

## Source apportionment of particle number size distribution at the street canyon and urban background sites

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**Abstract.** Particle size is one of the key ~~factors influencing how~~ parameters of aerosol particles affecting their climate and health effects. Therefore, a better understanding of ~~the~~ particle size distributions from ~~different~~ various sources is crucial. In urban environments, aerosols are produced in a large number of varying processes, and conditions. ~~This study aims to increase the knowledge of urban aerosol sources using a novel approach to positive matrix factorization (PMF). This is intended to improve the understanding of urban aerosol sources, utilizing a novel approach to positive matrix factorization (PMF).~~ The particle source profiles ~~were~~ detected in particle number size distribution data measured simultaneously ~~in at nearby~~ a street canyon and ~~at an nearby~~ urban background station between February 2015 and June 2019 in Helsinki, southern Finland. ~~The novelty of the method is combining the data from both sites and finding~~ ~~The data is combined into one file so that the data from both stations has the same timestamps. Then PMF finds~~ profiles for the unified data. ~~Five A total of five different~~ aerosol sources were found. Four of them were detected at both of the stations: slightly aged traffic (TRA2), secondary combustion aerosol (SCA), secondary aerosol (SecA), and long-range transported aerosol (LRT). One of the sources, fresh traffic (TRA1) was only detected at a street canyon. The factors were identified based on available auxiliary data. ~~Additionally, the trends of the found factors were studied, and statistically significant decreasing trends were found for TRA1 and SecA. A statistically significant increasing trend was found for TRA2.~~ This work implies that traffic-related aerosols remain important in urban environments and that aerosol sources can be detected by using only particle number size distribution data as input in the ~~PMF~~ positive matrix factorization method.

## 30 1 Introduction

Urban aerosol is a complex mixture of particles of ~~different-various~~ sizes and compositions, originating from multiple anthropogenic and natural sources, including, sea salt, fuel combustion (e.g., in thermal power generation, incineration, domestic heating, combustion engines), road, tire, and brake wear, dust, pollen, volcanic ash, forest fires, and industry (Almeida et al., 2006; Guerreiro et al., 2015; Karanasiou et al., 2009). ~~Of these anthropogenic sources are predominant in urban areas (Guerreiro et al., 2015). Of these, anthropogenic sources typically dominate urban aerosol concentrations (Guerreiro et al., 2015).~~ The negative health effects related to particulate matter (PM) pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) are commonly accepted and well-documented (i.e., Koenig, 2000; J. Wu et al., 2017). ~~(Koenig, 2000; J. Wu et al., 2017)~~ also leading to indirect financial consequences ~~through increased mortality and treatment of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases~~ (Johnston et al., 2021). ~~The~~ recent WHO good practice statement ~~encourages~~, the systematic measurement of particle number concentration (PNC) ~~of particles  $\geq 10$  nm, is encouraged~~ emphasizing the significance of ~~PNC particle number concentration~~ in addition to PM mass (WHO, 2021).

Source apportionment of aerosols can be done in multiple ways. ~~Commonly used source apportionment techniques in atmospheric sciences include k-means cluster analysis, principal component analysis (PCA), and receptor modelling methods. One often used method is receptor modeling. Two of the most used receptor modeling methods in aerosol science are principal components analysis (PCA, Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016)) and positive matrix factorization (PMF) (Tauler et al., 2009).~~ In this work, a receptor modelling method called positive matrix factorization (PMF) was used. PMF is a mathematical multi-derivative method developed by Paatero, (1997) that can be performed for many types of data, and it is the most widely used and established source apportion method for atmospheric aerosol particle data currently (Hopke et al, 2020; Hopke et al., 2022; Yang et al, 2020). The decision to use PMF was made because PMF is a well-established source apportionment method in environmental sciences, and there was suitable software available. Additionally, as PMF is a factor analysis method, it is fundamentally suitable to this kind of study, as it assumes that the observed data is a combination of latent underlying factors. ~~In contrast, PCA, for example, attempts to linearly combine the underlying variables to reduce the size of the data. This work concentrates on PMF which is a mathematical multi derivative method developed by (Paatero, 1997) and is widely used especially in environmental sciences. PMF can be performed for many different types of data. PMF has been used For-for example, chemical composition-composition data (e.g. Li et al. 2003; Makkonen et al., 2023), the mass spectra (e.g. (Oduber et al., 2021; Teinilä et al., 2022), particle number size distribution (NSD) (Krecl et al., 2008; Zhou et al., 2005) and/or a in combined matrixes with NSD and auxiliary data (Rivas et al., 2020). However, conducting source apportionment solely based on NSD data and using auxiliary data only to verify the sources seems to be challenging have some challenges as the -and the results are relatively hard to interpret, and/or source profiles might be mixed with multiple sources (Zhou et al., 2005, Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016, Krecl et al., 2008). This makes interpreting of results using auxiliary data more difficult. To improve the separation between sources when using only NSD data as input to PMF, NSD data from two sites is combined into one data file in this study.~~

Urban aerosol size distributions have been studied in a comprehensive review of urban aerosols consisting of approximately 200 articles, ~~and~~ including 114 cities in 43 countries (Wu & Boor, 2021) (~~F. Wu & Boor, 2021~~). They stated that in urban environments, the majority of particles ~~in terms of number~~ are in the ~~particle~~ size range of 10-100 nm, and the concentrations decrease approximately by a factor of 100 when the particle size increases from 100 nm to 1000 nm. In particular, PMF especially has been applied to size distribution data in numerous studies in urban, suburban, urban background, or residential locations in Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Europe, and the USA. (Al-Dabbous et al., 2015; Dai et al., 2021; Friend et al., 2012; Gu et al., 2011; Harrison et al., 2011; Kasumba et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2004; Krecl et al., 2008; Leoni et al., 2018; Liu, et al., 2017; Ogulei et al., 2007; Pokorná, et al., 2020; Rivas et al., 2020; Squizzato et al., 2019; Thimmaiah et al., 2009; Vu et al., 2016; Wang, et al., 2013; Yue et al., 2008; Zong et al., 2019). Only one of the studies used data from Helsinki (Rivas et al., 2020). In this study, particle NSD number size distributions were was investigated in an urban background (UB) and street canyon (SC) sites in Helsinki, southern Finland. The simultaneous data from these two sites have been analysed in previous studies. Okuljar et al. (2021) investigated the relative contribution of traffic and atmospheric new particle formation to the concentration of sub-3 nm particles. They utilized PNC data between 1-800 nm and auxiliary data from the stations. They found that the particle concentrations in the SC were higher over the whole size range. Additionally, they associated particles in the size range of 1-25 nm with local sources at the UB and found particles in the size range of 1-100 nm to have a dominant contribution from local sources in the SC. Rivas et al., (2020) used data from both sites in a study that applied PMF on NSD data across four European cities. They identified five factors for both stations: nucleation, fresh traffic, urban background, biogenic, and secondary.

Earlier studies conducted in the Helsinki metropolitan area have shown that ~~the~~ NSDs vary based on the dominant source. Nucleation-produced particles are the smallest, with mode particle sizes of 7-11 nm, ~~with~~ traffic-influenced emissions have ~~ing~~ varying mode particle sizes ~~being of~~ 10-75 nm, with the smaller particles ~~being~~ produced by nucleation and larger particles ~~being soot mode from~~ (Harni et al., 2023; Pirjola et al., 2017; Rivas et al., 2020). Woodburning has been shown to produce slightly larger particles at a mode particle size of 46 nm and to have a wide particle size distribution (Harni et al., 2023; Pirjola et al., 2017). Biogenic emissions have been shown to produce particles with mode sizes between 69 ~~and~~ 100 nm (Harni et al., 2023; Rivas et al., 2020).

This study was intended to improve the understanding of urban aerosol sources by applying statistical source apportionment methods such as PMF (EPA PMF 5) to long-term size distribution data. This study aimed to explore how well the sources of urban aerosols are statistically separable based on the number size distribution data using positive matrix factorization (EPA PMF 5). The factors were identified based on the diurnal cycles of the PMF factors, available supporting data, including gases (NO<sub>x</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>), and particle chemistry. The data used in this study was measured at ~~two in two different~~ sites, ~~an~~ Street Canyon (SC) and Urban Background Station (UB) from February 2015 to June 2019. These ~~datasets, comprising~~ more than 4 ~~-years~~ long datasets also allowed indicative investigation of the trends in NSDs and ~~discussed a discussion of~~ the reasons for the changes observed in NSDs. The novelty of this study is how the data was handled from the two nearby sites with

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strongly overlapping aerosol sources by adding the data from the two sites to the same data matrix as columns instead of doing two separate PMF analyses.

## 2 Experimental

### 2.1 Measurement sites

The data used in this study was measured at two ~~different~~ atmospheric measurement stations. The first measurement station is an ~~street-canyon~~ (SC) site at Mäkelänkatu in Helsinki Finland (60° 11' 47.53" N, 24° 57' 6.41" E), and it is governed by the Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (~~HSY~~). The measurement site is situated ~~right~~ beside one of the busiest main roads in Helsinki and is heavily influenced by traffic emissions. The SC measurement site is described in detail by [Barreira et al. \(2021\)](#). (~~Barreira et al., 2021~~). The second station, the ~~urban background~~ (UB) station, is located at Kumpula Helsinki SMEAR III ( 60° 12' 10.41" N, 24° 57' 40.53" E). The site is situated near a park area ~~with a distance of~~ more than 100 m from the nearest busy road. ~~A detailed description of the SMEAR III station is given in (Järvi et al., 2009).~~ [Järvi et al. \(2009\)](#) describes the SMEAR III station in detail. The distance between ~~the~~ SC and UB stations is approximately 900 m.

### 2.2 Instruments

Particle ~~number size distribution~~ NSD data used in this work was measured between ~~the 13<sup>th</sup> of~~ February 13, 2015 and ~~the 5<sup>th</sup> of~~ June 5, 2019. ~~The instruments used in the measurements are listed in Table 1.~~ At the SC site, NSDs were measured with a differential mobility particle sizer (DMPS) consisting of a condensation particle counter (CPC, A 20, Airmodus, Helsinki, Finland) and a Vienna-type differential mobility analyzer (DMA). At the UB site, NSDs were measured with a twin differential mobility particle sizer (Twin-DMPS). [Hoppel \(1978\)](#) describes the ~~The~~ working principle of DMA and response functions ~~are described in detail by Hoppel (1978).~~ The size spectra of DMPS at the SC site were measured in 26-size bins with particle sizes ranging from 6 to 800 nm ~~and with~~ a time resolution of approx. 8 min 40 s ~~to~~ 9 min 5 s. The DMPS at the UB ~~site~~ measured particles in 50-size bins with particle sizes of 3-794 nm with a time resolution of ~~approx~~ ~~approx.~~ 9 min 50 s ~~to~~ 10 min 5 s. ~~Both of the DMPS systems were made by the University of Helsinki and approved by European Center for Aerosol Calibration and Characterization. Both of the systems had dryers in the inlet lines to keep the relative humidity (RH) below 40%.~~ The ~~charger of the~~ DMPS ~~charger~~ had difficulties charging the ~~three~~ smallest particle size bins (6.0, 7.3, and 9.0 nm) ~~hes~~ on the SC site; therefore, particles smaller than 10 nm were excluded from the analysis for both sites. ~~Both DMPS systems participated in an intercomparison with a reference instrument from Leibniz Institute for Tropospheric Research (TROPOS) SMPS in the UB station between June 11 and 14, 2021, and demonstrated comparable results.~~ ~~Non-refractory~~ PM<sub>1</sub> (organics, sulphate, nitrate, ammonium, chloride) was measured with an aerosol chemical speciation monitor (Q-ACSM, Aerodyne Research Inc., [~~Ng et al., (2011)~~]) at the SC site. ~~A mass-based Q-ACSM calibration was performed using dried size-selected (300 nm of mobility diameter) ammonium nitrate and ammonium sulphate aerosol~~

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particles. The effective nitrate-response factor (RFNO3) relative ionization efficiencies of sulphate and ammonium (RIENH4) and relative ionization efficiency of sulphate (RIESO4) were determined, and analyte signals were converted into nitrate-equivalent mass concentrations. An effusive source of naphthalene, located in the detection region, was used as a reference for m/z and ion transmission calibrations. A Nafion dryer was installed prior to the instrument inlet so that the RH of the sample flow was maintained below 40%. A chemical composition-dependent collection efficiency was used having been calculated according to Middlebrook et al. (2012), with the exception that a collection efficiency of 0.45 was used for samples when ammonium was below the detection limit. More information can be found in Barreira et al. (2021).

PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> mass concentrations were measured with a Tapered Element Oscillating Microbalance (TEOM, model 1405). The black carbon (BC) concentrations at the SC were measured using an Aethalometer (AE33, Magee Scientific). NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> concentrations were measured with Horiba APNA 370 and Horiba APOA-370. At the SC, CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were measured with LICOR model LI-7000 and CO with Horiba APMA-360. At the UB, NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> were measured with TEI42S and TEI49. SO<sub>2</sub> and CO have been were measured with Horiba APMA 370 and Horiba, APSA 360.

**Table 1: The list of instruments used in the measurements.**

Instrument	Station	Measured variable
DMPS (CPC, A20 Airmodus, and Vienna-type DMA)	SC	NSD
DMPS (Twin-DMPS)	UB	NSD
Q-ACSM (Aerodyne Research Inc)	SC	Non-refractory PM <sub>1</sub>
TEOM (model 1405)	SC	PM <sub>10</sub> and PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Aethalometer (AE33, Magee Scientific)	SC	BC
APNA370 (Horiba)	SC	NO <sub>x</sub>
APOA-370 (Horiba)	SC	O <sub>3</sub>
LICOR (model LI-7000)	SC	CO <sub>2</sub>
APMA-360 (Horiba)	SC	CO
TEI42S	UB	NO <sub>x</sub>
TEI49	UB	O <sub>3</sub>
APMA 370 (Horiba)	UB	SO <sub>2</sub>
APSA 360 (Horiba)	UB	CO

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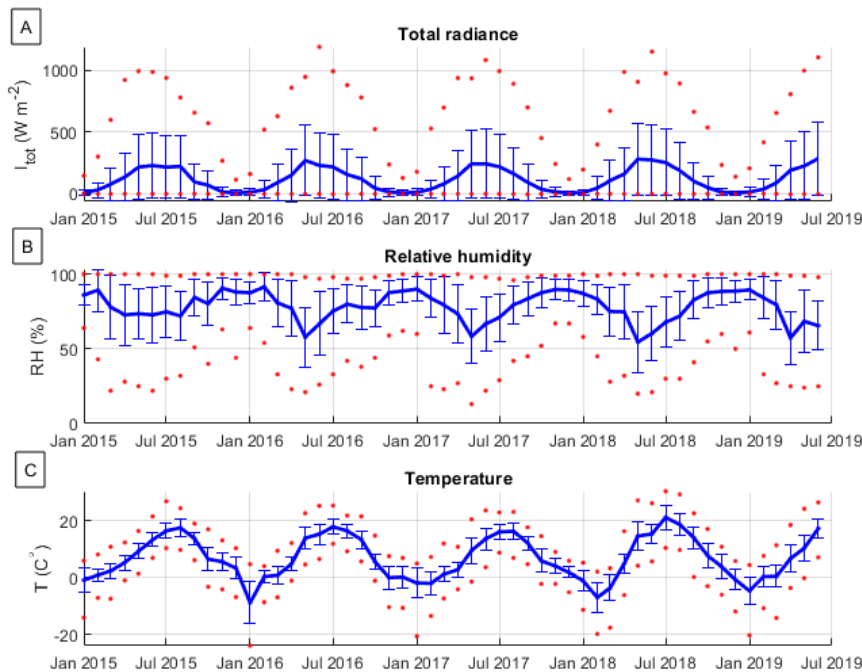
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### 140 2.3 Meteorology

Helsinki is a northern city with four ~~different~~ seasons. The total radiance ( $I_{tot}$ ) and ~~relative humidity~~ (RH) were measured beside the UB at the Helsinki Kumpula weather station (60.203071N, 24.961305E, 24 m asl). The temperature (T) used in this study was measured at ~~the~~ Helsinki Kaisaniemi weather station (60.17523N, 24.94459E, 3 m asl), situated 2.4 km south ~~from of the~~ SC and 3.2 km from the UB; ~~as the~~ ~~temperature~~ T data measured at the Helsinki Kumpula weather ~~station~~ had a large gap in late 2017, ~~with~~ missing several months of data. The monthly average ~~relative humidity~~ (RH), ~~temperature~~ (T), and ~~total radiance~~ ( $I_{tot}$ ) are presented in Fig. 1. The RH reached maximum values during early winter (November-January), and the lowest values were measured during late spring (May). ~~Temperature~~ and  ~~$I_{tot}$  radiance on the contrary~~ reached maximum values during the summer months (June-August). The  ~~$I_{tot}$  radiance~~ reached the maximum slightly earlier (June-July) than the ~~Temperatures~~ (July-August). The highest monthly average ~~Temperature~~ was measured during July 2018 (21.3 °C), and the lowest ~~Temperature~~ was in January 2016 (-9.2 °C, Fig. 1c). In this paper, meteorological data was used in the interpretation of the results.



**Figure 1:** A presents Monthly average values for Total radiance ( $I_{\text{tot}}$ ), Relative humidity (RH), and temperature (T) over the measurement period (2015-2019) at Helsinki. B for RH, and C for T over the measurement period (2015-2019) in Helsinki. The constant blue line represents the monthly mean value. The bars show the standard deviation, and the red dots show the maximum and minimum values counted from hourly values.

#### 2.4 Data processing

The data was processed in the following manner before being input into the PMF: Initially, outliers were identified and eliminated separately at both stations. Subsequently, the data was averaged on an hourly basis independently at each station. The data was then interpolated to 16-size bins at both locations. Finally, the data from the two sites was merged horizontally into a single matrix with 32 bins in total. In more detail, strong outliers were removed from the DMPS data by calculating the total concentration and removing the data points that had a concentration ten times larger or smaller than the adjacent measurement points. These relatively relaxed outlier criteria were applied because the measurement site is less than a meter from the driving lanes, and therefore, variations in the concentrations can be expected due to passing cars. These relatively

165 relaxed criteria for strong outliers were used as the particle number concentration typically varies significantly in the traffic  
environment. After removing the outliers, the size distribution data from the DMPS was averaged over ~~1~~one-hour periods to  
minimize the effect of varying lengths of measurement cycles (approx. 8 min ~~the 40 s to~~ 9 min 5 s at ~~the~~ SC and ~~approx~~approx.  
9 min 50 s ~~to~~ 10 min 5 s at ~~the~~ UB), ~~and~~ ~~A~~additionally, ~~this to be able to give matching~~allowed for matching time stamps on  
~~the to~~ SC and UB data. Only ~~these one~~1-hour data points that had full coverage of data from both stations were included in the  
170 subsequent analyses. Averaging is not expected to affect the source profiles significantly, and average NSD data has been used  
in PMF analysis ~~also~~ in previous publications (e.g., Ogulei, Hopke, & Wallace, 2006). ~~(Ogulei, Hopke, & Wallace, 2006).~~  
The data analysis was done using a novel method of combing ~~the~~NSD data from the two measurement stations ~~together~~so  
that PMF solved factors for both stations simultaneously. To the ~~authors'~~knowledge~~of the authors~~, this approach has not been  
used before. ~~Using this approach, the same factors were solved for both sites. So the factor profile which in this case was the~~  
175 ~~size distribution of factor could be slightly different for the stations but the time series would be the same between the stations.~~  
~~In this approach, a single common factor is calculated for both stations, comprising 32 size bins. The initial 16 size bins are~~  
~~associated with the SC and the remaining 16 with the UB. Given that there is only one set of factors, the time series are identical~~  
~~for both stations, whereas the size distribution profiles vary between the sites. If a factor has a substantial local contribution at~~  
~~one of the sites but not at the other, then its profile would be pronounced at that station and near zero at the other. If there would~~  
180 ~~be a strong local contribution to some factor then the profile of that factor was significant at one of the stations and near zero~~  
~~at the other.~~ To be able to do this reliably and give even weight to data of both stations, the number of bins and the particle  
size limits needed to be scaled to the same. This was also ~~necessary because using needed as using too~~large datafiles was not  
possible in EPA PMF 5.0. The data was reduced so that ~~both~~SC and UB NSDs were presented in 16-size bins. ~~Therefore, So~~  
the data matrix consisted of the first 16 columns of SC size bins and the last 16 columns of UB size bins. Data size bins have  
185 been modified for ~~PMF-positive matrix factorization~~ in other studies. ~~For example, Zhou et al. (2005) for example,~~ reduced  
165 bins to 33 by averaging over five bins. In this study, ~~the reduction of bins were reduced was done~~so that a vector with ~~an~~  
even lognormal bin width was created starting from 1 nm (lognormal width of 0.11 in this study). Then, the SC and UB data  
were interpolated linearly to this diameter vector so that the value for each new diameter point was given as a linear  
interpolation in a logarithmic x-axis between the nearest original diameters. The new size bin midpoint diameters were: 12.6,  
190 16.2, 20.9, 26.9, 34.7, 44.7, 57.5, 74.1, 95.5, 123, 158, 204, 263, 339, 437~~6.5~~, and 562 nm. The interpolation needs to be done  
on a logarithmic x-axis; otherwise, ~~the interpolated~~ concentration is overestimated with a negative derivative and  
underestimated with a positive derivative of the NSD curve. ~~This effect is demonstrated in supplement Fig. S1.~~ This approach  
enabled ~~us to give~~giving the same diameters to both sites regardless of ~~what~~the original size bins ~~were~~. This procedure has  
two drawbacks. One is that the data is ~~levelled~~slightly, as the interpolated values are always between two original values.  
195 Therefore, the highest peaks are slightly lower and the lowest bottoms are slightly higher than in the original data. The second  
drawback is that some of the smaller changes in the NSD may be lost. An example of reduced data compared to the original  
data is ~~presented in supplement~~presented in Fig. Fig. S24.

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Source apportionment is typically conducted seasonally (winter, spring, summer, and autumn) among most long-term size distribution source apportionment analyses (Hopke et al., 2022). However, in this study, the data were ~~analyzed-analysed~~ in one set to ~~be able to evaluate~~ allow us to evaluate the changes in the contributions of ~~various different~~ factors over the whole measurement period. Rose et al. (2021) ~~have~~ stated that to maintain the representation of the total reliable concentration ( $N_{tot}$ ), data coverage needs to exceed 50% on the seasonal level and 60% on the annual level; for the reliable evaluation of diurnal variation, a yearly coverage of 75% was required. The seasonal coverages of the overlapping data for both sites are presented in Table 4. Notably, ~~is that~~ the coverages for the first and last seasons (i.e., winter 2015 and summer 2019) were low, as the measurement period started and ended in the middle of the seasons.

**Table 4:** Seasonal overlapping data coverage for ~~urban background (UB)~~ and ~~street canyon (SC)~~ sites.

	Winter (Dec- Feb)	Spring (Mar- May)	Summer (Jun- Aug)	Autumn (Sep- Nov)
<b>2015</b>	14%	81%	92%	92%
<b>2016</b>	62%	70%	88%	90%
<b>2017</b>	86%	49%	89%	91%
<b>2018</b>	73%	48%	84%	93%
<b>2019</b>	85%	88%	5%	-

## 2.5 Positive Matrix Factorization (PMF)

Positive matrix factorization, ~~developed by Paatero (1997), PMF (Paatero, 1997)~~, is a multi-derivative method that is widely used in environmental sciences to apportion the sources of the measured data. PMF is a least-squares method ~~that is~~ based on the fact that the matrix X with dimensions  $n \times m$  can be presented as a product of two matrixes:  $A_2$  with dimensions  $n \times y_2$  and  $B_2$  with dimensions of  $y \times m$ . This can be used so that the matrix  $n \times m$  is the measured result matrix with  $n$  observations and with  $m$  species, or, in the case of NSD, particle size bins and  $y$  can be set as the number of independent sources.

In estimating error, the methodology was established by Ogulei, Hopke, Zhou, et al. (2006) (Ogulei, Hopke, Zhou, et al., 2006) and further developed by Rivas et al. (2020) (Rivas et al., 2020). The measurement uncertainties ( $\sigma_{ij}$ ) were calculated with the following equation:

$$\sigma_{ij} = \alpha(N_{ij} + N_j)$$

Where  $\alpha$  is the arbitrary constant, ~~similar to that was chosen similarly as in Rivas et al. (2020), Rivas et al.'s (2020) work~~ (0.02 for the SC and 0.022 for the UB), and  $N_{ij}$  is the concentration of sample  $i$  in size bin column  $j$ , and the  $N_j$  is the arithmetic mean of concentration in size bin  $j$ . The overall uncertainty was calculated using the following equation:

$$S_{ij} = \sigma_{ij} + C_3 \cdot N_{ij}$$

where  $\sigma_{ij}$  is measurement uncertainty,  $C_3$  is an arbitrary constant that was set in this study to 0.1 for both the UB and SC, and for UB as in Rivas et al., (2020), but  $C_3$  was set differently at 0.1 while Rivas et al., (2020) had it at 0.18 to better fit the data.  $N_{ij}$  is the concentration of bin  $j$  of sample  $i$ .

Wiedensohler et al. (2012) have stated that the concentration measurement errors seem to be approximately double for particles in the size range of 200-800 nm compared to 20-200 nm. Therefore, in this study, the measurement errors are corrected for these particle sizes by doubling the  $\alpha$  factor.

In this study, the most reasonable solution to fit the data was a five-factor solution based on the testing to produce results with the most meaningful physical interpretation and with reasonable residuals. The robustness of the solution was tested using different random seeds as starting points and performing displacement analysis on the solutions. The factors were identified as fresh traffic (TRA1), slightly aged traffic (TRA2), secondary combustion aerosol (SCA), secondary aerosol (SecA), and long-range transported aerosol (LRT). The dispersion-corrected PMF results were also calculated for the five factors for comparison, but and the difference in the results calculated without the dispersion correction was found to be negligible (Dai et al., 2021). The differences between the normal and dispersion normalised PMF were evaluated based on the Pearson correlation coefficients between weekday diurnals (>0.98 for all factors), weekend diurnals (>0.98 for all factors), monthly contributions (>0.96 for all factors) and factor profiles (>0.97 for all factors). In dispersion correction, the original measurement data is normalized by the ventilation coefficient which is the height of the boundary layer times the average wind speed during the period. The goal of the dispersion correction is to reduce the inaccuracy in the source apportion caused by the dispersion of aerosol in the atmosphere (Dai et al., 2021). The results calculated with dispersion normalization are presented in supplement Fig. S2S6. Fig. 2 shows the mean residuals, mean scaled residuals, mean relative residuals, and  $Q/Q_{exp}$  values for the different number of factors between 2 and 10. At the chosen five-factor solution, the mean relative residual was only around 2.8% on average. The residual and  $Q/Q_{exp}$  values decrease continuously as the number of factors increases. However, for scaled residuals, mean relative residuals and  $Q/Q_{exp}$  values, the decrease is smaller after increasing the number of factors past five. This is an indication that five is an acceptable number of factors. Additionally, the neighbouring solutions of four and six are presented in supplemental Figures S3 and S4, respectively. The four-factor solution merges the factors described later in this paper (SCA and SecA). In a five-factor solution, these two have notably different diurnal profiles, and therefore, merging them is not sensible. The six-factor solution presented in S3 splits the SCA into two factors that have very similar diurnal profiles and contributions throughout the year, and therefore, they are likely to be from the same source. In supplemental material S5, the average relative residuals with the standard deviation are presented for each size bin. In Fig. 2 the average residual percentages of the measured PN concentrations in different size classes are presented for each size class. The selected solution is seen to explain more than 95 % of the concentration on average with the average residual being always under 10 % for both stations.

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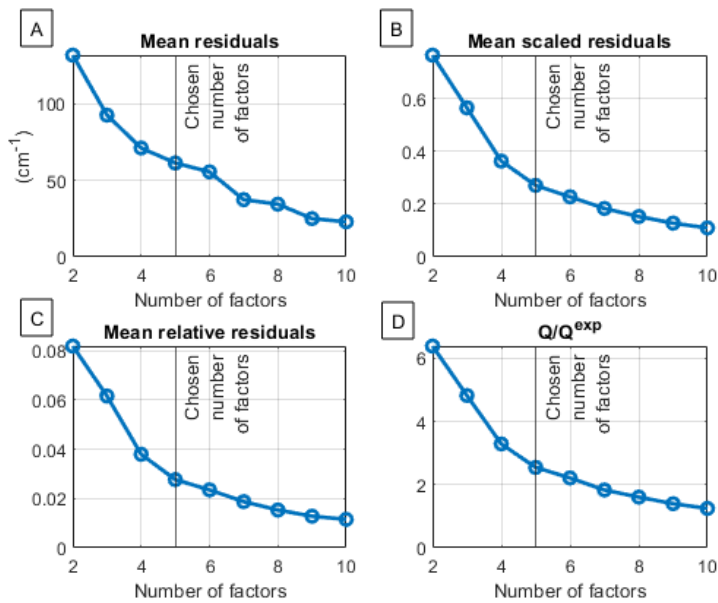


Figure 2: Mean residuals (A), mean scaled residuals (B), mean relative residuals (C), and  $O/O_{exp}$  values (D) for the different number of factors between 2 and 10. The mean residuals presented have been calculated size-wise as an average over the unified dataset from the SC and UB measurement locations.

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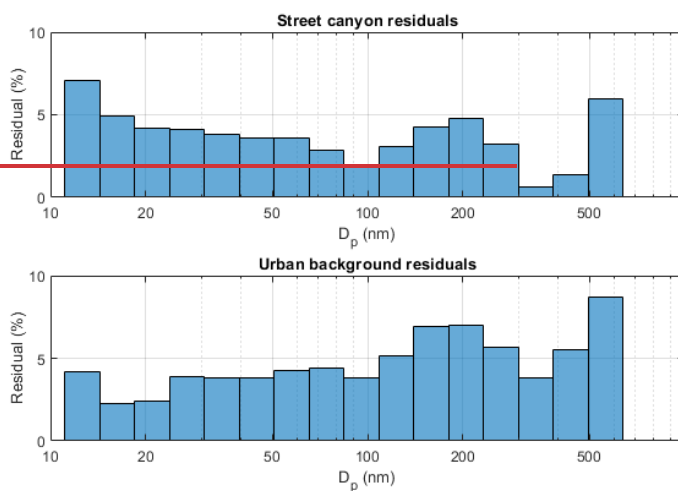


Figure 2: Hourly average residual percentage for each particle size bin for the Street Canyon and Urban background measurement sites.

## 260 2.6 Trend analysis

Time series of PMF factors were fitted with trends by using the Theil-Sen estimator developed-established by Theil (1950) and further developed by Sen (1968). The base-level-base-level concentrations at the beginning of the measurement period were calculated using the slope determined by the Theil-Sen estimator with each data point and counting the median. Because factors had clear seasonal variance the Theil-Sen estimator was plotted in two ways: One involved using the seasonal Theil-Sen estimator, in which where only data from the same months is compared together in forming the estimate. The other way was first removing seasonality from data using the seasonal-trend decomposition procedure presented by Cleveland et al. (1990). The seasonal trend removal was needed because the reliability of the results was evaluated using the Mann-Kendall test for monotonic trends (Mann, 1945), which can not be done with seasonal data. The results are presented in Table 35. Figures showing the trend decomposition for the factors and the fitted Theil-Sen estimators are presented in the supplemental material. The trend decompositions for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT are presented in S7, S9, S11, S13, and S15, respectively. Additionally, the fitted Theil-Sen estimators are presented for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT in S8, S10, S12, S14, and S16 respectively, are presented in S3-S12. Notably, the trends calculated using the seasonal Theil-Sen estimator and the Theil-Sen estimator calculated from data without seasonal variability were almost identical, increasing the confidence in using seasonal trend decomposition for the data (Table 5).

## 275 3 Results and discussions

### 3.1 General description of number-size-distributionNSD

280 Particle number-size-distributionsNSD were ~~was~~ found to be noticeably different ~~for the~~between stations. The time series of the daily average number-size-distributionsNSD in each year are presented in Fig. 3. Figure 3k (~~lowest panel~~) presents the Pearson correlation coefficientR<sup>2</sup>-(R-squared)-value as a function of particle size when the daily partiele-number concentrationsPNC in each of the 16-size bins are compared between the SC and UB. The observed NSD at the SC in the size range of 12.6 to 562 nm contained significantly more nanosized (< 100 nm) particles on many occasions, as well as higher overall particle concentrations compared to the UB. ~~Notable is that~~Notably, the R<sup>2</sup>-valuecorrelation was higher for the larger particle sizes, ~~especially for partieles above 200 nm,~~ indicating that if the smallest particles are disregarded, the time series would be relatively similar. The higher overall partiele-number-concentrationPNC at the SC, higher correlation-R<sup>2</sup> above 200 nm particles, and lower R<sup>2</sup>-correlation below 200 nm particles compared to the UB indicate that there was at least one local source producing a lot of nanosized d particles at SC that was missing at UB.

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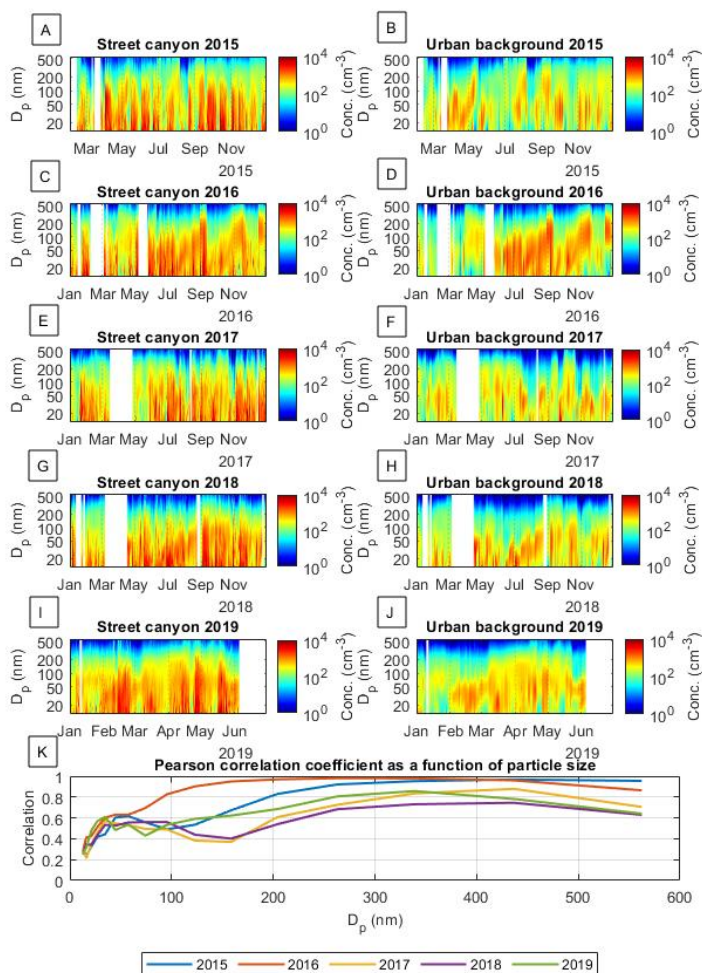


Figure 3: Time series of daily average number-size-distribution (NSD) for street-canyon (SC) and urban-background (UB) for each year: 2015 (A and B), 2016 (C and D), 2017 (E and F), 2018 (G and H), and 2019 (I and J) (Feb-2015-Jun-2019). The data used is reduced to 16-size bins. In the figure, the particle diameter ( $D_p$ ) is presented on the y-axis, the x-axis presents the time, and particle number concentration (PNC) ( $\text{cm}^{-3}$ ) has been presented shown by logarithmic color scale. The yearly correlation between the UB

290

and SC stations (Pearson correlation coefficient  $R^2$ , R-squared) is presented in the bottom plot for the various different particle sizes for the and daily mean concentrations.

### 3.2 Identification of factors

295 The most reasonable solution in the PMF analysis was a five-factor solution. The factors were identified based on the diurnal profiles, annual variation of the factors, and comparing them to the available auxiliary data measured at the UB and SC sites ( trace gases, particle chemistry, PM mass concentrations, and meteorology). The factor profiles and identification variables, their diurnal contributions for workdays and weekends, and monthly contributions are presented in Fig. 4 and Table 32. The contributions presented in Fig. 4 are the coefficients with which to multiply the factor profile at each time to get the real contribution. The contributions depicted in Fig. 4 represent the scaling factors applied to each source profile at specific times. For instance, if the contribution at a certain time is two, the corresponding source profile is scaled by a factor of two at that moment. The source profiles and their contributions are normalized such that the mean contribution from each source averages to one over the measurement period.

Table 32: PMF factors, their size modes, correlating variables, and identification.

Factor	PN size mode (nm)	Important correlating variables	Identification arguments
TRA1 — fresh traffic emissions from the immediate vicinity of the site	12.6	BC, NO, NO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> at SC	Particle size, and diurnal profile similar to traffic intensity. Correlation with traffic tracers.
TRA2 — slightly aged (minutes to an hour) traffic emissions	16.2	NO <sub>x</sub> and NO at UB	Diurnal profile is similar to traffic. Slightly behind TRA1
SCA — Secondary combustion aerosol	44.7	NO <sub>x</sub> at UB, mz60	Delayed peak after TRA1 and TRA2 correlation with NO <sub>x</sub> at UB
SecA — secondary aerosol	74.1	Total organics, mz43	No difference between workdays and weekends, highest concentrations in summer.
LRT — long range transported aerosol	204	PM <sub>2.5</sub> , SO <sub>4</sub> , NO <sub>3</sub> and total organics	Correlations with variables related to LRT

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and minimal diurnal profile

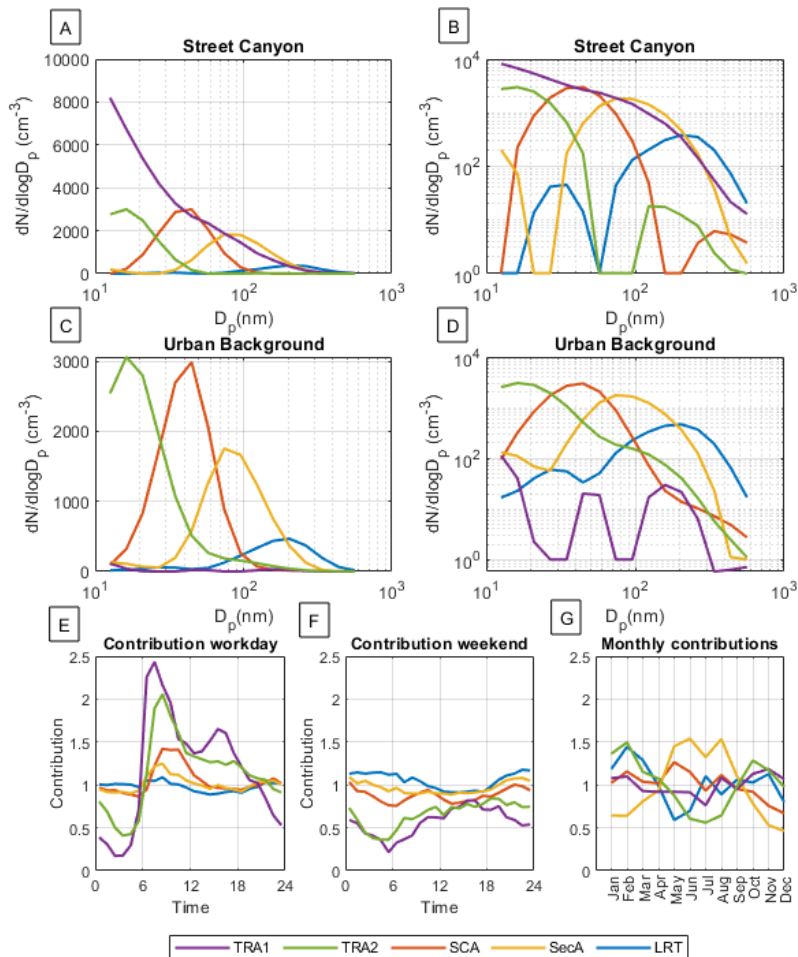


Figure 4: Positive matrix factorization (PMF) factors presented for both stations on linear (A for SC, C for UB) in-linear and logarithmic xy-axes for Street Canyon (upper-plot) and Urban-background (middle-plot) sites E presents the and their hourly



relative contributions (lower plot) during workdays, F during weekends, and G the average monthly contributions. Note that the linear scales for the plots A and B are different. The value presented in contribution figures is the factor with which to multiply the factor profile at any current time to get the total contribution. The average for the contribution factor is 1 over the whole measurement period for all the factors.

TRA1 was interpreted to represent particles that originated from the local traffic emissions in the immediate proximity of the measurement station. This factor was the dominant factor in the SC, while it was almost zero at the UB, which was located on a hill over 100 m from the nearest busy road. TRA1 had the highest number of particles in the smallest measured particle size (12.6 nm) and the second mode at around 50-60 nm. Possibly, a third mode at 100-200 nm can be seen as a tail in the log-log plot (Fig. 4b). Similar non-volatile modes at 10 nm and 70 nm particle diameters have been reported for laboratory measurements for modern gasoline cars (Karjalainen et al., 2014). Also, Rönkkö et al., (2017) have shown that traffic produces significant concentrations of nanocluster aerosol in urban traffic environments. During weekdays, TRA1 had a distinctive diurnal profile, similar to BC and NO<sub>x</sub>; these, which are often related to traffic emissions, with the largest peak during the morning rush hour and the second, slightly lower peak during the afternoon rush hour (Fig. 5a). TRA1 had significantly lower contributions during weekends, but a high correlation with NO<sub>x</sub> and BC (Fig. 5b). Overall, the linear relationship between the variables (Pearson correlation coefficients (R)) for TRA1 with BC (AE33 with 880 nm) and NO<sub>x</sub> were 0.76 and 0.85 at the SC, respectively. TRA1 had also a high correlation with NO<sub>2</sub> and NO at SC (Table 34).

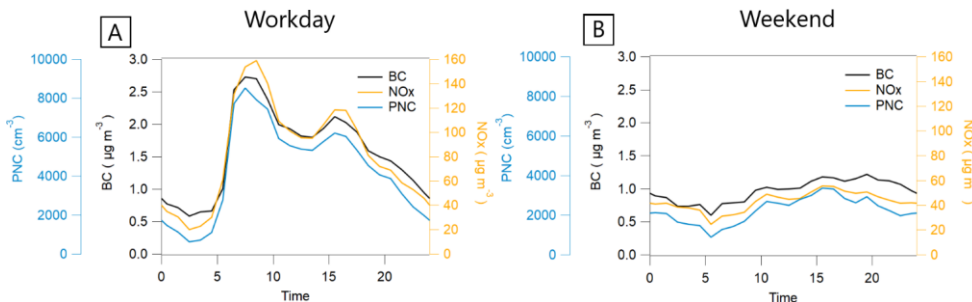


Figure 5: Diurnal profiles for TRA1 factor-related PNC concentrations at the SC, along with NO<sub>x</sub> and BC<sub>880</sub> concentrations presented separately for workdays (A) and weekends (B). Average hourly TRA1 factor-related particle number concentrations at the street canyon marked with blue presented with NO<sub>x</sub> and BC<sub>880</sub> at the street canyon measurement site for workdays and weekends, 2015–2019.

TRA2 was interpreted as a slightly aged traffic-related factor. Atmospheric aging of aerosols is expected to increase the mode particle size of NSD due to the oxidation of gaseous volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into compounds with lower volatilities. These oxidized compounds then condense on existing particles, making them larger. Furthermore, smaller particles experience greater diffusion losses. Consequently, we can expect a shift in the mode particle size toward larger particles during aging. The aged nature of the factor was concluded as shown in Fig. 4c; the morning rush hour peak of TRA2 is observed 1 hour later compared to TRA1. TRA2 also has similar contributions at the SC and UB, and therefore, the TRA2 was considered to be slightly aged, as the road is further away (100 m) from the UB station. Additionally, the mode particle size was larger

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for TRA2 compared to TRA1, TRA2 factor was interpreted as a slightly aged (~minutes to an hour), atmospherically processed (e.g., cooling, dispersion, mixing), traffic-related factor. It had a maximum mode particle size of 16.2 nm at both stations. The mode particle size was larger than for TRA1 which was logical as during dilution and cooling, the precursor gases condense on primary particles growing the particle size (Ning & Sioutas, 2010). TRA2 also had displayed a diurnal trend that matches the traffic pattern, having a peak during the morning rush hour and elevated concentrations for the rest of the working hours of the day (Fig. 4e). The morning peak was noticed approximately 1 hour later compared to than the TRA1 factor. Therefore, the TRA2 can be considered slightly aged, regionally processed traffic emissions, originating from a slightly larger area. The most significant correlations of TRA2 with auxiliary data were with NO<sub>x</sub> and NO measured at the UB (Table 4). Additionally, TRA2 correlated moderately with NO<sub>x</sub> and NO measured at the SC. This moderate correlation was expected, as the NO<sub>x</sub> and NO measured at the UB are the background levels that are also measured at the SC. However, in addition, the NO<sub>x</sub> and NO concentrations at the SC are strongly influenced by the immediate traffic emissions, and therefore, the correlation of TRA2 with the concentrations at the SC is lower than with the concentrations at the UB. This also supports the slightly aged character of TRA2, as the SC site was dominated by immediate traffic-caused emissions (Fig. 4a). The TRA2 had higher concentrations was more concentrated during colder months, which might be because in cold temperatures, VOCs condense more efficiently on existing particles (Fig. 4g). In addition, the boundary layer is shallower during cold months enhancing the accumulation of primary pollutants.

The secondary combustion aerosol (SCA) factor had a peak particle size of 44.7 nm at both sites and was interpreted as a secondary aerosol originating from combustion processes (i.e., of liquid fuel (e.g., such as gas, diesel, oil) or solid fuel such as (e.g., biomass, and coal, or gas) combustion. SCA was seen to have had relatively weak correlations with the primary traffic emissions (e.g., NO<sub>x</sub>, BC, CO, ORG57) auxiliary data, as could be expected for atmospherically processed aerosol. The strongest Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.56 was found with NO<sub>x</sub> at the UB site (Table 3) both having very similar diurnals during both workdays and weekends (Fig. 6). The strongest Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.56 was observed between TRA2 and NO<sub>x</sub> at the UB site (Table 4). TRA2 and NO<sub>x</sub> at the UB site also had similar diurnal patterns on working days and weekends. The highest peak of the SCA peak was seen approximately 3 hours later compared to than the TRA1 factor, indicating that the factor included traffic emissions that have had been aged/processed a couple of hours in the atmosphere. SCA factor was found to have an evening peak in addition to the morning rush hour peak (Fig. 4e). The evening peak was more pronounced during weekends, which indicates there might be possible contributions from biomass combustion (Fig. 4f). In an earlier study, BC originating from biomass combustion has been shown to contribute 15 ± 14% at the SC and between 41 ± 14 and 46 ± 15% of the BC in residential/detached house areas (Helin et al., 2018). To support this, the diurnal trends of SCA and organic fragments at m/z 60 (Q-ACSM) at the SC were plotted (Fig. 6). The fragments at m/z 60, and especially particularly its fraction of the total OA<sub>s</sub> have widely been used as a marker for primary wood combustion emissions (Alfarra et al., 2007). The m/z 60 was seen to correlated well with the evening peak at the SC, strengthening the assumption of wood combustion contribution. Interestingly, m/z 60 was also elevated also during the morning rush hour, although the m/z 60 is usually related to biomass combustion and not traffic, suggesting also a traffic-related source for this ion. The similar

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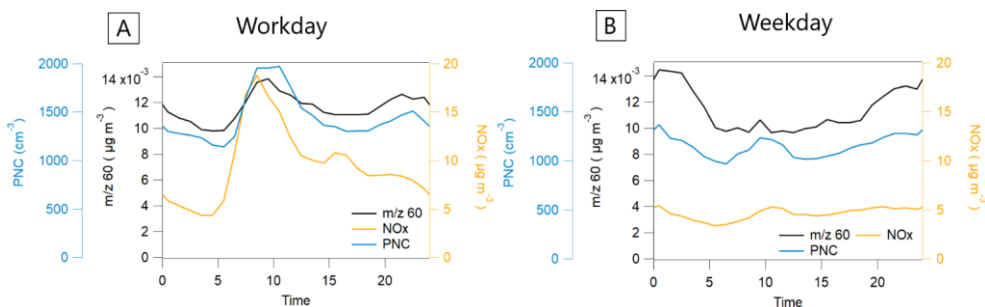
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370 diurnal profiles of m/z 60 only act as indications of biomass combustion contributions. The annual variation of SCA is small  
 (Fig. 4g). Likely because although during the wintertime, the amount of biomass combustion increases the amount of sunlight  
is low, limiting SOA formation, whereas during summer, the amount of biomass burning is lower, but the amount of sunlight  
increases, thus enhancing SOA formation. In contrast, traffic emissions remain stable throughout the whole year.



375 **Figure 6: Diurnal trends-profiles for SCA factor-related PNC concentrations at the SC, and, along with NO<sub>x</sub> concentration at the URBan-background station and organic fragments at m/z 60 concentrations at the SC and their diurnal profiles during workdays (A) and weekends (B).**

The secondary aerosol (SecA) factor had a peak particle size of 74.1 nm at both sites and was interpreted as an aged, photochemically formed secondary aerosol from biogenic and anthropogenic precursors. This assumption is based on the negligible difference in diurnal profiles between workdays and weekends and elevated contribution during the summer months with the highest total radiance (Fig. 1a and 4g). Additionally, the strongest correlations of the SecA factor were with total organics and m/z 43: (Table 34). The m/z 43 has been associated with less oxidated secondary organic aerosol (Chen et al., 2022) Anthropogenic and biogenic VOCs are shown to be important SecA precursors in a traffic environment (Saarikoski et al., 2023). HoweverSurprisingly, the SecA factor also somewhat correlates with BC (Table 34), possibly indicating that BC particles that are ubiquitous in traffic environments might act as cores for or be mixed into these SecA particles.

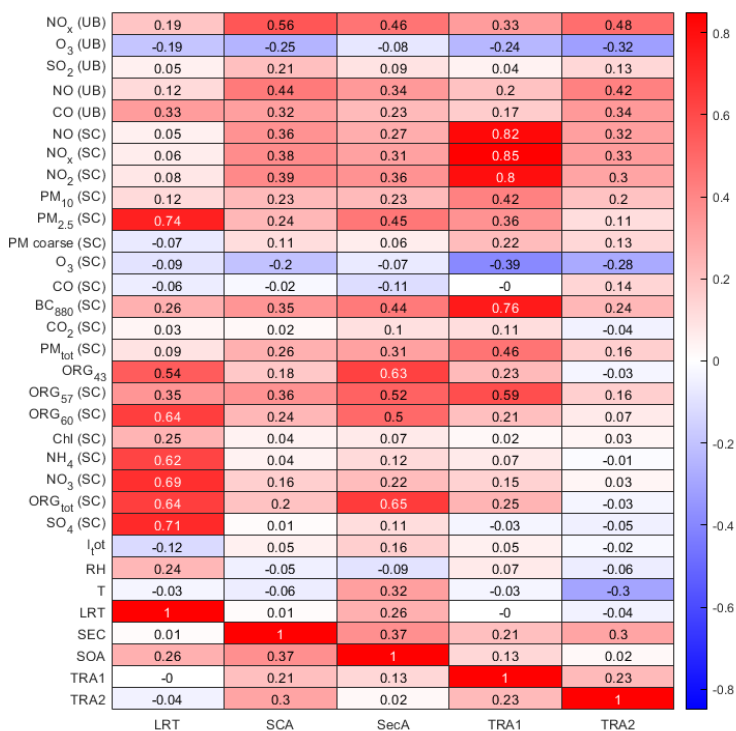
The long-range transport factor (LRT) factor had a peak particle size at of 204 nm at both sites and is interpreted as a long-range transport because of its as it had strong correlations with PM<sub>2.5</sub>, SO<sub>4</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, and organics (Table 34). The correlation was even higher (0.80) with the sum of NO<sub>3</sub> and SO<sub>4</sub> at the SC. Typically higher concentrations of accumulation mode particles have been observed during the LRT events (Timonen et al., 2008). Furthermore, Niemi et al. (2009) have shownshowed that relatively high concentrations of inorganic ions, especially SO<sub>4</sub>, NH<sub>4</sub>, and BC<sub>2</sub> are typically observed during the LRT events. The correlation of LRT with NH<sub>4</sub> was relatively high, but the correlation with BC was quite low (Table 34). The reason for the low correlation with BC might be due to local sources of BC (e.g., traffic and the short atmospheric lifetime of BC; (Cape et al., 2012). AdditionallyAlso, Niemi et al. (2009) did not report high concentrations of NO<sub>3</sub> during the LRT episodes, likely because of evaporation losses of ammonium nitrate from the filters. However, more recent studies with online

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analysis of NO<sub>3</sub> have linked elevated NO<sub>3</sub> concentrations to LRT episodes in the area (Harni et al., 2023; Barreira et al., 2021; Pirjola et al., 2017). Also, elevated PM<sub>1</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations have been related to the LRT episodes in the area (Harni et al., 2023; Barreira et al., 2021; Niemi et al., 2009; Pirjola et al., 2017). (Harni et al., 2023; Barreira et al., 2021; Niemi et al., 2009; Pirjola et al., 2017)

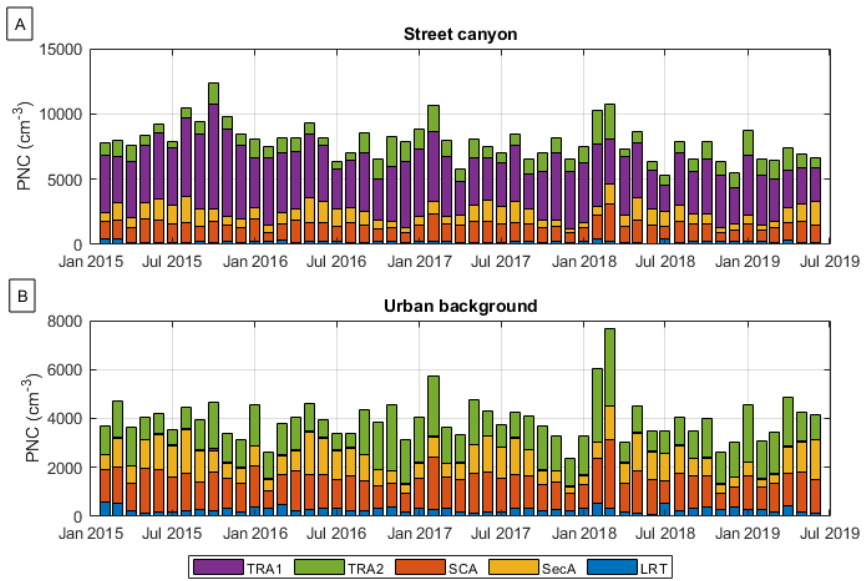
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400 **Table 43:** Pearson correlation coefficients of the PMF solution factors (LRT, SCA, SecA TRA1, and TRA2) with other factors and other measured parameters ( with NO<sub>x</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO, and CO from the UB station; and NO, NO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> PM<sub>coarse</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, CO, BC<sub>880</sub>(AE33), CO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>tot</sub>, ORG<sub>43</sub>, ORG<sub>57</sub>, ORG<sub>60</sub>, Chl, NH<sub>4</sub>, NO<sub>3</sub>, ORG<sub>tot</sub> and SO<sub>4</sub> from SC, Total radiation (I<sub>tot</sub>), and RH from the Kumpula weather station, and Temperature (T) from the Kaisaniemi weather station.



405 **3.3 Monthly average contributions and trends of factors**

Figure 7 represents the time series for the contributions of the PMF factors to PNC at the SC and ~~urban~~ UB sites. The average monthly contributions at the SC site were 52%, 15%, 17%, 13%, and 3% for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT, respectively. For the UB, the corresponding monthly average contributions were 1%, 36%, 34%, 23%, and 7% for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT, respectively. TRA1 ~~factor~~ was seen to be the main contributor to PNC at the SC, while at the UB, the PNC was usually dominated by the slightly aged combustion-related factors, TRA2 and SCA, with quite similar contributions, as could be expected for stations situated next to the road and 100 m away from the road. During summertime, ~~also~~ SecA also made had a contribution that was roughly even with those of TRA2 and SCA ~~in at~~ both stations, highlighting the importance of secondary aerosol formation even in urban environments. Barreira et al. (2021) described the increased contribution of organics aerosol mass during summertime in Helsinki. Similar contributions of traffic-related aerosols either fresh (46%) like TRA1 in this study or aged (27%) like TRA2+SCA (sum 28%) have been reported in the roadside environment (Al-Dabbous & Kumar, 2015).



**Figure 7: Contribution of different various factors to particle number concentrations (PNC) at the street canyon SC (A) and UB (B) urban background sites.**

420 The contributions of factors at the SC and UB stations were also calculated in terms of particle volume. Notably, the contributions of the various factors to volume concentrations were different when compared to contributions to the PNC

contributions of factors were very different when the particle volume was considered (Fig. 8). The average monthly contributions at the SC were 28%, 1%, 4%, 26%, and 41% TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT, respectively. For the UB, the monthly average contributions were 1%, 5%, 7%, 29%, and 59% for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT, respectively. Compared to PNC, the contributions of TRA1, TRA2, and SCA decreased, whereas those of SecA and especially LRT increased. The largest contributor to volume concentration was LRT, followed by SecA at the UB. At the SC, the second largest contributor to particle volume during summer months was also the SecA but during winter the second largest contributor was TRA1. The contributions of LRT to volume concentration varied greatly from month to month at both stations. The months of the highest concentrations varied between years, highlighting the event nature of this factor, as singular strong events can increase LRT contributions. This is in contrast to Fig. 7 and Fig. 8, which show little month-to-month variation, and the concentration patterns stay relatively stable between years.

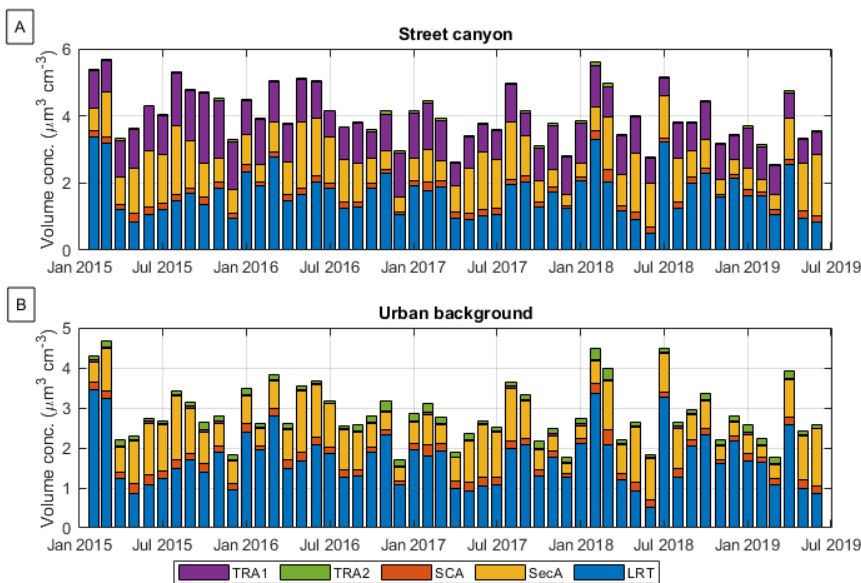


Figure 8: Monthly average volume-based contributions of various factors at the SC (A) and UB (B) stations during the measurement period.

Three Regarding the statistically significant trends in the factor concentrations, three trends with statistical significance were found: decreasing trends of -9.5% and -6.5% yearly for TRA1 and SecA, respectively, and an increasing trend of 6.4% yearly for TRA2 (Table 45). The decreasing trend of TRA1 seems to imply that the primary emissions from traffic have been decreasing, reducing over the years. This is supported by the fact that the vehicle fleet has renewed rapidly in Finland between

the years 2015 and 2019. For instance, the proportions of low-emission (EURO 6/VI grade) vehicles in driven kilometers have increased in different vehicle classes in Finland as follows: cars from 6% to 29%, vans from 1% to 25%, and trucks from 7% to 31% (VTT's LIPASTO calculation system for traffic exhaust emission in Finland). The proportion of low-emission city buses has increased particularly quickly in the Helsinki metropolitan area, from 17% to 59% during over the course of 5 years (statistics from the Helsinki Regional Transport Authority HSL). The impact of bus emissions is significant at the Mäkelänkatu SC site, since there is a bus lane very close (0.5 m) to the air quality monitoring station. Notably, e is still that the slightly aged traffic-related emissions (TRA2) have has increased, possibly. That can be speculated to be due to the change in the engine and after-treatment techniques of the vehicles, and emphasizes the significance of atmospheric processes on interacting traffic emissions.

The decrease of the SecA factor is difficult more complex to explain as it was speculated to have both anthropogenic and biogenic sources. The latter is closely connected to relatively stable biogenic sources and meteorology (temperature and light and I<sub>00</sub>) and the former to the fast development of cleaner engine and after-treatment technologies driven by new emission limits. In the previous chapter, SecA concentrations were shown shown to indicate possible correlation to somewhat correlate with BC. One possible reason for this was suggested to be that the BC particles could act, which was suggested to be due to the BC particles acting as cores for SecA. In fact, the decreasing trend was similar to earlier presented BC trends (trends (decrease between -10% and -6% yr<sup>-1</sup>) in different environments (traffic, urban background, and regional background) in Finland (Luoma et al., 2021). No statistically significant trend was found for SCA or LRT, although a slight decrease was indicated for both. There could be many reasons for this. Although traffic emissions have decreased (e.g. Barreira et al., 2021), biomass combustion for residential heating has increased lately. LRT emissions are mainly affected by meteorological conditions and can vary a lot between years. We note that mMore data (years) is are needed to see if the decreasing trends found in this study were was real as the larger the sample size is, the better the hypothetical test is. Table 4-5 presents all the results of the trend analysis.

**Table 5-4: Seasonal Theil-Sen estimators and Theil-Sen estimators calculated from data with seasonality removed with confidence levels and base-level concentrations at the beginning of the measurement period for TRA1, TRA2, SCA, SecA, and LRT. The trend in the table is significant if the significance level is above 95% (p-value < 0.05).**

		TRA1	TRA2	SCA	SecA	LRT
<b>Seasonal</b>	Base	5175	953	1445	1073	214
	<del>Theil-Sen</del> concentration (cm <sup>-3</sup> )					
<b>estimator</b>	Yearly change (cm <sup>-3</sup> )	-493	61	-32	-70	-6

	Relative change (%)	-9.5	6.4	-2.2	-6.5	-2.7
<b>Theil-Sen estimator for data with no seasonality</b>	Base concentration (cm <sup>-43</sup> )	5149	953	1407	1074	210
	Yearly change (cm <sup>-43</sup> )	-471	62	-11	-70	-5
	Relative change (%)	-9.1	6.5	-1	-6.6	-2.3
	Significance	yes	yes	no	yes	no

## 465 Conclusions and summary

Particle size is one of the most important parameters of atmospheric particles ~~in terms of health and climate effects since it impacts the climate and health effects of particles~~. In this study, the origin and characteristics of particle ~~number size distribution~~NSD were investigated in Helsinki, southern Finland. The measurements were carried out at two sites, ~~an urban background~~UB and a ~~street canyon~~SC site, between 2015 and 2019. The source apportionment based solely on the particle ~~number size distribution~~NSD data was performed using ~~positive matrix factorization~~PMF. A novel approach to analyze the data was used, as the particle ~~number size distribution~~NSD data were combined from two ~~different~~ nearby sites. As a result, the same factors with the same time series were obtained for both sites, only with different profiles. If a similar profile was seen at both sites the source was considered regional.

~~In total, 5~~Five factors were found in the data: ~~fresh traffic~~(TRA1), ~~slightly aged traffic~~(TRA2), ~~secondary combustion aerosol~~(SCA), ~~secondary aerosol~~(SecA), and ~~long range transported aerosol~~(LRT). Three of the factors were related to traffic. TRA1 had a clear diurnal profile, with the ~~largest highest~~ peak during the morning rush hour and the second, slightly lower peak during the afternoon rush hour. TRA2 peaked approximately 1 hour later ~~compared to the than~~ TRA1, factor indicating slight processing in the atmosphere, ~~while SCA had reached~~ a maximum of ~~three 3~~ hours later than TRA1, being much more aged. SCA had an evening peak in addition to the morning rush hour peak, which indicated that it might have originated from both

liquid fuel (mainly traffic) and solid fuel (biomass) combustion. TRA1 ~~factor~~ was the main contributor to PNC at ~~the~~ SC, while at ~~the~~ UB, the PNC was usually dominated by the slightly aged combustion-related factors; TRA2 and SCA. During summertime, ~~also~~ SecA ~~also~~ had a significant contribution to aerosol ~~particle number concentrations~~PNC at both stations.

The trend analysis revealed that TRA1 and SecA have been decreasing by 9.1% and -6.6% yearly, ~~respectively~~. For TRA2, an increasing trend of 6.5% yearly was discovered. These findings indicate that the properties of particle emissions originating



485 from traffic have changed in recent years, probably due to the changes in ~~the~~ vehicle engines and after-treatment techniques. The significant decreasing trend for TRA1 implies that while the improving emission reduction techniques seem to be reducing freshly emitted immediate-particulate emissions of traffic, the slightly aged traffic emissions are even increasing, as an increasing trend was observed for TRA2. This change in vehicle fleets is not only related to the direct emissions; decreased as the decrease of SecA can be speculated to be linked to the decreased of core particle concentrations, such as BC.

490 The SCA factor seemed to be a mix of aged traffic particles and particles from biomass combustion. ~~However, the contribution of biomass combustion to the PNC in the traffic environment entails high uncertainty. Although the contribution from biomass combustion in traffic environment includes high uncertainty. Also~~ Additionally, all the factors had more than one mode. Therefore, in addition to the particle size bins, adding the auxiliary data to the PMF analysis might improve the separation between the different factors. However, the novel method of attaching simultaneous data from two different sites seems to improve the detection of various different factors and could be useful in locations where there is NSD data is available from more than one site.

In conclusion, traffic remains a large contributor to ambient PNC particle number concentrations in urban environments despite the decreasing trend caused by the improvements in emission reduction technologies and electrification of the traffic fleet. Additionally, while the primary emissions have decreased reduced the effect on the secondary aerosols is more uncertain; as in this study, the concentrations of slightly aged aerosols were increasing. Therefore, studying how the emissions age in the atmosphere is important in the future. Additionally, the study demonstrated that detecting aerosol source factors purely based on NSD data is possible, but attaching the factors to individual sources would be difficult without available auxiliary data.

#### Data availability

Data is available upon request from the corresponding author Sami Harni (sami.harni@fmi.fi)

#### 505 Supplement

#### Author contributions

SDH ~~made the~~ created formal analysis, software, and visualization and wrote the original draft of the paper. MA, SS, and JN contributed to the conceptualization and writing by reviewing and editing the article. HP, PA, and HM contributed to the investigation. VL contributed to the formal analysis, reviewing, and editing of the article. PH contributed to the formal analysis. TP and TR contributed to editing and rewriting the article. HT acted as a supervisor and contributed to the conceptualization as well as reviewing and editing of the article.

## Competing interests

One of the co-authors is a member of the editorial board of Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics.

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