

Infodemic 5G

Screaming into the Void: The Battle of 5G Interpretative Frames on Social Media

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Digital Methods Winter School 2021

Research Questions

Research Question: What are the critical interpretative frames of 5G on social media platforms, especially in regards to the infrastructural claims of 5G conspiracy theorists?

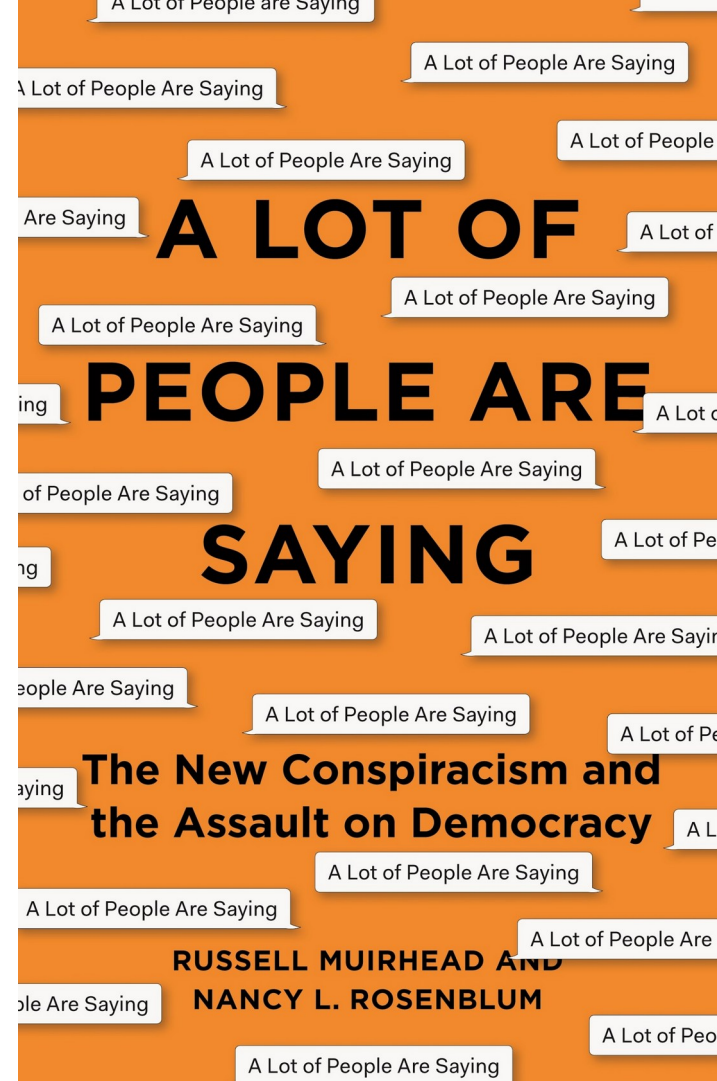
Sub-Question 1: What is a sub-categorization of the main motifs, symbols and epistemic phrases that epistomise 5G across platforms?

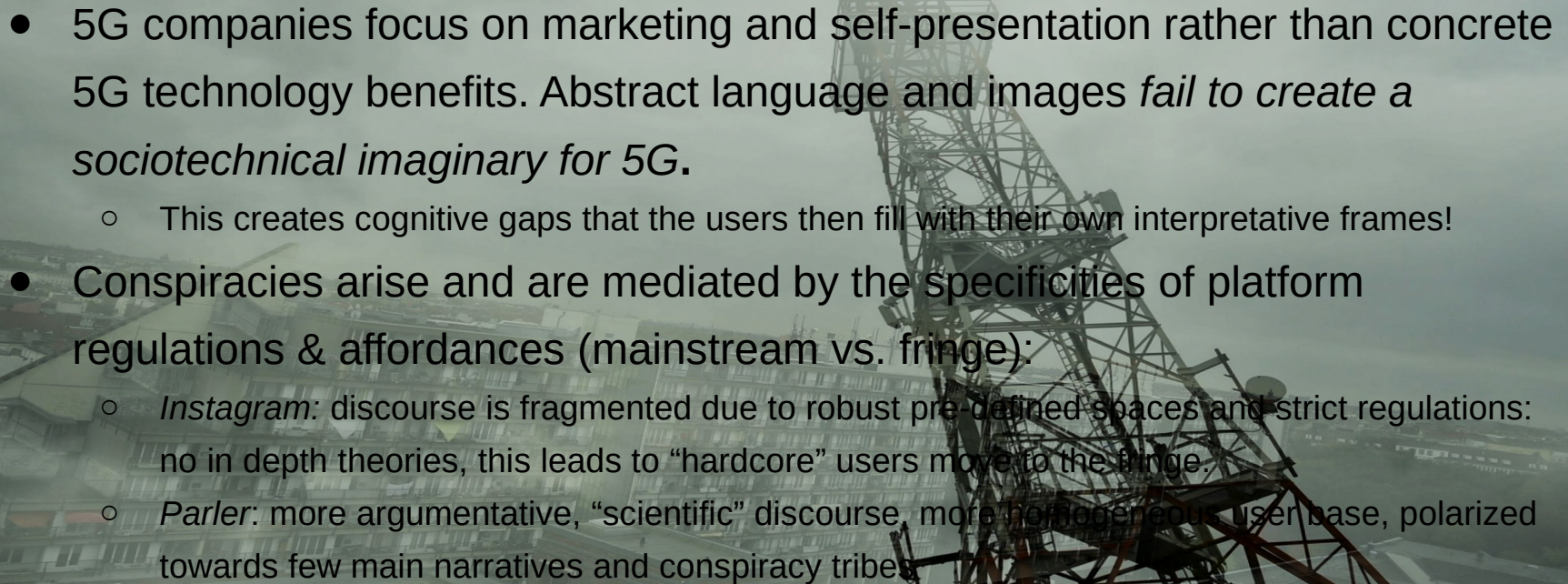
Sub-Question 2: How does 5G discourse evolve over time and space?

Sub-Question 3: Do 5G conspiracies mirror or overlap with the imaginaries of 5G providers?

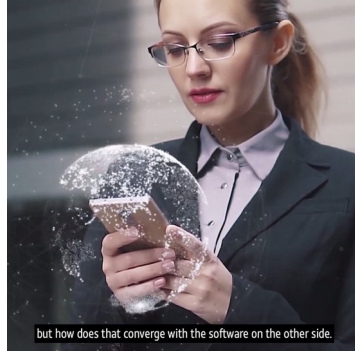
Theoretical Framework

- Conspiracy without Theory (Muirhead and Rosenblum, 2019)
→ new conspiracism as conspiracy without explanation & argumentation
- Conspiracy Fragments vs. Theories
→ conspiracy theories as alternative forms of knowledge production



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- 5G companies focus on marketing and self-presentation rather than concrete 5G technology benefits. Abstract language and images *fail to create a sociotechnical imaginary for 5G*.
 - This creates cognitive gaps that the users then fill with their own interpretative frames!
 - Conspiracies arise and are mediated by the specificities of platform regulations & affordances (mainstream vs. fringe):
 - *Instagram*: discourse is fragmented due to robust pre-defined spaces and strict regulations: no in depth theories, this leads to “hardcore” users move to the fringe.
 - *Parler*: more argumentative, “scientific” discourse, more homogeneous user base, polarized towards few main narratives and conspiracy tribes

Provider imagery: Instagram & YouTube



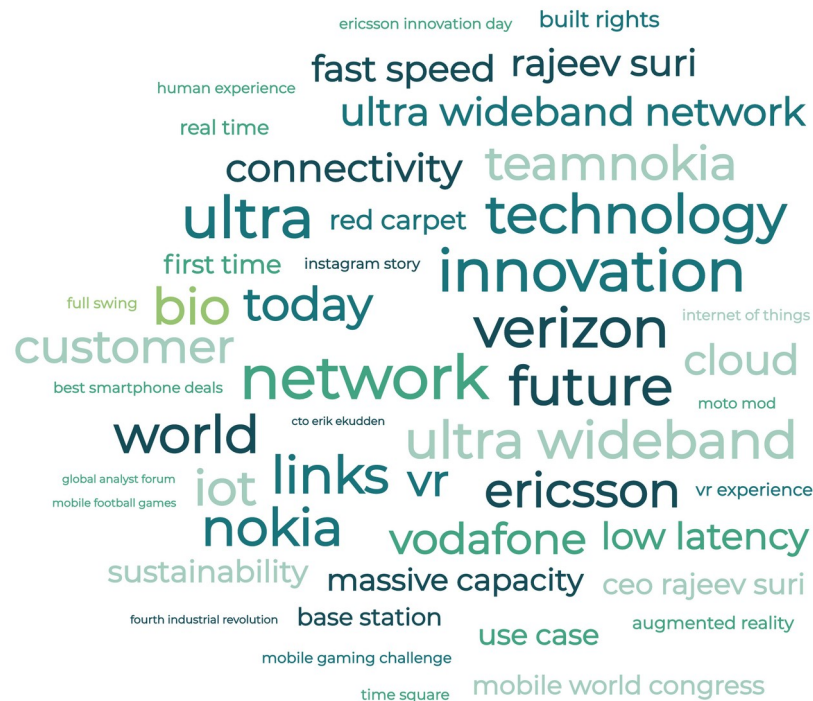
Instagram provider
accounts sample posts



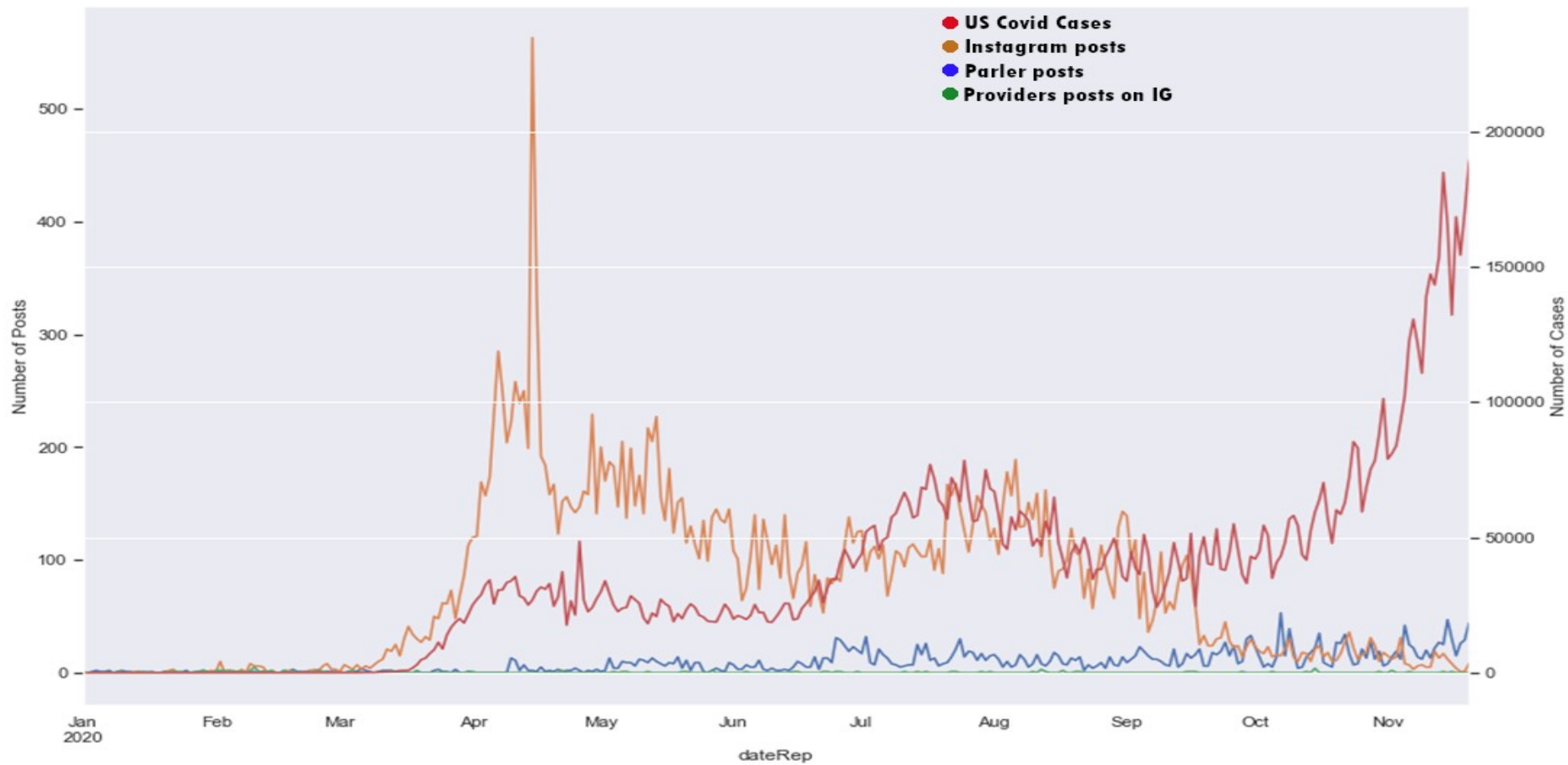
YouTube sample thumbnails from providers' videos

Providers' discourse: Webpages & Instagram

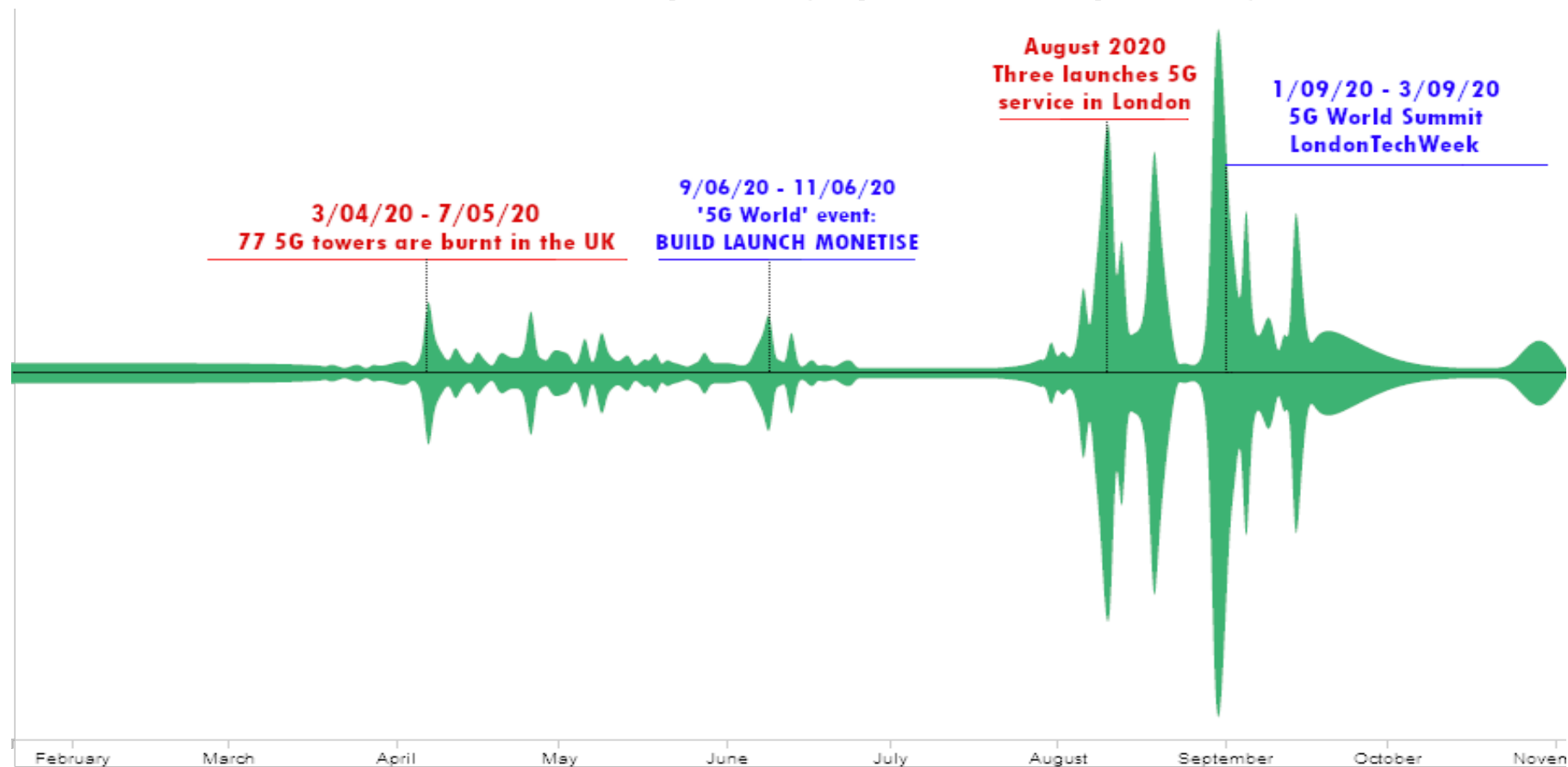
Word cloud comparison: Websites and Instagram posts of vendors and network operators

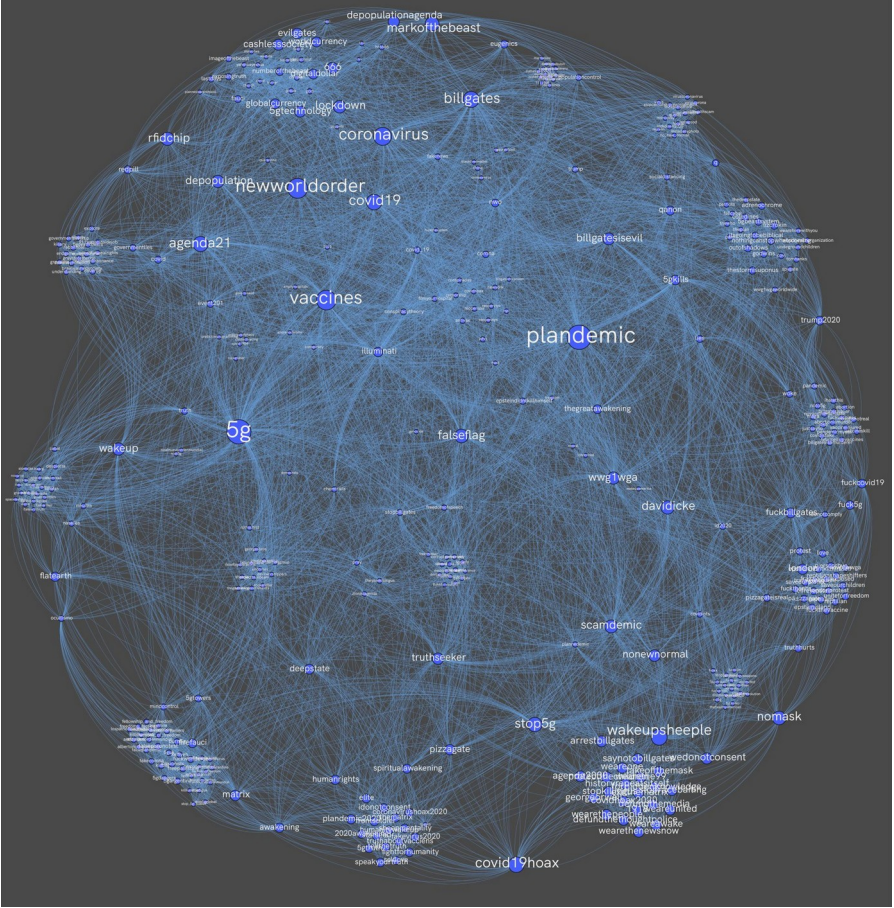


Time Series

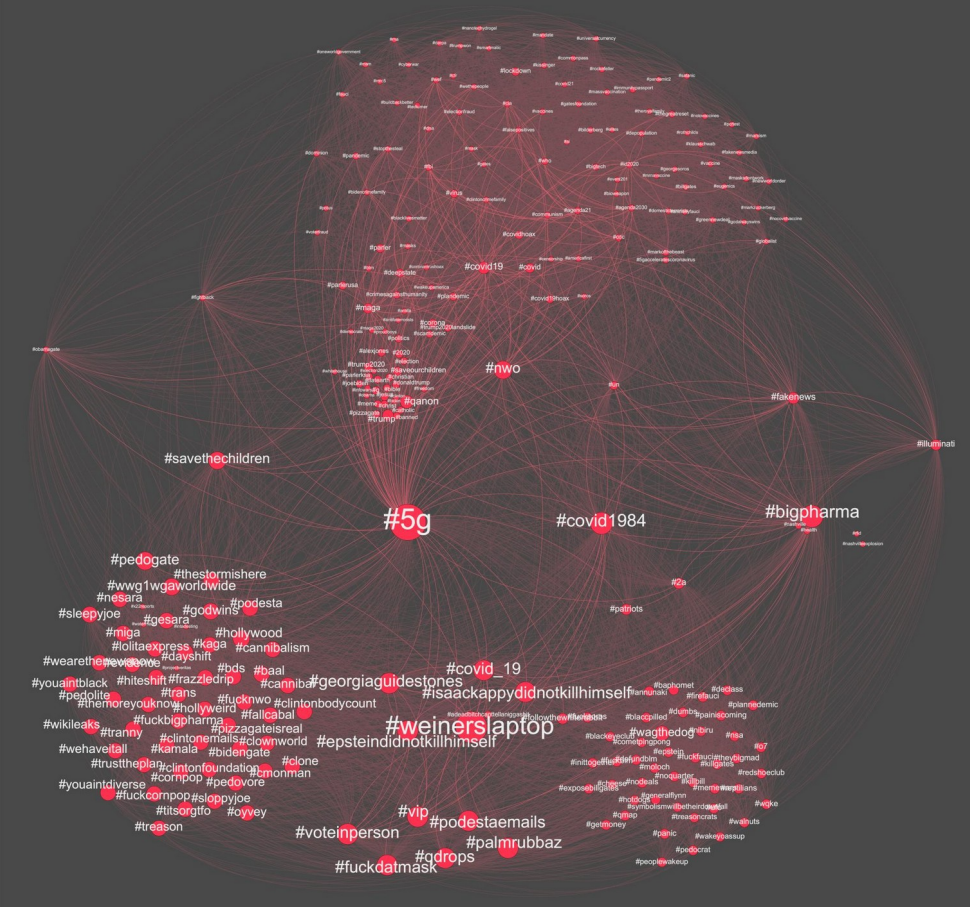


5G events and IG-conspiracy post frequency in London





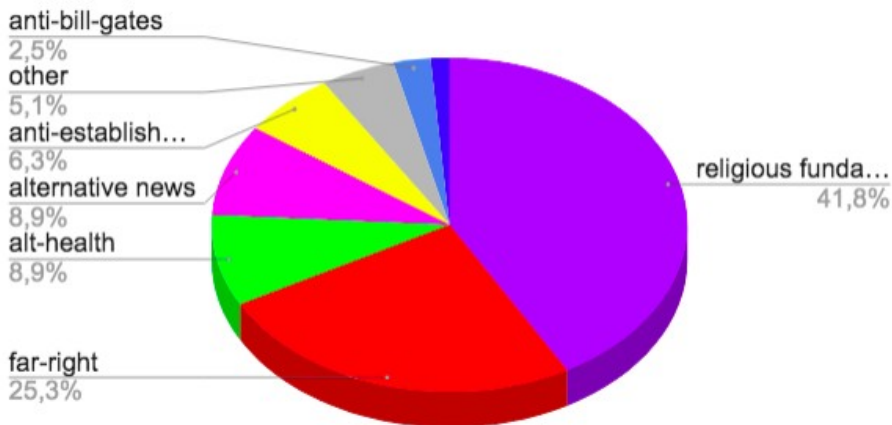
Instagram: Small, scattered clusters



Parler: Large, organized clusters

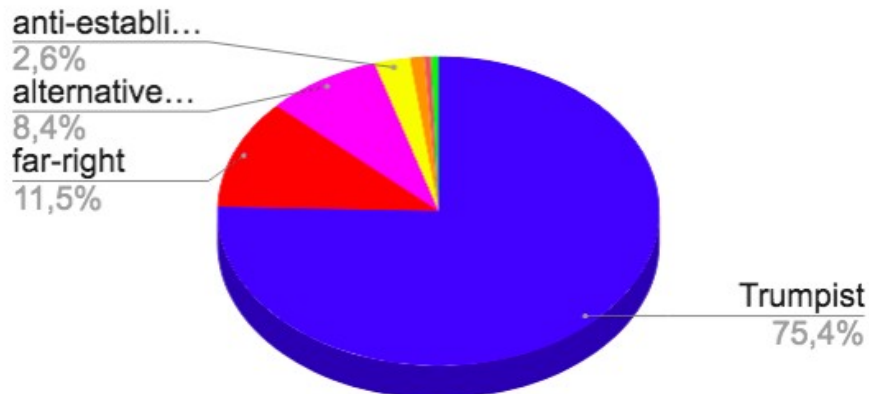
Conspiracy Tribes Instagram vs. Parler

5G Instagram Conspiracy Tribes



- over 50% of accounts deleted
- nearly 40% conspiracy theorists
- 10% ordinary users
- more diverse users & tribes

5G Parler Conspiracy Tribes



- one deleted account
- over 95% conspiracy theorists
- no regular users
- few independent media accounts



asabove_asbelow44 • Follow ...



lepetersworld



32 likes

DECEMBER 4, 2016

IG alt-health account sample post



Brian Peters

bpeterssquare

Salesman in the vacation industry forced to be a digital soldier. I post things that interest me as well opinions. Freedom loving, gun loving, woman loving, flag loving patriot defending his country.



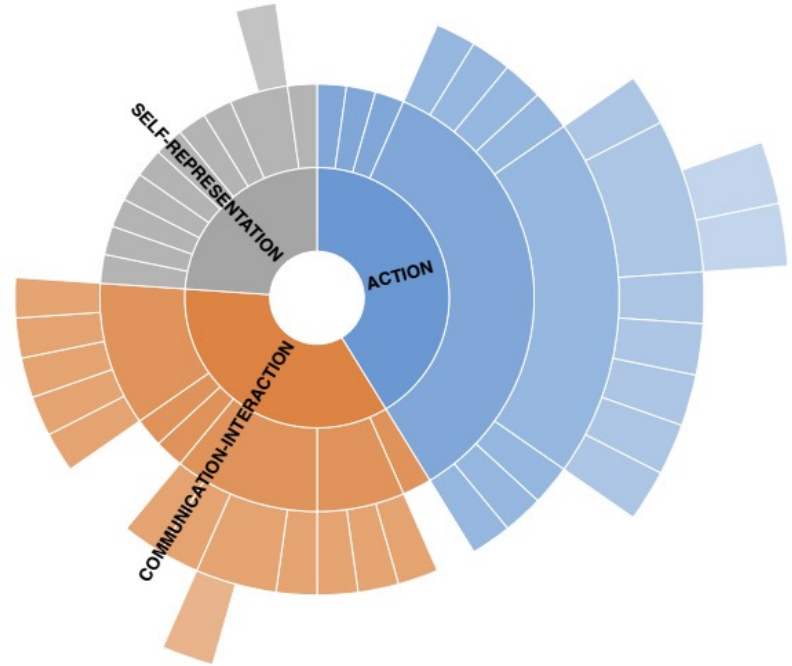
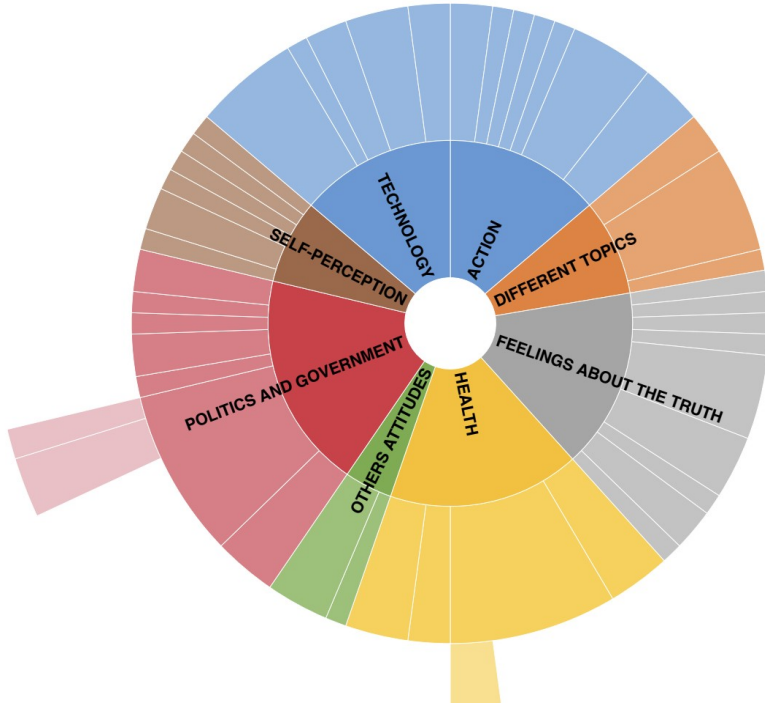
eleven.eleven.humanity

elevenelevenhumanity

👉 Original Account Deleted 4 Times by Instagram 🌐 Truth Exposer 🐰 Follow the White Rabbit 🙏 The Truth is Powerful and It Prevails 🌍 New Earth 4D/5D Ascension 📖 Critical Thinker ✨ We the People

Parler sample bios (fig 1: Trumpist, fig 2: migrated user)

Text Analysis Instagram vs. Parler



Thanks for all the contributions, to all the projects and to the Winter School for this space. Looking forward to the following presentations!

