



**DE-CONSPIRATOR**

DETECTING AND COUNTERING INFORMATION SUPPRESSION FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## D3.3

# The 'DIMI' Content Classification Document:

Alternative Media Networks and Narrative Interfaces of Domestic Amplifiers of FIMI

University of Amsterdam

University of Groningen

31/12/2025



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## Executive Summary

This report develops an initial mapping of a Domestic Information Manipulation and Interference (DIMI) sphere that functions as a critical interface through which Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) narratives reach domestic audiences in the European Union. Building on the methodology outlined in DE-CONSPIRATOR Deliverable D3.1, the report shifts analytical attention away from foreign actors alone and toward the domestic actors, infrastructures, and narratives that enable the amplification, recirculation, and localization of FIMI content within European information environments.

The report is based on a first pass of large-scale data collection from 442 Telegram channels across six language groupings, with in-depth analysis focusing on Chinese, Dutch, French, and German language content. Across all sections, the central finding is that FIMI narratives do not circulate in isolation. Rather, they are embedded within a heterogeneous DIMI sphere composed of alternative media outlets, influencers, online communities, and parajournalistic actors that weaponize existing social categories to engage domestic audiences.

The report begins by identifying a key limitation in prevailing FIMI frameworks because they emphasize foreign state actors while underplaying the role of domestic actors. Drawing on the EEAS FIMI architecture, we argue that categories such as “state-aligned” channels insufficiently capture the fuzzy boundary between foreign-aligned messaging and domestic actors who actively create, shape, adapt, and circulate such narratives. To address this gap, the report introduces the concept of a DIMI sphere to refer to a network of domestic actors and platforms that recirculate, amplify, and advance foreign narratives to local audiences. The report argues that without deep linguistic, cultural, and social embedding that DIMI actors provide, information manipulation cannot operate effectively. As such, domestic actors are not mere conduits but are structurally integral to the success of FIMI activities.

### Data and Methodology

The empirical analysis draws on millions of Telegram messages collected in 2025 and going back as far as 2018, using the Telegram API and a purposive sampling strategy. While the full dataset includes six language groupings, the report focuses analytically on four languages where sufficient computational and linguistic support was developed by the consortium: Chinese, Dutch, French, and German. In total, 11.1 million messages were analyzed through topic modeling pipelines. Two primary methodological approaches are employed. First, social network analysis of URLs shared in Telegram messages is used to map cross-platform information flows and identify prominent web domains linked within the DIMI sphere. Second, topic modelling is applied to large text corpora to surface dominant narratives and identify how social categories are mobilized as interfaces for manipulation. Due to differences in language structure and data scale, the analysis uses BERTopic for Dutch, French, and German messages, and Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) for Chinese-language messages, following the pipeline established in DE-CONSPIRATOR D3.1.

### Mapping the DIMI Sphere

The social network analysis reveals that Telegram-based DIMI actors consistently link to a wide range of web domains. These include mirrors of Russian state-linked outlets (such as RT), state-aligned channels like Rybar, and a large number of alternative news websites operating in European languages. Particularly prominent are several French and German alternative media outlets, which appear as central nodes in the network based on

degree centrality. These findings indicate that while mainstream platforms remain relevant, alternative and low-moderation platforms play a disproportionate role in facilitating cross-platform diffusion. Telegram functions as a hub that connects foreign state-linked content to domestic alternative media ecosystems, which then reframe and redistribute narratives for local consumption.

### **Narrative Analysis Across Language Groups**

Using topic modeling, the report identifies recurring narratives across Chinese, Dutch, French, and German Telegram content. Despite linguistic and cultural differences, these narratives consistently rely on the construction and weaponization of social categories—including national identity, immigration, public health, sexuality, geopolitics, and distrust of institutions—to activate domestic engagement with FIMI-aligned messaging. The analysis confirms expectations outlined in D3.1: narratives that resonate with domestic grievances and identity markers are especially effective in bridging foreign messaging and local audiences. Rather than discrete or isolated themes, these narratives frequently overlap within individual posts, reinforcing one another and creating coherent interpretive frames for audiences.

#### *German-Language Content*

The German-language DIMI sphere is characterized by a high degree of thematic fragmentation combined with a shared distrust of institutions, mainstream media, and political authorities. Topic modelling and network analysis confirm that German-language Telegram channels frequently discuss COVID-19, government authority, media censorship, migration, and national sovereignty, often linking these issues through conspiratorial or populist frames. COVID-19 is a central narrative anchor in the German dataset, with pandemic-related themes continuing to structure discussions of freedom, resistance, and state overreach well beyond the immediate public-health context. These narratives intersect with anti-government and anti-media frames, positioning political institutions, public broadcasters, and scientific authorities as untrustworthy or actively deceptive. The report finds that Telegram played a key role in linking anti-lockdown activism with established far-right actors during the pandemic, a pattern that persists in post-pandemic discourse. Geopolitical narratives are also prominent, particularly those related to Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and Western “Russophobia.” German-language channels frequently cite Russian state or pro-Russian sources and frame international conflicts as evidence of Western hypocrisy or elite manipulation. Migration-related content is securitized through narratives emphasizing threats to women, children, and social order, facilitating the integration of US-based FIMI narratives into German-language discourse. Overall, the German-language DIMI sphere reflects a communication environment shaped by crisis thinking, institutional skepticism, and the normalization of conspiratorial explanations.

#### *French-Language Content*

The French-language DIMI sphere is marked by a strong geopolitical orientation and a high level of ideological diversity, with narratives circulating across both right-wing and left-leaning alternative media ecosystems. Topic modelling shows that discussions of geopolitics—particularly the Russia–Ukraine war, the Israel–Palestine conflict, and NATO—dominate French-language Telegram channels, often intersecting with domestic political grievances. Anti-EU and anti-government narratives are prominent, frequently framed through appeals to national sovereignty and historical memory. In particular, Gaullist symbolism is selectively

appropriated to portray contemporary French governments as betraying national independence by submitting to EU, NATO, or US influence. These narratives coexist with critiques of mainstream media, which are portrayed as biased, censored, or complicit in elite deception. The report also identifies a distinct focus on Francophone Africa and post-colonial grievances, with content targeting North African and Sub-Saharan diaspora communities. FIMI and DIMI actors exploit historical legacies of colonialism to frame Western foreign policy as exploitative and hypocritical, aligning Russian geopolitical narratives with existing frustrations among marginalized communities. Content is frequently translated or adapted using dialects of French, Arabic, and culturally specific references, allowing geopolitical narratives to resonate with domestic social tensions. Overall, the French-language DIMI sphere demonstrates how FIMI narratives are localized through national history, diaspora identities, and global geopolitical framing.

### *Dutch-Language Content*

The Dutch-language DIMI sphere shows a strong reliance on US-based right-wing parajournalistic sources and a pronounced orientation toward conspiracy-driven narratives. Topic modelling reveals frequent discussion of COVID-19, vaccines, NATO, migration, transgender issues, and elite corruption, often framed through emotionally charged storytelling. Dutch Telegram channels frequently share content from US alternative media outlets such as The Gateway Pundit, ZeroHedge, The Blaze, Breaking911, and Disclose.tv. These sources import US-centric ideological frames into the Dutch context, particularly narratives focused on culture wars, distrust of liberal institutions, and moral panic around children and sexuality. References to figures such as Donald Trump, Jeffrey Epstein, and Elon Musk are common, linking local discussions to broader transnational conspiratorial ecosystems. Geopolitical content related to Ukraine, Gaza, and NATO appears alongside domestic issues such as agricultural policy and nitrogen regulation, reflecting attempts to connect international crises to national grievances. The report notes that Belgium's institutional role as host to EU and NATO institutions increases the salience of anti-EU and anti-NATO narratives in Dutch-speaking contexts. Overall, the Dutch-language DIMI sphere is characterized by heavy cross-border narrative importation, affective communication strategies, and the prominence of conspiracy theories as organizing frames.

### *Chinese-Language Content*

The Chinese-language analysis identifies a set of dominant narrative clusters centered on national image construction, geopolitical conflict, anti-Western discourse, diaspora identity, and media dissemination. Topic modelling shows that international conflicts—particularly the Russia–Ukraine war and Taiwan Strait tensions—form a substantial portion of Chinese-language Telegram content, often framed through anti-hegemonic narratives opposing Western influence. Diaspora-related narratives occupy a central position in the Chinese-language DIMI sphere. Content alternates between positive portrayals of overseas Chinese as patriotic cultural ambassadors and negative depictions emphasizing crime, insecurity, or moral risk in host societies. This dual framing reinforces in-group cohesion while fostering skepticism toward Western societies and institutions. The analysis also highlights the importance of cross-platform dissemination, with frequent citations of Chinese and Russian state media outlets serving to reinforce message authority and trust.

### Parajournalistic Actors and Alternative Media

In its final analytical section, the report conducts close readings of nine parajournalistic alternative media outlets, primarily in the French and German contexts. These actors occupy a hybrid space between journalism, activism, and propaganda. They selectively appropriate mainstream news formats while promoting narratives aligned with FIMI themes, often emphasizing crisis, distrust, and civilizational decline. These outlets play a crucial role in circulating FIMI narratives to domestic audiences by embedding them in locally resonant frames and controversies. Their prominence within the DIMI sphere underscores the importance of focusing on narrative interfaces and infrastructural roles, rather than attribution to foreign actors alone.

### Conclusions

Overall, the report demonstrates that FIMI activity in the EU is best understood through the lens of a DIMI sphere composed of domestic actors, alternative media infrastructures, and overlapping narratives. The findings show that domestic actors are central to the circulation and resilience of manipulative information, particularly through the weaponization of social categories and identity-based narratives. By foregrounding narratives and domestic interfaces rather than actor attribution alone, the report contributes a framework that aligns with policy concerns around information integrity while avoiding the externalization of disinformation as a purely foreign threat. The analysis provides a foundation for future research and policy responses that address the structural and narrative conditions enabling information manipulation within European societies.

Under EC Review

# 1. Introduction

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*In this report our goal is to develop an initial mapping of a Domestic Information Manipulation and Interference (DIMI) sphere that provides an interface for FIMI narratives to reach domestic audiences in the EU. This is facilitated by a wide range of actors that we uncover in this report that use social media profiles and websites to launder FIMI to domestic audiences, often by weaponizing existing controversies and issues in targeted societies.*

*This report is based on a first pass of data collection as part of the DE-CONSPIRATOR project and executes the methodology outlined in the Methodology Working Paper (D3.1).*

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Foreign information manipulation and interference would not succeed without the efforts of a range of domestic actors. Yet, there is little acknowledgement of the importance of domestic actors. For example, the EEAS's recent FIMI architecture that references four categories of FIMI channels: official state channels, state-controlled outlets, state-linked channels, and state-aligned channels, but does not explicitly reference the role of domestic actors be they influencers, alternative news media outlets, or even politicians. The first three channels refer specifically to those that can be attributed to a specific, foreign threat actor. The fourth refers to state-aligned channels "that cannot be attributed to state control or funding...but show systematic signs of alignment with a state entity" (EEAS 2025, p. 15). This last category, according to the EEAS can refer to a range of channels such as a YouTube channel, networks of fake websites (eg. Doppelganger/Portal Kombat), and Telegram channels. In the EEAS's architecture, these 'state-aligned' channels are attributed to foreign actors. In this report, we demonstrate that domestic actors play a crucial in amplifying and recirculating FIMI signals. This is a challenge because the boundary between state-aligned channels and domestic actors is fuzzy, which creates significant challenges for policy responses that rely on attribution to a foreign actor rather than understanding the interplay between foreign and domestic actors in the tactics, techniques, and procedures of FIMI.

In this report, we develop a framework that enables understanding the linkages between a typology of domestic actors and their role in amplifying and recirculating FIMI signals. As our focus is on domestic actors, we conduct a mapping of a DIMI sphere—replacing foreign with domestic—to better understand the interface between domestic actors, audiences, and foreign information manipulation and interference. We argue that without substantial embeddedness into a domestic context, which requires the use of linguistic, cultural, and social markers, it is impossible to conduct information manipulation. Moreover, domestic actors are involved in the political process that would "ha[ve] the potential to negatively impact values, procedures and political processes" (EEAS 2025), so it would be improvident to externalize information manipulation to foreign parties given the substantial presence of local actors.

We begin by collecting extensive data on Telegram accounts that we identify as amplifying FIMI narratives based on qualitative investigation. These accounts are selected because they situate themselves as ‘domestic as they post in a local, European language (or a diasporic language prevalent in Europe, eg. Chinese or Russian) and engage in discourse that is related to domestic cultural, social, and political topics. In Section 1 of the report, we produce a general mapping of the DIMI sphere, incorporating data from Telegram accounts situating themselves as actors representing French-, German-, and Dutch-speaking citizens, along with accounts presenting themselves as Baltic citizens (often using Russian language as well as Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian), and diasporic groups, focusing on the Chinese-speaking East Asian diaspora in Europe and the (primarily) English-speaking South Asian diaspora. This allows our analysis in Section 1 of the report to map a wide range of the DIMI sphere while also taking account of the fact that FIMI actors often directly target messaging to minority groups (DE-CONSPIRATOR 2025).

This report is based on the collection of millions of Telegram messages from these accounts, drawing on a processing pipeline established in DE-CONSPIRATOR Deliverable 3.1 (DE-CONSPIRATOR 2025). On these millions of messages, we apply a complex processing pipeline that incorporates the following methods:

1. Extraction and network analysis of cross-platform URL links from the Telegram channels to the rest of the web using the entire sample.
2. Topic modelling of messages in Chinese, Dutch, French, and German to identify key types of content and narratives used in the FIMI-DIMI interface.
3. Identification and qualitative analysis of key websites and information sources targeting Dutch, French, and German-language communities in the EU.

The volume of data raised substantial limitations for existing data processing techniques. First, our network graphs are extensive and include thousands of URL destinations, aggregated based on domains and social media platforms. Second, existing processing pipelines developed by the DE-CONSPIRATOR consortium (see D3.1) were insufficient for the form of Telegram messages. Specifically, we planned to use the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) algorithm for topic modelling, but the volume of data was so high that this was not feasible. Consequently, we adapted the original pipeline based on document-level embeddings, dimensionality reduction, clustering, and keyword extraction, relying on the open-source BERTopic framework with customized modules for GPU-accelerated analysis. For our analysis of Chinese language messages, we use LDA on a subsample of the Telegram seed, which relies on the original pipeline proposed in D3.1. This is due to the custom processors for text mining of Chinese language that were developed for the DE-CONSPIRATOR consortium. Given these challenges, we are only able to engage in a first pass of data analysis on a limited sample. However, this report provides proof of concept for a reproducible pipeline suitable for the extensive volume of data DE-CONSPIRATOR has collected from Telegram. To support this reproducibility, we discuss our dataset with descriptive statistics in further detail below in Section 1.1.

Given the unexpected volume of data, in this report we focus in detail on four language groups: Chinese, Dutch, French, and German. While we only cover four of the many languages that are present in our dataset, this allows for sufficient depth to develop a close analysis of the narratives and topics that serve as an interface between DIMI and FIMI, discussed in Section 2 of this report. In Section 1, we map the DIMI sphere using the URLs from the Telegram data that we collected. In doing so, we find the primary destinations on the web that the DIMI sphere links to. This DIMI sphere connects state-linked Russian websites, including mirrors of RT as well as channels such as Rybar, with domestic audiences. Further, we uncover a huge set of web domains shared by our Telegram seed that are primarily alternative news domains. Chief among these are four French and four German alternative news websites that are very prominent in the network (based on degree

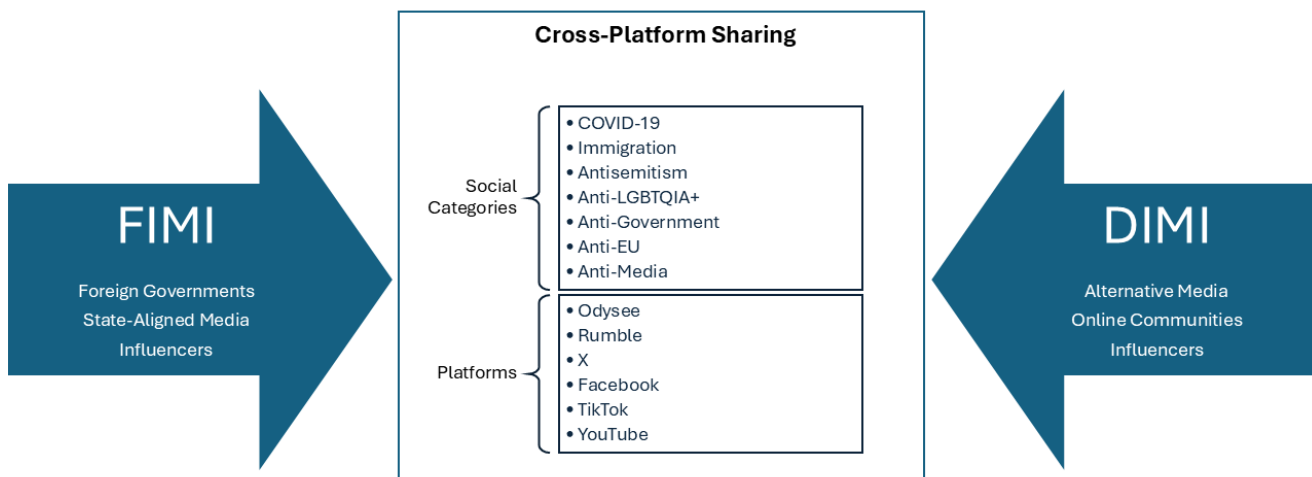


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Diagram of FIMI and DIMI interaction

centrality) that we study as detailed cases (along with one Dutch one) in Section 3. In Section 2, we present an overview of content based on topic modelling in the Chinese, Dutch, French, and German data. Through these topic models, we cluster millions of Telegram messages and derive a general set of narratives that are evident in each language group. We argue that these narratives consistently reference the construction and weaponization of social categories that serves as a primary interface between domestic actors and FIMI activities. Finally, Section 4 takes a close look at eight alternative media outlets in closer detail, providing a detailed look at French and German alternative media narratives that are circulated on Telegram. Overall, the findings of this report are consistent with existing research in the FIMI sphere, but our analysis contributes a view into the domestic actors that are amplifying FIMI narratives and the parajournalistic outlets that launder it for audiences in the EU. We also provide further evidence that the weaponization of social categories (e.g. identity, sexuality) is a central aspect of the DIMI sphere.

## 1.1 Data & Methodology Overview

In this section, we explain the data and methodology applied in the project. The project applies two primary research methodologies: social network analysis and topic modelling, both of which are supplemented with visualization, qualitative interpretation, and close reading. Drawing on digital methods, we combine both computational and qualitative approaches to understand the role of narratives and content in generating an interface between domestic actors and FIMI activities. Since the following analytical sections of this report use different kinds of data, this section of the report provides a high-level overview of the data used and the methodological choices applied in the different parts of this report. Section 2 focuses on social network analysis, which involves the collection of hyperlinks (URLs) across the web to understand cross-platform exposure to FIMI content by studying Telegram messages. This allows us to focus on identifying patterns of information diffusion and clusters of state-aligned actors. Section 2 thus focuses on the study of hyperlinks in the Telegram data and connections to the wider web. This is only one dimension of the data that we have collected, as the Telegram messages themselves form large text corpora that can be analyzed. In Section 3, we apply topic modelling pipelines to drive qualitative analysis of the content of the millions of Telegram messages that we have collected. This allows us to identify and surface different narratives that are present in the data, enabling the development of a general framework that can be used to identify the types of narratives that are most likely to provide domestic interfaces for FIMI activity. This involves a mix of computational

methods and qualitative interpretations of outputs. Through this process, we confirm the earlier expectation in DE-CONSPIRATOR D3.1 that the weaponization of social categories is central to activating domestic actors as conduits for FIMI narratives. Finally, in Section 4, we engage in a close reading of nine parajournalistic actors identified in the social network analysis in Section 2 and deepen our understanding of DIMI narratives as described in Section 3.

### 1.1.1 Telegram Seeds

In total, this report is based on messages collected from 442 total Telegram accounts. To collect this data, we use the Telegram API (using the Telethon Python package) to collect data. As discussed above, this was based on the collection of a seed covering six language groups. The total number of accounts is provided in Table 1.1. In each case, we started with a few initial accounts from each language group and collected all the forwarded Telegram channels from this initial seed of a handful of accounts. Then, the research team purposively selected relevant accounts to include for data collection. This second stage of data expansion was executed twice and, due to the purposive sampling approach, there are substantial differences between each language group in terms of the quantity of channels collected. As the table shows, we included substantially more German accounts in the data. While this does present some skew in the data for Section 2, we account for this through clustering and community detection. In Section 3, we organize analysis based on topic models for each of the four language groups we study, so the substantial presence of German language accounts does not skew our analysis there. The data collection occurred between March and May 2025 and covers the entirety of Telegram channels, reaching as far back as 2018.

Language Group	Number of Telegram Channels
Chinese	58
Dutch	74
French	69
German	157
Baltic & Russian Diaspora	59
English (South Asian Diaspora)	25
Total	442

*Table 1.1: Number of Telegram Channels Collected in Each Language Group*

### 1.1.2 Text Analysis Data & Topic Modelling Pipeline

While the social network analysis in Section 2 is based on all 442 accounts, our text analysis is based on an analysis of a subset of four language groups: Chinese, Dutch, French, and German. We focused on these due to strong language support in existing pre-trained models and the complexity of pre-processing data in the Baltic language group that includes four different languages. While this is of course a limitation, our ambition

in this report is based on a first analysis of the data collected in DE-CONSPIRATOR Work Package 3 and will be expanded by the end of the project.

Language Group	Telegram Messages Analyzed
Chinese	2,920,824
Dutch	1,450,983
French	2,769,912
German	3,977,786
Total	11,119,505

*Table 1.2: Total Telegram Messages Analysed in Topic Models, By Language*

Considering the immense volume of messages collected, we used a computational methodology known as topic modelling in order to analyze the data and identify relevant narratives that may be a key interface for FIMI to reach domestic audiences. Due to the differences in the language, we use two different algorithms to process the data. We had originally planned to use LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) across all the languages, but the complexity of the Telegram messages in Dutch, French, and German prevented efficient processing (eg. high number of emojis, hyperlinks, etc.). While we attempted various pre-processing strategies to address this, it was not possible to scale LDA across these posts. On the other hand, the Chinese messages were easier to process using standard NLP pipelines and basic optimizations for analysis of Chinese-language text. Therefore, for Dutch, French, and German, we used a more complex, GPU-based pipeline that scaled efficiently by relying on sentence embeddings and clustering rather than LDA. Our topic modelling for Chinese text utilizes LDA.

For the Dutch, French, and German text, we utilized BERTopic, which is a topic modelling framework that deviates substantially from LDA. Instead of a probabilistic model that identifies words most associated with topics, BERTopic instead uses a transformer-based approach. This leverages the latest developments in machine learning. We use a pre-trained sentence embedder (Reimers and Gurevych 2019), which is a type of language model that performs well on multilingual classification tasks. Through this process, each message (which we treat as an individual “document”) is encoded into a high-dimensional vector, which is a mathematical representation of the content in the message. Following standard procedures with sentence transformers, we do not pre-process the sentences before they are encoded. We then use dimensionality reduction (UMAP) to reduce the dimensionality of the vectors to prepare for clustering using the HDBSCAN algorithm.<sup>1</sup> This ‘clusters’ all of the messages into a variable number of topics, grouping similar messages

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<sup>1</sup> To scale the algorithms to our large data, we created customized wrappers the accelerated Nvidia CUMML and CUDF Python packages to process all data on a consumer-grade GPU (RTX 3090), using the CUMML UMAP and HDBSCAN algorithms and a customized count vectorizer. We tuned the parameters of each of these algorithms to fit the large data sizes that we are working with. For UMAP dimensionality reduction, we reduce vectors to 10 dimensions, with 100 nearest neighbors and a minimum cosine distance of 0.05. Our HDBSCAN model uses a minimum of 20 samples, a minimum cluster size of 300, and the “eom” cluster selection method. This was determined after multiple testing runs as the best hyperparameters based on qualitative interpretation of the resulting topics.

together. This results in hundreds of topics for each language group. FoWe then extract the relevant words for each topic by computing the term frequency-inverse document frequency score of all words that occur more than 50 times in the dataset, which gives us a handful of keywords that help to describe the topic. At this stage we also apply stopword removal and the aforementioned frequency filter to ensure clear topic representations for expert interpretation. We then use a visualization of cluster hierarchy and document data maps (see figures in Section 3) to determine which topics are most relevant for further analysis using expert-guided purposive sampling. Once the topics are created, we examine them in further depth and selected those that were most relevant (rather than most frequent) and generated qualitative labels for each. These are the clusters that are highlighted in the document data maps and form the basis of qualitative analysis and interpretation in Section 3. For the Chinese-language messages, LDA-based topic modeling analysis was performed. The purpose of topic modelling is to automatically extract topics that appear repeatedly from large amounts of text. This in turn reveals the narrative strategies employed by FIMI messages for Chinese diaspora audiences. This study tries several different numbers of topics, including 3, 8, 10, and 15, in order to find the balance between granularity and interpretability of topics. An 8-topic model was ultimately chosen as this was able to categorise the content while ensuring that each topic remained legible without producing redundant or incoherent topics.

Under EC Review

## 2. Mapping the DIMI Sphere

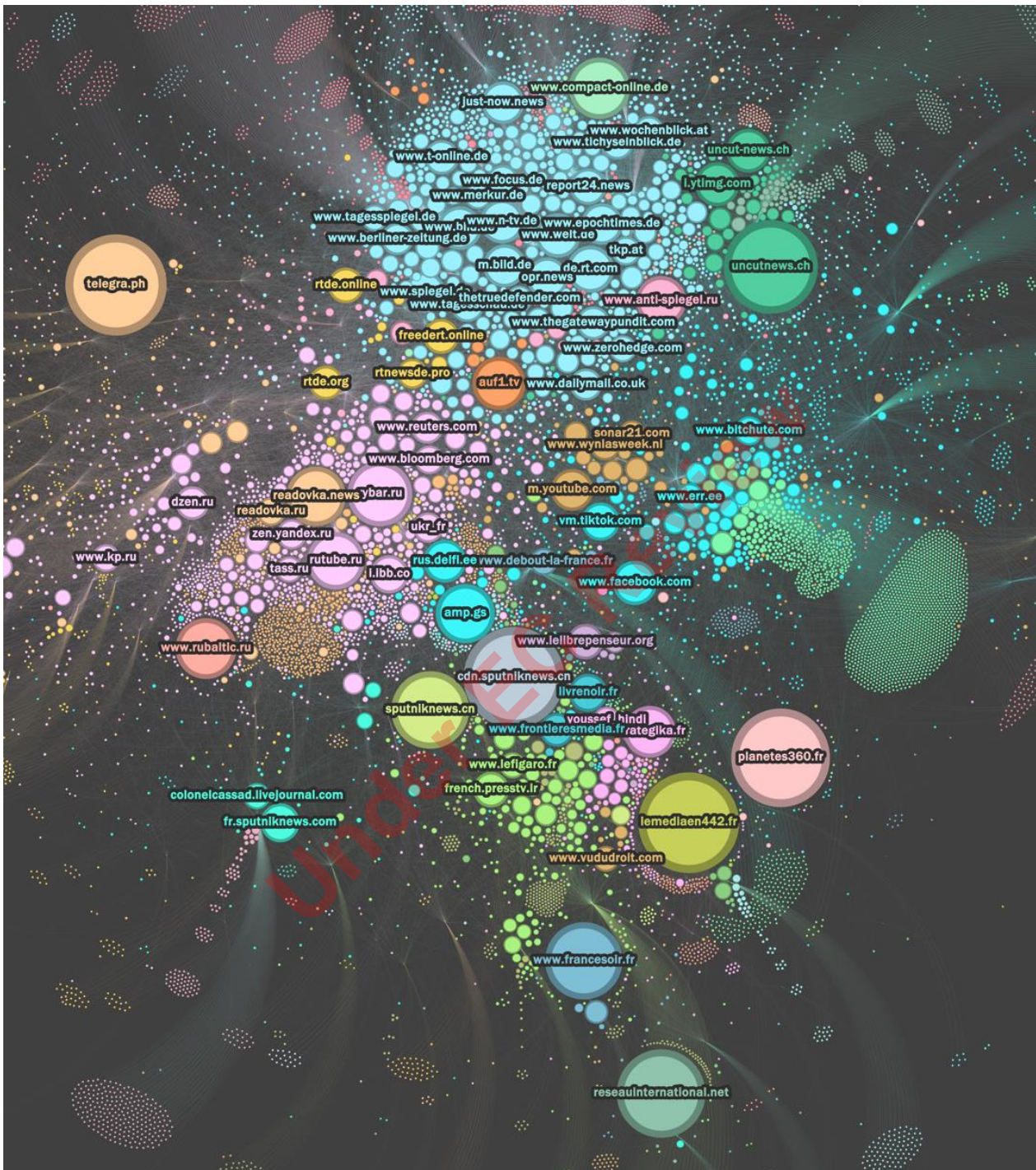


Figure 2.1: The Cross-Platform DIMI Sphere<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> URL Domains and Social Media accounts with an incoming link from a Telegram account collected in this report (see Table 1.1). Accounts are sized by weighted in-degree (total number of shares in sample of messages). Domains and Accounts are only labeled if weighted in-degree is greater than or equal to 100.

As outlined in the Methodology Working Paper (D3.1), our mapping of the DIMI sphere begins with collecting extensive data from Telegram. Our goal is to understand the information networks that these accounts are embedded in. First, we collected all the Telegram messages (text only, images, videos, and other audio files are not included due to storage and time limitations) produced by each of these seed channels (see Table 1.1). Then, we extracted all the Telegram channels that they forwarded and shared and purposively selected some additional accounts to expand the coverage of our analysis. After two passes of this expansion, we collected all messages from a large sample of Telegram accounts that we suspected were engaged in the amplification and recirculation of FIMI. As readers will see in Figure 2.1, the high overlap of many state-linked channels (eg. Readovka, Rybar) demonstrates that our purposive selection in the seed is in line with the expectations of existing research into FIMI networks on Telegram (EEAS 2025). From this large sample, we collected all the Telegram messages authored by these channels. As we collect these messages, they expose forwarded Telegram groups (eg. content from other Telegram groups that users in our seed broadcast to their users) as well as URLs that point to websites, social media accounts, and videos on sites such as YouTube, RuTube, Rumble, Odysee, and BitChute. This allows for cross-platform analysis of the FIMI networks as they intersect with domestic audiences. In this section, we discuss the findings of both analyses. Our findings demonstrate that websites, alternative media outlets, and US and Russia-based platforms are key vectors for transmitting information, narratives, and messages from FIMI channels to local audiences in Europe. We find that the DIMI sphere is structured less by ideological coherence than it is by infrastructural affordances that allow recirculation of FIMI content amongst domestic audiences and by parajournalistic actors that act as key brokers of FIMI narratives.

## 2.1 Reconstructing the DIMI Sphere: Links to Parajournalistic Actors and Platforms

To analyze cross-platform dynamics in the DIMI sphere we extracted all the URLs shared in all the messages from accounts in our seed. Using open-source Python libraries, we extracted the URL domain such that links to specific articles, for example, could be aggregated. We also expand any shortened URLs that are generated through services such as bit.ly (Yin 2018). This allows us to construct a graph between the users in our Telegram seed and the domains and social media accounts that they share most frequently. As Figure 2.1 shows, our Telegram seed primarily shares alternative news websites in local languages (in the Figure, French and German are visible but other languages such as Dutch and Estonian are evident in the graph but not labeled) as well as Russian-linked outlets including TASS, Russia Today (RT), Sputnik, Readovka and Rybar. As well, we see numerous mainstream news outlets included as well, such as Bild, Spiegel, Reuters, Bloomberg, and others.

In addition to aggregating URLs directed at websites, we also use web scraping to collect information on users from URLs pointing to their social media profiles. Currently, our URL processing pipeline supports Odysee, Rumble, X, and VKontakte. We also see links to many platforms including Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube as well as smaller platforms such as BitChute. We use the YouTube API to identify shared YouTube channels, which we will continue to research for deliverable D3.4, Actors Database. Unfortunately, TikTok links are not stable and cannot be used to link back to specific accounts and due to data access challenges, we are not able to resolve URLs to Facebook.

After creating the graph, we run a community detection algorithm (Louvain) to identify clusters of densely connected nodes. These communities are based solely on their linkages in URLs shared from Telegram accounts in our seed rather than content. This generated 40 communities that we analyzed further, of which the most important 20 (based on the number of shares from unique channels in the Telegram seed) we include

Community	Total Nodes	Total Shares
German-Language Websites	1,853	116,252
Mainstream News & State-Linked Channels	1,506	66,760
International News & Russian-Linked Channels	355	61,382
Media en 4-4-2	17	41,266
Health-Related Topics I	918	39,203
Transnational Right-Wing Actors	127	35,447
Reseau International & Related Alternative Media Sites	795	24,962
French and Dutch Alternative Media	533	18,193
Mainstream French News & French Alternative Media	357	17,286
Dutch Alternative Media	251	14,970
RT German	1,742	11,550
Pro-Russian French Geopolitics	154	10,245
Pro-Russian German Accounts on Donbass	113	9,104
Far-Right German Websites	28	8,327
Baltic and Russian Websites	207	8,258
Austrian Far-Right and Alternative Media	27	6,640
Pro-Russian French Media	116	5,333
French Alternative Media	13	4,723
French Alternative Media (Le Libre Penseur)	137	3,461
China & Hong Kong Media	171	2,501
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,422</b>	<b>505,863</b>

Table 1.2: Total Telegram Messages Analysed in Topic Models, By Language

in Table 2.1. Experts then reviewed each of these 20 communities and labelled them based on their content. We focus our analysis down to only those nodes that have incoming connections from at least 6 accounts from the initial set in Table 1.1 (reducing the prevalence of spam and accounts with high weighted in-degree counts due to repeated sharing from just one account in the seed). This allows us to determine key types of actors that we identify in the URL share graph that are linked by multiple users in our seed rather than just one. The communities do not overlap with one another, so (for example) there are German-language newspapers in the “Mainstream News & State-Linked Channels” community as well, and vice versa (for example). Finally, the total number of shares in Table 2.1 does not reflect the entirety of all shares in the dataset as quantified in Table 2.2. This is due to the inclusion of 20 of a total of 40 communities in Table 2.1 and represents 80.2% of all shares.

Our analysis reveals a DIMI sphere consistent with our expectations laid out in DE-CONSPIRATOR D3.1 and the findings of existing research into FIMI targeting the EU. We find that the largest, most interconnected component of the links identified in the graph refer to German language news and websites. This is partly due to a skew as we found many more German language Telegram groups in our initial seed, however, it also indicates that there is a substantial exposure to FIMI in German speaking Telegram groups as many such groups appeared in the process of seed expansion. In the community “German-Language Websites” we find an extensive set of websites with high numbers of incoming connections, referring to many parajournalistic actors that we discuss in Section 4. In addition, some prominent, mainstream news sources are also included in this section such as *Die Welt*, *Bild* and *Spiegel* as well as a few English-language, right-wing tabloid sources from outlets such as *The Daily Mail* and *New York Post*. However, the most prominent news source in this

partition of the graph is *RT Deutsch*. Alongside, we identify *The Epoch Times* as a prominent news source in this community, which is widely recognized as a far-right news outlet associated with the Falun Gong religious movement. As well, *Report24* is a further sensationalist outlet we identify in this community. Closely associated with this community are a set of dense relationships between a few Telegram channels in our German seed and a number of mirrors of *RT Deutsch* content, such as the URLs “rtde.online”, “freedert.online”, “rtde.org”, “rtnewsde.pro”, “rtde.expert”, “rtnewsde.com”, as well as the Odysee and Rumble (alternative video sharing sites) profiles for *RT Deutsch*. This reveals that state-linked media has a substantial presence in German language and numerous domains are being used to mirror RT content in the context of sanctions.

Platform	Total Shares
Odysee	3,552
Rumble	3,627
X/Twitter	13,908
Vkontakte	3,190
Facebook	4,313
TikTok	2,762
Other Web Domain	599,661
<b>Total</b>	<b>631,013</b>

Table 2.2: Platforms and Web Domains by Total Shares (not including YouTube)

Alongside the large German-Language website community, we find similar patterns in French language communities, which have been formed primarily around specific alternative media outlets such as *Le Média en 4-4-2*, *Reseau International*, and other parajournalistic actors. In the French data, we observe a surprising trend which is the emergence of “Geopolitics” influencers and thinkers that reproduce narratives aligned with Russian and other FIMI threat actors. This is particularly present in pink in the south-central region in the graph where *Strategika.fr* and the X account “youssef\_hindi”, which represents an author that writes in French about geopolitics and interreligious conflict in the world. Nearby, to the left, a small cluster in green represents a number of accounts—linked to *PressTV Iran*, another state-linked FIMI source—that targets minority groups with FIMI narratives in French language. The French communities, which tend to be clustered around specific outlets, demonstrates that within this language group, there is far more ideological diversity than is observed in the German communities. However, both language spheres (which make up a substantial proportion of the links in this dataset) are indicative of a substantial effort made by FIMI actors to establish information-sharing networks that rely primarily on alternative media and parajournalistic actors. This centrality of parajournalistic actors is evident as well in other language groups covered in this graph. For example, in Dutch language we see numerous conspiracy theory outlets, narratives related to health issues during and after the COVID-19

pandemic referring to vaccines and 5G, and numerous alternative media outlets. Further, in our seed of Baltic language accounts, we identify prominent information laundering websites, such as Baltnews with multiple domains (including, .lt, .lv, .ee., and .com), which is recognized as such by NATO Stratcom (Stolze 2022). Due to this substantial proportion of parajournalistic outlets and alternative media sources, we dedicate section 5 to a close case study of a purposively selected sample of these sources based on their prominence in the network graph here. Thus we can conclude here that parajournalistic actors are a key vector of domestic actors that contribute to the spread of FIMI narratives.

In addition to a wide range of parajournalistic websites, state-linked outlets, and junk news websites, many links also point to various social media platforms. Of these, YouTube and X/Twitter are the platforms that receive the most incoming links. Given the structure of X/Twitter URLs, we are able to easily determine the unique social media profiles that are linked, which total to 13,908. YouTube URLs, on the other hand, do not expose the name or profile of the social media account, so we use the YouTube API to identify the users behind each URL. We identified 42,328 unique links to YouTube (excluding mobile YouTube links with the domain m.youtube, included in “Other Web Domain” in Table 2.2). Of these links, we were able to identify 10,469 unique YouTube accounts associated with the videos linked (25% of the total), that were shared a total of 69,793 times by accounts in our Telegram seed. In addition to these unique YouTube accounts, we were unable to identify the YouTube accounts behind 31,859 unique links (75%) that were shared 56,849 times. This large proportion refers to links that were broken, dead, or links to videos that have been deleted, taken down by the platform for community guidelines violations, or copyright infringement. This shows that while YouTube has substantial FIMI exposure, the platform provides a less stable space for FIMI information sharing. The most shared channel is from Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, the leader of the right-wing Debout la France party, the right-wing *Frontieres* alternative media outlet, German-language alternative media channel *Team Heimat*, pro-Russian media outlets *Russosphere* and *DruschbaFM*, alternative media outlet *Politik Spezial*, and other channels such as the far-right, Dutch Forum voor Democratie party. As with the URL shares, we observe that links primarily point to alternative media outlets associated with right-wing and far-right ideologies as well as pro-Russian accounts.

A similar pattern is also evident with the 13,908 unique X/Twitter accounts that we have identified. The most-shared account is @ukr\_fr, which presents pro-Russian narratives about the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, right-wing French-language accounts including Dupont-Aignan again, as well as many English language accounts associated with the MAGA movement. As with the other URL shares, there are also numerous mainstream news sources and accounts linked as well. Given the large volume of both YouTube and X/Twitter links, we can conclude that both platforms have substantial exposure to FIMI content and play an important role in circulating FIMI narratives to domestic audiences. We also attempted to identify users from links to Facebook and TikTok, but we could not do so given data access limitations for Meta platforms. Further, most TikTok links shared in our dataset are not stable and therefore it is not possible to identify users from URLs. However, we find that these two platforms are not used substantially by our Telegram seed. In fact, they are on par with the “alternative tech” platforms that we have identified. The relative prevalence of “alt-tech” platforms in comparison to others is a surprising finding. While YouTube and X/Twitter links far outnumber all other platforms, the platforms Odysee and Rumble, which have had documented exposure to extremist and far-right content (Munn 2023), are utilised almost as frequently as Facebook and TikTok. Odysee and Rumble have very lax content moderation policies and, in many cases, serve as mirrors for Russian state-linked content, with both platforms hosting RT and state aligned channels such as DDGeopolitics. Both platforms’ have substantial exposure to FIMI content (mirroring sanctioned RT content), with channels on those platforms serving as hosting sites for videos associated with the parajournalistic actors identified in the URL shares. On these two platforms, we also identify a substantial presence of US-based far-right actors. As these

platforms have very low levels of moderations and advertise their commitment to “free speech”, we find they are essential hosting platforms for FIMI content to reach domestic audiences as well as providing a vector of exposure to US-based and Russia-based FIMI narratives.

In sum, this analysis demonstrates that the DIMI sphere identified through Telegram is best understood not as a consistent ideological ecosystem, but as a network of websites and platforms that enables the persistent recirculation of FIMI narratives across platforms, languages, and domestic audiences in the EU. Our findings show that parajournalistic actors, supported by a constellation of state-linked sources and low-moderation platforms, are critical actors that translate, localize, and amplify FIMI content for domestic consumption. While mainstream media and platforms such as YouTube and X/Twitter remain important vectors of exposure, the substantial role of alternative “alt-tech” platforms and mirrored state media underscores how affordances of platform governance, sanctions evasion, and content moderation shape the structure of the DIMI sphere. These results highlight that countering FIMI requires sustained attention not only to individual narratives or actors, but to the cross-platform infrastructures and parajournalistic intermediaries that enable their circulation and resilience within European information environments.

Under EC Review

## 3. Modelling Content in the DIMI Sphere

This section applies content modelling to DIMI activity on Telegram, focusing on a defined set of recurrent thematic clusters: immigration, COVID-19, antisemitism, anti-LGBTQIA+ narratives, anti-EU discourse, anti-government messaging, anti-media framing, and geopolitics. The analysis maps how these topics are articulated through recurring claims, visual motifs, and emotional cues, and how they are circulated via URLs, reposts, cross-posting, and attribution chains linking bloggers, influencers, and alternative media sources. Particular attention is paid to the mutual reinforcement among actors, whereby similar narratives appear across multiple channels, creating dense webs of reference that amplify reach and perceived credibility. Topic modelling captures how these thematic strands intersect and circulating across channels, forming a DIMI sphere in which narratives are recycled, reframed, and legitimised through networked dissemination on Telegram.

### 3.1 DIMI Content and the Politicization of Social Categories

In this section, we discuss various forms of DIMI content at a high level that we have found in the data collected across the four languages modelled. We focus on key issues and the social categories identified as relevant in D3.1.

#### 3.1.1 Immigration

Immigration fueled by underlying Islamophobic narratives appears as a charged social category, often portrayed not as a complex socioeconomic phenomenon but as a threat with cultural, demographic, and security implications (Culloty and Suiter 2021). Telegram channels in our dataset routinely frame migration as deliberate destabilization engineered by NGOs, EU institutions, or shadowy elites to undermine national sovereignty and traditional identities, often veering into conspiracy theories like the “great replacement theory”.<sup>3</sup> Migrants are depicted less as individuals or families seeking safety than as instruments of a broader agenda that brings crime, civil disorder, and demographic “reset” (cf. Brouwer et al 2017; Benczes and Ságvári 2022). This framing serves at least two rhetorical functions: first, it externalizes social problems by attributing them to outsiders; second, it reinforces grievance narratives that present citizens as victims of political betrayal. By linking migration to themes like economic decline, cultural decay, and loss of control, these channels and websites transform immigration into a symbolic boundary marker between “the people” and “the elites.” (Shetty 2022).

In the anti-migration narratives observed in the Telegram channels, migration is framed through a deeply nostalgic lens, evoking an idealised “lost paradise” of ethnically homogenous societies and “simpler times” before multiculturalism. Individual stories, often fabricated or AI-generated, depict migrants as refusing to integrate, demanding halal food in Western countries, or insisting on wearing “non-Western” or ethnic clothing. Highly visual content, including AI-generated videos, frequently shows bearded men or women in burqas creating “scandals” about free food not being halal or complaining about government-provided housing. These images can reinforce a core trope: migrants are portrayed as opportunists, criminals, invaders, culturally incompatible, and overwhelmingly bearded men of color. Crime reports involving migrants trigger

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<sup>3</sup> The “Great Replacement” theory is a far-right conspiracy claim that Western populations are being intentionally replaced by non-white, non-Christian immigrants through demographic and political engineering.

predictable comment chains such as “the usual suspects” or sarcastic references like “here come the nurses and doctors again,” mocking the argument that migrants contribute positively to society. Across these channels, migration is framed as an existential threat; one that must be stopped at the border and reversed through expulsions or stricter policing. This cluster reveals how FIMI actors mobilise fear, nostalgia, and cultural anxiety to solidify anti-migrant sentiment and normalise exclusionary policies.

### 3.1.2 COVID-19

In our dataset, COVID-19 functions as a central narrative device for articulating mistrust toward institutions, scientific authorities, and mainstream media (cf. Jennings et al 2021). Rather than treating the pandemic as a public-health crisis, the actors behind Telegram channels and websites frame covid as a coordinated exercise of political control, concealment, and manipulation (cf. Ferrara et al 2020). The posts frequently cast doubt on the origins of the virus, exaggerate vaccine risks, and portray health measures as tools of surveillance or repression and amplify the perceived grievances and persecution of the vaccine and pandemic denialists. This reframing transforms COVID from a biomedical issue into a symbolic category representing state overreach, elite deception, and the betrayal of ordinary citizens. As a result, readers are primed to interpret subsequent political and scientific developments through the same lens of systemic conspiracy and governmental overreach.

COVID-denialism narratives in these channels consistently portray the pandemic as a manufactured or exaggerated crisis engineered for political control rather than a genuine public-health emergency (cf. Malinverni and Brigagao 2020). They claim that governments intentionally inflated case numbers through misused PCR tests, relabeled influenza as COVID, or financially incentivized hospitals to overreport deaths, casting medical institutions as complicit actors rather than responders. Vaccines are framed not only as unsafe but as deliberate tools of harm, linked to depopulation agendas, immune suppression, infertility, or bioweaponry, with all these findings being “confirmed” by “whistleblowers” or “doctors” whose supposed medical credentials are highlighted in the posts. Some narratives assert that excess mortality was caused solely by lockdowns or vaccination, while others go further by suggesting the virus was never isolated or may not have existed at all. These claims are often embedded in larger conspiratorial frameworks, arguing that global elites preplanned the pandemic to justify surveillance, economic restructuring, or social engineering. In this way, COVID becomes a symbolic story of deception and authoritarian intent, with every phase of the pandemic reinterpreted as evidence of a coordinated plot.

### 3.1.3 Antisemitism

In these alternative media ecosystems, antisemitism as a social category can range from coded to explicitly articulated, drawing on some of the oldest and most dangerous conspiratorial tropes, much like on other social media (Hübscher 2023) Apart from relying on coded references to “globalists” or “shadow elites,” or specific individuals (e.g., George Soros) many outlets openly revive classic blood-libel themes, accusing Jews of inherent brutality or moral corruption, especially in discussions of Gaza or Israeli military actions. Others claim that Jewish individuals or institutions control media, finance, or international organizations, presenting Jewish agency as omnipresent and malevolent. These narratives frame Jews not as a diverse population that is often critical of the State of Israel’s actions, but as a unified conspiratorial force, turning them into symbolic scapegoats for global problems ranging from migration to war and economic instability (cf. Rensmann 2024). In doing so, such outlets reinforce historically rooted antisemitic worldviews while embedding them into contemporary political grievances. These channels usually attribute the “orchestration” of global crises such

as pandemics and geopolitical conflicts to a “cabal” and decry the censorship that bans them from more mainstream platforms.

### 3.1.4 Anti-LGBTQIA+

Across these TG channels and “alternative” outlets, anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric is frequently expressed through attacks on “woke culture,” gender studies, and especially trans people, framing them as symbols of societal decay or elite-engineered moral collapse. Channels often portray gender diversity as a dangerous ideological project imposed on schools, families, and public institutions, warning that “le wokisme” or “gender ideology” is corrupting children, undermining traditional values, or erasing biological reality (cf. Lewicki and Clark 2025). Trans people are depicted as threats to women’s rights, public safety, or national identity, serving as convenient targets for broader culture-war narratives. By presenting LGBTQIA+ inclusion as a top-down mandate rather than a civil-rights issue, these outlets transform sexual and gender minorities into emblematic figures of a supposed cultural assault led by elites and try to create a moral panic by securitizing the discourse, at times even insinuating that this is an effort of “Jewish” elites (a clear link to antisemitism). In the anti-queer narratives circulating across the monitored Telegram channels and para-journalistic outlets, some actors go so far as to promote conversion therapy, framing LGBTQIA+ identities as pathological and reversible or just inherently predatory. Our cross-linguistic analysis reveals a strong emphasis on the victimization of children (mirroring Russian state propaganda): channels claim that children must be “protected” from allegedly “perverted adults” who supposedly impose homosexual or gender-nonconforming identities on them. In the U.S.-based media environment, these narratives reflect and amplify deep societal polarization, positioning LGBTQIA+ rights as evidence of moral decay and cultural decline. Anti-queer messaging is frequently intertwined with appeals to Christianity and calls to “return to God,” framing queer identities as incompatible with national traditions, religious values, and social order (cf. Leidig 2023).

### 3.1.5 Anti-EU

In the anti-EU narratives circulating in the monitored Telegram channels, the European Union is routinely framed as an authoritarian “dictatorship of Brussels” that imposes unwanted policies on member states, especially related to minority rights (cf. Kuhar and Shevtsova 2025). This topic frequently overlaps with other themes, most notably migration, where EU-level decisions are portrayed as undermining national sovereignty, cultural identity, and public security. Within these channels, the benefits of EU membership are consistently questioned or dismissed, while para-journalistic outlets operating on Telegram amplify stories that depict the Union as economically burdensome and politically coercive. For instance, we encounter the term “Zensursula” in some of the topics, a common occurrence in German-speaking (social) media since at least 2019 for her internet policies in Germany (Spiegel 2019), is now used in relation to her opposition to Elon Musk’s X (formerly Twitter) platform. A recurring trope is the promotion of a “Brexit-like” exit as a desirable pathway, with commentators emphasising alleged gains in autonomy, economic freedom, and national strength for countries that choose to leave the EU. Often framed as a “Fourth Reich”, it not only came up during the Euromaidan protest in Ukraine (Gaufman 2015) but has become a narrative used both by the far-right (e.g., Elon Musk) and in more leftist circles. Both encourage EU- disintegration, but from completely opposite political poles. This pattern illustrates how FIMI actors blend criticism of EU institutions with broader narratives of decline, instability, and elite overreach to erode trust in the European project.

### 3.1.6 Anti-Government

In the anti-government narratives observed across the monitored Telegram channels, messaging is highly language- and country-specific but follows a shared populist logic. In English-language channels and affiliated para-journalistic outlets, the Democratic Party is framed as the root cause of economic decline, rising crime, ongoing wars, and “porous borders.” These channels frequently position European far-right leaders and populist parties as ideological allies, pointing to them as examples of political “coherence” and resistance to liberal governance across the Atlantic. In European contexts, particularly within French- and German-speaking channels (some are based in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Northern Italy, etc.), the emphasis shifts toward isolationism, with calls to prioritize the “in-group” and to “put our own people first.” Echoing classic populist rhetoric, their own governments are depicted as corrupt elites disconnected from the needs of “the true people,” while far-right actors are celebrated as the only political force capable of restoring order and national integrity (cf. Hameleers and Yekta 2025). Through these narratives, FIMI ecosystems seek to delegitimize democratic institutions and normalize anti-system sentiment, ultimately positioning extremist alternatives as both necessary and legitimate.

In the French-speaking part of the dataset, anti-government rhetoric is often infused with Gaullist narratives that invoke national sovereignty, resistance to foreign influence, and the moral duty of the “true people” to oppose a corrupt or submissive political class. These actors selectively appropriate Gaullist symbolism (e.g., “grandeur nationale”, strategic independence, defiance toward supranational bodies) to frame contemporary governments as betraying France’s historic mission. The EU, NATO, and global institutions are depicted as forces that have usurped France’s autonomy, while current leaders are portrayed as weak imitators who have abandoned De Gaulle’s legacy of strategic autonomy and popular legitimacy. By reinterpreting Gaullism as a populist tradition rather than a state-building doctrine, these outlets claim continuity with a heroic national past while delegitimizing present governance as foreign-controlled, morally bankrupt, and fundamentally anti-French. This rhetorical move grounds conspiratorial and anti-establishment narratives in a culturally resonant storyline that portrays resistance not as extremism, but as a patriotic restoration of the nation’s rightful path.

### 3.1.7 Anti-Media

The anti-media narratives focus on mainstream media and public broadcasters, who are consistently portrayed as biased, in some cases left-leaning, too mainstream or even criminal. This delegitimization serves as a justification for presenting Telegram channels and their affiliated para-journalistic outlets as the “only truthful sources,” positioning them as alternatives to supposedly corrupted mainstream journalism (cf. De Leon et al 2024). A key advantage of these channels within the FIMI/DIMI ecosystem is their sheer volume: through a firehose strategy, they overwhelm the information space with repetitive, high-frequency messaging that allows their narratives to dominate by quantity rather than credibility. Our analysis of URLs shared in these channels shows that a wide range of media outlets (at times ideologically contradictory) are selectively mobilised to support anti-media claims. This includes the strategic use of legitimate statistics or reputable sources (hence the relatively high presence of many mainstream outlets among the links, such as The New York Times, NOS, Die Welt, or Le Figaro), which are then embedded in layers of misinterpretation and manipulation. The result is a narrative environment where contradictory content is stitched together to create an illusion of evidence, making disinformation more difficult to counter and further eroding trust in established news institutions.

### 3.1.8 Geopolitics

In the geopolitics topics, narratives heavily overlap with other thematic frames, but two regions dominate: Israel/Palestine and Russia/Ukraine. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is treated in highly contradictory ways across the monitored Telegram channels. On one hand, support for Palestine is framed as a leftist, “criminal” position; in this logic, some channels adopt explicitly pro-Israel narratives, presenting Israel as an innocent victim of aggression akin to Ukraine. On the other hand, strongly antisemitic channels use the same conflict to condemn Israel and position themselves as supporters of Palestine. This results in a paradox: the same outlets that routinely express racist sentiments toward Arabs and Muslims can, in this geopolitical context, promote pro-Palestinian messaging. Such contradictions are strategically exploited within the broader FIMI/DIMI ecosystem, particularly by Russian state and proxy media, which portray Russia as a defender of the Global South and as a crusader against Western oppression and hypocrisy (cf. Audinet 2025). These narratives are often less about ideological commitment and more about oppositional positioning: any stance that destabilizes the Western “establishment” becomes useful. Consequently, the geopolitical frame frequently links back to the anti-government cluster, reinforcing a worldview in which Western institutions are delegitimized and Russia, or other anti-Western actors, are cast as protectors of global justice.

In the Russia–Ukraine context, Telegram channels and affiliated outlets circulate highly fragmented and often contradictory narratives. A significant subset reproduces Kremlin-aligned messaging almost verbatim, presenting the war because of Western “lies,” provocation, and geopolitical expansion. In this framing, Russia is depicted as having had “no choice” but to invade, with Putin portrayed as a reluctant actor seeking peace and negotiations. Responsibility for prolonging the conflict is shifted onto President Zelenskyy, who is framed as corrupt, greedy, and personally invested in extending the war for financial and political gain. These channels also discourage Western support for Ukraine, arguing that assistance merely delays peace and diverts resources from domestic problems that “actually matter.”

At the same time, other Telegram outlets adopt a more sympathetic stance toward Ukraine, not necessarily out of ideological support, but as part of a strategic repertoire. By expressing solidarity with Ukraine, they attract a broader audience and cultivate trust, which is then leveraged to disseminate disinformation on other issues such as climate change, COVID-19, migration, or domestic politics. This instrumental approach demonstrates how FIMI actors use the war not only to reinforce pro-Russian narratives but also to build influence ecosystems in which followers are gradually exposed to a wider portfolio of misleading or manipulative content.

## 3.2 DIMI Narratives and Social Categories Across Language Contexts

In the following four sections, we discuss how the politicization of social categories proceeds in German, French, Dutch, and Chinese-language Telegram messages by building on the outputs of the topic models. In the case of German, French, and Dutch, we construct topic models using a transformer-based framework as discussed in Section 1.1. We then visualize and explore the topics returned in each language group by purposively selecting relevant topics for further analysis based on expert analysis. These topics are then discussed at a general level. Because these transformer-based topic modelling approaches return hundreds of topics, our analysis of the three European languages provides a high-level overview of the findings of the topic models by focusing on expert analysis of a purposive sample (driven by our focus on social categories) of topics. On the other hand, since the LDA approach we used for the Chinese-language data returns a pre-determined number of topics (in our case, eight), that section includes a closer interpretation of each topic (and is consequently a longer section). The German, French, and Dutch sections here are kept deliberately brief as we

provide further analysis of these themes and narratives in Section 4. The following subsections demonstrate the centrality of the politicization of social categories in the DIMI sphere, forming a key vector for the circulation of FIMI narratives in the EU.

### 3.2.1 German-Language Content

During the COVID-19 pandemic, German studies found that Telegram became a hub for organizing protests, spreading pandemic misinformation, and linking anti-lockdown activists with established far-right actors (Zehring & Domahidi, 2023; Schrimpf et al., 2023). In part, this was motivated by more stringent platform regulation during the pandemic (Dieter et al 2021), which also allowed these activists to claim victimhood for being banished from more mainstream platforms (Müller and Harrendorf 2025). These findings are supported by topic modelling and network analysis, which show that far-right Telegram communities frequently discuss “freedom,” “resistance,” and “sovereignty,” using these frames to recruit and mobilise followers (Zehring & Domahidi, 2023; Schrimpf et al., 2023). The thematic focus of these networks is equally diverse and adaptive (Schulze et al 2022). Each community cluster tends to specialize in certain narratives-ranging from anti-government sentiment to COVID-19 skepticism and nationalist rhetoric (Boved & Grindrod, 2022; Wischerath et al., 2024), or even independence of some German federal lands (Kiess et al 2022; Böhme 2024).

Judging from this constellation of topics, the discussion on many German-speaking Telegram channels would likely appear fragmented, but tied together by a shared distrust of institutions, mainstream media, and political authorities. Labeled topics such as Big Pharma, COVID, censorship, YouTube, EU uncensored, Lauterbach, and Sputnik suggest an environment where health policy, pandemic responses, and media regulation are reinterpreted through a critical or conspiratorial lens. References to *The Epoch Times*, other channels of information, and streaming and platforms like Odysee indicate an emphasis on “alternative” information spaces and the belief that mainstream narratives are manipulated or suppressed (or, as they often complain, “censored”).

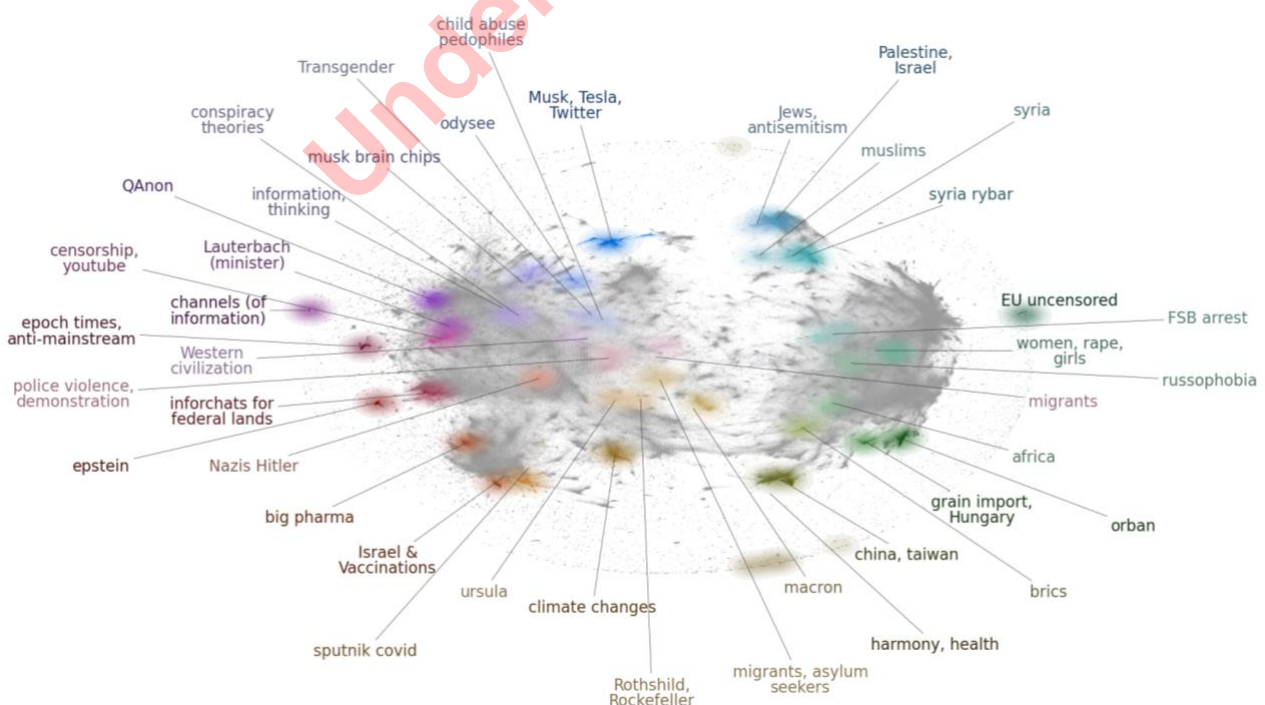


Figure 3.1: German Document DataMap

A second cluster of topics points to geopolitical concerns that are often discussed with a strong ideological framing. Mentions of Russia, FSB arrest, Russo-phobia, Syria, Rybar, China/Taiwan, BRICS, Africa, Orban, Macron, Western civilization, and grain import/Hungary reflect a worldview in which global power shifts and foreign conflicts are interpreted as part of a broader struggle against Western elites or liberal governance. Figures like Musk (Tesla, Twitter, brain chips) show how certain tech or media actors are seen as counterweights to established institutions and the frequent references to the Russian ministry of defense as a source of information showcases a conscious strategy to platform the views of the Russian government.

A third thematic field deals with social and cultural anxieties: migrants, asylum seekers, Muslims, women/rape/girls, child abuse, Epstein, Nazis/Hitler, Jews/antisemitism, Palestine/Israel, and Transgender. The reason that these issues end up in the same thematic field is related to the way the immigration is securitized in the German-language context: through threats to female bodies and children (Czudnochowski 2025), which, in term, facilitates the penetration of American FIMI narratives and actors who provide similar narratives and further material that is related to specific American context (eg. Epstein), global flows of transphobia (Sanchez-Sanchez et al 2023), or broader racist and antisemitic conspiracy theories. Discussions around these subjects in such channels often involve conspiracy theories around the respective subjects with racist claims. Overall, the presence of all these topics together suggests a communication space shaped by skepticism, crisis thinking, and a desire for narratives that challenge mainstream political, social, and media institutions and the fact that there are local info chats for specific federal lands in Germany indicate the fact that FIMI content often penetrates through geographically more local communities. There are also a number of German “disinfluencers”. While most have focused on German-speaking pro-Russian “journalists”, in our dataset, there are other home-grown “journalists” who are focused on COVID-19, immigration and QAnon conspiracy theories that have significant audiences. In most cases, our data shows that they cooperate with each other creating a dense network of narrative resonance and reinforcement (Kleinen-von Königsłow et al 2025).

### 3.2.2 French-language Content

Francophone Europe represents an important case study because of the popularity of the French language across the EU member states. Apart from local DIMI actors who also cater to a diverse, left- and right-leaning Francophone audience, Russian FIMI actors appear to adapt their narratives to a broader Francophone public sphere, where content can be repackaged and recycled across Telegram channels (Audinet et al., 2023; Deleye, 2024) and across platforms. In most cases FIMI and DIMI actors exploit tensions related to immigration and sovereignty by amplifying narratives that fuel anti-establishment sentiments, distrust in mainstream media, and skepticism towards the EU (VIGNIUM, 2024; VIGNIUM, 2025). In the French case, there is an additional layer of historical grievances related to French colonialism that is often amplified to exacerbate social tensions (Leveque, 2024). In the dataset, we notice a significant portion of the content that targets North African and Sub-Saharan diaspora communities (Douzet et al., 2021; EUvsDisinfo, 2025) and several FIMI and DIMI actors who specifically discuss historical legacies related to French colonization. Some of the Francophone diasporic groups are also exploitable through these narratives that exploit lived experiences that often include systemic marginalization at the hands of both national governments and Western international actors. For example, NATO and EU foreign policies are criticized through terminology which evokes historical legacies of colonialism (Horak et al., 2024). Content gets translated into dialects of French, Arabic, and regional slang, and draws upon cultural references (from African solidarity to Islamic identity politics). This is to strategically recode disinformation through diasporic narratives and allow operations to link international conflicts with domestic discontent, which hence aligns Russian interests with the frustrations of communities who already feel

excluded or surveilled by the French state. This allows disinformation to, in addition to disseminating disinformation narratives, also affirm existing grievances within networks which blend political critiques with cultural affirmations. This ultimately results in a messaging ecosystem which is highly adaptive and in which disinformation is identity, as well as ideology, based.

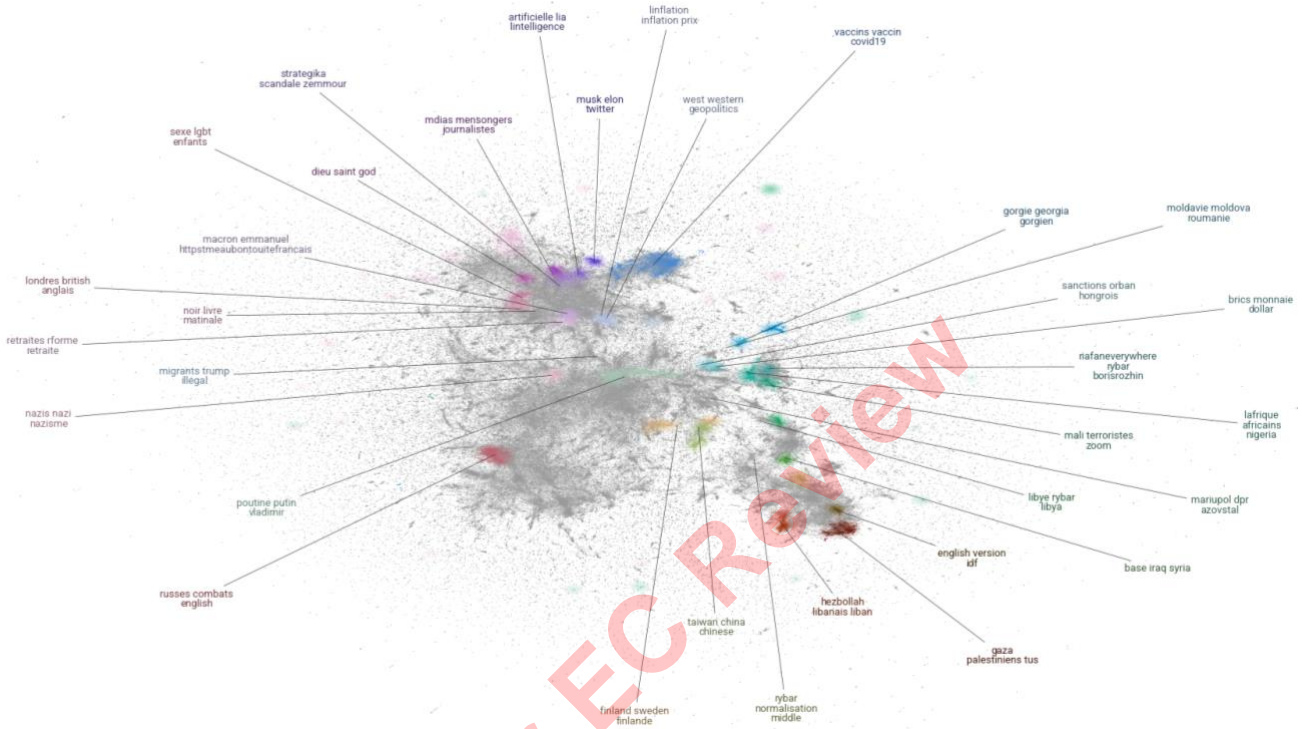


Figure 3.2: French Document DataMap

The topic modeling of the French-language dataset showcases the presence of social categories outlined in D3.1. The Telegram channels do in fact post on topics related to covid, anti-LGBTQIA+, the EU and immigration, but the majority of the topics seem to focus on geopolitical themes. It may be related to the fact that the users tend to use and repost Russian and American FIMI actors, but they also rely significantly on the DIMI network (e.g., the website Strategika features in the purple cluster), coupled with the topic related to “lying media”. The network is predictably focused on French internal domestic issues (such as pension reform, the presidency of Macron), but it has also a very global angle related to Francophone Africa.

Taken together, these topics suggest that many French-language Telegram discussions revolve around geopolitics framed through a mix of crisis narratives, ideological alignment, and distrust toward traditional institutions. Frequent references to *war updates*, *Gaza*, *Middle East*, *IDF*, *Hezbollah*, *Mariupol*, *Georgia*, and *NATO* indicate a strong focus on ongoing conflicts. Mentions of *Russian pro-war sources*, *Rybar*, and *Putin & Geopolitics* point to the circulation of narratives drawn from pro-Kremlin information spaces, while *BRICS*, *sanctions*, and *West & geopolitics* often appear in discussions questioning Western strategic choices or highlighting global power shifts.

Domestic politics also appear strongly intertwined with these geopolitical conversations. Items such as *Macron*, *pension reform*, *inflation*, and *media/anti-media* suggest a climate of political disillusionment where government decisions are scrutinized and mainstream journalism is often portrayed as biased. Figures like

*Zemmour* and themes such as *right-wing geopolitics* reflect the presence of nationalist or identity-based frameworks. When combined with socially sensitive topics like *LGBT & children*, *Nazis*, and *US migration*, these channels often foster cultural anxiety with broader ideological critiques of Western political leadership through fear-based narratives.

Finally, the mix of *AI*, *Musk*, *Satan* references, and *Luc Michel* (a known geopolitical commentator in fringe networks) illustrates how technological change, moral panic, and conspiratorial motifs intersect in these discussions. Africa and the Sahel appear through *Africa geopolitics* and *Moldova*, often framed as arenas of great-power competition rather than as complex regions in their own right. Overall, this set of topics suggests a communication environment in which global conflicts, domestic grievances, and distrust of institutions reinforce one another, producing a narrative world that challenges mainstream political and media accounts while often amplifying polarized or speculative interpretations.

### 3.2.3 Dutch-language Content

Across Dutch Telegram channels, several themes appear with notable frequency, many of which reflect a strong influence from U.S.-based information ecosystems. Content related to the war in Gaza circulates widely, alongside persistent discussions about vaccines and public health. NATO is another recurring topic, often linked to broader geopolitical concerns. Posts about AI and figures like Elon Musk are common, as are discussions around transgender issues and the protection of vulnerable children. References to the late convicted pedophile and human trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, satanic symbolism, and elite corruption also appear regularly. This topic, accuses Democrats in the US and liberals more broadly of spreading satanic values, while the persona of Donald Trump (in spite of being accused of links to Epstein) is framed as a fighter against such “destructive powers”. In addition, a significant amount of news shared in these channels relates to developments in the United Kingdom, further underscoring the transnational nature of the content, even though it is mostly related to royal gossip and the Windsor’s connection to Epstein.

Overall in the Dutch-language ecosystem, global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russian-Ukraine war, may have motivated Dutch Telegram users to find information outside of their usual news sources (Simon et al, 2022). Hameleers (2020), argues that different actors can strategically manipulate or fabricate narratives to respond to people’s confirmation bias in the Dutch context. Furthermore, misinformation using fake statistics, experts, and evidence is found to be perceived as more accurate than misinformation without a factual reference, confirming similar findings in other countries. Thus, appeals to objectivity, portrayed as a ‘virtuous’ counterpart to the admission of emotional involvement (Hong, 2021) continue to be effective alongside emotional appeals. This was especially relevant among Dutch-speaking ‘antagonistic communities’ on Telegram (Willaert et al. 2022), that showed the prevalence of COVID-19 conspiracy theories and criticisms of the government’s approach to the pandemic. Furthermore, the regional divide between Flanders and Wallonia provides an entry point for FIMI actors seeking to exacerbate internal fragmentation. Disinformation campaigns have been observed attempting to stir tensions through destabilising and anti-democratic messages, in attempts to amplify sensitive events (farmers’ protests, the conflict in Gaza, and Western support for Ukraine), or to utilise sensitive issues such as migration and LGBT+ rights (VSSE, 2025). Additionally, Belgium’s role as the headquarters of NATO and the EU institutions makes it a prime target for narratives that seek to undermine Western institutions and fuel Euroscepticism (NCCN, 2024). This is a much more conspiracy theory-driven dataset that also picks up on Dutch domestic hot topics (stikstof – nitrogen use in agriculture), but is much more heavily involved in topics related to covid, debunked “biolabs in Ukraine” narratives, fears about transgender persons and pedophilia.

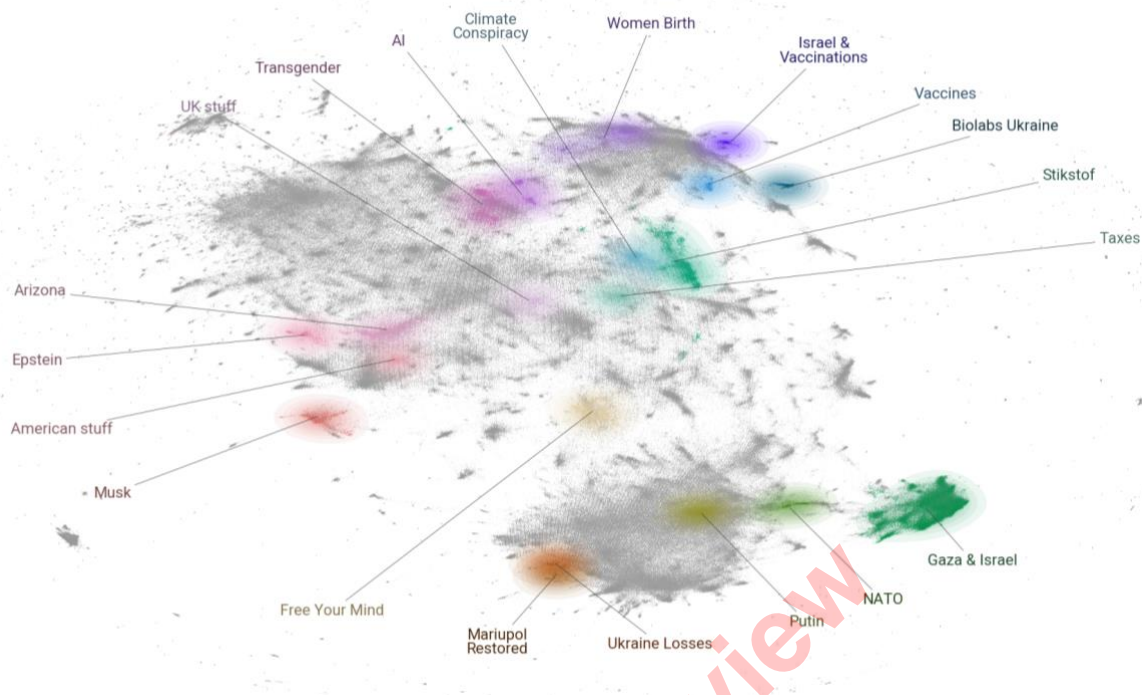


Figure 3.2: Dutch Document DataMap

Dutch Telegram channels stood out for their extensive use of English and their heavy reliance on US-based right-wing para-journalistic sources. Rather than drawing primarily on local or European media, these channels frequently share content from outlets such as *The Blaze*, *Breaking911*, *The Gateway Pundit*, *ZeroHedge*, and *Disclose.tv*. This pattern underscores the degree to which Dutch alternative media ecosystems are shaped by US informational dynamics, importing both content and ideological framing from US conservative and conspiratorial discourse.

In this regard, US right-wing para-journalistic actors can be understood as forms of FIMI, particularly because their narratives often resemble those circulating in Russian information ecosystems. This is especially evident in their criticism of the EU and NATO, their calls to defend traditional families and Christian values, and their framing of LGBTQIA+ issues as liberal propaganda and a threat to children. The overlap between these narrative repertoires suggests a transnational alignment that allows US-origin content to function as an external influence within Dutch information spaces.

English language outlets circulating across Dutch Telegram channels rely on emotionally charged storytelling that privileges outrage, empathy, and fear over analytical reasoning. *The Blaze* cultivates anger and moral indignation through vivid accounts of government overreach and cultural decay. *Breaking 911* condenses these affects into short, viral headlines engineered to evoke immediate reaction of “affective clickbait” model of populist communication. *The Gateway Pundit* uses affect through sensationalised depictions of crime and migration. This outlet mixes real incidents with highly politicized interpretations, turning news into a vehicle for ideological messaging. *ZeroHedge* mobilises anxiety and resentment around COVID-19 and geopolitics, fusing fear of vaccines, economic manipulation, and global instability into an overarching sense of betrayal. *Disclose.tv* similarly circulates affective uncertainty, linking vaccines to cancer, framing politics as apocalyptic struggle, and offering Trump’s leadership as a solution.

### 3.2.4 Chinese-language Content

The LDA model used to engage in topic analysis in Chinese language is based on eight topics. As mentioned above, our analysis here is much longer to provide extra detail on an understudied area of FIMI (in Chinese language, but targeted at the diaspora in the EU) and due to the fact that Section 4 focuses on German, French, and Dutch alternative media content. The eight topics derived from the model represent distinct narrative threads in the Chinese-language Telegram FIMI channels. In Figure 3.1, the topics are represented in an intertopic distance map, which is a simplified version of the document data maps that were produced in the preceding subsections. Each bubble here represents a topic, and the size of the bubble indicates its overall prevalence in the corpus of Telegram messages. Distances between bubbles show the degree of semantic difference between topics, with overlapping areas indicating thematic intersections. Figure 3.1 shows that while some topics (e.g., topic 1, 3, 4, 7 in figure 2) overlap considerably, others (e.g., topic 2, 5, 6, 8) are more distinct. This overlap shows that Chinese language FIMI content on Telegram often mixes different issues. Geopolitical, nationalist, and diaspora narratives are frequently presented together. Each topic is discussed below with its top keywords, a descriptive label, and an interpretation of its discourse features. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the eight topics, including their top keywords, assigned label (with a brief explanatory title), and the main narrative direction each represents within the FIMI content. Keywords are listed in Chinese as they appear in the dataset. Topic labels and themes are translated to English for clarity.

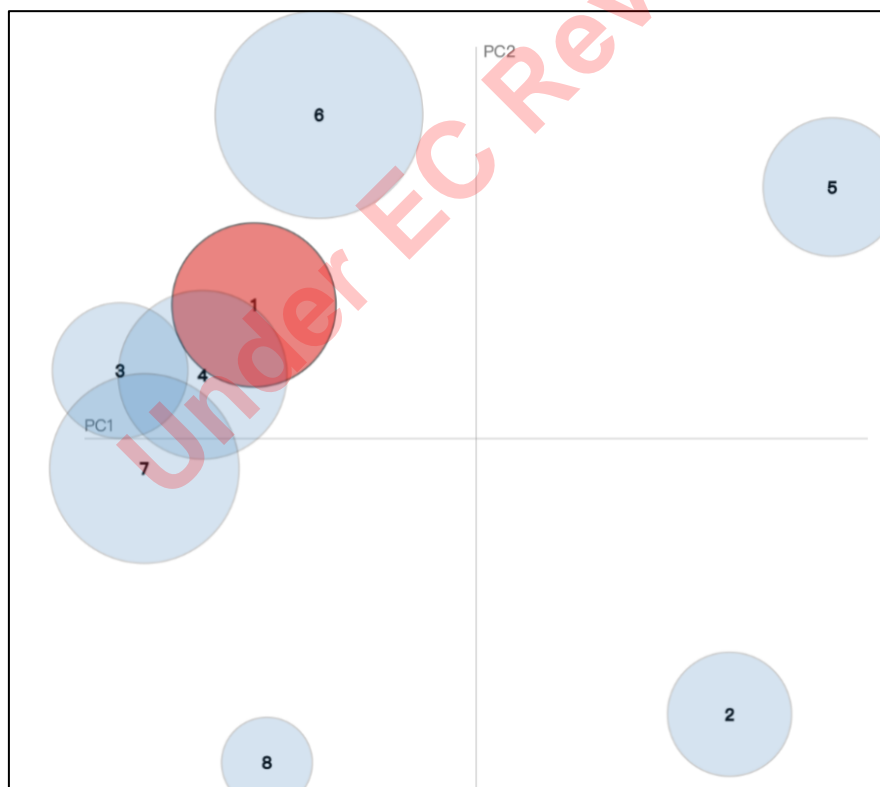


Figure 3.3: Intertopic Distance Map of Chinese-Language topics

Topic	Top Keywords (Chinese)	Assigned Label	Main Narrative Theme
1	中国, 发展, 经济, 强国, 科技, 文化	National Strength & Development of China	National image construction (patriotic discourse)
2	台湾, 祖国, 统一, 台独, 境外势力, 领土	Opposing Taiwan independence, emphasizing reunification	Nationalist narrative; diaspora mobilization
3	美国, 西方, 制裁, 干涉, 敌对, 霸权	Anti-Western Narrative (Western threats, interference and conspiracy frames)	Ideological/political narrative (foreign interference theme)
4	俄罗斯, 乌克兰, 战争, 军事, 北约, 冲突	Russia-Ukraine War (Geopolitical conflict and pro-Russian framing)	War narrative (great-power conflict, anti-NATO)
5	台海, 解放军, 军演, 武统, 战争准备, 防御	Taiwan Strait Tension (Military preparedness for Taiwan conflict)	War narrative (sovereignty defense, anti-intervention)
6	华侨, 华人, 侨胞, 文化, 交流, 爱国	Overseas Chinese Unity (Diaspora as cultural ambassadors & patriots)	Diaspora narrative (positive diaspora engagement)
7	华人, 犯罪, 安全, 诈骗, 歧视, 警方	Diaspora Challenges (Crime and safety issues involving Chinese abroad)	Diaspora narrative (negative aspect)
8	媒体, 消息, 报道, 来源, 平台, CGTN, Sputnik	Media & Information (Use of news sources and cross-platform links)	Meta-narrative (propaganda dissemination strategy)

Table 3.1: Chinese-language LDA Topics

The first topic centers on the national strength and development of China. The topic has the keywords of “发展” (development), “经济” (economy), “强国”(strengthening the nation). The discourse in this topic primarily emphasizes China's economic growth, technological advancement, and cultural confidence. For example, the channel “PDChinanews” sends messages like “China will promote the high-quality development of the satellite communication industry, making it the best all over the world.” The messages from these channels often portray China’s rise in a positive light, presenting an image of the nation growing increasingly prosperous and powerful on the international stage. This type of narrative emphasizes the dimension of national image construction, fostering national pride and cohesion by highlighting successes across various aspects of the country. The content maintains a positive tone with strong patriotic ideology, which aims to inspire a sense of national identity and pride among audiences, including the Chinese diaspora. This topic primarily manifests as positive propaganda in the construction of national image. It does not directly address topics related to overseas Chinese communities.

These topics are not entirely disconnected from one another. Many topics overlap in content, which reflects the characteristic of Telegram FIMI content. Topics 1, 3, 4, and 7 show notable overlaps in keywords and content. For example, messages about the Ukraine war (Topic 4) often incorporate anti-Western rhetoric (Topic 3). They use similar language about Western “interference” or “hegemonic threats” to construct the topic. These related topics can be viewed as the extension of official Chinese media narratives on Telegram channels. Topic 3 constructs a narrative resisting Western intervention. The keywords of the topic are “制裁” (sanctions), “干涉” (interference), “敌对” (hostile), “霸权” (hegemony). The core keywords of this topic align closely with the collocations associated with the West in the result of collocation analysis. Both analytical approaches reflect a critical and negative stance toward Western nations (particularly the United States), criticizing their interference in other countries' internal affairs and dominance over international matters. Certain posts insinuate that Western powers employ conspiracies such as ‘colour revolutions’ to suppress the development of nations like China and Russia. This narrative reflects a typical discourse of external information manipulation, employing political communication tactics to attribute international conflicts to Western conspiracies. Its intent is to raise distrust and antipathy towards the West among its audience. While this topic does not directly concern the overseas Chinese community, it also carries potential influence on diaspora audiences.

By persistently emphasising the unreliability of Western media and governments, it leads overseas Chinese to view mainstream information in their host countries with scepticism. Instead, they came to identify with the stance of their home country. This is closely linked to ideological propaganda and forms part of the countering of Western discourse, reinforcing the adversarial mindset of “us” versus “them” (the West). Topic 4 focuses on Russia-Ukraine War and great power conflict. Within this topic, the names of various political figures and military forces frequently appear. The keywords of topic 4 include “普京”(Putin), “冲突”(conflict) and “北约”(NATO), and includes state-controlled outlets such as *Exinshe*, which is the Chinese name of RIA Novosti. This Russia-Ukraine war narrative includes content describing battlefield developments, military support, and great power competition surrounding the war in Ukraine. This topic portrays Russia and China as allies resisting Western ‘invasion’. The war is portrayed not merely as a regional conflict but as part of a broader fight against Western hegemony, which is why these topics intersect in the intertopic distance map. Topic 7 relates to anti-Western narratives from the perspective of Chinese diaspora communities. This topic can be summarised as challenges faced by Chinese diaspora communities and issues within overseas societies. The keywords includes “华人” (people of Chinese heritage), “犯罪” (crime), “安全” (safety), “歧视” (discrimination). Content under this topic is mainly about the messages concerning crimes and threats involving overseas Chinese, such as reports of Chinese involvement in fraud cases, violent incidents or kidnappings within Chinese diaspora communities. As analyzed in the previous discussion on collocation patterns for Chinese diaspora terminology, Chinese diaspora communities are described using distinct terms. “华侨”(Overseas Chinese nationals) often serves as a positive framing, whilst “华人” (people of Chinese heritage) frequently appears in cases highlighting criminality or moral failings among overseas Chinese. At the same time, these negative terms attempt to build panic, which suggest that members of the Chinese diaspora face foreign dangers or moral traps easily. This narrative thereby fosters fear and distrust towards diaspora communities. Discourse concerning the Chinese diaspora frequently attributes problems to the host society's negative influence. Topic 7 connects the struggles of the Chinese diaspora with host countries' societies, which is also a narrative that overlaps with anti-Western themes. These overlaps indicate that individual Telegram posts frequently address multiple topics. For instance, a single post might exaggerate China's strength, condemn Western hostility and cite current conflicts as supporting evidence at the same time.

Topic 2 centers on the content about sovereignty defense and national reunification. It focuses on opposing Taiwan independence. The topic has the keywords of “祖国”(motherland), “境外势力” (foreign forces), “领土”(territory). The frequently used term “motherland” carries strong emotional and patriotic connotations, reinforcing the narrative that both sides of the strait belong to one China. As Figure 2 illustrates, the sovereignty and unity theme of topic 2 appears isolated from the other clusters. This separation occurs because the keywords that define this topic (“Taiwan,” “unification,” “independence,” “motherland”) are highly specific and overlap with the vocabularies of other themes. Unlike other narratives on national development, geopolitical conflict or diaspora issues, discourse about unification with Taiwan employs a distinct set of expressions that is largely confined to this topic. The distance in the visualization reflects the empirical distinctiveness of sovereignty-related discourse. It also indicates the strategic choice in Chinese FIMI operations that the Taiwan issue is framed as an independent narrative domain rather than blended into broader discussions. Topic 5 concerns Taiwan Strait tensions and military preparedness. Unlike Topic 2, its keywords include more military terminology, including “解放军”(People's Liberation Army) and “武统”(unification by force). This narrative emphasizes the potential for armed conflict and highlights China's military preparations. It frames war preparations as rational and necessary measures.

Topic 6 concerns the overseas Chinese diaspora unity and patriotism. Its keywords include “文化”(culture) and “爱国”(patriotism). This topic portrays the Chinese diaspora as cultural bridges and supporters of their motherland. Content frequently emphasises educational programmes such as Confucius Institutes and cultural exchanges with host countries. Many messages are the stories that show solidarity within diaspora communities. The underlying message is that Chinese diaspora should embrace their patriotic identity and act as ambassadors for Chinese civilisation. This narrative integrates the global Chinese community into the broader framework of national image-building. The final topic, topic 8, concerns media and information dissemination. Keywords include ‘CGTN’, “Sputnik” and ‘Weibo’. Related content frequently quotes articles from Chinese and Russian media outlets. This practice reinforces the authority of the messages, which helps the audience to build the trust towards the information. This topic shows that propaganda is not only about creating stories but also about spreading them more widely through cross-platform sharing. Telegram channels rely heavily on a few selected media outlets, which makes them act as the important hubs for delivering information to Chinese diasporas.

In the analysis of Chinese-language Telegram FIMI channels, the content related to the diaspora is mostly presented in the form of political news. The word frequency analysis of the dataset reveals that the overall context of the content is highly politicised. The most common terms across these channels include “China,” “America,” “Ukraine,” “nation,” “government,” “president,” and “military.” The themes are centred on international conflicts and great-power competition, particularly the Russia–Ukraine war and US–China relations. Timeline analysis shows a clear spike in messaging after the Russia–Ukraine war began in 2022. A similar trend was also observed by Hanley and Durumeric (2024), who found that after Russia announced its “partial mobilisation,” there was a noticeable increase in coordinated messaging across Russian and multilingual Telegram channels. Their study shows how geopolitical events can quickly trigger waves of aligned content across the platform.

## 4. Case Studies on Parajournalistic Actors

Across the various language spheres observed, distinct types of alternative media and para-journalistic actors emerged, each adapting to the local media ecosystem while sharing strikingly similar rhetorical strategies. These ranged from self-styled *disinfluencers* who claim to “reveal the truth” ignored by mainstream outlets, to semi-professional news platforms that blend conspiratorial commentary with selective reporting. While the forms varied (e.g., YouTube channels, Telegram channels, online newspapers, blogs) their function was often similar: to position themselves as authentic counterweights to perceived establishment narratives.

Our case study has shown that crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, serve to consolidate publics around these alternative information hubs in the quest for collective meaning-making (Yablokov et al 2025). Covid skepticism, for instance, provided a unifying frame that transcended national borders and traditional ideological categories. Yet, unlike more conventional political polarization, these networks did not align neatly along a left–right axis. Apart from recurring anti-migrant rhetoric, which was widespread across most contexts, ideological distinctions were blurred. Narratives around “freedom,” “truth,” and “sovereignty” became the organizing principles, allowing actors from different backgrounds to coalesce under a shared opposition to mainstream institutions, be it in Germany, France or the Netherlands.

A key strategy across these ecosystems involved platforming extreme or controversial voices through interviews and framing them as expressions of “free speech.” This practice effectively weaponized liberal democratic ideals such as freedom of expression, against the very systems that uphold them. The same media actors who denounced censorship thus curated outrage-driven content that normalized extremist or conspiratorial worldviews. Paradoxically, themes of *homonationalism* and LGBT hate coexisted within these spaces: even where tolerance was professed, it was often paired with denunciations of “woke excesses” or “gender ideology,” creating a contradictory but resonant cultural stance.

When it came to international issues, the patterns were even less linear. Coverage and commentary on Palestine and Israel, for instance, did not conform to predictable ideological alignments. Instead, they produced a spectrum that mixed right-wing nationalism with pro-Palestinian sentiment, framed through anti-globalist or anti-American lenses. Narratives about Ukraine similarly tended toward pro-Kremlin or “anti-Western” positions, often embedded within broader arguments that “Russia defends traditional values” while “America is worse anyway”, which, in the French context, was supposed to be reminiscent of pseudo-Gaullist nationalism. Media such as *The Epoch Times* illustrated how such messaging can be embedded subtly: one sensationalist or conspiratorial article amid a larger flow of otherwise unremarkable news, lending legitimacy through familiarity.

The ideological fragmentation described above can often be subsumed under the phenomenon described as “rossobruni”, a convergence of red (far-left) and brown (far-right) ideologies (Insisa 2022). This convergence is visible in shared narratives among tankies, far-left activists, and anti-establishment actors who, despite opposing positions on culture or identity, sometimes align around anti-liberalism, anti-EU sentiment, hostility toward NATO and the United States, and sympathy for authoritarian powers such as Russia or China. In this space, leftist anti-imperialist language is repurposed to justify authoritarian state violence, while far-right ethno-nationalism adopts anti-capitalist or anti-globalist rhetoric to broaden its appeal. The result is not ideological coherence but a grievance-based coalition, where opposition to “the system,” “Western elites,” or “liberal decadence” overrides historical ideological divides. This fragmentation weakens the traditional left by hollowing out their core principles, replacing them with reactive politics that are easily instrumentalized by foreign and domestic disinformation actors seeking to mobilize dissent without offering genuine emancipatory or democratic alternatives.

Finally, the English-language sphere exerted a powerful gravitational pull. American conservative media figures like Candace Owens and Tucker Carlson were frequently translated or subtitled into other languages, serving as ideological reference points for local actors and adding additional social capital to the extreme points of views and conspiracy theories. This interplay between local adaptation and global circulation underscores how alternative media ecosystems operate today: not as coherent ideological blocs, but as flexible, transnational networks that repackage dissent, grievances, and identity politics for diverse In the following section, we take a detailed look at French and German alternative journalistic actors and one Dutch one.

## 4.1 lemediaen442.fr

The website is a popular news outlet that also backlinks to a YouTube channel and a Spotify playlist. Their monthly visits is around 738.8K, which is just below their disinformation colleagues *reseauinternational* at 1million. It styles itself as a media outlet “par le peuple et pour le peuple” (by the people, for the people) They cover topics including politics, economy, society, culture, science and tech, environment, sport, videos, interviews etc and declares itself independent from the state and billionaires (“Notre média ne dépend ni de l’État, ni de milliardaires, ni de subventions privées.”). ConspiracyWatch, a recognized platform for monitoring conspiracy theories, notes that the site is an “information alternative” site that relays many conspiracy-theory claims, particularly around Covid-19 and vaccines. Specifically, they report that the site publishes translations from known conspiracy media, interviews with people in the (French) anti-vax / conspiratorial sphere (e.g. Chloé Frammery, Nicole Delépine), and content disallowed by platforms due to disinformation. ConspiracyWatch also attributes the origin/founding of the site to Marcel D., who is described as “youtubeur complotiste soralien” (i.e., someone associated with conspiracy circles, and linked to Alain Soral’s circle) in their analysis.

The overall narrative strategy of *Le Média en 4-4-2* can be described as a populist and conspiratorial anti-establishment discourse that blends themes from both far-right and far-left ideologies while presenting itself as “independent journalism.” Across topics such as COVID-19, immigration, geopolitics, and cultural issues, the outlet reuses emotional patterns, such as fear, outrage, victimhood, and distrust, to reinforce grievances and affirm readers’ pre-existing skepticism toward political elites, institutions, and mainstream media. Its tone is moralizing and dramatic, often framing the public as victims of manipulation by powerful global actors such as the EU, WHO, or the United States, and portraying “the people” as engaged in a righteous struggle for truth and sovereignty.

On COVID-19, *Le Média* systematically undermines institutional credibility by promoting narratives of deception and abuse of power. It presents the pandemic as a “plandemic,” a tool for establishing dictatorship or advancing a “transhumanist agenda” led by Bill Gates and the WHO. Articles equate vaccination policies with historical injustices, likening the treatment of the unvaccinated to the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust and amplify distrust by suggesting that vaccines cause cancer or were politically motivated. These claims appeal to moral outrage and victimhood, positioning the outlet as a defender of “truth” against scientific or governmental “manipulation.” References to free consent and “dictatorship of the syringes” (22 September 2025) to further legitimize anti-vaccine stances as reasoned skepticism rather than extremism.

The site’s coverage of immigration and “wokisme” (wokeness) reinforces its populist dichotomy of “us versus them.” Immigration is framed as a symptom of hypocrisy, blaming far-right leaders for supporting Israel while criticizing migration, or accusing Israel itself of creating refugee flows through wars. Simultaneously, anti-LGBTQIA+ narratives employ fear and moral panic: LGBTQIA+ movements are portrayed as predatory, corrupting youth, and destroying families under the guise of inclusivity. The recurring trope of “defending

children” functions as a mobilizing grievance, emotionally linking cultural change to existential threat. “Wokisme” is cast as an aggressive ideology, a “tyranny” (20 May 2025) that undermines reason and tradition, allowing readers to reaffirm their moral integrity by opposing it.

Sample Content, Le Media en 4-4-2

Geopolitically, *Le Média* promotes strong anti-EU, anti-NATO, and anti-U.S. sentiments while glorifying Russia and China as rational, peaceful alternatives. The EU is depicted as a bureaucratic “vassal” of Washington, responsible for war, moral decay, and economic decline. Russia, by contrast, is portrayed as effective, humane, and peace-seeking, e.g., Putin as calm and pragmatic, or Dugin as a misunderstood intellectual. This affirmation of Russian narratives not only legitimizes pro-Kremlin propaganda (e.g., denial of war crimes, casting NATO as aggressor) but also reframes it as an extension of French “Gaullism” and sovereignty. Through

figures like Pierre de Gaulle, the outlet merges patriotic nostalgia with contemporary pro-Russian sentiment, reinterpreting resistance to the West as continuity with de Gaulle’s legacy.

## 4.2 planetes360.fr

This website has a very sensational look with AI-generated thumbnails and clickbaity headlines that often feature exclamation points or question marks. It says that it’s a part of a group “profound geopolitics”, another similar website with more content on conspiracy theories. Many of the articles have a YouTube video linked (or, rather, are often the summaries of the linked YouTube videos). The analysis shows how the site blends fear-driven narratives, affirmation of populist positions, and conspiratorial frameworks to create a worldview that is strongly anti-government, anti-EU, anti-Western, and aligned with Russia, China, and Iran.

### Sample Content, Planetes360



Covid-19 is one of the central topics in Planetes360’s discourse. Their articles suggest that mass vaccinations caused widespread deaths, that freedoms were eroded under the guise of public health, and that the pandemic triggered economic collapse. Fear is the primary affective strategy here, though sometimes the site also affirms that Covid was not “just a flu,” thereby lending credibility to survivalists and stockpilers. The mixed approach reflects a broader attempt to delegitimize the government while at the same time positioning the site as “realistic” compared to mainstream dismissals.

Immigration is presented as a geopolitical weapon deliberately imposed on Europe (12 April 2024), especially France. Planetes360 emphasizes that immigration brings no economic benefit but only burdens, while also framing it as an injustice against natives (24 May 2025), particularly Christian and atheist students allegedly discriminated against. This narrative aligns with far-right tropes, portraying immigration as both a cultural and economic threat to national identity.

The site devotes considerable space to anti-LGBTQIA+ discourse. LGBTQIA+ rights are described as “woke excesses” imported from the United States and as a cultural virus that destabilizes societies. Here too, Planetes360 uses a culture-war framing, casting LGBTQIA+ policies as “crazy” (27 January 2025) divisive and frightening and even satanic (18 August 2024). At the same time, it makes claims that many homosexuals reject “LGBT ideology” because it has been hijacked by “globalists”. This allows the site to claim it is not against individuals but against hidden agendas, a classic strategy of reframing discrimination as resistance to manipulation.

Planetes360 also directs strong criticism toward the European Union. The EU is depicted as a warmachine, authoritarian, ultra-centralized, and operating without popular legitimacy. It is associated with digital dictatorship and Orwellian governance. Ursula von der Leyen, in particular, is singled out as unelected,

scandal-ridden, and dictatorial, surrounded by handpicked German advisors. The EU is accused of economic self-destruction and of imposing wars on its populations. Articles frequently affirm calls for “Frexit” and suggest that Europeans are disillusioned by the EU’s “empty rhetoric.” The EU, in this framing, is simultaneously suicidal and oppressive, both an agent of collapse and a perpetrator of authoritarianism.

Anti-government narratives in Planetes360 focus heavily on France and President Emmanuel Macron. The French government is compared to the USSR, with centralized surveillance and corrupt elites. Elections are portrayed as rigged, with political parties dismissed as puppets of globalist interests. Law enforcement is described as increasingly militarized, repressing protests and criminalizing dissent. Yet the military is paradoxically depicted as the last bastion of loyalty to the nation, a potential force of resistance rather than repression. Macron’s government is demonized as oppressive and illegitimate, with some articles going as far as affirming support for a coup. At the same time, the site valorizes “resistance fighters,” conspiracy theorists, and traditionalist patriots, presenting them as the “good people” aligned with true French values of honesty, mutual aid, and courage. In this way, the site constructs a binary opposition between corrupt elites and virtuous ordinary people.

The mainstream media is another frequent target. Planetes360 refers to them as “système médias” or trash press. The accusations are familiar: Western media are biased, pro-Israel, pro-US, and guilty of double standards. For example, they highlight Palestinian suffering but suggest that mainstream coverage downplays or silences such issues compared to Western victims. Any regulation against hate speech is reframed as censorship and injustice. By contrast, Russian media such as RT and Sputnik are described as objective and truthful, with their journalists portrayed as defenders of free speech against “intellectual terrorism.” Margarita Simonian, RT’s editor-in-chief, is described in heroic terms, representing resistance against Western monopoly over narratives. Thus, distrust in mainstream media is coupled with affirmation of pro-Russian outlets.

Geopolitics is a dominant category in Planetes360. NATO is described as the world’s most dangerous organization, designed to impose Anglo-Saxon and European hegemony over Eurasia. Russia is consistently framed as militarily strong, economically resilient, and victorious in Ukraine. Any setbacks are dismissed as tactical adjustments. Russia, along with China and Iran, is portrayed as a rising force against a collapsing West. Europe, on the other hand, is seen as doomed without Russian energy, and its alliance with NATO is characterized as siding with the losing team. This geopolitical framing consistently induces fear of collapse and outrage at Western hypocrisy. At the same time, it affirms those who support multipolarity and suggests that France should either become non-aligned or quickly switch alliances toward Eurasia.

The site’s stance on Israel and Palestine is firmly pro-Palestinian. Israeli human rights abuses, Gaza’s starvation, and IDF crimes are frequently highlighted, while Western governments are condemned for empty words and inaction. Planetes360 also claims that French society is more pro-Palestine than Macron’s government, presenting a divide between the people and elites. However, the site also indulges in strong anti-Israel conspiracies, including allegations of Hasbara propaganda networks in France, references to “Greater Israel” projects rooted in Talmudic or Kabbalistic texts, and Jewish plots for global domination linked to the Great Reset. Although it avoids defending Nazism, it reproduces classic antisemitic tropes under the guise of anti-Zionism. In this sense, its pro-Palestinian stance is deeply entangled with conspiratorial anti-Jewish narratives.

The ideological orientation of Planetes360 can be described as a blend, though it is primarily rooted in far-right positions. On the one hand, it is pro-Russia, anti-EU, anti-US, and anti-NATO, while it is also strongly anti-LGBTQIA+, anti-immigration, and critical of Islam. It advocates for traditional Catholicism, particularly the pre-1962 version prior to Vatican II reforms, and aligns with thinkers like Alexander Dugin who promote Eurasianism. It also embraces conspiracy theories about Jewish world domination. On the other hand, it overlaps in its criticism of Western imperialism, highlighting the decline of the West and the rise of the Global

South as a counterforce. The site selectively borrows this anti-imperialist rhetoric, even if its broader worldview is far-right.

There are also internal contradictions. The site criticizes Marine Le Pen's party as having become part of the system, despite past sympathies, and dismisses Jordan Bardella as "the Macron of the far-right." At the same time, it has moments of defending Jean-Marie Le Pen. Covid-19 coverage also reflects contradictions, sometimes dismissing it as exaggerated, sometimes affirming that it was genuinely dangerous. These inconsistencies highlight the opportunistic nature of Planetes360's narratives: what matters is not coherence but alignment with popular discontent.

### 4.3 reseauinternational.net

Réseau International is a French-language "alternative news" platform that covers a broad spectrum of global issues (geopolitics, war, health, globalism) with frequent dramatic or contrarian headlines and narratives. It does not have a very sensationalist look, even though some of their headlines often sound sensationalist and clickbait. It has been in existence since around 2013 (the domain registration is 2013-10-30) and claims to operate as a platform for commentary, analysis, and alternative viewpoints. They link themselves with Russia-affiliated websites (e.g., Sputnik France, Russie Info) and feature authors both from the far-left and far-right. While it may appear in the form like a news website, its editorial stance is strongly ideological rather than strictly balanced reporting. It includes content that qualifies as misinformation or high risk for misleading framing, especially on matters like COVID vaccines and the Ukraine war. Traffic metrics show it has significant reach in Francophone markets: for June 2025 the site had global ranking of ~36,000 and ~1.3 million visits, with most traffic in France (~75%) and also Switzerland, Belgium. As mentioned above, it does not necessarily neatly align with the right/left political spectrum; for instance, they publish many articles and videos about the perceived excesses of progressive ideology (which they call *le wokisme*), but at the same time, they also engage in antisemitic conspiracy theories ("globalism", "zionism"), anti-immigration discourse (although this topic has become less popular over the years) and anticolonial messaging, covering a number of topics from the (North) Africa, Asia and Latin America.

LGBTQIA+ issues are covered through the problematic of the supposed excesses of "woke" ideology. In a video titled « Léna Rey : Wokisme et féminisme, une création du capitalisme ? » (28 Aug 2025) on Réseau International, the author talks about the term "wokisme" in the context of feminism, gender dysphoria, drag queens, and quotas, framing it as a social engineering phenomenon, and linking it to capitalist logic. Another piece: « Nos valeurs ne sont pas universelles » (11 Mar 2024) by Robert Gil on the same site mentions "Cancel Culture, Wokisme, LGBT+, Transgenre" in its subtitle, arguing that these are debated in society but "they have nothing universal" and criticizing the imposition of Western values on other cultures. A further example: « Il faut se rendre à l'évidence : La guerre culturelle du wokisme a éclaté » (12 Aug 2023) also from Réseau International, claims that a "cultural war" around "wokisme" has begun, implying that it is a major ideological battlefield rather than a neutral social issue. The article « Négationnistes noirs et blancs » includes conspiracy-laden content (for instance, "it is Jews who orchestrate the woke movement...[with] efforts to impose homosexuality as the norm with a monstrous neo-feminism, and this neo-feminism with transgenderism"), which indicates that the site not only critiques "wokisme" but overlays that critique with conspiratorial tropes and extremist narratives.

Many recent RI articles focus on the war in Ukraine from a perspective that often aligns with Russian or anti-Western narratives: e.g., articles such as "Les troupes ukrainiennes abandonnent le front en grand nombre", "L'Ukraine tente de détourner un MiG-31 russe avec un missile Kinjal pour entraîner l'OTAN dans le conflit". Also the English version lists stories such as "This report on the war in Ukraine is unique", "Zelensky and the

imaginary war, magical SKYSHIELD, NATO terrorism”. In the context of the war, the West is framed as deceitful and imperialist; Russia, China, or BRICS are depicted as truth-tellers or liberators. The role of RI is then to expose “hidden truths” about Western hypocrisy, war crimes, or propaganda, while Russia is presented as defending sovereignty and multipolarity. RI appears to address “globalist” themes, imperialism, colonialism, and critiques of “Western” powers. For example: “From the European Union to the Ukrainian Union – the reverse colony”, thus often touching upon more left-leaning narratives.

### Sample Content, Reseau International

	<p><b>L'Europe s'arme... parce qu'elle ne peut pas faire la guerre</b></p> <p>Analyses / 13 novembre 2025 / No Comment</p> <p>par Alexandre Lemoine. Les pays européens doivent à tout prix maintenir le contingent américain sur le continent, car...</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>		<p>importe à l'Iran 13 novembre 2025</p>
	<p><b>Combien va nous coûter la future CIA de von der Leyen ?</b></p> <p>Actus / 13 novembre 2025 / 1 Comment</p> <p>par Philippe Béchade. Une agence de renseignement européenne (!) dirigée par Ursula elle-même... au service des valeurs talmudiques...</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>		<p>Amérique latine : Trinité-et-Tobago, une autre brèche dans le bouclier percé des Caraïbes 13 novembre 2025</p>
	<p><b>Von der Leyen construit sa «Police secrète d'État»</b></p> <p>Actus / 13 novembre 2025 / No Comment</p> <p>par Pierre Duval. Von der Leyen a décidé de créer ses services secrets. C'est la traduction de la...</p> <p><a href="#">Read more</a></p>		<p>La Chine vient de briser l'avantage technologique des États-Unis – voilà comment 13 novembre 2025</p>
			<p>Le président algérien a gratié l'écrivain Boualem Sansal à la demande de l'Allemagne 13 novembre 2025</p>
			<p>Algérie : les enjeux stratégiques au Sahel 13 novembre 2025</p>
			<p>Histoire d'un blocus avorté : comment le Mali a fait échouer les plans de MSC et CMA-CGM 13 novembre 2025</p>

## 4.4 Strategika.fr

Strategika maintains a presence on Facebook, X, and Telegram, although its activity varies across platforms. The Facebook page has approximately 6.6 thousand subscribers but has been inactive since July 2023. Its X account, followed by around 11.6 thousand users, shows a similar pattern, with no posts after January 31, 2023. In contrast, the Telegram channel is active and counts roughly 10.7 thousand subscribers. Content on Telegram is published in a mix of French and English and frequently cites material from RT while promoting strongly anti-Western narratives.

Strategika presents itself both as an independent think tank and as an editorial project. The website publishes analyses, dossiers, geopolitical commentary, and investigative articles on a wide array of topics ranging from global geopolitics and strategic orientations to economy, media, culture, and societal issues. Strategika positions itself as an alternative outlet offering strategic insight and “independence”. According to its own presentation, the platform aims to connect expert analysts (political scientists, strategists) with the general public and decision-makers. It also offers what it terms “strategic consulting” services to political and geopolitical actors.

Strategika presents itself as an outlet independent from mainstream media, state influence, and corporate interests. It markets its content as “expert analyses” and “unpublished dossiers,” offering readers privileged insight into strategic and geopolitical developments. According to its mission statement, the platform seeks to

provide a “global vision” of world dynamics, identify shifting power balances, and propose strategic alternatives for France and its partners within an emerging multipolar order. In doing so, it foregrounds values such as realism, sovereignty, independence, autonomy, and freedom, positioning itself as a principled counterweight to what it portrays as compromised or ideologically driven mainstream information sources.

Strategika’s content follows a consistent ideological framework that privileges geopolitical realism and positions itself against Western institutions, mainstream media, and what it characterizes as liberal-globalist agendas. Its articles frequently invoke themes of global manipulation, conspiracy, ideological decay, and civilizational decline attributed to liberal or progressive policies. Global events are routinely framed through the lens of crisis, threat, and deterioration, whether the topic is media regulation, governance structures, or societal change. This perspective is reinforced through emotionally charged language that emphasizes danger, corruption, and existential risk, casting Western institutions as deceptive or oppressive while portraying Strategika as a defender of sovereignty, truth, and cultural identity.

*Sample Content, Strategika.fr*



Strategika frequently features the work and commentary of Alexander Dugin, as well as references to his late daughter Darya. Dugin (often referred to as Putin’s philosopher), is known for his Eurasianist philosophy advocating a Russia-led geopolitical sphere and a civilizational alternative to the West, and appears on the site as an intellectual voice. His ideas are presented as authoritative critiques of Western power structures. On Strategika, Dugin is portrayed as someone who exposes a supposed “deep state” operating as a corrupt Western cabal that infiltrates institutions in the United States and Europe, manipulates elections, undermines populist leaders such as Donald Trump, and enforces a liberal-globalist agenda while claiming to defend democracy. Within this framing, Trump is positioned as a political figure resisting this cabal, reinforcing Strategika’s broader narrative of a global struggle between sovereign, tradition-oriented forces and a deceptive, authoritarian Western establishment.

Strategika dedicates substantial space to COVID-19 and public health, maintaining a thematic section that revisits many of the pandemic's most common disinformation tropes. Its coverage routinely suggests government overreach, vaccine-related dangers (as far as deaths among children), and broader biopolitical control agendas, echoing patterns widely seen in disinformation ecosystems during and after the pandemic.

Geopolitics and global governance issues are covered widely on the outlet. Strategika frequently criticizes Western institutions, including NATO and the European Union, and frames globalism and Western foreign policy as destabilizing forces. In contrast, it presents concepts such as multipolarity, strategic sovereignty, and non-Western alliances as viable and even necessary alternatives. Conflicts, political crises, and shifts in global order are often described through narratives of decline, division, and strategic collapse within the West.

A recurring theme is the portrayal of media and information regulation as mechanisms of censorship. The platform warns of expanding surveillance and "information control," suggesting that Western-led initiatives to regulate online content are part of a coordinated effort to suppress dissent and alternative perspectives. Strategika also engages heavily with cultural and civilizational narratives. It emphasizes national sovereignty, cultural identity, traditional values, and the need to resist what it characterizes as Western decadence and progressive social norms. These arguments often align with populist, conservative, and anti-globalist discourses circulating more broadly across European alternative media.

Strategika blends geopolitical commentary with conspiratorial framing. Its combination of expert-sounding language, emotionally charged narratives, and anti-establishment positioning mirrors patterns commonly observed in both foreign and domestic information manipulation and interference ecosystems. Although the site presents itself as independent, its persistent focus on anti-globalism, distrust in Western institutions, and cultural preservation suggests that it plays a stabilizing role within an alternative information ecosystem, reinforcing skepticism toward mainstream media.

## 4.5 AUF1

This website styles itself as a trailblazing, fully independent and alternative TV outlet in the German-speaking area, launched in May 2021 by founder and editor-in-chief Stefan Magnet. It portrays its mission as exposing the "media mainstream's Gleichschaltung" (forced uniformity), promising critical, objective coverage on topics like COVID-19, "globalist" agendas, and societal transformation. Its narrative supposedly centers on values such as freedom, self-determination, human dignity, and delivering viewer-funded, non-corporate-influenced content. This messaging, paired with clean layout and mainstream-style programming (daily news, interviews, satire, fact-checks), is designed to mimic the aesthetics and seriousness of established broadcasters.

While AUF1 adopts a legitimate-sounding framework—"alternative TV station," viewer-based funding, calls to bypass "system media"—analysts and watchdogs have consistently categorized it as a far-right conspiracy outlet. It routinely disseminates COVID-19 denial, climate skepticism, anti-trans, anti-LGBTQIA+, and antisemitic narratives, i.e., frequently invoking coded references to "globalists," "Great Reset," or George Soros, embedded in conspiracy mythology. Use of apocalyptic framing and fear-mongering is central to its format, framing non-compliance as existential resistance. Despite lacking a television license, AUF1 has leveraged regional broadcasting slots (e.g., via RTV) to project legitimacy, which triggered regulatory scrutiny and eventual legal action. AUF1's reach has expanded significantly, as its Telegram channel alone boasts around 240,000 subscribers, and its website reportedly draws around one million monthly views, placing it among the most-followed right-wing "alternative media" outlets in the German-language sphere. Critics have noted that AUF1's personnel often stem from far-right or extremist movements, and its presentation uses

superficial professionalism to veil ideological manipulation because it loosely resembles ARD, a mainstream German channel.

*Sample Content, AUF1*



## 4.6 Epoch Times Deutschland

This website presents itself as a serious, independent media outlet with roots in traditional journalism, even though it's a far-right media company affiliated with the anti-CCP Falun Gong religious movement. Its "Über uns" (About Us) section states that it is a media organization based in Berlin, emphasizing that its "truthful" coverage is free from governmental or corporate influence and committed. The site mirrors mainstream news platforms structurally: it features standard categories such as Politik (politics), Deutschland, Ausland (abroad), Wirtschaft (economy), Gesellschaft (society), Meinung (opinion), Kultur, and more. This familiar layout and branding lend it the appearance of a legitimate, conventional news source. Despite projecting neutrality, numerous media analysts classify the outlet as aligned with right-populist to right-extremist discourse. Critics argue that it disproportionately publishes negative content about refugees and migration, as well as favorable coverage of the AfD, effectively catering to a specific ideological demographic. The platform's polished design, neutral tone, and structuring like mainstream outlets strategically obscure the underlying ideological orientation, enabling it to masquerade as a credible news source.

The language and the look of the articles are a little more toned down compared to the more overtly conspiracy theory promoting websites. The headlines are also not necessarily clickbaity compared to the kind of headlines that are used in misinformation susceptibility research tests (Sander van der Linden Mist tests) and mimic mainstream media headlines (e.g., "6 problems that Habeck should expect in China" or "Opinion poll: more than half do not want a covid vaccination"). However, upon closer inspection, the contents of the articles become much more problematic, but the content of this website is more likely to slip under the radar compared to websites like uncutnews (see below), especially because the articles tend to use a certain amount of truthful information in their coverage to affirm certain views in their public and then proceed to the foster grievances. In the case of Covid, the most common way to do that is to use "an expert" opinion to promote an unscientific claim. For instance, in the article "Dr. Harvey Risch: why more vaccinated people contract COVID-19 compared to the unvaccinated", the headline starts with the academic credentials of the expert in question,

affirming his credibility and then proceed to talk about the “long-term” negative consequences and a photograph of a little girl in a mask with a tablet being vaccinated


### Sample Content, Epoch Times Deutschland

**COVID-19-Impfung**

**Fauci bemängelt Wirksamkeit von Impfstoffen und fordert Verbesserungen**

Dr. Anthony Fauci gehört zu der wachsenden Zahl von Verantwortlichen, die zugeben, dass die COVID-19-Impfstoffe nicht gut gegen Infektionen wirken.

Zachary Stieber · 12. Februar 2023 11




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**Exklusiv-Interview**

**Dr. Harvey Risch: Warum bekommen mehr Geimpfte als Ungeimpfte COVID-19?**

„Die Impfstoffe haben das Immunsystem so weit geschädigt, dass die Menschen langfristig mit höherer Wahrscheinlichkeit COVID und wahrscheinlich auch andere Atemwegserkrankungen bekommen“, meint der Epidemiologe Harvey Risch.

Redaktion · 8. August 2022 80




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**„Seltsame Phänomene“**

**Dr. Harvey Risch: Anstieg aggressiver „Turbo-Krebsarten“ - besonders bei jüngeren Menschen | ATL:NOW**

„Kliniker beobachten seltsame Phänomene“, sagt Dr. Harvey Risch. „So erkranken 25-Jährige an Darmkrebs, obwohl es in ihrer Familie keine Vorerkrankung dafür gibt.“

Redaktion · 11. März 2024 0




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**EKKLUSIV** **„Turbokrebs“**

**Professor Harvey Risch: Krebserkrankungen nach COVID-Impfungen in nie dagewesenem Ausmaß**

Exklusivinterview: Dr. Harvey Risch, Professor emeritus für Epidemiologie, spricht über neue „Turbokrebsarten“, die Impfung und den Umgang mit dem COVID-Virus.

Efthymis Oraipoulos, Jan Jekielek · 10. Dezember 2023 33



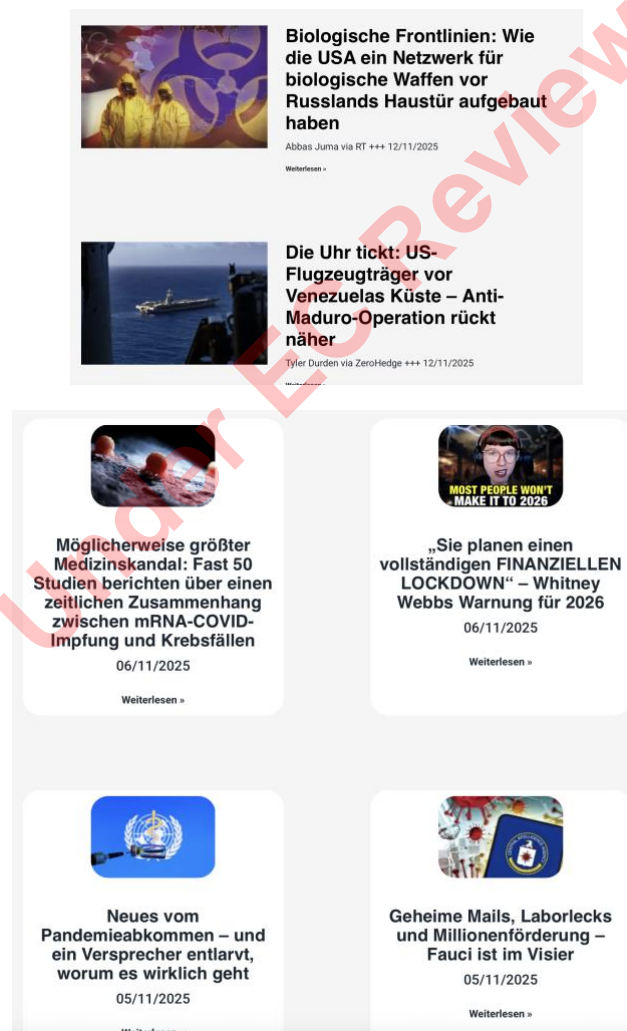
## 4.7 uncutnews.ch

This Swiss outlet positions itself as an independent, unmanipulated Swiss news platform covering geopolitics, health, technology, and the economy. Its homepage is structured similarly to mainstream media sites, featuring sections like "Meistgelesen" (Most Read) and "Video-Tipp" (Video Tip), while inviting readers to subscribe to their newsletter or follow them on Telegram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube. The site emphasizes that it receives no funding from associations, parties, or lobby groups, levying no advertising, and urging readers to contribute via donations, including PayPal, Bitcoin, and bank transfers, to remain independent. Despite its independent veneer, uncutnews.ch has been broadly flagged by media analysts as spreading conspiracy theories, misinformation, and extremist content. Media Bias/Fact Check rates it as a far-right, conspiracy-pseudoscience site with very low factual reporting and credibility. The platform disguises itself as an alternative, grassroots news outlet, particularly effective through polished design, (comparative) lack of ads, and an appealing call to “free media”, which can cloak its ideological slant. Its articles often reference or republish content from conspiratorial or fringe sources and avoid naming journalists, further

obscuring editorial accountability. Despite their professed independence, they often feature reprints and translations from e.g., RT, Sputnik, conspiracy theorists Leo Hohmann and Arnaud Bertrand, ZeroHedge (an American conspiracy theory website), The Exposé (another “alternative news website” in English) or Nine For News, (a Dutch far-right news website that decries mainstream media as propaganda machine calls the EU a dictatorship) among others.

uncutnews.ch frequently publishes sensational content that targets mainstream institutions, public health measures, and global elites. Examples include Holocaust denial, pandemic conspiracies, climate-change denial, and pro-Russian propaganda. Headlines such as "The Holocaust is the greatest and most enduring lie in history" and descriptions of Auschwitz as a “sanctuary of lies” highlight the site’s extremism. It reposts content from controversial figures and outlets, e.g., Peter Koenig, Uwe Froschauer, and sources linked to QAnon or pro-Putin narratives. Additionally, the platform is notably active in German-language pro-Russian Telegram networks, leveraging networks that can reinforce misinformation through shared content.

### Sample Content, Uncutnews.ch



The screenshot displays a grid of article cards from the website. Each card features a small image, a headline, a byline, a date, and a 'Weiterlesen' link. A large red watermark 'Review' is overlaid diagonally across the entire grid.

- Card 1:**
  - Image:** Two people in yellow hazmat suits.
  - Headline:** Biologische Frontlinien: Wie die USA ein Netzwerk für biologische Waffen vor Russlands Haustür aufgebaut haben
  - Byline:** Abbas Juma via RT +++ 12/11/2025
- Card 2:**
  - Image:** A ship at sea.
  - Headline:** Die Uhr tickt: US-Flugzeugträger vor Venezuelas Küste – Anti-Maduro-Operation rückt näher
  - Byline:** Tyler Durden via ZeroHedge +++ 12/11/2025
- Card 3:**
  - Image:** A globe with red spots.
  - Headline:** Möglicherweise größter Medizinskandal: Fast 50 Studien berichten über einen zeitlichen Zusammenhang zwischen mRNA-COVID-Impfung und Krebsfällen
  - Date:** 06/11/2025
- Card 4:**
  - Image:** Whitney Webb speaking.
  - Headline:** „Sie planen einen vollständigen FINANZIELLEN LOCKDOWN“ – Whitney Webbs Warnung für 2026
  - Date:** 06/11/2025
- Card 5:**
  - Image:** UN logo.
  - Headline:** Neues vom Pandemieabkommen – und ein Versprecher entlarvt, worum es wirklich geht
  - Date:** 05/11/2025
- Card 6:**
  - Image:** A document with a red stamp.
  - Headline:** Geheime Mails, Laborlecks und Millionenförderung – Fauci ist im Visier
  - Date:** 05/11/2025

Uncut News frequently frames migration as a tool of systemic manipulation or demographic change rather than a mere humanitarian issue. For example, in the article “*Migration als Machtinstrument: Der stille Systemumbau Europas wird fortgesetzt*” (May 2025), the outlet argues that supranational actors use open

borders and migration strategically to reshape European political and social order. A more alarmist tone appears in *“Zahlen von Eurostat enthüllt: Europa im Migrations-Tsunami ...”* (September 2025), where the platform describes migration in “Tsunami”-terms and argues that demographic change is being driven deliberately via UN-led mechanisms like the Global Compact for Migration. This framing stresses a loss of control, portraying immigration as a political project rather than a neutral social phenomenon. Moreover, the anti-immigration rhetoric is coupled with the anti-EU rhetoric. For instance, in the article *“Brüssel plant Massenzug: EU will 7 Millionen Arbeitsmigranten bis 2030”*, Uncut News argues that the EU is deliberately importing millions of labor migrants despite high unemployment, framing it as another piece of a “migration project” that undermines national autonomy. They also interpret demographic changes as a “massiven demografischen Wandel” (mass demographic change) in Europe, describing how increasing linguistic and cultural diversity threatens national identity.

Migration seems like a topic that is weaved into other conspiratorial disinformation article. For instance, on the topic of Ukraine, uncutnews published a piece where they highlighted a speech by President Putin in the article *“Putin: ‚Die „Eliten“ belügen ihre Bürger ... Gewalt, Migration und Krise statt Sicherheit“*, where Putin is criticizing European elites for supposedly lying to their populations, fueling migration, and creating insecurity, thus positioning Russia as a voice of truth against a corrupt Western order. The article ends with an alarmist note that checks almost all populist boxes:

While **Brussels** and **Berlin** keep their populations in a state of **panic** with **scare** tactics about an impending attack on **NATO**, people already know: the real war is being fought at home – against the interests of European **taxpayers**. The bitter truth is: Europe is not sacrificing its future to Moscow, but to its own **elites**, who prioritize **war, lies, and a lust for power** over the well-being of its citizens. (October 3, 2025, Putin: „Die „Eliten“ belügen ihre Bürger – schaut auf die Straßen Europas: Gewalt, Migration und Krise statt Sicherheit“ (Video), [uncutnews.ch](https://uncutnews.ch), emphasis added)

On COVID, Uncut News strongly adopts conspiratorial or skeptical framing. In *“Schlamperei oder Verschwörung: COVID-19 als strukturelles Tiefenereignis”*, the outlet argues that measures like lockdowns, mask mandates, and mass vaccination were not just mistakes, but politically motivated, serving globalist/technocratic elites (including WHO, central banks, digital IDs). Regarding vaccine safety, uncutnews publishes alarmist interpretations of studies: for instance, *“Mega-Studie ... extrem höheres Risiko für ... Krebs”* alleges a dramatic increase in cancer risk after COVID vaccination. They also highlight supposed whistleblower or dissenting voices, such as in *“Prof. Bhakdi warnt ... modRNA als globale Gefahr”*, where they present mRNA technology as a “global threat” rather than a public health tool, similarly to Epoch Times above.

## 4.8 Report24.news

Report24.news portrays itself as an independent, high-standard journalistic platform based in Linz, Austria. It is a high-traffic far-right “alternative” media outlet with a particularly strong audience in German-speaking countries. Third-party analytics such as SEMrush estimate between 600,000 and 720,000 monthly visits in mid-to late-2025, with a sizable share of users coming from Germany, Austria, and Italy. Engagement indicators like a 6–7 minute average session duration suggest that readers often stay on the site to consume longer articles, while the heavy proportion of direct traffic implies a loyal and returning user base. Technically, the site operates on a WordPress infrastructure and funds itself through advertising and reader contributions, positioning its platform as independent and oppositional to mainstream outlets.

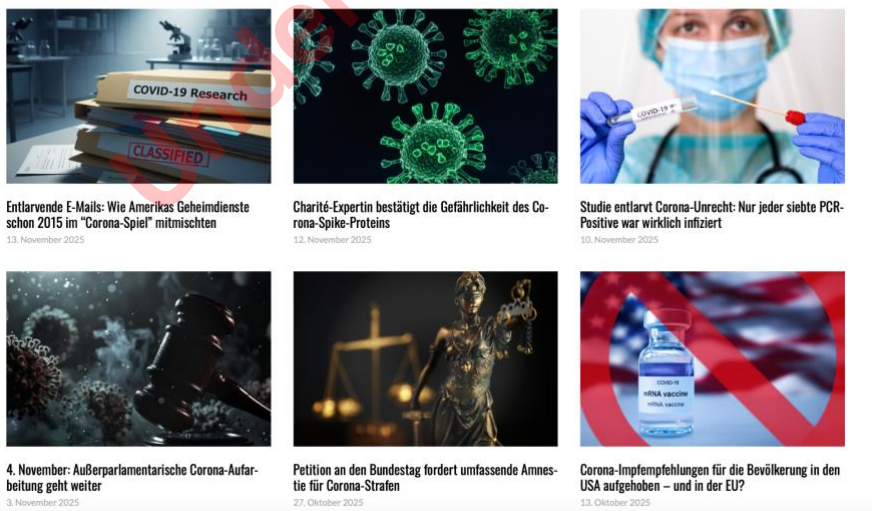
This platform seems like one of the outlets that galvanized its audience through Covid-related disinformation when they launched in 2021 and then capitalized and branched out to other topics as well. According to its

own “About” information, it offers news, reports, and opinions across global and German-speaking contexts, anchored in values like truthfulness, editorial independence, and freedom of expression. It emphasizes source citation, editorial accountability (with author-by-author responsibility and contactability, although pseudonyms are used for some contributors to protect sources), and the rejection of censorship and external influence. The site regularly publishes anti-vaccine content, conspiratorial narratives about COVID-19 measures, migration and sensational headlines lacking backing from reputable sources. Additionally, its content often reflects a pro-Russian slant. Fundraising and revenue streams include advertisements and promotions for products from the Kopp Verlag a publisher known for conspiracy and far-right content and other ideological allies.

Its COVID-19 reporting repeatedly casts doubt on scientific consensus, highlighting accusations against virologists, amplifying fringe studies about spike-protein “epigenetic damage,” and portraying public-health measures as instruments of political control. By suggesting that governments manipulated variant narratives to revive “Corona machinery,” or that influenza was deadlier than all COVID waves combined, Report24 positions itself as exposing hidden truths obscured by authorities and mainstream media. For example, an article titled “Covid-Ursprung: Warum untersucht niemand Drostens Verwicklungen?” attacks Christian Drosten and suggests a cover-up around the lab-leak theory, implying top virologists and health authorities deliberately downplayed or hid involvement. In “Übersterblichkeit in Frankfurt: Influenzawelle 2022 tödlicher als alle COVID-19-Wellen”, Report24 argues that the 2022 influenza wave caused more excess deaths than all COVID-19 waves combined — casting doubt on the severity of COVID and the proportionality of pandemic policies. Unlike other outlets that had less covid-related content since 2021, Report24.news still publishes pieces about it, pushing anti-vaccination disinformation and conspiracy theories about the origins of the disease.

Sample Content, Report24

Suchergebnisse für: corona



The screenshot displays six search results for the term 'corona'. Each result includes a thumbnail image, a title, and a date:

- Thumbnail 1:** A stack of books, one labeled 'COVID-19 Research' and another 'CLASSIFIED'.
- Title 1:** Entlarvende E-Mails: Wie Amerikas Geheimdienste schon 2015 im "Corona-Spiel" mitmischten
- Date 1:** 13. November 2025
- Thumbnail 2:** 3D rendering of green coronavirus particles.
- Title 2:** Charité-Expertin bestätigt die Gefährlichkeit des Corona-Spike-Proteins
- Date 2:** 12. November 2025
- Thumbnail 3:** A person in a blue surgical mask and cap holding a test tube.
- Title 3:** Studie entlarvt Corona-Unrecht: Nur jeder siebte PCR-Positive war wirklich infiziert
- Date 3:** 10. November 2025
- Thumbnail 4:** A dark, abstract image with a hammer and a gavel.
- Title 4:** 4. November: Außerparlamentarische Corona-Aufarbeitung geht weiter
- Date 4:** 3. November 2025
- Thumbnail 5:** A golden statue of Lady Justice holding scales.
- Title 5:** Petition an den Bundestag fordert umfassende Amnestie für Corona-Strafen
- Date 5:** 27. Oktober 2025
- Thumbnail 6:** A vial of mRNA vaccine with a red prohibition sign over it.
- Title 6:** Corona-Impfempfehlungen für die Bevölkerung in den USA aufgehoben – und in der EU?
- Date 6:** 13. Oktober 2025

In its coverage of immigration, Report24 adopts an alarmist and conspiratorial tone that centers on the themes of national decline, demographic threat, and elite-driven population transformation. Migrants are framed not primarily as individuals in need but as elements of a coordinated system involving smugglers, NGOs, EU bureaucrats, and complicit governments. Articles describing asylum as a “luxury package,” warning of an EU-driven “civil war trajectory,” or claiming that education programs for North African students amount to

“population replacement” reinforce a worldview of Europe under siege. An article *“Asyl als Pauschalreise: Vom Schlepper-Luxus bis zum Einbürgerungsservice”* (24 September 2025) describes migration as a “luxury all-inclusive package” run by smugglers, NGOs, and companies, where migrants are promised “hotel stays, social benefits, and even jobs”. The piece *“42 Milliarden für den Selbstmord Europas – Brüssel öffnet Erasmus für Nordafrika”* (22 October 2025) describes EU funding for students from North Africa as a demographic and cultural threat, tying education programs to “population replacement” and literally describes an education-related policy as a suicide of Europe.

Sample Content, Report24

Suchergebnisse für: immigration



Hochverrat an Deutschland: CDU will, dass Vereinte Nationen über Immigration entscheiden  
18. Juni 2024



Niederländische Immigrationsstudie zerlegt linkslinke Utopien  
6. März 2024



Wohnungsnot ist Resultat der Massenimmigration, doch Linke wollen jetzt Kleinstwohnungen für alle  
31. März 2023



Massenmigration: Sie löst keine Probleme, sie ist das Problem  
5. November 2025



Biden ließ ihn laufen – jetzt sind drei Amerikaner tot: Der Fall Jashanpreet Singh  
23. Oktober 2025



Japan setzt bei seiner Bevölkerung auf Qualität statt Quantität  
24. Oktober 2025

This pattern extends to Report24’s portrayal of the EU and national governments, which are depicted as incompetent, undemocratic, or intentionally harmful. The site heavily emphasizes themes such as “EU debt union,” failures in migration management, or Brussels pursuing policies that endanger Europe’s cultural and economic stability. Interviews with far-right politicians are presented as authoritative diagnoses of the EU’s flaws, while critical events (e.g., such as diplomatic missteps or funding programs) are framed as evidence of systemic decay. Most of the “failures” of the national governments are linked to their migration policies that are supposedly being pushed from Brussels.

In geopolitics, particularly regarding Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and energy policy, Report24 often echoes narratives favorable to Moscow or skeptical of Western intentions. Claims about secret peace plans, Ukrainian “false-flag” operations, exaggerated casualty numbers, or U.S.–Ukrainian involvement in pipeline sabotage position Western governments and media as suppressing or manipulating information. These stories, combined with broader anti-media cues, support the idea that mainstream reporting cannot be trusted and that alternative outlets reveal the suppressed “real” story. Anti-media and media “control” narrative is implicit through other themes (e.g., war, migration, COVID) is a distrust of mainstream media, though Report24 doesn’t always explicitly demonize “the media” in every article, but they often talk about how “mainstream” ignores, silences or misrepresents certain topics (e.g., “islamization” or crimes supposedly committed by migrants etc).

Sample Content, Report24

Suchergebnisse für: ukraine



Endspiel Ukraine: Wie Washington und Moskau den Krieg beenden wollen  
20. November 2025



Ukraine: Großes Korruptionsnetz im Energiesektor aufgeflogen  
11. November 2025



Pensionierter NATO-General: "Die Ukraine ist dem Untergang geweiht"  
10. November 2025



Keine Lust auf den Fronttote: 100.000 junge Ukrainer fliehen aus dem Land  
2. November 2025



US-Magazin deckt auf: Deshalb besteht Europa auf Ukraine-Sieg  
1. November 2025



Schweigen über einen Söldnertod in der Ukraine: Londons unbequemer Fall Jordan Chadwick  
1. November 2025

As a classic far-right website, report24.news is very concerned with what they call “woke” or leftist issues. They often publish pieces about “woke excesses”, often delighting over “woke tears” mirroring the far-right rhetoric in the US (Tuters 2018). They usually conflate a number of issues into the woke/left spectrum, but the main issue for them remains immigration and fears of Überfremdung, thus they are less concerned with LGBTQIA+ themes (even though they are still present on the website). The way they represent LGBTQIA+ issues are firmly rooted in securitization of queerness, e.g., presenting queer people as dangerous for children (e.g., Wiener Städtische lockt Kinder in Online-Community für “vertrauliche” Beratung durch LGBTQ-Gruppe) with accusations of rape and propaganda.

Sample Content, Report24

Suchergebnisse für: woke



Woke bis zum Untergang: Trotz Übernahme will EA sich vor LGBTQ-AktivistInnen unterwerfen  
8. November 2025



"Cancel Netflix" – Musk bläst zum Kreuzzug gegen Woke-TV und Kinderindoktrination  
4. Oktober 2025



Woke-Irrsinn – jetzt soll auch "Curry" rassistisch sein  
4. Oktober 2025



Get woke, go broke: DiCaprio stolpert über Antifa-Heldenepos  
1. Oktober 2025



Den woken Mob befeuern, dann zurückrudern? JK Rowling reagiert auf Emma Watsons "Kehrtwende"  
30. September 2025



Asylpolitik entlarvt: Wie linkswoke Ideologie und die Profitgier der Asylmafia Europa zerstören  
9. September 2025

## 4.9 NineForNews

An outlet that stood out in the Dutch context is *NineForNews*. *NineForNews* positions itself as an alternative news outlet by beginning its “About us” section not with information about its own mission, but with an attack on traditional Dutch media. It states: “Before we can tell you who we are, it is important to know what the mainstream media is.” The platform argues that outlets such as the Dutch public broadcaster NOS are systematically biased, specifically accusing them of being pro-EU, pro-USA, and anti-Russia. According to *NineForNews*, mainstream media supposedly mislead the public, conceal important information, and promote government-friendly narratives. By contrast, *NineForNews* presents itself as independent, unbiased, and free from political or corporate influence. This oppositional framing allows the site to justify its role as a corrective to alleged institutional propaganda while positioning its audience as informed outsiders who access truths that established media purportedly suppress.

*NineForNews* covers an unusually broad range of topics that blend speculative, conspiratorial, spiritual, and pseudo-scientific themes. Its categories include subjects such as archaeology, consciousness, alien life, crop circles, UFOs, free energy, paranormal phenomena, radiation, and the universe, alongside more contemporary conspiracy themes such as chemtrails, the Great Reset, Nesara, propaganda, and “the conspiracy.” Within its “Conspiracy” section, *NineForNews* recirculates a range of long-standing and widely debunked conspiracy theories. These include claims that the 9/11 attacks were an inside job, that the moon landing was staged, and that Adolf Hitler escaped Germany rather than dying in 1945. The outlet also promotes narratives alleging CIA involvement in the assassination of John F. Kennedy, along with other classic plots involving secret elites, hidden technologies, and suppressed historical truths. The outlet also addresses public-health issues like COVID, alongside financial topics, innovation, and internet-related stories. Additionally, it features sections on nature and the environment, human and animal issues, spiritual content, and commentary on TV, film, and books.

### Sample Content, *NineForNews*



 <p>© 19 november 2025 14:00 86</p> <p><b>Campagne om Nederlanders voor te bereiden op ramp laat zien: verschil tussen complottheorie en waarheid is meestal zo'n 2 jaar</b></p>	 <p>© 8 november 2025 14:00 76</p> <p><b>Als je één groot plan ziet achter corona, de drones en oorlog in Oekraïne ben je volgens deze minister een complotdenker</b></p>	 <p>© 1 oktober 2025 06:00 101</p> <p><b>Deze 3 hulpverleners zagen op 9/11 iets heel verdachts</b></p>
 <p>© 30 september 2025 09:30 131</p> <p><b>Volgens deze psychiater komt 'de complotdenker' vaak juist verder van de gedeelde werkelijkheid af te staan</b></p>	 <p>© 26 september 2025 13:00 26</p> <p><b>De moord op Charlie Kirk: magische spreuken voor de massa</b></p>	 <p>© 14 september 2025 19:00 74</p> <p><b>Slachtoffer maakt gehakt van EO-serie over complotdenken: 'Dit is buitengewoon kwalijk'</b></p>



8 september 2025 17:00 102

**'Hierom was de NASA-maanlanding nep': Thierry Baudet krijgt bijval uit wel heel onverwachte hoek**



5 september 2025 17:00 11

**De Grote Verdwintruc: 'Hitler wist verdraaide goed dat de FBI naarstig naar hem op zoek zou gaan na zijn verdwijning'**



31 augustus 2025 06:00 94

**Gideon van Meijeren over EO-docuserie 'Het Complot': 'Echt een tenenkrommend slechte documentaire'**



29 augustus 2025 17:00 5

**'Deze 'eenarmige bandiet' speelde een zeer dubieuze en cruciale rol in Hitlers opera van het nachtelijk schouwspel'**



29 augustus 2025 09:30 67

**Forum voor Democratie stelt justitieminister Kamervragen over 'problematische' politiehandleiding complotdenken**



25 augustus 2025 13:00 82

**Maak kennis met de man die bepaalt of jij 'extreemrechts' of 'geradicaliseerd' bent**

The outlet urges its readers to join its Telegram channel with over 17,000 subscribers. It views Telegram as an independent communication platform free from government control. In its description, the outlet claims that the Dutch government has become increasingly corrupt and authoritarian since the COVID-19 crisis, describing the Netherlands as a “police-state dictatorship.” It alleges that innocent citizens, reporters, and livestreamers are arrested or assaulted, protests are banned, and constitutional rights are being removed. The site refers to the Dutch government as a “Nazi regime” that violently suppresses any resistance and pushes through “insane” policies.

NineForNews also warns that websites and domains are being seized, suggesting that its own site may soon be taken offline for spreading what it calls “independent news.” It claims the legal system is equally corrupt and that mainstream media spread only government propaganda. Telegram is therefore presented as the only secure and reliable way to keep receiving their updates. They encourage users to join for free so they can continue to reach their audience even if their main website is shut down, promising to redirect followers to backup domains through the Telegram channel.

## 5. Conclusion

In structuring the analysis presented in this deliverable, our approach to content classification focused on the interaction between platforms, actors, and narratives, rather than on isolated posts or individual claims. This perspective enabled the identification of Telegram as a particularly prominent platform for the dissemination and facilitation of disinformation through DIMI, due to its low moderation environment, high degree of cross-channel linking, and reliance on reposting as a primary mode of circulation. Within this ecosystem, we identified a set of recurrent narrative domains that structure the majority of disinformative content observed, including immigration, COVID-19, antisemitism, anti-LGBTQIA+ narratives, anti-EU discourse, anti-government messaging, anti-media framing, and geopolitics. These themes function as modular narrative building blocks that are repeatedly mobilised by a range of actors, such as influencers, bloggers, and parajournalistic outlets, to sustain engagement, amplify polarisation, and enable the persistence and adaptability of DIMI across issue areas and audiences.

The documented information landscape reveals a profound transformation in how political meaning is organised and contested. Traditional left–right ideological distinctions, while not entirely absent, no longer provide a stable framework for structuring public debate or political alignment. Instead, polarising narratives, most prominently those related to COVID-19, immigration, LGBTQIA+ rights, antisemitism, and geopolitics, are strategically disaggregated from their original ideological contexts and recombined to appeal to diverse, disaffected audiences across the political spectrum. This process produces ideologically heterogeneous spaces in which right-wing cultural, moral, and identitarian frames coexist with left-coded critiques of globalisation, Western power, and economic inequality. Rather than signalling ideological incoherence, this convergence reflects a broader reconfiguration of political mobilisation around shared affective registers. Publics increasingly coalesce around emotions such as distrust toward institutions, fear of cultural or demographic decline, resentment toward perceived elite manipulation, and nostalgia for national or moral restoration, rather than around parties, programmes, or ideological traditions (cf. Alyukov 2023).

Within this fragmented environment, political engagement is increasingly channelled through issue-based communities and thematic social media places that form around singular narratives or perceived grievances, among which are vaccine scepticism, anti-EU sentiment, opposition to “woke” politics, claims of systematic media censorship, or pro-Russia geopolitical framing. These issue publics are largely decoupled from coherent ideological platforms and often operate transversally across political identities and platforms. Their internal cohesion is generated not by shared political projects but by a common sense of threat, harm, or exclusion. This structural feature makes such publics particularly susceptible to disinformation and manipulation, as engagement is driven by emotional resonance and perceived urgency rather than by deliberation or ideological consistency.

DIMI and FIMI actors exploit these conditions with considerable effectiveness. Their influence is evident in the systematic hijacking and reframing of left-leaning discourses, particularly those associated with anti-imperialism, economic justice, pacifism, and scepticism toward Western foreign policy. Within the analysed ecosystem, these discourses are frequently redirected to legitimise Russian state narratives or to undermine democratic institutions by presenting authoritarian actors as defenders against Western hypocrisy, neoliberal exploitation, or cultural imperialism. This tactic does not simply mimic left-wing language; it strategically repurposes progressive vocabulary, symbols, and historical references to advance agendas that are fundamentally anti-democratic, anti-pluralist, or aligned with foreign state interests. As a result, ideological signifiers that traditionally functioned as markers of democratic critique are transformed into vehicles for legitimising authoritarian power and geopolitical realignment.

The analysed information environment demonstrates that contemporary disinformation ecosystems are characterised less by ideological consistency than by the coexistence of seemingly contradictory narratives. Positions that would traditionally be understood as mutually exclusive, such as being simultaneously anti-Putin and anti-Palestinian, supportive of LGBTQIA+ rights while opposing immigration, or critical of authoritarian governance yet hostile to the European Union, frequently coexist within the same channels, communities, or even individual actors. These configurations are not incidental but reflect a mode of political sense-making organised around issue-based alignment rather than coherent ideological frameworks. Thematic social media spaces, parajournalistic outlets, and influencer-driven channels actively exploit these overlaps by selectively foregrounding narratives that resonate emotionally with their audiences, while downplaying ideological tension or contradiction. Through repetition, framing, and cross-referencing, these actors normalise hybrid positions and facilitate the circulation of content that can appeal to multiple, otherwise divergent publics simultaneously. This flexibility enhances the reach and durability of disinformation narratives, allowing them to migrate across audience segments and political identities while remaining anchored in shared affective drivers such as distrust, grievance, or perceived threat.

The complexity of the ecosystem is further intensified by cross-pollination among foreign actors and information sources. Russian narratives do not circulate in isolation; they are frequently echoed, adapted, and reframed by Chinese state-linked outlets and proxy channels, which selectively integrate these narratives into their own strategic messaging. These narratives are also reintroduced into domestic alternative media environments, where local bloggers, influencers, and pseudo-independent outlets amplify them further. This multilayered circulation creates a recursive amplification loop in which content gains credibility through repetition, cross-referencing, and apparent ideological diversity. The involvement of multiple foreign and domestic actors obscures points of origin and attribution, producing the illusion of widespread consensus while significantly expanding reach and durability.

As Russian narratives travel through Chinese channels and subsequently re-emerge within domestic DIMI ecosystems, they acquire both local relevance and ideological camouflage. Framed through locally resonant grievances, historical analogies, or culturally specific symbols, these narratives become increasingly difficult to identify as externally aligned or strategically coordinated. This process complicates detection and attribution efforts and weakens traditional counter-disinformation responses that rely on clear distinctions between domestic dissent and foreign interference. The cumulative effect is the emergence of a dense, multi-layered amplification environment that normalises misinformation, entrenches polarisation, and progressively erodes trust in democratic institutions, independent media, and knowledge-producing authorities.

The identified dynamics underscore the need to conceptualise DIMI and FIMI not as isolated incidents or platform-specific phenomena, but as structural features of contemporary information environments. Influence operations increasingly exploit emotional alignment, issue-based mobilisation, and cross-ideological convergence, rather than targeting discrete ideological groups. Understanding and countering these dynamics therefore requires analytical approaches that account for narrative hybridity, networked amplification, and the affective foundations of contemporary political publics.

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DETECTING AND COUNTERING INFORMATION SUPPRESSION FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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