

Infodemic 5G

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

Bryan Steffen, Eleni Maragkou, Emma Breuer, Giulio Valentini, Jasper van der Heide, Roxana Varvara Boboc, Selin Ashaghimina, Veronica Fanzio, Veronica Moretti, Jörn Preuß, Giovanni Lombardi, Emile Provendier, Sylvain Mignot, Niels ten Oever (facilitator), Maxigas (facilitator)

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?

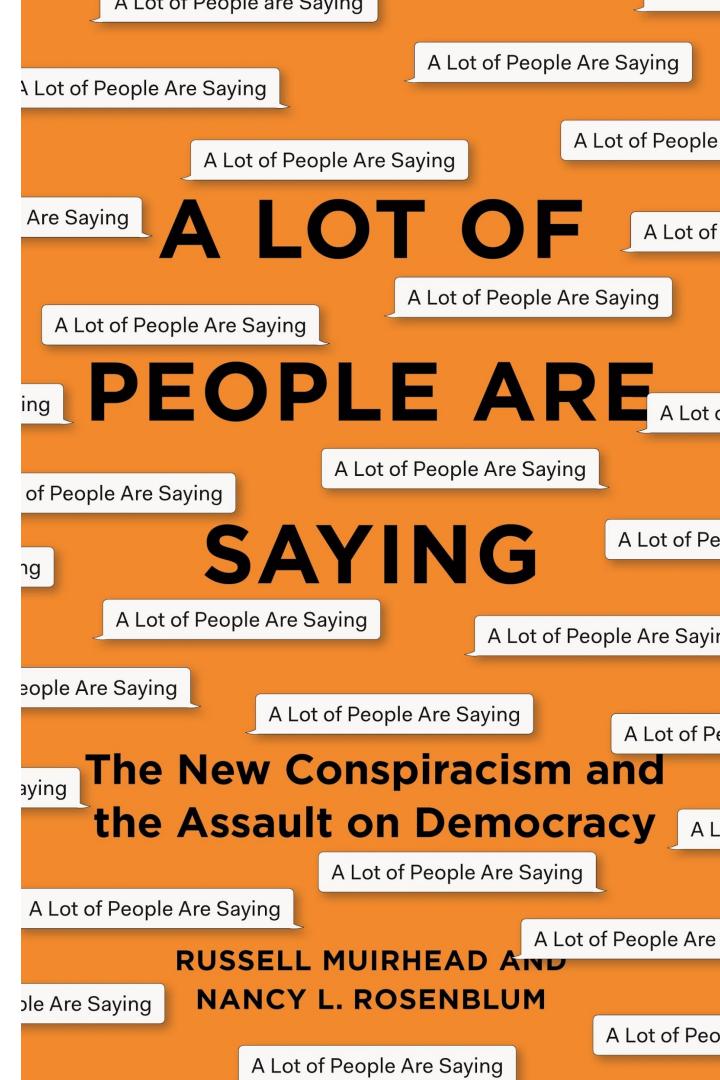
Sub-Question 1: What is a sub-categorization of the main motifs, symbols and epistemic phrases that epistemise 5G across platforms?

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

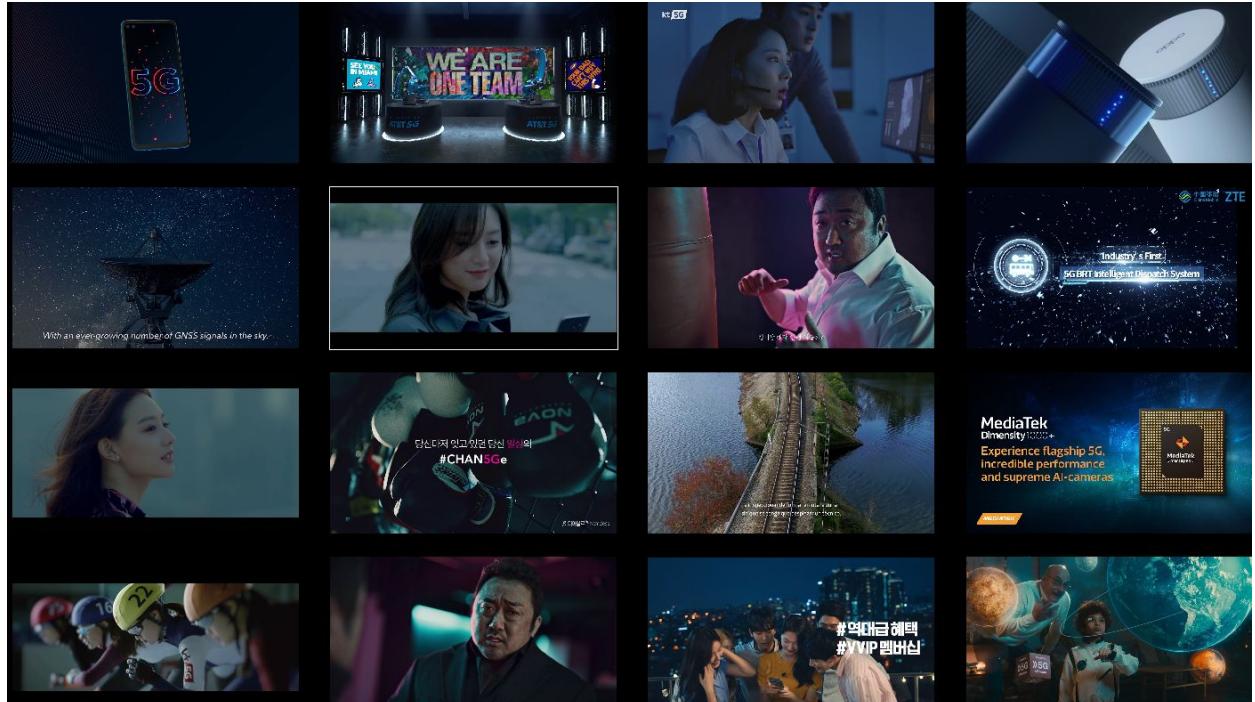
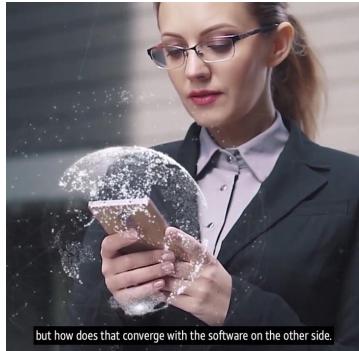
- Conspiracy without Theory (Muirhead and Rosenblum, 2019)
→ new conspiracism as conspiracy without explanation & argumentation
- Conspiracy Fragments vs. Theories
→ conspiracy theories as alternative forms of knowledge production



Main Takeaways

- 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

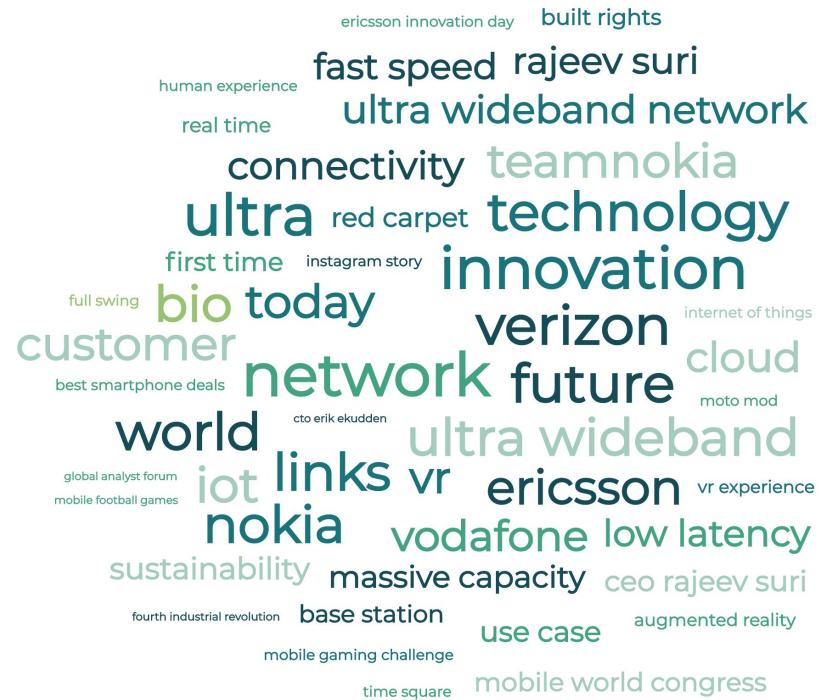


Instagram provider
accounts sample posts

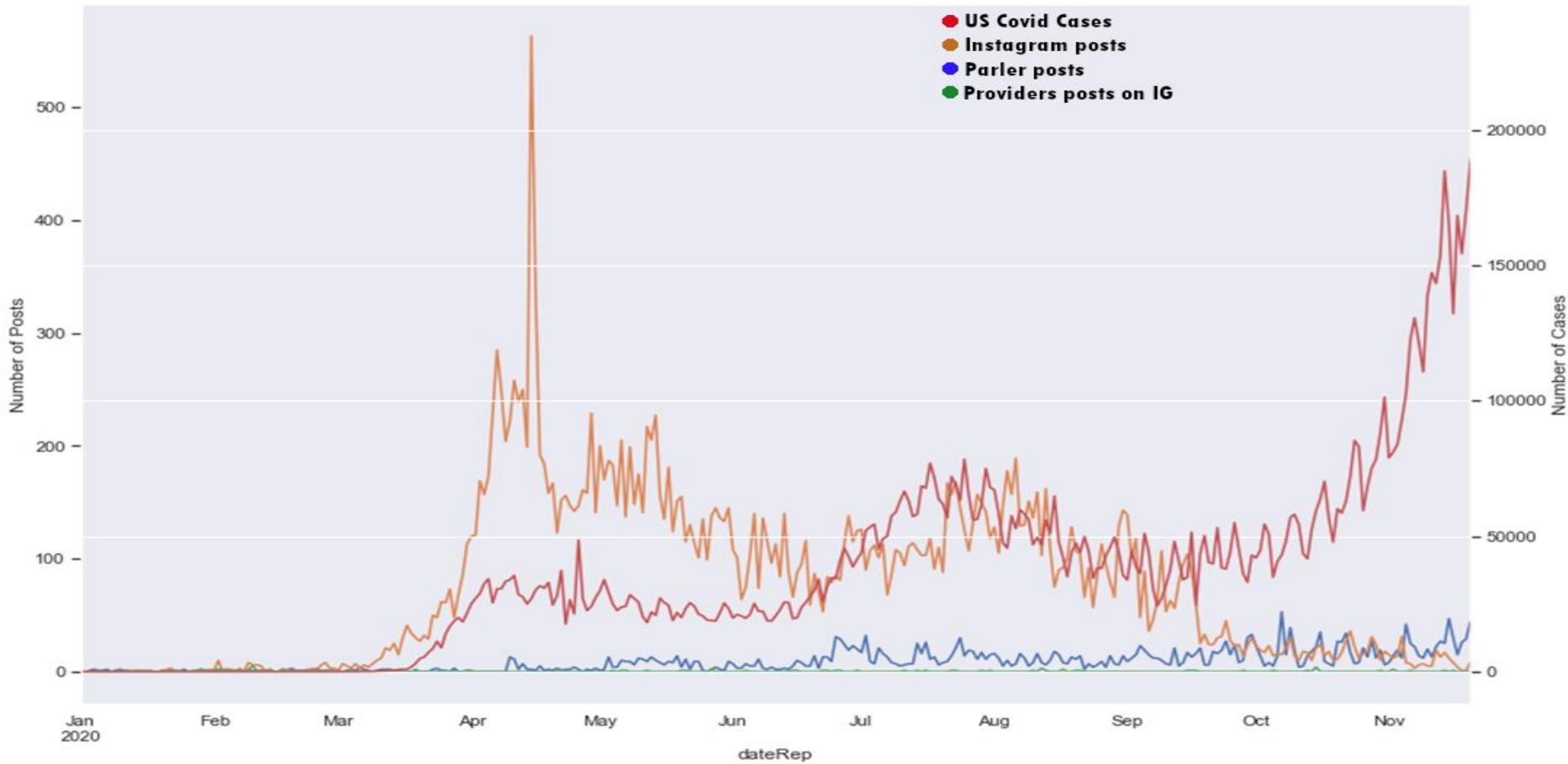
YouTube sample thumbnails from providers' videos

Providers' discourse: Webpages & Instagram

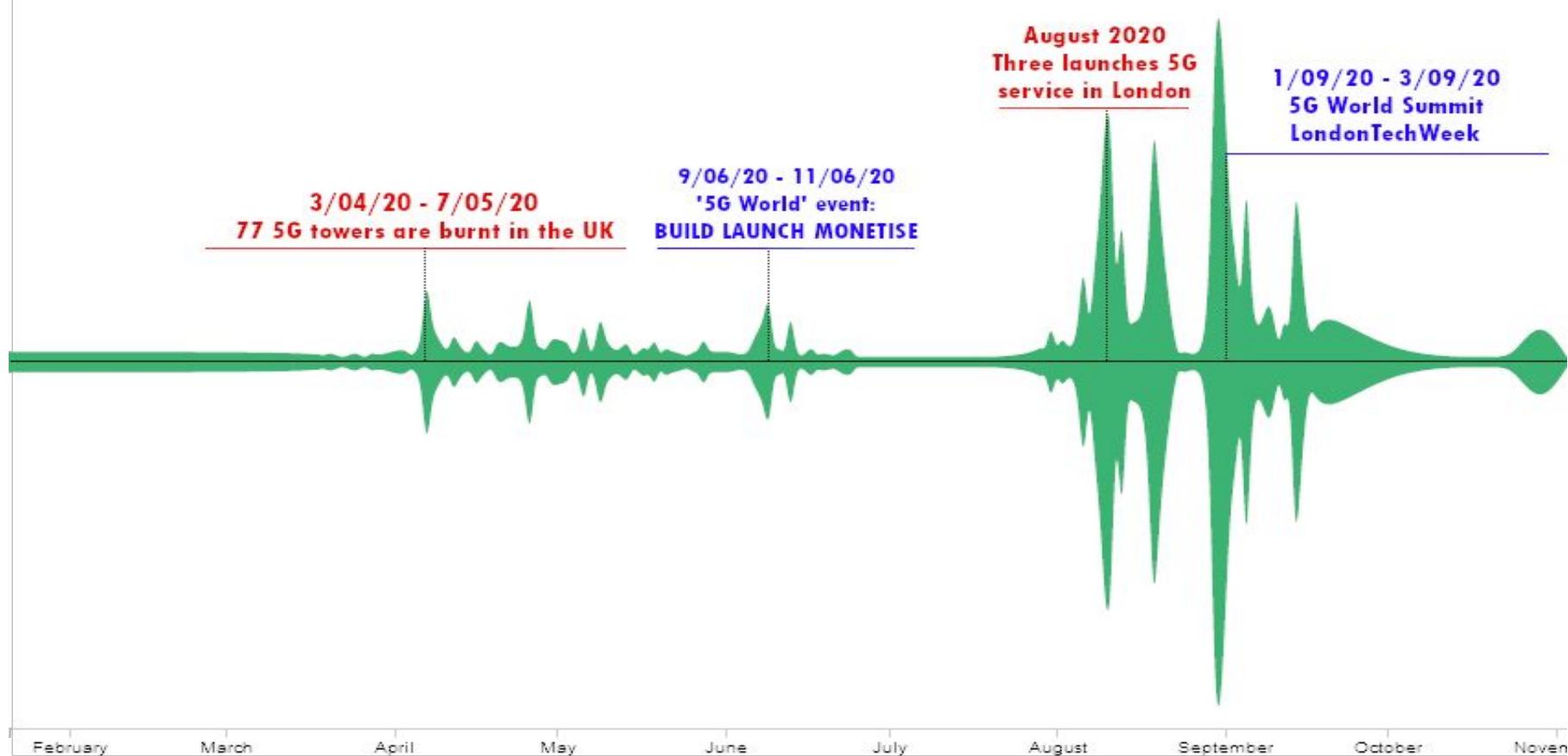
Word cloud comparison: Websites and Instagram posts of vendors and network operators

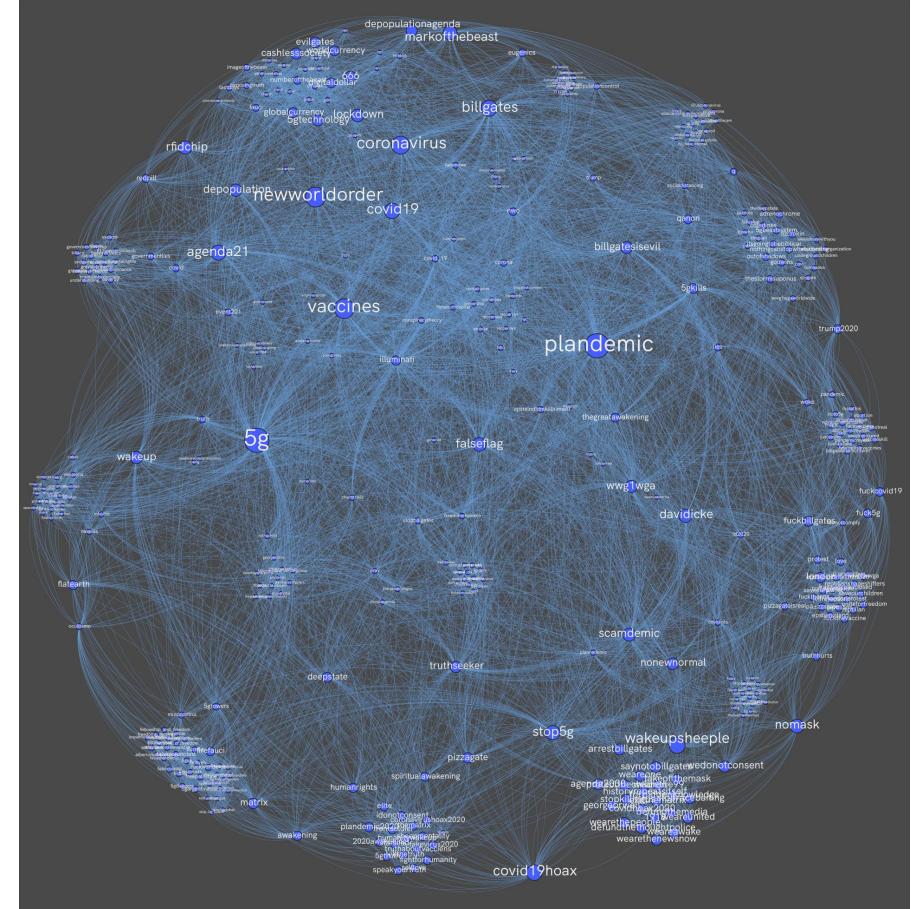


Time Series

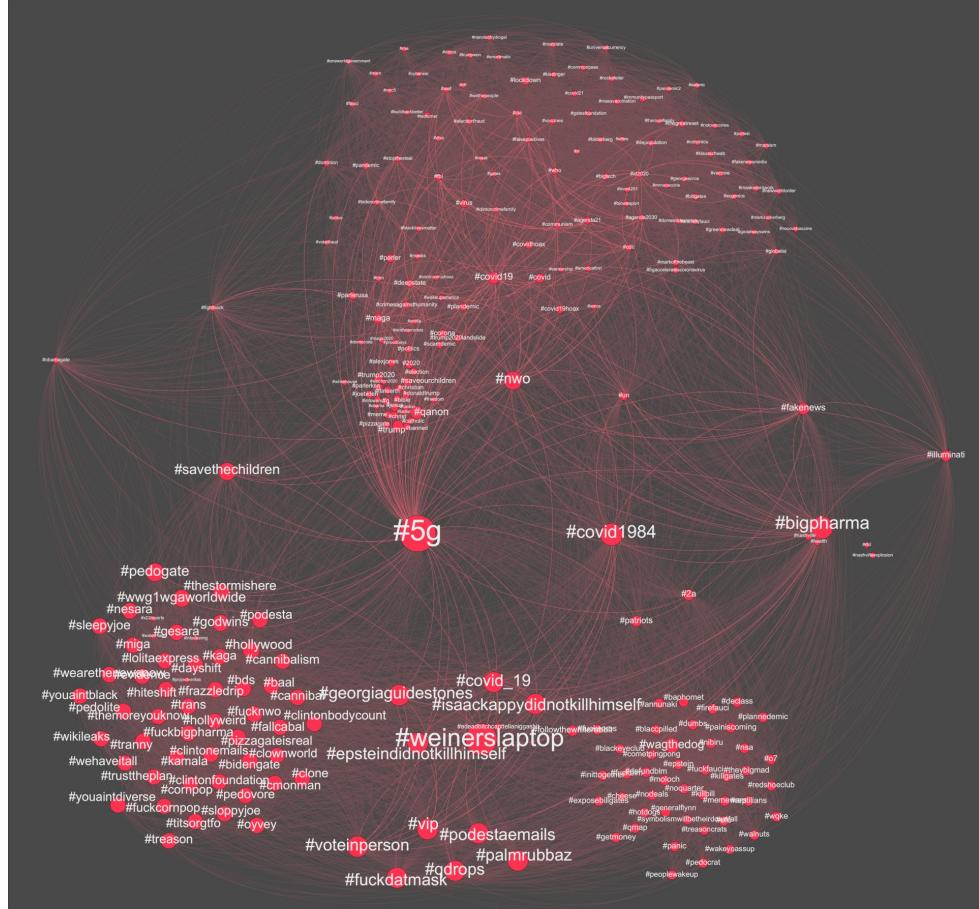


5G events and IG-conspiracy post frequency in London





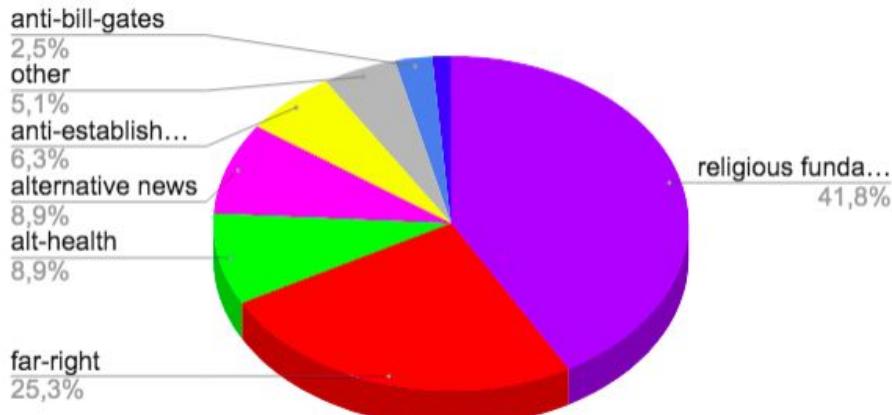
Instagram: Small, scattered clusters



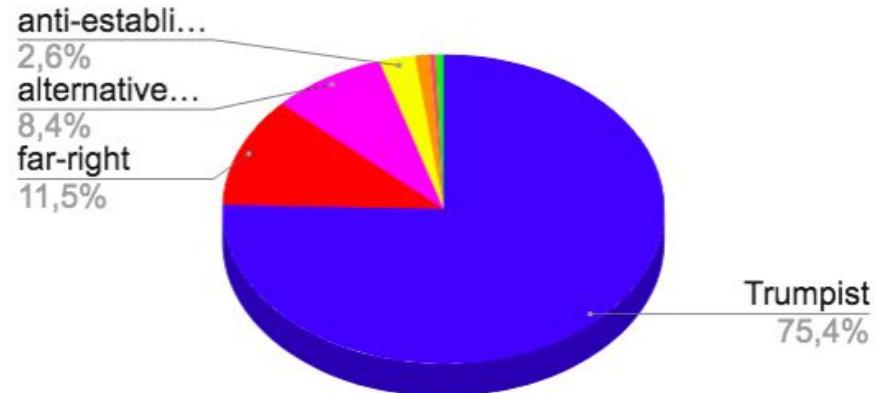
Parler: Large, organized clusters

Conspiracy Tribes Instagram vs. Parler

5G Instagram Conspiracy Tribes



5G Parler Conspiracy Tribes



- over 50% of accounts deleted
 - nearly 40% conspiracy theorists
 - 10% ordinary users
 - more diverse users & tribes
- one deleted account
 - over 95% conspiracy theorists
 - no regular users
 - few independent media accounts



asabove_asbelow44 • Follow ...



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.



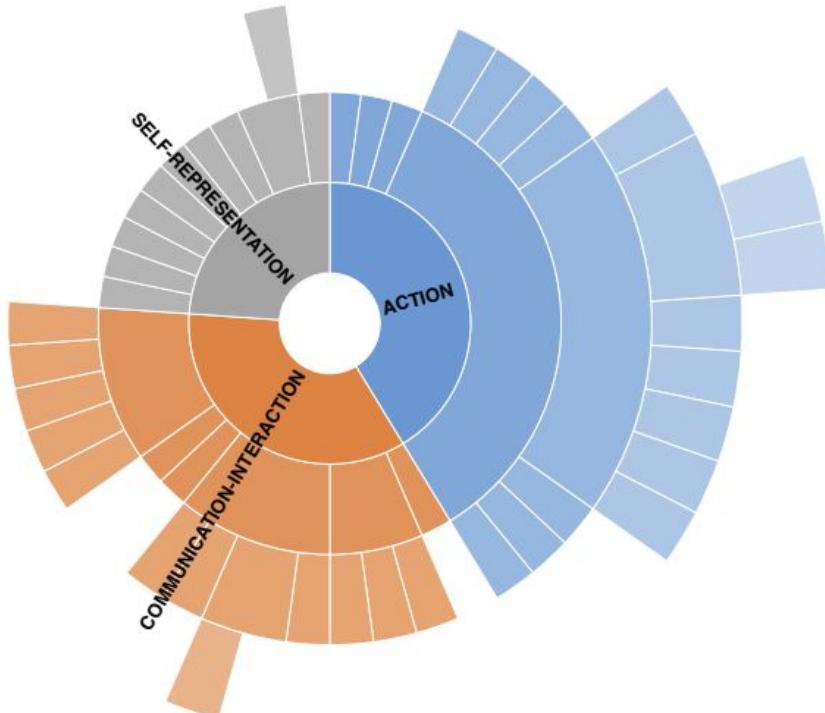
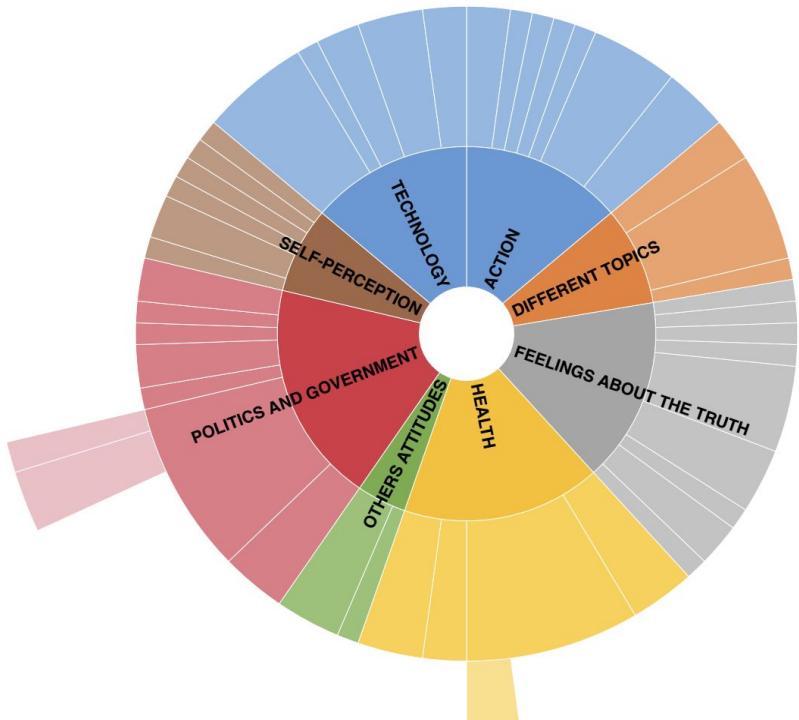
eleven.eleven.humanity

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👉 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!

