frontal passages or 670
 convective phenomena. 671

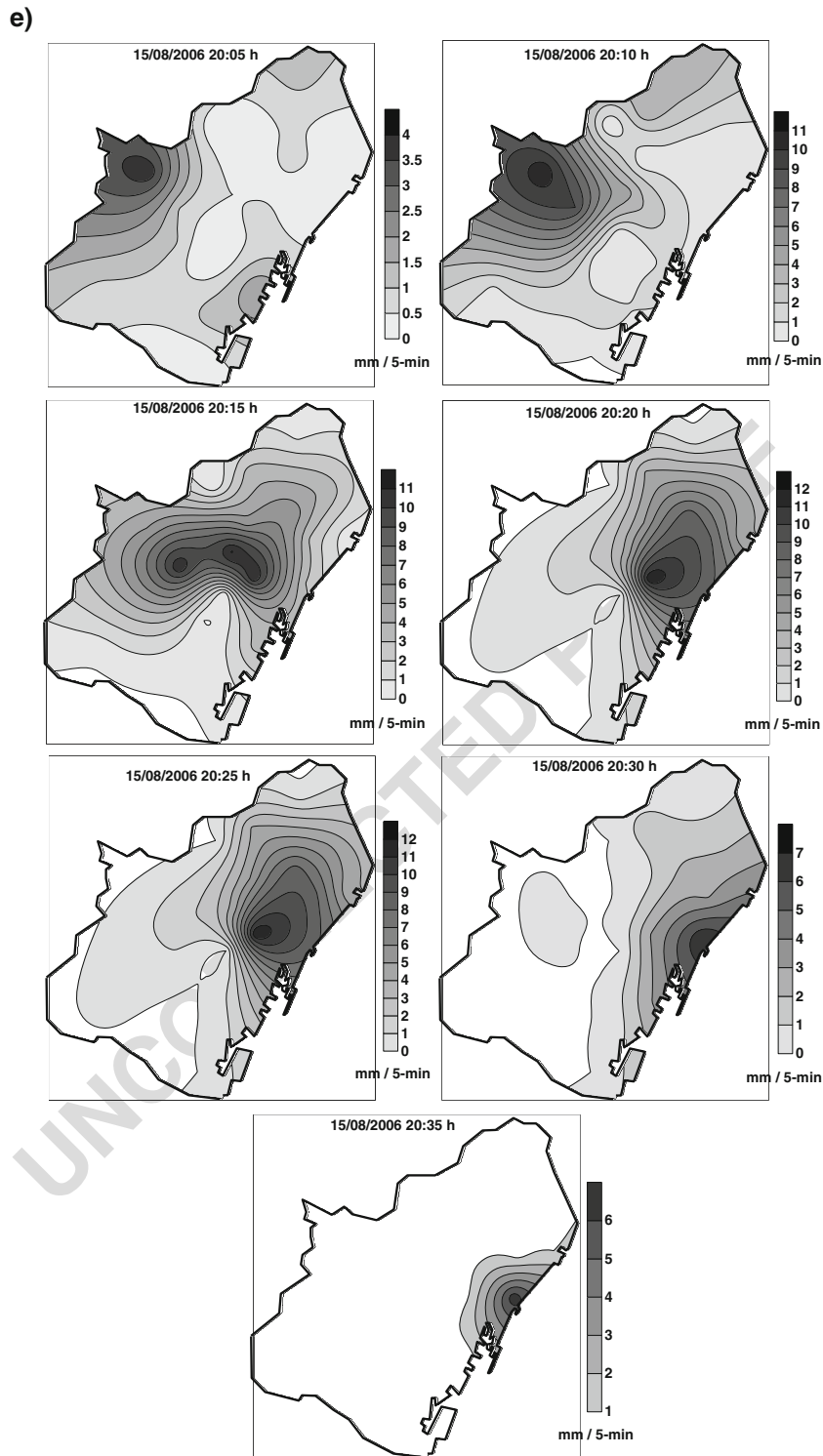


Fig. 10 (continued)

672 From the viewpoint of flood prevention, taking into ac- 678
 673 count some geographical and topographical characteristics of 679
 674 Barcelona area (closeness to the Mediterranean coast line, 680
 675 enhancement of rainfall intensity due to the vicinity of the 681
 676 littoral chain and a smooth slope from this chain to the littoral 682
 677 coast), characteristics derived from analyses of extreme 5-min 683

rain amounts are valuable. Specifically, dependences of I_{max} 678
 on I_m and I_σ offer a picture of expected extreme intensities for 679
 smooth, moderate and heavy intensity episodes, as well as the 680
 increase of I_{max} for episodes of wide intensity range. 681
 Additionally, the time evolution of three episodes shown in 682
 Fig. 10a–e could be an example of valuable information 683

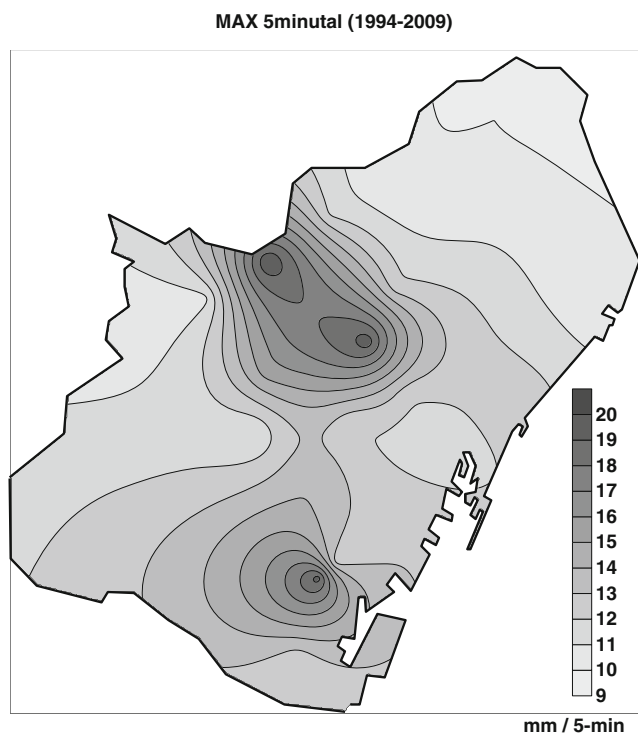


Fig. 11 Spatial distribution of the maximum 5-min rain amounts recorded in the urban network for years 1994–2009. Isolines are given in mm/5 min

684 obtained by the spatial–temporal monitoring of episodes recorded by the urban network. Results associated with Fig. 11
 685 are also very important. For future flood episode prevention, two relevant questions should be considered. First, as mentioned before, the spatial distribution of I_{max} is not homogeneously spread, but concentrated around three nuclei of outstanding values. And second, even for places away from these three critical points, 5-min rain amounts are not negligible.
 687 High magnitudes on a metropolitan area, as those exceeding 10 mm/5 min, should be carefully taken into account in engineering studies, leading to a reduction of flood risk and its effects. Alternatively, flood risks could be also quantified by means of extreme value statistics and return periods. This kind of analysis is out of the scope of this paper, but it should be a forthcoming objective for a better contribution to mitigate the effects of heavy rainfall episodes on urban areas.

700 A simple analysis at the daily scale is not sufficient to improve drainage systems, especially for western Mediterranean areas, where heavy and irregular rainfalls are expected. A more detailed knowledge about short integration-time records, as 5-min amounts, is convenient to design right-dimensioned drainages submitted to heavy short-length rainfall intensities, which may generate outstanding flows. In particular, NIC permits the determination for every rain rate gauge or for every episode the probability of exceeding a certain 5-min amount, the expected I_{max} and where the highest I_{max} are expected, permitting then a more accurate design. For

instance, in agreement with Fig. 11, the nucleus of high I_{max} close to the Barcelona harbour is on the windward side of a low hill of 150 m a.s.l. (Fig. 1). This fact possibly enhances the effects of eastern and south-eastern advections. The other nuclei of extreme I_{max} appear very close to the littoral chain (500 m a.s.l.), and very likely, the same causes concerning eastern advections proposed for the first nucleus would be right now.

Finally, it is also worthy of mention that the fractal structure of the rainfall intensity is clearly manifested by the power law describing NIC, as well as by the established power law relationships between pairs of parameters (Y_m, R), and (X_m, R). These fractal relationships should be in agreement with the fractal scaling behaviour of rainfall intensities.

Acknowledgements The rain rate gauge network data has been gently provided by CLABSA, the company that controlled the sewer systems of Barcelona along the years 1994–2009.

References

Alijani B, O'Brien J, Yarnal B (2008) Spatial analysis of precipitation intensity and concentration in Iran. *Theor Appl Climatol* 94:107–124

Ananthakrishnan R, Soman MK (1989) Statistical distribution of daily rainfall and its association with the coefficients of variation of rainfall series. *Int J Climatol* 9:485–500

Benjamin JR, Cornell CA (1970) Probability, statistics and decision for civil engineers. McGraw-Hill, New York 685 pp

Burgueño A, Austin J, Vilar E, Puigcerver M (1987) Analysis of moderate and intense rainfall rates continuously recorded over half a century and influence on microwave communications planning and rain-rate data acquisition. *IEEE Trans on Comm* 35:382–395

Burgueño A, Puigcerver M, Vilar E (1988) Influence of rain gauge integration time on the rain rate statistics used in microwave communications. *Ann Télécommun* 43:522–527

Burgueño A, Vilar E, Puigcerver M (1990) Spectral analysis of 49 years of rainfall rate and relation to fade dynamics. *IEEE Trans Commun* 38:1359–1366

Burgueño A, Serra C, Lana X (2004) Monthly and annual statistical distributions of the daily rainfall at the Fabra Observatory (Barcelona, NE Spain) for the years 1917–1999. *Theor Appl Climatol* 77:57–75

Burgueño A, Martínez MD, Lana X, Serra C (2005) Statistical distributions of the daily rainfall regime in Catalonia (NE Spain) for the years 1950–2000. *Int J Climatol* 25:1381–1403

Burgueño A, Martínez MD, Serra C, Lana X (2010) Statistical distribution of daily rainfall regime in Europe for the period 1951–2000. *Theor Appl Climatol* 102:213–226

Casas MC, Codina B, Redaño A, Lorente J (2004) A methodology to classify extreme rainfall events in the western Mediterranean area. *Theor Appl Climatol* 77:139–150. doi:10.1007/s00704-003-0003-x

Casas MC, Rodríguez R, Redaño A (2010) Analysis of extreme rainfall in Barcelona using a microscale rain gauge network. *Meteorol Appl* 17:117–123. doi:10.1002/met.166 <http://hdl.handle.net/2117/6733>

Casas MC, Rodríguez R, Prohom M, Gázquez A, Redaño A (2011) Estimation of the probable maximum precipitation in Barcelona (Spain). *Int J Climatol* 31:1322–1327. doi:10.1002/joc.2149 <http://hdl.handle.net/2117/9654>

Urban rainfall intensity patterns

768	Hosking JRM, Wallis JR (1997) Regional frequency analysis. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 224 pp	792
769		793
770	Hosking JRM, Wallis JR, Wood EF (1985) Estimation of the generalised extreme value distributions by the method of probability-weighted moments. <i>Techtonometrics</i> 27:251–261	794
771		795
772		796
773	Jolliffe IT, Hope PB (1996) Representation of daily rainfall distributions using normalised rainfall curves. <i>Int J Climatol</i> 16:1157–1163	797
774		798
775	Lana X, Serra C, Burgueño A (2003) Trends affecting pluviometric indices at the Fabra Observatory (Barcelona, NE Spain) from 1917 to 1999. <i>Int J Climatol</i> 23:315–332	799
776		800
777		801
778	Lana X, Martínez MD, Serra C, Burgueño A (2005) Periodicities and irregularities of indices describing the daily pluviometric regime of the Fabra Observatory (NE Spain) for the years 1917–1999. <i>Theor Appl Climatol</i> 82:183–198	802
779		803
780		804
781		805
782	Lorente J, Redaño A (1990) Rainfall rate distribution in a local scale: the case of Barcelona City. <i>Theor Appl Climatol</i> 41:23–32	806
783		807
784	Malamud BD, Turcotte DL (1999) Self-affine time series: generation and analyses. <i>Adv Geophys</i> 40:1–90	808
785		809
786	Martínez MD, Lana X, Burgueño A, Serra C (2012) Normalized monthly shortage curves: a contribution for a better understanding of monthly rainfall deficit in Western Europe. <i>Theor Appl Climatol</i> 108:535–552	810
787		811
788		812
789		813
790	Martín-Vide J (2004) Spatial distribution of a daily precipitation concentration index in Peninsular Spain. <i>Int J Climatol</i> 24:959–971	814
791		815
816		

UNCORRECTED PROOF