



INSTITUTO
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The construction and verification of narratives about the war in Ukraine through the editorialization of independent and diplomatic fact-checking organisations

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Master in New Media Management

Supervisor:
Professor Gustavo Cardoso, Full Professor,
Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September, 2024



SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Department of Sociology

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Resumo

Esta dissertação investiga a atual ameaça da desinformação na Europa e a missão da verificação de factos como meio de mitigar os efeitos da desinformação, especificamente no contexto de uma crise política como a guerra na Ucrânia. Tendo como pano de fundo o paradigma da desordem informativa (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) e a Sociedade em Rede (Castells, 2009), esta dissertação tem como objetivo explorar a forma como as narrativas estratégicas (Miskimmon et al., 2013) moldam a desinformação e como as lógicas diplomáticas e jornalísticas abordam os consequentes casos desinformativos. Através de uma análise de conteúdo comparativa, esta dissertação explora as semelhanças e diferenças entre entidades que operam dentro de lógicas institucionais diferentes: EUvsDisinfo, por um lado, e Maldita e Polígrafo, por outro. A análise de conteúdo temática e quantitativa ajuda a estruturar os diferentes temas e as abordagens a esses temas por parte do EUvsDisinfo, da Maldita e do Polígrafo. Esta dissertação apresenta duas conclusões principais. Primeiro, o fact-checking orientado por uma lógica diplomática sustenta o objetivo da diplomacia pública de projetar uma contra-narrativa em oposição às narrativas estratégicas de desinformação de Estados estrangeiros. Por outro lado, o fact-checking jornalístico centra-se apenas na correção e contextualização da desinformação. Todavia, as narrativas estratégicas de desinformação e a desinformação nas redes sociais tendem a estar ligadas através da reprodução de narrativas pelos utilizadores das redes sociais. Estas conclusões reforçam a ideia de que, numa sociedade em rede, as abordagens diplomáticas e jornalísticas do mesmo acontecimento têm papéis divergentes na formação das perceções.

Palavras-chave: fact-checking, narrativas estratégicas de desinformação, Desordem Informativa, Sociedade em Rede, análise comparativa de conteúdo

Abstract

This dissertation delves into the current threat of disinformation in Europe and the mission of fact-checking as a mean to mitigate disinformation effects, specifically in the context of a political crisis like the war in Ukraine. Having the information disorder paradigm (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) and the Network Society (Castells, 2009) as background, this dissertation aims to explore how strategic narratives (Miskimmon et al., 2013) shape disinformation and how diplomatic and journalistic logics address the consequent disinformative cases. Through a comparative content analysis, this dissertation explores the similarities and differences between counter-disinformation entities that operate within different institutional logics: EUvsDisinfo, on the one hand, and Maldita and Polígrafo on the other hand. The thematic and quantitative content analysis helps to structure the different themes and the approaches to those themes by EUvsDisinfo, Maldita and Polígrafo. As a conclusion, this dissertation presents two main findings. First, fact-checking guided by a diplomatic logic sustains public diplomacy's goal to project a counter-narrative in opposition to the strategic disinformation narratives of foreign states. On the other hand, journalistic fact-checking focuses only on the correction and contextualization of disinformation. Nonetheless, strategic disinformative narratives and social media disinformation tend to be linked through the reproduction of narratives by social media users. These findings highlight that, in a networked society, diplomatic and journalistic approaches to the same event have diverging roles in shaping perceptions.

Keywords: fact-checking, strategic disinformation narratives, Information Disorder, Network Society, comparative content analysis

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Introduction

In July 2024, Ursula Von der Leyen made a speech in front of the European Parliament regarding her re-election as President of the European Commission. In her speech, Von der Leyen highlighted how the threat that disinformation poses to the democratic system and institution requires new approaches to counter this phenomenon in Europe. The president of the European Commission presented the first idea of an “European shield for the democracy” which will include a network of European fact-checkers (Sahuquillo & Gomez, 2024). The aim of this shield is to counter foreign disinformation and manipulation that destabilize democratic institutions by focusing on the behaviour and not on the narratives of the disinformation as one official source told El País.

It is important, thus, to highlight that the EU already has a taskforce focused on the mission to counter disinformation originating from foreign political actors, especially Russia. EUvsDisinfo is a diplomatic project that belongs to the European External Action Services and corrects disinformation narratives that targets mainly East European countries that not necessarily belong to the European Union, for instance Ukraine. On the other hand, the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) works with a network of independent European fact-checkers that cooperate in order to tackle the spread of disinformation in Europe. However, after 10 years since the invasion of Crimea, which motivated the creation of EUvsDisinfo, the threat that disinformation poses to Europe continues to worry European leaders and is forcing them to channel more resources into a new European network and “shield for the democracy”.

This dissertation intends to explore the information disorder landscape (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) in Europe and the verification of mis/disinformative narratives through the practice of fact-checking by journalistic and diplomatic standards since both areas of intervention present the common goal to tackle the spread of disinformation. By journalistic standards, I understand the verification of facts made by independent entities that recognize to themselves a journalistic mission to inform society and thus see themselves as a journalism enterprise (Graves & Cherubini, 2016). On the other hand, by diplomatic standards I understand the work that intends to correct disinformation narratives spread by foreign States, and the work which is part of a diplomatic mission to manage narrative clashes (Hedling, 2021). Therefore, this work aims to contribute to a well-structured vision regarding how new informative actors approach the spread of disinformation originated by narratives surrounding the war in Ukraine.

Hence my research question becomes: how do independent and official fact-checking actors approach the mis/disinformative narratives surrounding the war in Ukraine?

In order to answer to this question, I will proceed with a comparative content analysis using a summative approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) focused on the narrative themes and narrative elements of the war in Ukraine. The goal of this dissertation is to visualize the distribution of the narratives across counter-disinformation articles from fact-checking and myth-busting entities and the distribution of the narrative elements of the war across each narrative and entities' work. By doing this, the following dissertation contributes not only to the understanding of the differences and similarities of diplomatic and journalistic oriented counter-disinformation during a war crisis context but also to the comprehension of how they contribute to the reality organization (Waisbord, 2013) of the Iberian and European audiences regarding the war in Ukraine.

Literature Revision

1.1. The Information Disorder and the Network Society

According to Castells (2009), the diffusion of the Internet has made possible a new organization of society which he nominates the Network Society. This new paradigm is characterized by a new communication logic organized through networks in which every intervenient has the capacity to send messages in a many-to-many system (Castells, 2009). Thus, since the diffusion of the Internet, the communicative practices of social actors have changed in order to suit the network structure. Cardoso (2023) argues then that from the generalization of a network communication structure results a series of social dynamics which “facilitate the erosion of social institutions accustomed to the previous mass communication model” (p.26). Thus, the network communication model has facilitated the multiplication of both communicative actors and publics, which has led to potential informative disorders (Cardoso, 2023; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

In their framework proposal, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) organize the information disorder in three components: types, elements, and phases. The types are differentiated by two characteristics: the veracity of the message and the intention of the agent. Thus, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) create the following definitions:

- Misinformation: “Information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm.” (p.20)
- Malinformation: “Information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country” (p.20)
- Disinformation: “Information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country.” (p.20)

On the other hand, the information disorder can be understood by its elements and their relationship. These are the agents, the messages, and the interpreters. The agents are the one that create, produce and distribute the message and the ones that possess or not the intention to disinform or to harm. The message can take many forms and characteristics as well as be false, misleading, or true. The interpreter is the one who receives and interprets the message (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In a network structure, the interpreter is given the capacity to recreate,

reproduce and disseminate the message through social technologies thus becoming an agent themselves (Castells, 2009; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Furthermore, the information disorder follows three stages: its creation, production, and dissemination. These phases start with the agent that creates and leads the message to their audience and interpreters. However, because the interpreter can also become an agent, Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) argument that the production phase can also be a reproduction phase that is followed by a new distribution phase, creating thus a loop in the information flow:

What the ‘interpreter’ can do with a message highlights how the three elements of information disorder should be considered parts of a potential never-ending cycle. In an era of social media, where everyone is a potential publisher, the interpreter can become the next ‘agent,’ deciding how to share and frame the message for their own networks. (p.28)

Therefore, the authors also alert for the importance to consider that each stage potentially has different agents acting on them. The agent that creates the content can be different from the agent that produces and from the agent that distributes which indicates that the one who creates and the one who produces or distribute may have potentially different intentions. As the authors put it: “the characteristics of agents can vary from phase to phase.” (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017, p. 25). Hence, the role of the agents in the network plays an important part in the information disorder as they act in every stage of the information flow. The information disorder is, thus, the set of challenges that misinformation, malinformation and disinformation bring to a digitally connected world (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). The authors argue that these challenges origin from “information pollution” that pervades in public discourse and encompasses a varied range of topics such as politics, medicine, or war for example.

In an information disorder landscape, the transition from a mass communication model to a network communication model means that the authority of social institutions on the communication flow is now shared with other actors (Cardoso, 2023). On the one hand, a network environment enables institutions and public officials to reach audiences the same way journalists do (Cardoso, 2023; Castells, 2009). For instance, Kovach & Rosenstiel (2021) present the example of governments that have at their disposal the tools necessary to create “pseudojournalism in the form of faux news websites, video news releases, subsidies to ‘media personalities’ willing to accept money to promote policy, and more.” (p.21). On the other hand, as technology platforms are inherently social by being “driven by billions of humans sharing words, images, videos and memes that affirm their positions in their own real-life social networks” (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017, p.13), the network environment of the internet and

social technology allows the amplification of the effects of information disorders, due to its influence on the production, communication, and distribution of information (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Mejias & Vokuev, 2017; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

In other words, social actors in the network society are capacitated to pursue and assert their own interests (Castells, 2009) in each stage of the information disorder: creation, production and dissemination (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Thus, several actors have at their disposal the tools to also reach specific or broad publics and audiences according to their communicative intentions (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021), which impacts the journalistic activity. As Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) argue:

What was called journalism is now only one part of our information diet, and journalism's role as intermediary and verifier, like the roles of other civic institutions, has become relatively smaller and thereby a weaker influence on the whole. (p.29)

Bennett & Livingston (2018) add that this fragmentation results in a lesser trust in public information sources since it reduces the effectivity of journalistic gatekeeping (Amazeen, 2019; Cardoso, 2023; Graves, 2013; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). Again, Kovach & Rosenstiel (2021) argue that "Certainly, the notion of the press as a gatekeeper—deciding which information the public should know and which it should not—no longer defines journalism's role" (p.29). Therefore, today's democracies fragilities are concerned with (1) changing media systems, (2) evolving technology and (3) the corrosion of institutional authority (Bennett & Livingston, 2018).

Furthermore, this logic becomes more present in a context of crisis. Having this in mind, this paradigm is characterized by the possibility of interference of foreign States in other countries public opinion and politics (Bennett & Livingston, 2018) through disinformation campaigns aimed at disseminating mistrust (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). A possible outcome of this paradigm can be a compromised social organization of reality (Waisbord, 2013), since news media are not the only actors with sole authority in this regard anymore (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). Nonetheless, according to the Digital News Report 2024, news consumers attribute high levels of importance to the updating and educative role of news (72% and 67% respectively) as well as their mission to give perspective to the consumers (63%) (Newman et al., 2024). These numbers are aligned to recent data on Portuguese citizen's perception on news and disinformation, which reveal that news are still generally seen as very important keep citizens updated and more informed about current events (Cardoso et al., 2024).

Importância das notícias em termos pessoais: "Pensando no papel que as notícias desempenham na sua vida, em que medida considera importante ou pouco importante notícias que..."

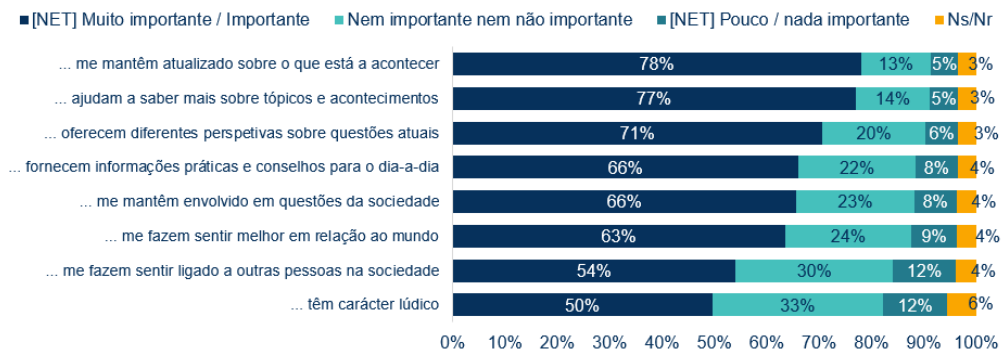


Figure 1.1 - News importance for Portuguese consumers (n=2012). Source: Gustavo et al. (2024)

As Waisbord (2013) assures, in a network communication landscape, reality's organization is a disputed work between news media and other entities with the same communication resources access. Furthermore, Ehrl (2023) presents the argument that when it comes to crisis management and communication, the new fluid media ecology disrupts the role of news media to mediate official trustworthy information. Hence, in the network society the conflicts resulting from a "contradictory structure of interests and values that constitute society" (Castells, 2009, p.57) become more evident and it becomes necessary to tackle the negative effects of the information disorder as the erosion of news media credibility and authority can result in the erosion of democracy itself. In the context of the Ukrainian crisis, I therefore sustain Szostek (2018) argument that "News consumption has become a security concern in the context of antagonistic relations between Russia and other states" (p.116).

1.2. New approaches: Fact-checking

The network society is characterized by new informative actors and approaches (Cardoso, 2023; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). One of the novelties can be characterized by the emergence of a new journalistic-like practice: fact-checking. For instance, Graves (2013) states that fact-checking is the practice of "journalism in the network mode" (p.10) and points out to three characteristics that explain the origin of the fact-checking movement around the world. The author states that fact-checking is part of a reform movement of journalism that became possible due to "changing journalistic standards and practices, a diminished gatekeeping role of traditional news organizations due to evolving technology, and a fractured media landscape that has diminished opportunities for civil public debate" (Graves, 2013 apud. Amazeen, 2019, p.543). Furthermore, Amazeen (2019) takes Graves statement to argue that fact-checking is the

result of a critical juncture defined by “(1) a decline in journalism, (2) easy access to technology for the masses, and (3) socio-political unrest” (p.542). Overall, these three characteristics are not very different from Bennet & Livingston (2018) proposal to explain democratic fragilities since they affect journalism and, consequently, democracy. Therefore, this critical juncture creates a welcoming scenario for both new informational agents and new informative approaches.

As Graves (2013) puts it, the “world of more or less ‘mass’ audiences in which journalism became a profession no longer exists” (p.12). Instead of a one-to-many system where the gatekeeping mission of journalism is mostly intact, the distributed network structure of the internet means the suppression of a central gatekeeper determining which content should be made available and which should be censored (Amazeen, 2019; Cardoso, 2023). Kovach & Rosenstiel (2021) argue that since journalists are not the only gatekeepers, their work has shifted to a new central role: “working with sources and technology to help audiences make order out of it, and potentially take action” (p.31).

Furthermore, due to the increasing flow of polluted information, the same authors state that one of the key activities of journalists today is to help the audience know which information they should rely on and which one they should discard. Therefore, techniques such as fact-checking, verification and source-checking (Wardle, 2018) arise. For Wardle (2018) fact-checking and verification are distinct activities. The former focuses on official inaccurate statements that have been published or said by official sources (political agents, think tanks or even news organizations). On the other hand, verification is the activity of verifying the accuracy of mostly visual content that has been disseminated by unofficial sources. The author argues that these distinct activities have been overlapping in the information disorder paradigm, resulting in the source-checking activity, or in other words, “the increasingly important techniques of investigating the individuals or networks” (Wardle, 2018, p. 958).

Nowadays, several fact-checking organizations work on both fact-checking and verification, thus focusing either on official or unofficial sources of mis or disinformation. As Wardle (2018) argues, an “audience doesn’t distinguish between a politician’s claim that refugees are on the rise and a manipulated video that supposedly shows refugees entering a country illegally. Audiences just want to know what is true” (p.959). Hence, fact-checkers around the world share one common mission of promoting public truth (Graves, 2018). In fact, Singer’s study on the global fact-checking initiatives suggests that correcting misinformation, enabling citizens to be well informed and strengthening citizens’ trust in information are the most important objectives for fact-checkers (Singer, 2021).

Fact-checkers efforts in this matter abide on a journalistic logic (Graves, 2018) despite the fact that “only about 60% of fact-checking outlets worldwide are attached to news rooms” (Lauer & Graves, 2024, p. 4). In order to comply with their common mission, fact-checkers tend to adhere to journalistic ideals like accuracy and fairness although they might be interpreted and put into practice differently from organization to organization (Graves, 2018). In fact, as Lauer and Graves argue (2024) fact-checking outlets “operate in extremely different socio-political environments, and their problem awareness, strategic alignments, and day-to-day activities are equally diverse” (p.5). Nonetheless, Graves (2018) states that the organizational differences across the global fact-checking movement are of little importance when compared to the “triumph of the journalistic logic” (p.624). The varied fact-checking movement is an example of how different outlets and organizations adopt a common goal and a common journalistic genre to pursue a common mission: public-truth promotion.

On the other hand, new informative actors and approaches may also include governmental actors, which can share the role of organizing reality and counter-act the dissemination of mis or disinformation. In fact, Ehrl (2023, p.137) states that governmental “anti-fake news initiatives are trying to generate discourses to distinguish fact from fiction and build strategic democratic narratives to inform public, media, and policy agendas” and are emerging as “important political crisis actors” (p.141). The information disorder context urges social and political actors to counter its effects in order to maintain democracy. Furthermore, critical diplomatic contexts like the war in Ukraine reinforce these actors’ goals alignment toward specific narratives that may be created, produced and disseminated by foreign states: strategic disinformation narratives (Aspriadis, 2023).

1.3. Strategic Disinformation Narratives and the War in Ukraine

As aforementioned, the network communication has shaped many societal processes shifting power logics that are now established through a network system (Castells, 2009). Hence, Castells (2009) argues that network society is characterized by a multidimensional change that leads to “conflicts rooted in the contradictory structure of interests and values that constitute society” (p.57). As this armed conflict occurs in the network society paradigm, and since changing media ecologies disrupt International Relations systems in which political actors dialogue through public diplomacy (Miskimmon et al., 2013), it is expected the dissemination of official and unofficial, true and untrue, and contradictory information through traditional and “new” media (Aspriadis, 2023; Mejias & Vokuev, 2017) regarding the war in Ukraine. We

can, then, characterize Russian invasion of Ukraine as a twofold event. On the one hand it is a military event that unfolds in Ukraine's territory. On the other hand, it is an information event that unfolds beyond Ukraine. As Miskimmon et al. (2013) argue:

Something interesting has been happening at the intersection of international relations and communication in the early twenty-first century, an ineffable sense that how international relations is done, by whom, and what it involves, are all being disrupted by new media ecologies. (p.1)

Furthermore, it is at the intersection of international relations and communication that we find public diplomacy: the promotion of messages to foreign audiences and the socialisation and learning with others (Nitoiu & Pasatoiu, 2023). Consequently, public diplomacy main goals are to shape the public perception and to highlight one's position in international order (Nitoiu & Pasatoiu, 2023). These goals are linked to the notion of reputation, which is built through narratives. As Hedling (2021) defines it, the role of Public Diplomacy is one of projecting narratives efficiently in order to resist or deconstruct other narratives or to convince of certain interpretations of political messages.

Miskimmon et al. (2013) presents the concept of strategic narratives as "a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors" (p.3) and thus a means for political actors to exert influence and change the discursive environment. An important aspect of strategic narratives is that they not only highlight an interpretation of what might be happening, they also reinforce what is important about the events that may be happening (Szostek, 2018). Therefore, a media environment in which disinformation proliferation is potentiated by a network structure, the informational space is driven towards "sustainable alternate presentations of reality that are being formed in a narrating process." (Aspriadis, 2021, p.27). Furthermore, political crises within a fragmented media environment bring more difficulties to political actors to legitimize their narratives in the face of disinformation (Ehrl, 2023).

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that strategic narratives are not undeniably the truth. As Massa & Anzera (2022, p. 88) argue, "political efforts to make storytelling understandable lead to events being turned into narratives that blur the lines between fact and fiction.". Strategic narratives are efforts to convince a specific interpretation of events that sometimes clash with other strategic narratives. In a political crisis like the war in Ukraine, strategic narratives are being used by both sides to delegitimize the opponent's efforts and to gather public support (Aspriadis, 2023). As Bennett & Livingston (2018) argue, disinformation

is strongly associated to political ambitions. Hence, disinformation “invites looking at more systematic disruptions of authoritative information flows due to strategic deceptions that may appear very credible to those consuming them” (Bennett & Livingston, 2018, p.124).

Furthermore, since 2013, in the context of an armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Tyushka (2022) argues that strategic narratives can become weaponized narratives to subdue the adversaries’ own narratives. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis has become a case study for the incorporation of disinformation within strategic narratives as it is being used as a tool to sow confusion regarding the events of the war (Aspriadis, 2023; Ehrl, 2023; Tyushka, 2022). Aspriadis (2023) presents the concept of Strategic Disinformation Narratives, which are meant to “subdue adversaries rather than reason with them” (p.26), turning dialogue opportunities into monological encounters (Nitoiu & Pasatoiu, 2018). In other words, Strategic Disinformation Narratives are disinformation campaigns meant to distort the perception of events and thus provoking information disorders in the opponent’s audience (Aspriadis, 2023; Ehrl, 2023), which aligns with Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) definition of information operations: political or non-political actors’ efforts to distort political sentiment and to attain a strategic outcome.

Thus, the 2022 invasion of Ukraine has become a political crisis that poses as an “existential threat” to the policy, identity and, lastly, system narratives of the EU countries towards Russia (Ehrl, 2023). As the Digital News Report Portugal from 2024 (Cardoso et al., 2024) suggests, the war in Ukraine is a prevalent topic among citizens’ encounters with what they perceive as disinformation. A total of 24% of the global sample had come across disinformation regarding the war in Ukraine, suggesting that the topic is still prevalent after two years of the start of the invasion.

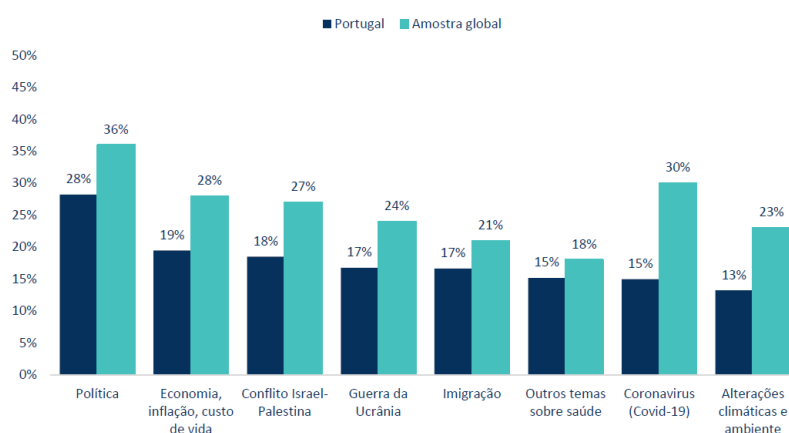


Figura 7. “Deparou-se com informação falsa ou imprecisa sobre algum dos seguintes temas na semana anterior?”, Portugal e Amostra Global, 2024 (resposta múltipla)
Fonte: RDNR 2024. Edição: OberCom. n=2012.

Figure 1.2 - Topics of disinformation users have come across the previous week (n=2012).

Source: Gustavo et al., 2024

The war in Ukraine became a central issue in the relationship between the West and Russia. Thus, it compiles several interested parties in the outcome of the conflict beside Ukraine and Russia: the European Union, the United States of America and NATO among others. In such international event with a voluminous informational output, it is important to define the type of relationship that sits between the collective West and Russia. Regarding the relationship between the EU and Russia, we can characterize it as a set of monological encounters (Nitoiu & Pasatoiu, 2023), suggesting that the dialogue between these political agents is composed by two distinct monologues that function inside a dichotomy between conflict and cooperation. In other words, Russia and the EU perceive the other both as a potential partner and a potential enemy depending on the context. For example, Tyushka (2022) synthesises that

Europe has always occupied a special place in Russia's storytelling of the 'self' and the 'other' – from Russia being portrayed as 'part of Europe' to it being cast as a 'better Europe' or – in the form of Eurasian integration – as an alternative model of regional cooperation while denigrating the normative character of the European liberal-democratic project. (p.115)

Furthermore, this tendency of othering has become more prevalent with the approximation of Ukraine to the "Euro-Atlantic liberal-democratic hegemony" (Tyushka, 2022). Historically, Ukraine and Russia share a similar culture in which the latter exerts influence on the former's identity construction. Nonetheless, lately, European culture has also impacted Ukraine's identity in alternative to the Eurasian and Slavic culture (Minesashvili, 2023), especially after the Euromaidan which reinforced Russian position towards Europe and the West (Claessen, 2023; Minesashvili, 2023). Therefore, Russia's narrative on Ukraine became one of othering, thus increasing the "underlying tension in EU-Russia relations" (Claessen, 2023).

Since then, a "multi-layered hybrid conflict" (Tyushka, 2022) has been in course between the Kremlin and its western opposition with "Ukraine's sovereign westwards move and the Euro-Atlantic liberal-democratic hegemony" as one of the main narratives to frame the issue (p.115). In February of 2022, Russia's efforts on othering Ukraine took another step and materialized on a new military attack to Ukraine's territorial integrity justified by several narratives that not only aim Ukraine and its leaders, but also aim for the legitimization of Russia's actions and the condemnation of European and Western diplomatic actions.

As aforementioned, Russia's narratives tend to accuse Europe and the west of having hegemonic intentions and provoking the armed conflict. Nonetheless, Ukraine is also the main subject of narratives revolving the war. Mainly, Ukraine is accused of practicing genocide towards the Russophone population in Donbas. Furthermore, this narrative is reinforced by the

non-recognition of the Kiev government as legitimate following the Euromaidan accusing it imposing a Nazi State in Ukraine (Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogues & Simanschi, 2023). All these narratives have the main objective of justifying the need for Russia's armed intervention in Ukraine (Johansson-Nogues & Simanschi, 2023) which was characterized as a special operation by the Kremlin's official communications. Consequently, Russia's actions, which are reinforced by their narratives, force Ukraine to seek for more support from the actors that Russia accuses of having hegemonic intentions – Europe, the USA and NATO – and thus fuelling the existent and new narratives on the events of the war (Minesashvili, 2023).

1.4. Counter-disinformation initiatives during political crisis

As aforementioned, changing media ecologies disrupt the communication logic within social and political actors in a network society (Castells, 2009) and potentiates information disorders (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) established by political actors through strategic disinformation narratives (Aspriadis, 2023). As strategic narratives are disseminated in a network environment, their messages can be taken by interpreters (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) that may reproduce and redistribute the information. A network environment, thus, enables disinforming states to be served with individuals who disseminate their intended messages (Aspriadis, 2023). As Mejias and Vokuev (2017) put it, both in Ukraine and Russia, “the opposition has relied on ‘new’ media to disseminate their messages” (p.1030). Thus, “online discourse has become an important space for the generation and propagation of these messages, turning regular citizens into propaganda machines capable of spreading disinformation, paranoia and hatred.” (p.1032).

Furthermore, in a many-to-many system where disinformation can proliferate (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) and in a context where crisis narratives also proliferate, it becomes necessary to counter-act mis and disinformation (Ehrl, 2023). Therefore, anti-disinformation initiatives are taking place, especially in a political crisis context, in an effort “to generate discourses to distinguish fact from fiction and build strategic democratic narratives to inform public, media, and policy agendas” (Ehrl, 2023, p.137). This new role can be provided specially by two actors which become crucial political crisis actors (Ehrl, 2023): journalistic-like actors like fact-checkers or official actors like diplomatic task forces. Specifically in the war in Ukraine context, Ehrl (2023) states that both actors create narrative contexts in the face of Russian disinformation narratives.

Therefore, it becomes important to compare these actors work on countering disinformation regarding the war in Ukraine. Although both focus on the same topic, their

activity is defined within different institutional logics. On the one hand, independent fact-checkers follow a journalistic-logic (Graves, 2018). On the other hand, the diplomatic “myth-busting” task force follows a public diplomacy logic (Hedling, 2021). Thus, the goal of this dissertation is to compare the content of the articles produced under these logics during the first two months after the February 2024 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Several independent fact-checkers, regardless of their location, tend to follow principals shared by the global fact-checking movement through the International Fact-checkers Network (IFCN). It is the case of Polígrafo and Maldita, two fact-checkers certified by the IFCN located in Portugal and Spain respectively. They define themselves as journalistic independent entities that follow technological innovations to pursue their goal to assess the truth in the public space (*Estatuto Editorial*, n.d.; *Transparencia de La Organización*, 2023). With the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Maldita developed a project within the IFCN in order to track disinformation related to the war in Ukraine across the globe. The #UkraineFacts compiles all disinformation cases handled by fact-checkers certified by the IFCN and allows a global collaborative approach to tackle the spread of disinformation. Hence, the work from Polígrafo and Maldita, for example, that were inserted in the database can be easily read, complemented or serve as leads to other international fact-checkers.

In this regard, there already exists literature on the analysis of Iberian fact-checkers’ work regarding the war in Ukraine. For instance, Magallón-Rosa et al. (2023) state that the president of Ukraine is the most common target of disinformation. Their study has revealed as well that military topics such as attacks, arms or armies, are the most recurrent themes of fact-checks produced in Spain. Another very pertinent insight from this study was considered in this dissertation as the reference to children and women was also very common. Finally, in their study, the authors present Newtral’s result for most common themes that this fact-checker worked on. These reveal that besides military actions and Zelensky, themes like Nazism, media montages, Russian denial of attacks and Putin were other recurrent themes (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2023).

On the other hand, since the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and the consequent information war have served as a pretext for the creation of the EUvsDisinfo project under the European External Action Services and the European Commission (Hedling, 2021). This semi-independent project belongs to a diplomatic service and follows public diplomacy key-activities as defined by Nitoiu & Pasatoiu (2023): advocacy through media, creation of international media institutions and performative displays. The project itself has two main key-activities: myth-busting and positive narratives projection (Hedling, 2021). Therefore, EUvsDisinfo aims

at the establishment of positive narratives through the countering of Russian disinformation. Although the project states that it does not represent an official EU standing (EUvsDisinfo, n.d.), it serves nonetheless as a narrative tool to build and solidify a European narrative and reputation through the verification of Russian strategic disinformation narratives. As Hedling (2021) argues, “managing narrative clashes is an essential part of diplomacy” (p.850), and the information war resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a pertinent example of a narrative clash.

In Ehrl (2023) analysis of EUvsDisinfo counter-disinformation, the author delineates the more recurrent topics of Russian disinformation. According to the study, the main topics tend to focus on the portrayal of Ukraine’s regime and respective actions as well as its diplomatic relationships with the EU and the USA, which are represented as the promoters of the Euromaidan protests as well as the accomplices of the Ukrainian Nazi regime. Furthermore, Ehrl (2023) also concludes that Russian narratives on the war tend to justify their military actions by exposing Ukraine’s aggression towards the Donbas population and the west expansionist interests and consequent provocation through NATO’s military exercises and the development of nuclear and biological weapons in Ukraine.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

2.1. Research objects and respective samples

My analysis consists of comparing three anti-disinformation entities' production regarding the war in Ukraine (two independent fact-checkers and one diplomatic project to counter disinformation). In order to pursue this comparison, I collected each entity's articles produced between 24 February 2024 and 24 April 2024, which became my sample of analysis. Followingly, I analysed the samples using MaxQDA software, a qualitative and quantitative content analysis programme that allows the codification of texts and subsequent analysis.

As Maldita and Polígrafo are part of the EDMO network, their articles were listed in EDMO's database of fact-checks on the Ukraine Crisis¹. Therefore, their articles were collected by filtering this database in order to obtain only Maldita's and Polígrafo's articles published during the timeframe of analysis and downloading the corresponding CSV file. For EUvsDisinfo sample collection I proceeded with a manual extraction from their own database. Overall, the sample is constituted by 333 articles in total from which 111 belong to Maldita, 84 to Polígrafo and 138 articles to EUvsDisinfo.

2.2. Research Design

The main goal of this analysis is to infer how strategic narratives are approached by diplomatic and journalistic standards when countering disinformation on the same happening: the war in Ukraine. Therefore, I proceeded with a content analysis which allowed me, as Krippendorff (2018) states, to make "replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use" (p.24). Hence, another goal of this dissertation is to extend a new possibility for future research to infer (Krippendorff, 2018) on counter-disinformation production and compare different entities' work on the same subject. Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge that content analysis is an effort to read texts from an objective perspective through a systematic reading (Krippendorff, 2018). However, the question that guides the analysis emerges from the analyst themselves, being "potentially at odds with whether others could answer them and how" (Krippendorff, 2018, p.15). Hence the research

¹Access link: <https://edmo.eu/thematic-areas/war-in-ukraine/the-fact-checked-disinformation-detected-in-the-eu/>

design that guides the following analysis is heavily influenced by the research question from this dissertation: how do independent and official fact-checking actors approach the mis/disinformative narratives surrounding the war in Ukraine?

The work of Krippendorff (2018) will be the main guideline to my analysis. Therefore as a final remark on the thought process that guides this analysis, it is important to establish two key observations from the author: content analysis (1) “must acknowledge that all texts are produced and read by others and are expected to be significant to them, not just to the analyst” (Krippendorff, 2018, p.27) and also, it (2) “must look outside the physicality of texts—for example, to how people other than the analysts use these texts, what the texts tell them, the conceptions and actions the texts encourage” (p.29). By having these two main ideas present, the analysis of the results and further discussion will focus not only on the texts but on the complete paradigm in which Maldita, Polígrafo and EUvsDisinfo exist, and which has already been developed in the literature review section of this dissertation.

The research design developed in this dissertation is constituted by two main stages of categorization and codification to produce data for the analysis. It is important to clarify what data means in order to understand how the research design affects the data produced as “data are commonly thought of as representing observations or readings, but they are always the products of chosen procedures and geared toward particular ends” (Krippendorff, 2018, p.86). First, I proceeded with a general categorization of each article according to the main theme of the fact-check or myth-bust in order to visualize the distribution of themes for each entities’ sample. Second, I proceeded with a quantitative content analysis considering the narrative elements that appeared in each theme. By doing this twofold analysis, it is possible to visualize and compare how each entity approaches the countering of disinformation on the same subject and expected to observe some differences and resemblances on their approaches. This will allow to achieve the goal of this dissertation: to better understand how independent and official countering of disinformation coexist in the same ecosystem and share similar goals.

The elaboration of the codebook was guided by Krippendorff (2018) definition of coding. The author defines the process of coding as the “mapping a given set of descriptively unknown but distinct and enumerable phenomena” (p.286) which allows to transform the phenomena observed into comparable valued units. In the case of this dissertation the phenomena are the production of counter-disinformation articles through journalistic and diplomatic standards by three different entities. According to the analysis done, the units of analysis were (1) the articles of each entity for the theme analysis, (2) the words of the article for the narrative elements analysis, and the (3) sentences of the articles for the analysis of co-occurrences between

narrative elements. The three analyses allowed not only to compare quantitatively the number of articles that focus on determined theme, but also allowing to calculate the mean of how many narrative elements appear per article under determined theme and with what frequency these elements co-occur on the same sentence, thus, deepening the discussion and the inferences done of the results.

The elaboration of the codebook and the process of codification were simultaneous as it became an inductive and deductive process of coding. The work of Hsieh & Shannon (2005) on how to approach qualitative content analysis was of immense value for the purpose of this dissertation. One of the approaches presented by the authors is the summative approach. It consists of a combination of quantitative and latent content analysis in order to explore the usages of keywords. It starts with the quantification of keywords which is then complemented with the interpretation of the usage of the keywords in their context. The definition of keywords is derived from the researcher's interest of study and/or the literature review which therefore implies that the keywords are defined before and during the codification process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The reading of existent literature on narratives surrounding the war in Ukraine (Cap, 2023; Ehrl, 2023; Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogues & Simanschi, 2023; Kordan, 2022) and on fact-checking of disinformation related to the war in Ukraine (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2023) was, therefore, very pertinent to the listing of narrative elements related to the Ukraine crisis that were then quantified and interpreted according to its context. For this reason, before analysing the quantification and usage of the narrative elements conceived, it was crucial to define themes in which the narrative elements were used as this would facilitate and narrow the interpretation of the usage. The elaboration of the themes was also conceived from the literature review and the first codifications of the samples. In annex A it is possible to see a table with the themes of the codebook developed and the listing of some narrative elements withdrawn from the literature studied in this dissertation. In annex B it is possible to see the list of narrative elements searched for.

As this is a comparative analysis between journalistic-like and political-like fact-checking, I opted to develop a new research design that better fits the research objectives and my objects of study, specially EUvsDisinfo. Therefore, along the codification process and the emergence of not applicable cases, the codes were rethought and reorganized into more broad or more narrow definitions resulting in theme codes that could be applied to the majority of articles on the sample and could highlight the distinct themes that surround disinformation related to the war in Ukraine. Overall, the established themes are constituted by recurrent actions on the war

(ex: military actions) and political and international relations subjects or actions (ex: Leader, State and Diplomacy). In addition, the categories were arranged in order to be broad categories that could be applied to each side of the war: Ukraine or Russia and respective political allies.

Table 2.1 - Codebook of themes

Theme	Definition
Citizen Action	Scenarios involving civilians acting or related to the context of the war in Ukraine in the form of supporting or boycotting one of the sides in the war. Actions can be pro or anti Russia or Ukraine.
Diplomacy	Scenarios that involve diplomatic relations with Ukraine or Russia in the form of agreements, treaties, cooperation, solidarity or sanctions, and by the figure of international or national bodies and states, and their leaders. Diplomatic actions can be directed towards Ukraine or Russia.
Disinformative Action	Disinformative scenarios about an alleged disinformative action in the context of the War in Ukraine. These scenarios can involve the staging or fabrication of an event, as well as the misinterpretation of a real war event in order to seem fabricated. Disinformative actions can be pro or anti Russia or Ukraine and respective allies. For this category, disinformation on disinformation is considered, i.e. when the fact-check focuses on disinformation whose topic is the attempt to disinform people (example: users spread the story that the images of a war case are not true or were not taken in the context of the war in Ukraine).
Hegemony	Scenarios involving the expansion or the intention of territorial expansion as well as the control or political influence over sovereign states. Expansion can be carried out by the West or by Russia.
Intensification	Scenarios involving the intensification of the conflict/crisis in Ukraine through the direct participation of other states in the war in the form of sending troops or military attacks with national armed forces. Scenarios that refer to Ukraine or Russia declaring war on states other than themselves are also considered escalation. Intensification can be provoked by Ukraine or by Russia and respective allies.
MilitaryAction	Scenarios that refer to war events caused by armed forces in the territory. These scenarios can involve Russian or Ukrainian troops. When it is not specified which army provoked the attack, it is classified as undefined Military Action (example: a building was hit by a missile without specifying to which army it belonged).

Peace	Scenarios involving a reduction in the intensity of armed conflict or progress towards achieving peace.
The Leader	Scenarios that refer to the leader of Ukraine or Russia and/or his inner circle (e.g. family). These are scenarios that identify the leader as the central figure of the event being fact-checked. The leader could be Volodymyr Zelensky or Vladimir Putin.
The State	Scenarios that refer to the governance of the Ukrainian or Russian states in the form of orders, actions or political ideologies. As in the case of the Leader, in these scenarios, the fact-checking must centre on an event caused by or directly related to the Russian or Ukrainian states.

After the initial codification of the main themes in each entities' repertoire, I furthered the analysis by counting the frequency of expressions that relate to elements of the narratives that surround the war in Ukraine. As mentioned before, the elaboration of this list of elements was done under a summative approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by reading the existent literature on the war in Ukraine and by relating the main themes to more specific subjects, locations or expressions used in the coverage of the war in Ukraine. It is important to highlight that the previous process of rearranging the theme categories in broader ones helped to define some elements for this part of the analysis. The counting was done through MaxQDA software which allows to create dictionaries that group several expressions into a unique category. Furthermore, once the dictionaries are defined, the software allows to run through all texts and code them according to the established dictionary. For instance, the code "Nazi" is the result of the dictionary group "Nazi" that is constituted by expressions such as "nazi", "neo-nazi", "swastika", "Hitler". As my group of samples were composed by three different languages, the dictionary expressions that constitute a code were written in the three languages: Portuguese, Spanish and English.

After the codification of themes and narrative elements it became possible to quantify the codes and create comparisons between the units of analysis regarding EUvsDisinfo, Polígrafo and Maldita's counter-disinformation work.

CHAPTER 3

Results

3.1 Theme Distribution

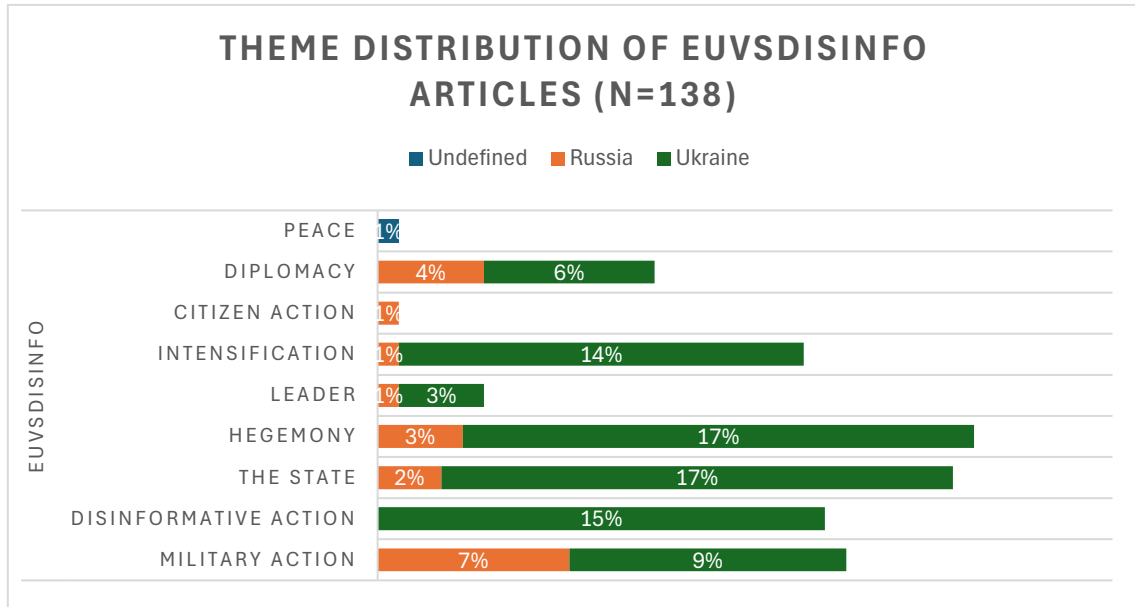


Figure 3.1 - Theme distribution of EUvsDisinfo articles (n=138)

Looking at the EUvsDisinfo articles, we can highlight that the themes of Hegemony and State are the more prevalent during the first two months since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Hegemony is the main theme on 20% of EUvsDisinfo articles as well as State that comprises 19% of their work. Furthermore, Military Action, Intensification of the conflict and Disinformative Actions are other themes that reveal to be prevalent on EUvsDisinfo coverage of the war in Ukraine. Unexpectedly, Diplomacy is not very relevant, only comprising a tenth of their articles. Also, it is pertinent to highlight the difference between State and Leader theme representation in EUvsDisinfo articles. State comprises 19% and Leader comprises only 4% of articles which indicates that EUvsDisinfo intervenes more on disinformation regarding Ukraine's regime and governability rather than Zelensky's leadership.

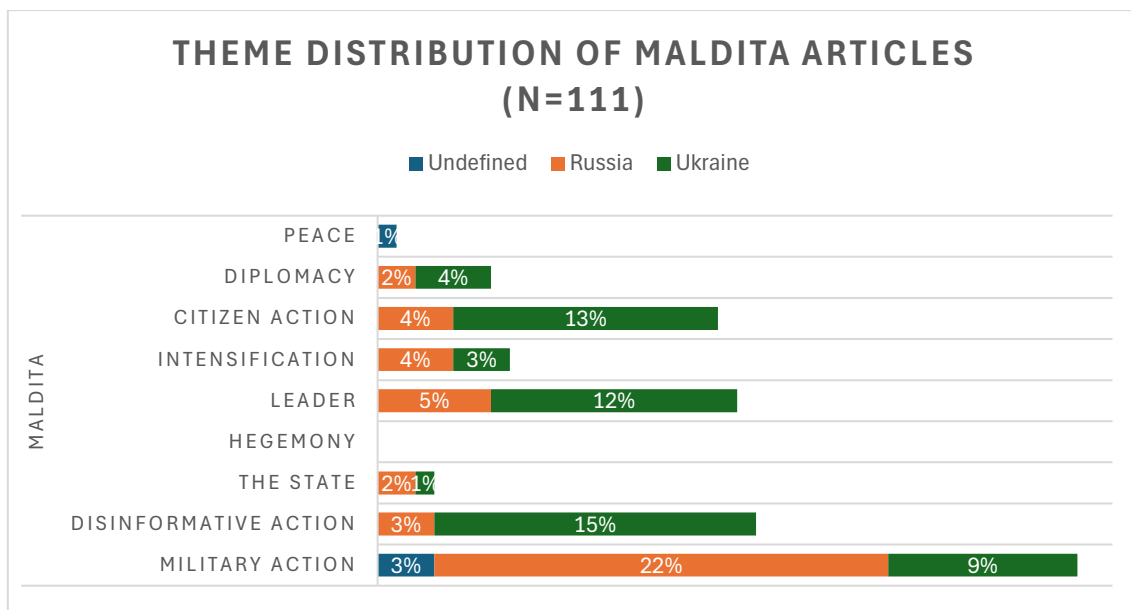


Figure 3.2 - Theme distribution of Maldita articles (n=111)

Maldita, on the other hand, presents a different theme distribution on their articles. Military Action is the most prevalent theme with a high margin: 34% of Maldita's articles comprises this theme. The following more prevalent theme is Disinformative Action followed by Citizen Action and Leader. Hegemony, Peace and State are the themes with the least prevalence.

These results are very different from EUvsDisinfo results, which should be expected as the context of Maldita's work is also very different. Being an independent fact-checker from Spain, the themes more related with public diplomacy and Russian strategic narratives are less represented. For instance, Hegemony, which had the higher prevalence on EUvsDisinfo's work, does not comprise a single article in Maldita's work for the same period analysed. Also, State had little significance in Maldita's coverage when countering disinformation regarding the war in Ukraine. Nonetheless, there are some similarities as well, especially for the Military Action and Disinformative Action themes which present similar representation in both entities' samples.

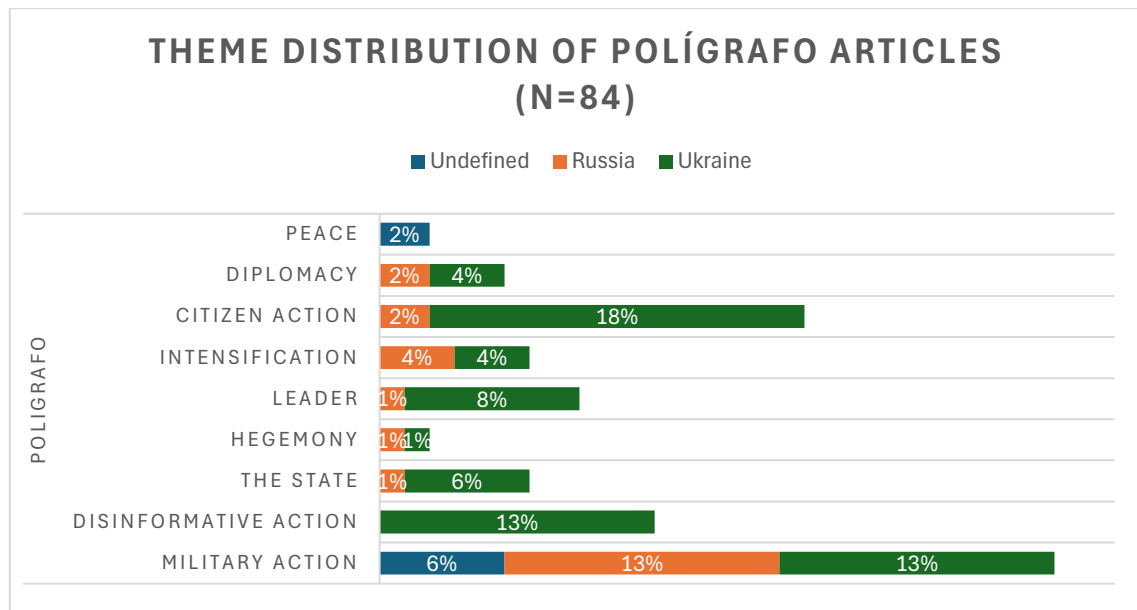


Figure 3.3 - Theme distribution of Polígrafo articles (n=84)

When looking at the theme distribution in Polígrafo's articles, we can notice that Military Action stands out with the higher prevalence followed by Citizen Action. The remaining themes reveal a similar representation except for Hegemony and Peace which comprise each 2% of the whole sample. Like Maldita, the theme Leader presents a higher representation than the theme State but nonetheless with very close prevalences. Furthermore, Citizen Action and Disinformative Action are two of the main focuses in Polígrafo's work, just like Maldita. Therefore, we can state that Polígrafo tends to reveal similar tendencies as Maldita in their theme distribution across their articles, which was expected since they are both independent fact-checking entities with a solid journalistic ground.

These results already indicate some differences on independent and official approaches to counter disinformation. Overall, each entity reveals different theme distribution. Nonetheless, it is clear that both independent fact-checkers show more resemblances between them and have a different thematic approach than official countering of disinformation to the cases they correct. From this analysis we can define 6 different themes represented in the top 3 more prevalent themes in each of the entities' work: Military Action (EUvsDisinfo, Maldita and Polígrafo), Disinformative Action (Maldita and Polígrafo), Citizen Action (Polígrafo), Leader (Maldita), Hegemony and State (EUvsDisinfo).

3.2. Narrative elements' frequency and co-occurrences

Once the main themes are established it is pertinent to further this analysis by comparing how each theme is approached on its own. To achieve that, for each entity I will analyse the mean

of narrative elements from the war in Ukraine per article in accordance with the theme the article belongs. Thus, it will become possible to see which entity uses more narrative elements in their production of counter-disinformation as well as which elements are most used per theme and per entity. The calculation of the mean will clarify which narrative elements are more pertinent to the counter-disinformation of each thematic for each entity and thus, it will allow to visualize how aligned or not the three entities are with each other when it comes to fact-checking or myth-busting disinformation related to the war in Ukraine. The higher the mean, the higher the prevalence of that narrative element for the thematic and entity analysed. The analysis of the frequency can be complemented by the analysis of co-occurrences between elements in the same sentence, which will allow to visualize how the elements relate to each other according to the theme as well as the producer of the article.

In annex C it is possible to see the results of the element' frequency according to the 6 themes highlighted before and the entities analysed. In annexes D to T it is possible to see the matrices for the most relevant co-occurrences between elements according to each theme and entity.

3.2.1. Military Action theme

Table 3.1 - Most frequent narrative elements in Military Action articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Attacks (\bar{x} = 5,73), Civilians (\bar{x} = 4,41), Russian Military (\bar{x} = 2,86), Russian Government (\bar{x} = 2,09), Ukraine Strategic Cities (\bar{x} = 2,14)
Maldita	Attacks (\bar{x} =4,86), Civilians (\bar{x} =1,73), Russian Military (\bar{x} =1,19)
Polígrafo	Attacks (\bar{x} =3,81), Civilians (\bar{x} =1,33), Russian Military (\bar{x} =1,04)

For the Military Action theme, EUvsDisinfo is the entity that uses more narrative elements. These relate more frequently to attacks, civilians, Russia's military and government and Ukrainian Strategic Cities. On the other side, it is possible to notice that for the coverage of disinformation related to military attacks, the independent fact-checkers tend to use with similar frequencies the same narrative elements. Attacks, civilians and Russia's military are the elements that appear at least once every fact-checking article they published under this theme. Therefore, EUvsDisinfo stands out by introducing more often elements related to the Russian Government and Ukrainian strategic cities which can be explained by its sole focus on Kremlin official communication (Hedling, 2021).

The coverage of Military Action related disinformation was the one that revealed the most similar usages of narrative elements between the three entities. Besides the usage of Attacks and Civilian related elements, all three entities tend to focus more on the Russian army's actions instead of the Ukrainian one. Focusing now on the co-occurrences of elements on the same sentence, it is possible to see that, regardless of the entity covering it, this thematic has a significant focus on Attacks and Civilians which very often occur together. EUvsDisinfo is the entity that stands out as it has used attacks and civilian related expressions 50 times in the same sentence whereas Maldita and Polígrafo have done it 21 and 5 times respectively. These sentences often describe military happenings of war like shootings, bombings and explosions.

However, there are differences between the diplomatic and journalistic approaches. For instance, although all three entities counter disinformation related to Military Attacks, their verdicts turn to be different since the disinformation they approach has different origins. EUvsDisinfo, which focuses on Kremlin propaganda (Hedling, 2021), counters disinformation related to the accountability of attacks and killings of civilians in the war, which corresponds to one of the main topics of Russian strategic narratives (Ehrl, 2023). Nonetheless, EUvsDisinfo does not counter the narrative in its totality but the disinformation adapted to specific events and therefore each article tends to focus on those specific events. For instance, in one article the contextualization is as follows: "Pro-Russian disinformation narrative trying to attribute responsibility for the Russian missile attack on Ukrainian civilians in the Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk to Ukrainian forces." (*DISINFO: Ukrainian Fascists Shelled the Kramatorsk Railway Station with a "Tochka U" Missile System*, 2022, para. 2). And the verdict is the following:

Contrary to pro-Kremlin media claims, many facts indicate that Russian forces attacked the Kramatorsk railway station itself with a Tochka-U missile, killing over 57 waiting civilians and injuring over 114 civilians, according to the Governor of Donetsk Region as of 11 April 2022. (*DISINFO: Ukrainian Fascists Shelled the Kramatorsk Railway Station with a "Tochka U" Missile System*, 2022, para. 4)

Therefore, although Russia's strategic narratives tend to hold accountable the West and Ukraine for the alleged Russian military intervention (Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023), in EUvsDisinfo's work it is possible to notice that the narrative is expanded into the narration of specific events which are framed in order to deny any responsibility on military attacks and attributing it to their enemies.

On the other hand, as Maldita and Polígrafo focus more on social media disinformative content (Magallón-Rosa et al., 2022), the disinformation they counter tends to be decontextualized information that is presented as the portray of real attacks or explosions in Ukraine but are in fact from other countries. For example, one of Maldita's articles focuses on a supposed video of a Russian air attack on civilians:

‘Que el mundo entero se entere de que los aviones de guerra de Rusia están disparando a los inocentes civiles de Ucrania’. Con este mensaje se difunde un vídeo en el que vemos a personas corriendo por la calle mientras les disparan desde el aire. (*No, Este Vídeo No Es de “Aviones de Guerra de Rusia” Disparando a Civiles En Ucrania: Está Grabado En Turquía En 2016*, 2022, para. 1)

The verdict of the fact-checker in this article was that it was a decontextualized video from 2016 in Türkiye: “Aunque circula como si fuese actual y relacionado con el reciente bombardeo de Rusia en varias ciudades ucranianas, la búsqueda inversa de imágenes muestra que el vídeo fue publicado en julio 2016.” (*No, Este Vídeo No Es de “Aviones de Guerra de Rusia” Disparando a Civiles En Ucrania: Está Grabado En Turquía En 2016*, 2022, para. 3). In addition, similar articles can be found in Polígrafo's work under this thematic. The Portuguese fact-checker has also analysed disinformation on social media that misinformed people into thinking that images of attacks were from Ukraine when instead they were from China: “O vídeo é autêntico, mas na realidade foi filmado na China, no dia 12 de agosto de 2015”. (*Vídeo Viral Mostra “Grande Explosão” Na Ucrânia Após Mais Um Ataque Aéreo Da Rússia?*, 2022, para. 4)

Although the work of the three entities focuses on alleged specific military events of the war, the disinformative framing tends to differ between the diplomatic and journalistic articles. These analysis helps to understand why there is a strong association between Russian Military and Attacks related elements in all three entities work since the disinformative topic focuses on military attacks misrepresented as Russian, the case of the journalistic entities, or on the unaccountability of the Russian army, the case of EUvsDisinfo. Furthermore, the analysis also explains the Russian Military related elements' strong association with Civilians related expressions since the disinformation misrepresents real or alleged Russian attacks that affect Ukraine's population.

3.2.2. Citizen Action Theme

Table 3.2 - Most frequent narrative elements in Citizen Action articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Attacks ($\bar{x}=9$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=4$), Europe ($\bar{x}=1$), Russian Military ($\bar{x}=1$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=4$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=1$), Ukraine Military ($\bar{x}=1$), War Crimes ($\bar{x}=1$)
Maldita	Attacks ($\bar{x}=1,72$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=4,11$)
Polígrafo	Civilians ($\bar{x}=4,11$)

For the Citizen Action theme, it is visible a strong discrepancy between the diplomatic approach of EUvsDisinfo and the journalistic approach of the independent fact-checkers. Although EUvsDisinfo only covered this theme once, it is again the entity that uses more elements more frequently. The elements that stand out the most are Attacks, Civilians and Russia's Government. Nonetheless, military related elements, like the Ukrainian and Russian Military as well as war crimes, were also referred once. On the other hand, for the independent fact-checkers, this thematic is not strongly associated with the narrative elements analysed since only Attacks and Civilians have more prominence.

Diving into the analysis of co-occurrences between elements, there are not strong association between elements in EUvsDisinfo sample. However, although they cannot be considered strong associations, in the sample of the independent fact-checkers it is possible to notice a similar tendency between Maldita and Polígrafo: the association between Nazism related elements and Civilians. This is explained when analysing the articles in which the association occurs. Both independent fact-checkers covered the same disinformation case regarding images of a man with nazi symbols tattooed and the same man with a police uniform:

Están circulando dos fotos que supuestamente corresponderían al "subjefe de policía" de la región de Kyiv/Kiev. En una de las fotos el hombre aparece sin camiseta, apuntando con un arma, y se puede ver que lleva tatuajes con simbología nazi en el torso y los brazos. En la otra imagen va vestido con lo que parece un uniforme policial. (*No, No Hay Pruebas de Que Este Hombre Que Tiene Tatuajes Con Simbología Nazi Sea El "Subjefe de Policía de La Región de Kiev"*, *En Ucrania*, 2022, para. 1)

However, the verdict reveals that the man belongs to the Azov Battalion and not the Ukrainian police force: "Mas essa alegação é falsa. O homem que surge nas imagens chama-se Artem Bonov Zalesov, um neonazi ligado ao Batalhão Azov, uma unidade de combate

ucraniana ultra-nacionalista. E não, este indivíduo não é comandante da polícia de Kiev” (Ferreira, 2022, para. 4)

3.2.3. Disinformative Action Theme

Table 3.3 - Most frequent narrative elements in Disinformative Action articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Attacks ($\bar{x}=2,10$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=7$), Disinformative Action ($\bar{x}=1,38$), Europe ($\bar{x}=2,62$), Genocide ($\bar{x}=2,05$), Russian Military ($\bar{x}=1,95$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=1,52$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=7,71$), War Crimes ($\bar{x}=1,76$), West ($\bar{x}=2,05$)
Maldita	Attacks ($\bar{x}=3,45$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=4,10$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=1,25$), Zelensky ($\bar{x}=2,35$)
Polígrafo	Attacks ($\bar{x}=3,09$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=3,82$), Disinformative Action ($\bar{x}=2,18$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=1$)

For the Disinformative Action theme, many narrative elements have a strong prevalence in the EUvsDisinfo sample but the ones which stand out the most are Ukraine Strategic Cities and Civilians, followed by Europe, Attacks and the West. Although EUvsDisinfo covers more narrative elements than the independent fact-checkers, it is possible to see many common usages of narrative elements between the diplomatic approach and the journalistic one. Overall, the independent fact-checkers have used many narrative elements such as Attacks, Civilians and Ukraine Strategic Cities in a similar proportion to EUvsDisinfo.

When analysing the association between elements under this theme, it is possible to notice a clear difference between the diplomatic and the independent approaches. On the one hand, EUvsDisinfo strongly associates Civilians related elements with other narrative elements like Ukrainian Strategic Cities, Attacks, Genocide, Russian Military and Government and the West. This is due to its intense coverage of the disinformation resulting from the Bucha Massacres episode. Most of their articles under this theme tend to revolve around the same premisses and conclusions since Kremlin propaganda established that the massacres were staged. For example, premisses like “Western and Ukrainian media and politicians are spreading another fake about the alleged killings of civilians by the Russian military in the Kiev city of Bucha” (*DISINFO: The West Is Spreading Fakes about Russian Atrocities in Bucha*, 2022, para. 1) or “Pro-Kremlin disinformation obfuscating atrocities against Ukrainian civilians committed by the Russian armed forces in Bucha, in the vicinity of Kyiv.” (*DISINFO: Russian War Crimes*

in Bucha Were Staged by a Music Channel Director, 2022, para. 2) tend to be concluded the same way: “A witness told Human Rights Watch that soldiers forced the five men to kneel on the side of the road, pulled their T-shirts over their heads, and shot one of the men in the back of the head” (*DISINFO: Russian War Crimes in Bucha Were Staged by a Music Channel Director*, 2022, para. 5).

Furthermore, the counter-disinformation of these Kremlin allegations also tend to emphasise the war crimes that happened in Bucha and thus explaining the strong association between Genocide and War Crime related elements regarding this theme. For example, the following citation from the president of Ukraine also tend to be incorporated in EUvsDisinfo coverage under this theme:

"These are war crimes and they will be recognized by the world as genocide. We are aware of thousands of people killed and tortured, with their limbs cut off. Raped women, murdered children. I believe this is genocide" (*DISINFO: The West Is Spreading Fakes about Russian Atrocities in Bucha*, 2022, para. 10)

This analysis corroborates the tendency observed before when counting only the frequency of elements under this theme as EUvsDisinfo not only used more narrative elements but also associated these elements between each other more frequently.

On the other hand, Polígrafo and Maldita strongest association occur mostly between Attacks and Civilians related elements since the disinformation that alleges that real videos and images of the war are in fact false tends to focus only on these narrative elements. For example:

‘VÍCTIMA DE BOMBARDEO RUSO EN 2022 CON LA MISMA ROPA Y VENDAJE QUE EN EL 2018 🤡🤡🤡 Esta mujer fue víctima de una explosión de gas que se produjo en un edificio en Ucrania en el 2018, no de una bomba lanzada a día de hoy por los rusos’, afirma un contenido en Telegram. Pero es un bulo: la mujer fue herida el 24 de febrero de 2022 en Ucrania. (*No, Esta Mujer No Fue Víctima de Una Explosión de Gas Que Se Produjo En Un Edificio En 2018: Fue Herida al Inicio Del Ataque Ruso a Ucrania de 2022*, 2022, para. 1)

In addition, the verdicts or explanations of the case also tend to use the same narrative elements incorporated in the original disinformation:

Após o bombardeamento de um hospital pediátrico em Mariupol, Ucrânia, no dia 9 de março, foram difundidas imagens de mulheres grávidas feridas a serem evacuadas do edifício destruído. Nas redes sociais, entretanto,

incluindo um "tweet" da Embaixada da Rússia no Reino Unido, surgiu a denúncia de que uma dessas vítimas é uma modelo e "influencer" ucraniana e que tudo não terá passado, afinal, de uma encenação de propaganda anti-Rússia. (Leal, 2022a, para. 1)

3.2.4. Hegemony Theme

Table 3.4 - Most frequent narrative elements in Hegemony articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Civilians ($\bar{x}=1,11$), Europe ($\bar{x}=2,32$), NATO ($\bar{x}=2,04$), Nazi ($\bar{x}=1,29$), Putin ($\bar{x}=1,61$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=2,75$), USA ($\bar{x}=2,32$), West ($\bar{x}=3,14$)
Polígrafo	Civilians ($\bar{x}=1,50$), Diplomacy ($\bar{x}=1,50$), NATO ($\bar{x}=5,50$), Putin ($\bar{x}=1$)

For the Hegemony theme, only EUvsDisinfo and Polígrafo produced articles under this thematic. Overall, it is possible to notice that some elements' frequency tends to be aligned between the two entities such as the elements referring to NATO, Putin and Civilians. Nonetheless, EUvsDisinfo is the entity that incorporates more elements more frequently and mentions other political actors in the Ukrainian Crisis like Europe, the USA, the West as well as the Russian Government. Furthermore, it is also relevant to stand out that elements referring to Nazism appear at least once in every article of EUvsDisinfo, whereas it appears in none of Polígrafo's coverage under this theme.

Regarding the co-occurrences of narrative elements, EUvsDisinfo articles tends to associate several elements between each other. In addition, it is possible to notice a pattern on how these elements co-occur in the same sentence. Firstly, EUvsDisinfo tends to group elements related to the western political actors (EU, USA, NATO and the West) since one of the main topics under this theme is the western provocation to Russia in order to justify the invasion. For example, "The Russian military operation in Ukraine ends the Western dreams about Ukrainian membership in NATO." (*DISINFO: The West Had Been Provoking the War in Ukraine for Years – Russia Had No Other Choice*, 2022, para. 2) is one of the premisses of disinformation being analysed in an article, which is disproved by EUvsDisinfo: "The US and EU did not aim to escalate relations with Russia and were not preparing for military conflict." (*DISINFO: The West Had Been Provoking the War in Ukraine for Years – Russia Had No Other Choice*, 2022, para. 5).

On the other hand, Russian political actors (Putin and Russian Government related elements) also tend to occur in the same sentence as these were the actors conveying the idea of a western provocation. Therefore, many articles tend to end with a call to action to accede another of EUvsDisinfo resources: “See our guide to deciphering pro-Kremlin disinformation around Putin's war.” (*DISINFO: Tensions in Ukraine Are a Western Intelligence Plot to Destabilise Russia*, 2022, para. 5).

Furthermore, there is also a strong association between USA and Bio-weapons related elements which refer to another strong narrative on the war which goal is to justify the Russian invasion (Ehrl, 2023; Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023). Therefore, many articles under this thematic have premisses like “According to experts, 16 American biological laboratories operate on Ukrainian territory” (*DISINFO: US Hasn't Ratified the Biological Weapons Convention and Uses Labs around Russia*, 2022, para. 1) or “Ukraine and the United States violated the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by developing biological weapons components w in Ukrainian biolaboratories located in close proximity to Russia.” (*DISINFO: Ukraine and US Violated the Biological Weapons Convention*, 2022, para. 1).

Lastly, it is also possible to notice a strong association between Putin and EU related elements. These commonly co-occur in the same sentence with two different approaches. Firstly, to attribute accountability to Putin for starting a military conflict in Europe: “On 24 February 2022, Putin announced his decision to launch a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, which started the largest military conflict in Europe since WWII” (*DISINFO: For the West, Ukraine Is a “Springboard” in Its Confrontation with Russia*, 2022, para. 4). Secondly, to promote the EU's official response to the invasion of Ukraine through a call-to-action paragraph common in several articles: “See the EU's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine here along with EUvsDisinfo's Guide to Deciphering Pro-Kremlin disinformation around Putin's War.” (*DISINFO: The West Had Been Provoking the War in Ukraine for Years – Russia Had No Other Choice*, 2022, para. 7).

3.2.5. The State Theme

Table 3.5 - Most frequent narrative elements in The State articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Attacks ($\bar{x}=1,07$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=2,25$), Diplomacy ($\bar{x}=1,19$), Europe ($\bar{x}=1,70$), Genocide ($\bar{x}=1,44$), Nazi ($\bar{x}=3,44$), Putin ($\bar{x}=1,30$), Russian Military ($\bar{x}=1,33$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=2,78$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=1,59$)
Maldita	Attacks ($\bar{x}=1,33$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=7$), Russian Military ($\bar{x}=1,33$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=1,33$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=3$), Ukraine Government ($\bar{x}=4,67$)
Polígrafo	Civilians ($\bar{x}=5,33$), Europe ($\bar{x}=1,33$), Peace ($\bar{x}=1$), Putin ($\bar{x}=1,7$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=1,50$), Ukraine Government ($\bar{x}=2,17$), USA ($\bar{x}=1$), Zelensky ($\bar{x}=1$)

The State theme is the one in which overall the three entities use more elements more frequently. However, although elements like Attacks, Civilians, Europe or Russian Military are used by all three entities, some elements stand out by being used only by EUvsDisinfo or the independent fact-checkers. For instance, Nazi, Genocide and Diplomacy are only used by EUvsDisinfo. On the other hand, the independent fact-checkers refer more the Ukrainian Government than the Russian Government, which does not occur in EUvsDisinfo articles.

It is by looking at the co-occurrences between elements that more differences stand out between the diplomatic and journalistic entities. Under this theme, EUvsDisinfo associates several narrative elements between each other. For instance, Attacks related elements strongly associate with Civilian and Russian Military related elements since many of the disinformation covered by the diplomatic entity focused on the accountability of the Ukrainian Crisis. On the one hand, once more EUvsDisinfo countered disinformative allegations that held Ukraine accountable and Russia unaccountable of the war events: “The Ukrainian authorities are using Kyiv residents as a human shield and deploying artillery guns in residential quarters.” (*DISINFO: Ukraine Uses Kyiv Residents as Human Shield*, 2022, para. 1) or “Moscow has no plans to “occupy” Ukraine, and Russian forces do not pose any threat to Ukrainian civilians or civilian infrastructure.” (*DISINFO: Russian Troops Pose No Threat to Ukrainian Civilians*, 2022, para. 1).

Furthermore, it is also relevant to highlight that Nazism related elements tend to appear together with either Russian Government or West related elements since one of the main

narratives on the war is the Ukrainian Nazi State and the respective complicity of the West (Ehrl, 2023; Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogues & Simanschi, 2023; Kordan, 2022):

Recurring pro-Kremlin disinformation narratives about Euromaidan portraying the 2013-14 Ukrainian revolution as a coup d'etat orchestrated by the West, and Ukrainian politics and society as dominated by Nazi/fascist ideology. (*DISINFO: Kyiv Regime Came to Power as a Result of Illegal Coup Organised by the West*, 2022, para. 3)

Lastly, Putin and Russian government related elements also tend to appear in the same sentence due to the previously analysed call to action that EUvsDisinfo inserts in the end of their articles.

On the other hand, the independent fact-checkers' work does not reveal any strong association between narrative elements under this thematic. Nonetheless, it is possible to notice that Polígrafo tends to associate references to Ukrainian Strategic Cities and the Ukrainian Government referring to the narrative that the Ukrainian State has always intended to attack the Donbass region which has been disseminated online by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and thus covering similar narratives to the Russian strategic narrative of Ukraine's aggression towards the Russian ethnic minorities (Fridrichová, 2023):

‘Durante a operação militar especial, alguns documentos classificados do comando da Guarda Nacional da Ucrânia foram adquiridos pelos militares russos. Estes documentos confirmam a preparação secreta do regime de Kiev de uma operação ofensiva no Donbass, em março de 2022’ (Leal, 2022b, para. 2)

3.2.6. The Leader Theme

Table 3.6 - Most frequent narrative elements in The Leader articles

Organisation	Most frequent elements per article (mean ≥ 1)
EUvsDisinfo	Attacks ($\bar{x}=1$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=3,40$), Europe ($\bar{x}=1,40$), NATO ($\bar{x}=1,80$), Putin ($\bar{x}=2,20$), Russian Military ($\bar{x}=1,20$), Russian Government ($\bar{x}=2,60$), Ukraine Strategic Cities ($\bar{x}=2,60$), USA ($\bar{x}=1,80$), West ($\bar{x}=1$), Zelensky ($\bar{x}=4$)
Maldita	Attacks ($\bar{x}=1,74$), Civilians ($\bar{x}=2,32$), Disinformative Action ($\bar{x}=1,16$), Nazi ($\bar{x}=1,32$), Putin ($\bar{x}=1,95$), Zelensky ($\bar{x}=9,63$)
Polígrafo	Civilians ($\bar{x}=1,75$), Nazi ($\bar{x}=2,13$), Zelensky ($\bar{x}=5,88$)

For the Leader theme, EUvsDisinfo is again the entity that uses more narrative elements more frequently. The three entities tend to be aligned regarding the use of Zelensky, Attacks and Civilians related elements. However, opposite to what occurred in The State theme, under the Leader thematic, the independent fact-checker often use the narrative elements Nazi and EUvsDisinfo does not. Furthermore, although the theme focuses on the Ukrainian and Russian leaders, EUvsDisinfo tends to also use more elements that refer to collective institutions like NATO, Europe, USA or even the West.

Diving into the analysis of co-occurrences of narrative elements under this thematic, it is possible to notice that EUvsDisinfo tendencies observed before do not apply to this thematic since it is not possible to observe as strong associations between narrative elements as the ones analysed before. Also, the independent fact-checkers do not reveal as many strong associations either. Nonetheless, it is possible to notice frequent co-occurrences between elements related with Zelensky and others like Civilians, Disinformative Action and Nazism.

Although many articles focus on the rumours of Zelensky's escape from Ukraine to Poland (*La Desinformación Sin Pruebas Que Afirma Que El Presidente Zelenski Ha Huido de Ucrania (a 1 de Marzo de 2022)*, 2022; *La No Huida de Zelenski: 26 Días de Desinformaciones Sobre La Salida Del País Del Presidente de Ucrania*, 2022; *Las Desinformaciones Sobre Que Zelenski, El Presidente de Ucrania, Ha Huido a Polonia (a 7 de Marzo)*, 2022), one of the strongest association between elements occurs in another specific topic of disinformation revolving Zelensky: its association with nazism:

E à medida que se intensificou a guerra real no terreno, as partilhas nas redes sociais desta fotografia do presidente Volodymyr Zelensky - a segurar uma camisola da seleção nacional de futebol com o seu nome e uma cruz suástica nazi - também foram aumentando, embora seja comprovadamente falsa.

(Sampaio, 2022, para. 1)

The disinformation was either originated from false contexts (Wardle & Derakshan, 2017) – “Se difunde como si esa cruz que lleva fuese un símbolo de la "Alemania Nazi", pero no es cierto. Es el emblema de las Fuerzas Armadas de Ucrania.” (*No, La Camiseta de Zelenski En Esta Imagen No Lleva Un Símbolo de La “Alemania Nazi”: Es El Emblema de Las Fuerzas Armadas de Ucrania*, 2022, para. 1) – or from image manipulations, which explains the strong association with disinformative action related elements – “No, esta foto en la que el presidente de Ucrania, Volodímir Zelenski, aparece sujetando una camiseta con la esvástica nazi no es real: es un montaje” (*Zelenski y Las Desinformaciones y Montajes Para Acusarle de Ser Nazi*, 2022, para. 5)

Furthermore, although the Russian strategic narrative presents Ukraine as a Nazi state (Kordan, 2022; Johansson-Nogués & Simansch, 2023; Fridrichová, 2023; Ehrl, 2023), expressions referring to Putin also tend to be associated with Nazism and Attacks related. When analysing Polígrafo's work it is possible to notice that the Ukrainian Nazi narrative has been inverted by social media users which presented an out of context montage of a Time Magazine cover with Putin presented as Adolf Hitler:

Está a ser partilhada nas redes sociais a imagem de uma suposta nova capa da revista "Time" (edição de março de 2022) em que se compara o atual presidente da Federação Russa, Vladimir Putin, ao antigo líder da Alemanha Nazi, Adolf Hitler, sob o título: "O Regresso da História". (Monteiro, 2022, para. 1)

In addition, Putin was also the target of decontextualized information which alleged that his announcements of the attack on Ukraine had been recorded prior to the invasion:

Por tanto, es un bulo que el vídeo de Putin anunciando el inicio del ataque contra Ucrania se grabara el lunes 21 de febrero, es del jueves 24 de febrero, el mismo día que comenzaron los bombardeos. (*No, El Video de Putin Anunciando Un Bombardeo Contra Ucrania No Se Grabó El Lunes 21 de Febrero, Es Del Jueves 24**, 2022, para. 4)

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

The results indicate different approaches between the diplomatic and journalistic entities. Overall, they confirm the tendency of EUvsDisinfo focusing on countering strategic disinformation narratives from Russia. The clear prevalence of the Hegemony (20%) and State (19%) themes in their articles coincide with the Russian discourse regarding the West – mostly represented by USA, EU and NATO – intentions on expanding their influence to control Ukrainian governance and surround and weaken Russia (Johansson-Nogues & Simanschi, 2023). Furthermore, it is under the theme Hegemony that it is possible to notice a higher co-occurrence between narrative elements referring to the main political actors in the war: USA, EU, NATO and the West on the one hand, and Russia and Putin on the other.

Regarding the State theme, the frequency and co-occurrence between narrative elements confirm the EUvsDisinfo focus on countering strategic disinformation narratives that accuse Ukraine of being Nazi. Not only Nazism related elements have prominence in EUvsDisinfo articles but also tend to appear together with Russian Government or West related elements which indicates a response to the Russian strategic narrative in which Russia's mission, is to free east Ukraine's popular republics from the Kiev Nazi regime oppression. Furthermore, it is pertinent to highlight that both strategic narratives on West expansion (Hegemony) and Ukraine's State reinforce each other creating the narrative on how Ukraine's Nazi and Russophobic government is supported by European and American institutions.

These results can be interpreted as signs of the role that EUvsDisinfo plays in the European public diplomacy. Considering that EUvsDisinfo's mission is to correct Kremlin official disinformative communication, the prevalent correction of disinformation related to the alleged West Hegemony intentions and to the oppression practiced by the Ukrainian Government are signs of the narrative clashes between Europe and Russia (Hedling, 2021). On the one hand, Kremlin disinformation intends to portray the international order by picturing the West and Ukraine as accomplices of violence and hegemonic interests. On the other hand, EUvsDisinfo answers and corrects the Russian narratives and establish a new picture of the international order through direct responses on accountability in the war. Furthermore, other signs detected are the frequent call-to-action paragraphs that conclude the articles to redirect readers to EUvsDisinfo guides to understand and refute the counter-narrative discourse of Russian

political actors. These results sustain Hedling (2021) concept of narrative clashes and respective management which are a crucial role of public diplomacy.

On the other hand, both independent fact-checkers do not present the same levels of prevalence for the Hegemony and State themes as EUvsDisinfo does. Instead, Military Action, Citizen Action and Disinformative Action are the most prevalent themes. Given that the context of their work is the war in Ukraine, which ultimately affects the lives of Ukrainian Citizens it was not surprising that Military Action and Citizen Action were among the most prevalent themes for the entities that tend to focus on social media disinformation.

However, the three entities' work address the Disinformative Action theme similarly. Not only Kremlin official communication responded to real happenings arguing it was fabricated. For instance, during the Bucha massacres episodes, official Russian communication alleged that the images were recorded, and the victims were paid actors. On social media a similar tendency was observed since there was not only the dissemination of out of context videos or images from other countries being presented as happening in Ukraine but also a disinformative response to videos or images from Ukraine alleging either that it was not Ukraine or that it was staged. This response was the topic of several fact-checking articles from Polígrafo and Maldita. Therefore, Disinformative Action became one of the main themes of both diplomatic and journalistic entities. This suggests a connection between strategic narratives created by a political and authoritative actor and disseminated by social and common actors (users) through social media, indicating thus Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) framing for the action of interpreters that after interpreting can become agents as well with the skills and tools to recreate or reproduce and disseminate polluted information. This framing became more visible after the latent analysis of the samples, which was guided by the analysis of the frequency and co-occurrences of the narrative elements.

Although the diplomatic and independent entities tend to differ on the prevalence of the themes of their work, the further results regarding the frequency and co-occurrence of narrative elements indicate a strong tendency for the spillover of narratives from the official quadrant to an unofficial one. The spillover occurs especially regarding two main topics of Russian Strategic Narratives on the war: (1) the Nazi Ukraine and (2) the un/accountability of strategic political actor on war events. These topics are found under the State, Leader and Citizen Action themes for the Nazi Ukraine narrative and the Military Action, Disinformative Action and State themes for the Accountability narrative.

Firstly, the analysis of the narrative elements in the Leader, State and Citizen Action themes indicate that the Nazi Ukraine narrative has some prevalence under these themes regardless of the entity. Nonetheless, it is possible to see that EUvsDisinfo and the independent fact-checkers approach this narrative differently. Whereas EUvsDisinfo approaches it always regarding the Ukrainian State, the disinformation the fact-checkers counter tends to use the person of Zelensky, Ukraine's leader, to represent the Nazism present in Ukraine. Furthermore, the case of the nazi policeman approached by Maldita and Polígrafo indicates that the nazi narrative on the Ukraine crisis is not exclusive from the Ukrainian governance. When it comes to the misrepresentation of civilian action, in this case an alleged police officer on vacation, the nazi symbols represented can be used to convey the idea of a Ukrainian Nazi State, and ultimately corroborate Kremlin propaganda that justifies the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Again it is possible to notice that this strategic narrative has been reinterpreted by social media users, which, as agents in the information disorder paradigm, have created, produced and disseminated polluted information (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017) framed under the strategic narrative that Ukraine is a Nazi state.

On the other hand, the accountability frame of the war in Ukraine revealed to be a prevalent topic approached by the three entities analysed under the Disinformative Action. In EUvsDisinfo's sample, many articles covered the disinformation regarding the Bucha Massacres, which was presented by the Kremlin as a staged episode of the war. Although this episode was not prevalent in Maldita and Polígrafo's sample, a similar narrative was covered by the journalistic fact-checkers. On all three entities work it is possible, thus, to highlight a similar disinformative framing on the events of war that overall contribute to the Russian strategy of delegitimizing its accountability on the war and respective military attacks (Ehrl, 2023; Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogues & Simansch, 2023). Furthermore, under this thematic, the allegation that either political institutions or news media were fabricating events of the war corroborate the argument that the current paradigm is characterized by the corrosion of trust on democratic institution and news media (Cardoso, 2023; Castells, 2009; Bennet & Livingston, 2018).

Given the context of the network society (Castells, 2009), not only these results corroborate Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) framing for the information disorder, but also are explained by Aspriadis (2023) and Mejias and Vokuev (2017) arguments that a network environment provides states with individual actors who spread their messages through their own networks by recreating or reproducing the original message (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Therefore, it is noticeable a spillover of the Russian strategic narrative to frames that

are created, produced and disseminated by social media users (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017), as well as there are indicators to the spillovers of their respective effects: the delegitimization of institutions.

In addition, under the Military Action theme, it was noticed that all entities cover specific events of the war related to real or alleged attacks, explosions or shootings. However, the disinformation approached by EUvsDisinfo also addresses the un/accountability narrative. Furthermore, although Russia's strategic narratives tend to hold accountable the West and Ukraine for the alleged Russian military intervention (Fridrichová, 2023; Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023), in EUvsDisinfo's work it is possible to notice that the disinformative narrative is deepened into the narration of specific events which are framed in order to deny any responsibility on military attacks and attributing it to their enemies. Hence, under this theme, although the work of the three entities addresses specific, real or decontextualized, military events of the war, the disinformative framing tends to differ between the diplomatic and journalistic articles.

It is relevant, thus, to highlight that in prevalent themes addressed by EUvsDisinfo (Hegemony, State and Military Action), the narrative of accountability is common, which can be explained by EUvsDisinfo's diplomatic nature since one of the main goals of Public diplomacy is the projection of narratives that establish the interpretation of current events and highlight one's position in the international order (Nitoiu & Pasatoiu, 2023; Hedling, 2021). Therefore, Russian diplomatic and disinformative efforts in holding the West accountable for the war in Ukraine tend to be answered by EUvsDisinfo's refutation of the accusations and holding Russia accountable instead. Thus, it is also pertinent to highlight one of messages repeated in EUvsDisinfo articles which incorporates the narrative elements analysed: "Russian troops are heavily shelling and bombing civilian facilities such as residential areas, schools, kindergartens, hospitals, orphanages, theaters and churches." (*DISINFO: Russian Troops Pose No Threat to Ukrainian Civilians*, 2022, para. 4).

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

The War in Ukraine has become one of the main case studies for the proliferation of disinformation through official and unofficial communication. Furthermore, it not only affects Ukraine and Russia but also Europe and western allies. As the dissemination of disinformation by official sources is endangering European democracies (Bennett & Livingston, 2018), Ursula Von Der Leyen has manifested the intention to build a democratic shield based on a network of fact-checkers.

The information disorder paradigm in which we currently live is characterized not only by the dissemination of polluted information, but also by the entry of new informative agents in the network society (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Castells, 2009). The evolution of technologies and media systems as well as the erosion of institutional authority (Bennet & Livingston, 2018) are the main conjecture that provoked the development and institutionalization of new informative activities like fact-checking (Amazeen, 2019). In addition, since journalistic activity has shifted from a gatekeeping function to a corrective one as well as government activity has tools at its disposition to create “pseudojournalism (Kovach & Rosentsiel, 2021), this dissertation attends to the arguments that the organization of reality is not solely disputed by news media anymore Waisbord (2013) by comparing the counter-disinformation approaches of diplomatic and journalistic entities. Furthermore, its main goal is to establish a better visualization of their work under a network environment paradigm (Castells, 2009; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

As Castells (2009) argues, the network society is characterized by opposing structure of values and interests. Furthermore, the several authors call for the necessity of tackling the conflicts resulting from these contradictory structures (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Ehrl, 2023; Bennet & Livingston, 2018; Graves, 2016; Amazeen, 2019; Aspriadis, 2023) in order to sustain news media and democratic institutions’ credibility and authority. Therefore, since the Ukraine War is inserted into a network paradigm it was expected to visualize these conflicts between disinformation and the respective correction. It is therefore important to consider that differences between EUvsDisinfo and Polígrafo and Maldita do not necessarily occur from the nature of the entity but also from the origin of the disinformation approached.

Since EUvsDisinfo sole focus is Kremlin official communication, due to its diplomatic nature nonetheless, the entity is not only correcting disinformation. EUvsDisinfo answers to

disinformation strategic narratives (Aspriadis, 2023). Accordingly, since the network environment is inherently social, the amplification and reinterpretation of disinformation narratives is another characteristic of this environment which allows, then, the recreation, reproduction and dissemination of official disinformative communications by social media users on social networks (Castells, 2009; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Aspriadis, 2023; Mejias & Vokuev, 2017).

It is relevant, then, to highlight that depending on the logic that underlined the entities work (diplomatic or journalistic logic), the approach to these conflicts differed. In other words, this dissertation concludes that, although diplomatic and journalistic entities present similarities regarding thematic approaches to disinformation related to the war in Ukraine, the articles produced convey the different objectives that each entity has. On the one hand, as Ehrl (2023) states, governmental initiatives discourse on countering disinformation elaborates strategic narratives in order to establish an informational ground base for the publics, the media and institutions which corroborates the results analysed regarding EUvsDisinfo. Hence, the consequent conflicts of information visible in EUvsDisinfo's work showed the management of narrative clashes that occur in Public Diplomacy activities (Hedling, 2021) and the protection and projection of EU's reputation by refuting accountability on the war. On the other hand, independent fact-checking initiatives main goals are to correct misinformation, inform citizens and enable them to trust in the information they consume (Singer, 2021). Therefore, the fact-checks produced by Maldita and Polígrafo did not reveal any counter-narrative projection in contrast to EUvsDisinfo.

Further research should deepen the result from this dissertation through discourse analysis research in order to better understand the differences between the structure and language of journalistic and diplomatic approaches to countering disinformation in a crisis context. Furthermore, since the Ukrainian Crisis has implication on an international level, it would be valuable to apply the research design of this dissertation on a broader geographical level. This way, according to geography, it could be possible to better understand the work of European fact-checkers and thus, provide more value to European initiatives like the European Democratic shield that Von der Leyen presented in the summer of 2024 to the European Parliament (Sahuquillo & Gomez, 2024).

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Annexes

Annex A – Theme and narrative elements identification according to the literature review

Theme	Citations	Narrative elements	Literature
Diplomacy	It had been propped and coloured in by subplots that include the idea of a Nazi-like regime in Ukraine that commits human rights abuses against its Russian-speaking Russian ethnic minority with the support of the West.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazism • War Crimes • Russophobia • West • Diplomacy 	Fridrichová, 2023
	aunque no exista una gran repetición en la temática adhesión de Ucrania a la Unión Europea, es esencial mencionar que existen hasta tres relatos que tratan de relacionar la incorporación de Ucrania a la UE con su participación en el conflicto bélico.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • Diplomacy 	
	the EU was increasingly portrayed as imposing the signing of the association agreement on Ukraine and, by doing so, closing the door on a possible ‘integration of integrations’ with the ECU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • Diplomacy 	Claessen, 2021
	Typical acts for creating tensions include the EU organizing color revolutions in Eastern Europe, Western countries running anti-vaccine campaigns, promoting Western values, and nazifying Ukraine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • West • Nazism 	Ehrl, 2023
	This portrayal of Western powers as foreign aggressors who divide Ukraine from within is frequently used in connection with Nazi references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West • Ukraine’s Government • Nazism 	
Disinformative Action	western countries are spreading anti-Russian (dis)information in Ukraine and somehow controlling Ukraine politically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West • Disinformative Action • Ukraine’s Government 	Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023

Hegemony	The war in this regard is not a war but a “special operation,” since Russia cannot wage war against Ukraine when, conceptually, Ukraine does not exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Operation • Russia’s Government • Ukraine’s Government 	Kordan, 2022
	The Russia story is deeply connected to the historical phenomenon of imperialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia’s Government 	
	“It is the authority and ‘right’ of Russia to intervene to protect the Russophone population of Ukraine and, in particular, the population in the Donbas territories. This subframe builds on the ‘Russian world’ concept invented by one of Putin’s ideologues”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russophobia • Russia’s Government • Ukraine’s Strategic Cities 	Johansson-Nogués & Simansch, 2023
	the official state-promoted view that the invasion of Ukraine was a purely defensive action on the part of Russia, as it was allegedly provoked by NATO and ‘[t]he conflict in Ukraine is a consequence of NATO’s eastward expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO 	
	a final subframe is presented by the narrative in the Russian press and social media of NATO as an existential threat to the Russian Federation, and of Ukraine as a launching pad for a NATO/western military assault on Russia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO • Russia’s Government 	
	The West then plays the role of the Great Other in this narrative, the enemy figure where the US resists Russia regaining its influence in the international arena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West • US 	Fridrichová, 2023
	posteriormente la estrategia de desinformación por parte de Rusia se centró en frenar el debate público sobre la posible expansión de la OTAN mediante la polarización y viralización de contenidos dirigidos a las poblaciones inmigrantes de los países vecinos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO • Migration 	Magallón-Rosa et al., 2022
	Russian disinformation narratives suggest that orange revolutions are organized by Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West • Ukraine’s Government 	Ehrl, 2023

	powers, turning Ukraine again into a puppet of the West		
Intensification	The first version was that Ukrainian Nazi extremists, motivated by aggressive ideology, dragged Western states into the war, notwithstanding the latter wanting to buy Russian gas and oil peacefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazism • West • Energy 	Fridrichová, 2023
	“the Russian (dis) information on NATO and EU military assistance exaggerate the size and content of the donations.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO • EU • Diplomacy 	Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023)
	Nuclear weapons also play an important role in this rhetoric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear Weapons 	
	“Russian allegations also involve supposed US biological weapons laboratories claimed to be located on the territory of Ukraine”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological Weapons • Biological Laboratories 	
	Russian sources that depict Russia as a victim who defends itself against Western provocation and aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West • Russia’s Government 	Ehrl, 2023
	Military exercises by NATO and the US are described as provocations, which justify Russian military deployment if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO • US • Russian Military 	
	Ukraine as working with the West to build biological and nuclear weapons to attack Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine’s Government • West • Biological Weapons • Nuclear Weapons • Attacks 	
	Soon Kyiv will have nuclear weapons ready to use against Donbas and Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear Weapons • Ukraine’s Strategic Cities 	

Military Action	the Ukrainian central government was mobilizing its forces to take back control over the territories it lost to Russian control in 2014.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's Government • 	Johansson-Nogués & Simanschí, 2023
	The Russian military offensive in 2022 was characterized as 'a special military operation by the Russian Armed Forces'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian Military • Special Operation 	
	The term genocide is now part of the debate describing Russia's plan for Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genocide 	Kordan, 2022
The State	"narration of the population in Donbas as victims of violence on the part of the central government in Ukraine and as in need of Russian protection."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's Strategic Cities • Ukraine's Government 	Johansson-Nogués & Simanschí, 2023
	special operation' in Ukraine is a means to 'denazify' the country, or to liberate it from extreme ideologies such as fascism, and purportedly to topple the current government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Operation • Nazism • Ukraine's Government 	
	"allegation that the Ukrainian government has been involved in continuous and longstanding violence against civilians in the Donbas"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's Government • Civilians 	
	'Kyiv regime' (inferring that it is driven by radical nationalist ideology) or the 'Kyiv junta' (drawing parallels with a dictatorship"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's Government 	
	The government in Kyiv has been portrayed as illegitimate since 2014 due to the illegality of its regime change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine's Government 	Fridrichová, 2023
	las principales narrativas rusas de desinformación detectadas a raíz de las protestas del Euromaidán en 2013-2014 se han centrado en retratar a Ucrania como un "estado nazi", un "estado fallido" o un "no estado"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazism • Ukraine's Government 	Magallón-Rosa et al., 2022
	In terms of its development, Ukraine follows the rest of Europe's historical trajectory, guided by the broad forces of globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • Ukraine's Government 	Kordan, 2022

	and modernization that shaped not only Ukraine's social and political culture but its national identity as well.		
	Second, the Ukrainian story points to Ukraine's quest for statehood, situating it within the dynamic that led to the creation of the modern international system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine's Government 	
	Ukraine, as Putin argues, is replete with enemies of both Russia and Ukraine – obliquely described as “Nazis” – from whom Ukraine must be liberated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putin Nazism 	
	The Kremlin repeatedly attempts to delegitimize Ukraine as a nation and state in the eyes of the Ukrainian and Russian publics, and, crucially, international community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia's Government Ukraine's Government 	Cap, 2023
	During the military build-up phase, Russian disinformation narratives predominantly portray Ukraine as a “relentless aggressor” who terrorizes and attacks its own people and territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine's Government Attacks Civilians 	Ehrl, 2023
	A context frequently used to narrate Ukraine as a fascist and human rights violator during the build-up phase is genocide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> War Crimes Genocide 	
	This scene-driven ratio further supports Russia's agent-driven narrative that narrate Russia as a rescuer and savior in order to build “a justification of offensive actions against Ukraine”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia's Government 	
The Leader	“Before the 2022 invasion, many sources cited Putin's claim that he saw a continuous Nazi ideology in Ukrainian state leadership”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putin Nazism 	Johansson-Nogués & Simanschi, 2023
	el presidente de Ucrania es la persona más afectada por la desinformación. Su homólogo ruso Vladimir Putin presenta un 20% menos de verificaciones que hagan alusión a su persona.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zelensky Putin 	
	las historias inexactas que envuelven al presidente ruso tienen como característica principal que éste no suele ser el protagonista directo de las mismas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putin 	

Citizen Action	N/D	N/D	N/D
Peace	N/D	N/D	N/D

Annex B – Dictionary of narrative elements

Narrative elements	Expressions
Attacks	Attack, explode, explosion, bomb, shoot, bombing, kill, ataque, explos, bombardeamento, bomba, disparo, dispara, tiro, mata, bombardeo, atacar, atac, tiros, misil, míssil, mísseis, missile
Azov	azov
Bio Weapons	biological weapon, bio weapon, bio-weapon, armas biológicas, arma biológica, armas biológicas, arma biológica, biológico, biologic
Bio Labs	Biolab, bio lab, biological weapon, biological attack, biological laborator, biological lab, laboratórios biológicos, laboratório biológico, laboratorio biologico, laboratorios biologicos
Chemical Weapons	armas químicas, arma química, químic, armas químicas, arma química, quimic, chemical weapon, chemic
Civilians	Civilian, woman, man, men, women, baby, child, babies, people, habitant, resident, civis, criança, homem, mulher, homens, gente, comunidade, habitante, cidadão, bebé, civil, ciudadan, niño, hombre, mujer, vítima, victim, pessoa, person
Disinformative Action	Encena, fabricat, ator, actor, atriz, atriz, actress, stage, coreograf, choreogra, fabricad, monta
Diplomacy	Diplomacy, diplomat, diplomacia, acordo de, cônsul, embaixador, embaixada, embassy, cônsul, embaçador, agreement, Tratado, ambassador, sanction, sanções, sanción, sanção, sanciones acuerdo de, diplomát

Energy	Energy, energetic, gas, oil, energia, crise energética, gás, petróleo, óleo, energia, energético
EU	Europe, European Union, Von der Leyen, Europa, UE, EU, Unión Europea, União Europeia
Genocide	Genocide, slaughter, genocidio, homicidio, homicidio, murder, matança, matanza, genocidio, chacina
Migration	Migration, migrant, migração, imigração, emigração, imigrante, emigrante, migrante, migratório, migracion, inmigracion, inmigrante, migratório, refugia, refugee, flee
NATO	NATO, OTAN, Soltenberg, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte, Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte
Nazi	Nazi, nazifi, nazify, suástic, neo nazi, neo-nazi, desnazific, nazista, esvástica, denazif, pro-nazi, hitler
Nuclear	Nuclear, Atomic, Ataque nuclear, Explosão Nuclear, Arma nuclear, Armas nucleares, Explosões nucleares, ataques nucleares, bomba nuclear, atômico
Peace	peace, paz
Putin	Putin, Russia's President, President of Russia, Russian President, Presidente Russo, Presidente da Rússia, presidente de rusia, presidente ruso
Russian Military	Russian military, Russian army, Russian troops, Russian strike, russian troopers, russian tank, russian force, russian soldiers, ataque ruso, Russia's troops, Russia's troop, Russia's strike, russia's soldiers, fuerzas armadas de rusia, tropas rusas, russia's attack, russia's army, russian missile, russia's missile, Exército da Rússia, Exército Russo, Ataque russo, Militares russos, Forças russas, soldado russo, míssil russo, mísseis russos, tanque russo, ataques russos, soldados russos, forças armadas russas, forças armadas da Rússia, fuerzas rusas, ataques rusos, militares rusos, ejército de rusia, ejército ruso, fuerzas armadas rusas, misil ruso, misiles rusos, soldados rusos, tanque ruso, tropas russas, tropa rusa, militar ruso
Russia's State	Governo russo, governo da Rússia, regime russo, regime da Rússia, estado russo, estado da Rússia, Federação russa, federação da Rússia, Ministério russo, Ministério da Rússia, Ministro russo, ministro da Rússia, Kremlin, parlamento,

	russo, parlamento da Rússia, Gobierno ruso, Gobierno de rusia, regimen ruso, regimen de rusia, estado ruso, estado de rusia, federación rusa, federación de rusia, ministerio ruso, ministerio de rusia, ministro ruso, ministro de rusia, parlamento ruso, parlamento de rusia, Russia's Government, government of Russia, russia's regime, regime of russia russia's state, state of Russia, russia's federation, federation of Russia, ministry of Russia, russia's ministry, russia's minister, minister of Russia, russia's parliament, parliament of Russia, russian government, russian regime, russian state, russian ministry, russian minister, russian parliament, russian federation, governo de moscovo, regime moscovo estado de moscovo, federação de moscovo, gobierno de mosc, regimen de mosc, estado de mosc, Moscow, government, moscow's government, moscow regime, moscow's regime, moscow's state, moscow state, government of Moscow, regime of Moscow, state of Moscow, Duma
Russophobia	Russophobi, russofobia, rusofobi
Special Operation	special operation, operação especial, operación especial, special military operation, operação militar especial, operación militar especial
Ukraine Strategic Cities	Donbas, Donetsk, Lugansk, crimea, Crimeia, kharkhiv, bucha, Lviv
Ukraine's State	Governo ucraniano, Governo da Ucrânia, regime ucraniano, regime da Ucrânia, estado ucraniano, estado da Ucrânia, ministro ucraniano, ministro da Ucrânia, ministério ucraniano, ministério da Ucrânia, Parlamento ucraniano, Parlamento da Ucrânia, Governo de Kiev, Regime de Kiev, Estado de Kiev, Gobierno de Ucrania, Gobierno ucraniano, regimen de ucrania, regimen ucraniano, estado de ucrania, ministerio ucraniano, ministerio de ucrania, ministro de ucrania, parlamento de ucrania, gobierno de Kiev, gobierno de kyiv, regimen de Kiev, regimen de kyiv, estado de kyiv, ukrainian government, government of Ukraine, ukraine's government, ukraine's regime, ukrainian regime, regime of ukraine, ukrainian state, state of Ukraine, ukraine's state, ministry of Ukraine, ukrainian ministry, ukraine's ministry, ukrainian

	minister, ukraine's minister, minister of Ukraine, ukrainian parliament, parliament of Ukraine, ukraine's parliament, kiev's government, government of Kiev, kyiv's government, government of kyiv, kyiv regime, kiev regime, kiev's regime, kyiv's regime, regime of kiev, regime of kyiv, kiev state, kyiv state, kiev's state, kyiv's state, state of kiev, state of kyiv
Ukrainian Military	ukrainian army, ukrainian forces, ukrainian military, ukrainian soldiers, ukrainian troopers, ukrainian para troopers, ukrainian paratroopers, ukraine's army, ukraine's forces, ukraine's military, ukraine's soldiers, ukraine's troopers, ukraine's para troopers, ukraine's paratroopers, ukraine's troops, ukrainian troops, forças ucranianas, forças da Ucrânia, forças armadas ucranianas, forças armadas da Ucrânia, militares ucranianos, militares da Ucrânia, tropas ucranianas, tropas da Ucrânia, fuerzas ucranianas, fuerzas de Ucrania, militares de ucrania, tropas de ucrania, soldados de ucrania, fuerzas militares de ucrania, fuerzas militares ucranianas, tanques ucranianos, tanque ucraniano, ukrainian tank, ukrainian missile, ukrainian attack, ukrainian bombing, ataque ucraniano, bombardeio ucraniano, fuerzas armadas de Ucrania
USA	United States of America, United States, USA, America, White House, Washington, Biden, EUA, Estados Unidos da América, Trump, Casa Branca, Blinken, EE-UU, EEUU, EE UU, Casa Blanca, US, América
War Crimes	war crime, war criminal, crime de guerra, crimes de guerra, criminoso de guerra, criminosos de guerra, criminales de guerra, criminal de guerra, crimes contra a humanidade, crime contra a humanidade, crime contra la humanidad, crime against humanity, crímenes contra la humanidad, crimes against humanity, crímenes de guerra
West	West, Ocident, Occident
WW3	world war three, world war 3, WW3, WWIII, third world war, 3rd world war, terceira guerra mundial, 3ª guerra mundial, 3GM, 3.ª Guerra mundial, terceira guerra mundial, catastrophe, catástrofe, catastrophe, catastrófico, atastrophic terceira grande guerra, Tercera grande guerra, Terceira Guerra, Tercera Guerra
Zelensky	Zelensky, Ukrainian President, President of Ukraine, Ukraine's President, Presidente da Ucrânia, Presidente ucraniano, zelenski, presidente de ucrania

Annex C – Average frequency of narrative elements per article according to Theme and Entity

	ENTITY	MILITARY ACTION			CITIZEN ACTION			DISINFORMATIVE ACTION		
		EUvsDISINFO	MALDITA	POLIGRAFO	EUvsDISINFO	MALDITA	POLIGRAFO	EUvsDISINFO	MALDITA	POLIGRAFO
	TOTAL OF ARTICLES	22	37	27	1	18	17	21	20	11
NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	5,73	4,86	3,81	9,00	1,72	0,18	2,10	3,45	3,09
	AZOV	0,36	0,38	0,19	0,00	0,06	0,12	0,05	0,05	0,00
	BIO WEAPONS	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,19	0,00	0,00
	BIOLABS	0,09	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,33	0,00	0,00
	CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0,14	0,03	0,04	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,05	0,00	0,00
	CIVILIANS	4,41	1,73	1,33	4,00	4,11	2,24	7,00	4,10	3,82
	DISINFROMATIVE ACTION	0,18	0,11	0,19	1,00	0,11	0,12	1,38	0,95	2,18
	DIPLOMACY	0,05	0,03	0,04	0,00	0,06	0,18	0,24	0,05	0,55
	ENERGY	0,14	0,08	0,04	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,30	0,45
	EU	0,86	0,05	0,22	1,00	0,22	0,18	2,62	0,20	0,09
	GENOCIDE	0,41	0,05	0,04	0,00	0,00	0,00	2,57	0,00	0,18
	MIGRATION	0,14	0,03	0,00	0,00	0,33	0,41	0,00	0,00	0,00
	NATO	0,27	0,24	0,11	0,00	0,06	0,06	0,05	0,00	0,00
	NAZI	0,55	0,19	0,00	0,00	0,33	0,53	0,24	0,00	0,00
	NUCLEAR	0,55	0,16	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	PEACE	0,00	0,03	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,24	0,05	0,15	0,09
	PUTIN	0,86	0,11	0,19	0,00	0,06	0,29	0,33	0,15	0,55
	RUSSIAN MILITARY	2,86	1,19	1,04	1,00	0,17	0,53	1,95	0,20	0,91
	RUSSIA GOV	2,09	0,00	0,15	4,00	0,00	0,24	1,52	0,00	0,00
	RUSSOPHOBIA	0,05	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	SPECIAL OPERATION	0,32	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,05	0,00	0,00
	UKRAINE STRAT CITIES	2,14	0,35	0,70	1,00	0,50	0,06	7,71	1,25	1,00
	UKRAINE GOV	0,05	0,14	0,11	0,00	0,06	0,00	0,24	0,05	0,36
	UKRAINE MILITARY	0,68	0,11	0,44	1,00	0,00	0,06	0,24	0,15	0,27
	USA	0,50	0,03	0,44	0,00	0,06	0,06	0,43	0,05	0,36
	WAR CRIMES	0,82	0,00	0,19	1,00	0,00	0,00	1,76	0,00	0,09
	WEST	0,59	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,06	2,05	0,05	0,27
	WW3	0,05	0,03	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,29	0,00	0,00
	ZELENSKY	0,18	0,24	0,30	0,00	0,00	0,18	0,76	2,35	0,36

Annex C - Continued

	ENTITY	HEGEMONY		THE STATE			THE LEADER		
		EUvsDISINFO	POLIGRAFO	EUvsDISINFO	MALDITA	POLIGRAFO	EUvsDISINFO	MALDITA	POLIGRAFO
	TOTAL OF ARTICLES	28	2	27	3	6	5	19	8
NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	0,64	0,00	1,07	1,33	0,50	1,00	1,74	0,50
	AZOV	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,42	0,13
	BIO WEAPONS	0,96	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	BIOLABS	0,71	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0,11	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,00	0,00
	CIVILIANS	1,11	1,50	2,15	7,00	5,33	3,40	2,32	1,75
	DISINFROMATIVE ACTION	0,18	0,00	0,15	0,00	0,33	0,00	1,16	0,63
	DIPLOMACY	0,82	1,50	1,19	0,00	0,33	0,60	0,05	0,38
	ENERGY	0,04	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,11	0,00
	EU	2,32	0,00	1,70	0,67	1,33	1,40	0,16	0,25
	GENOCIDE	0,64	0,50	1,44	0,33	0,00	0,40	0,00	0,25
	MIGRATION	0,11	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,00	0,00
	NATO	2,04	5,50	0,41	0,00	0,17	1,80	0,00	0,00
	NAZI	1,29	0,00	3,44	0,00	0,17	0,00	1,32	2,13
	NUCLEAR	0,07	0,00	0,04	0,00	0,17	0,00	0,00	0,00
	PEACE	0,11	0,00	0,19	0,00	1,00	0,60	0,00	0,00
	PUTIN	1,61	1,00	1,30	0,67	1,17	2,20	1,95	0,63
	RUSSIAN MILITARY	0,71	0,00	1,33	1,33	0,50	1,20	0,42	0,13
	RUSSIA GOV	2,75	0,00	2,78	1,33	0,00	2,60	0,53	0,25
	RUSSOPHOBIA	0,14	0,00	0,11	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	SPECIAL OPERATION	0,25	0,00	0,15	0,00	0,17	0,20	0,00	0,00
	UKRAINE STRAT CITIES	0,93	0,50	1,59	3,00	1,50	2,60	0,05	0,63
	UKRAINE GOV	0,29	0,50	0,44	4,67	2,17	0,80	0,16	0,00
	UKRAINE MILITARY	0,04	0,00	0,11	0,00	0,33	0,20	0,37	0,38
	USA	2,32	0,00	0,81	0,00	1,00	1,80	0,00	0,38
	WAR CRIMES	0,21	0,00	0,48	0,33	0,17	0,40	0,00	0,00
	WEST	3,14	0,00	0,81	0,00	0,17	1,00	0,05	0,00
	WW3	0,00	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,00	0,00
	ZELENSKY	0,04	0,50	0,30	0,67	1,00	4,00	9,63	5,88

Annex D – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Military Action Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINIAN MILITARY
ATTACKS	0	50	0	35	11	17	6
AZOV	2	2	0	0	1	1	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	2	2	0	1	2	1	0
CIVILIANS	50	0	0	33	10	13	4
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	1	1	0	2	1	0	0
EU	3	4	5	3	5	1	0
GENOCIDE	3	1	0	0	2	5	0
MIGRATION	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
NAZI	1	1	0	0	2	1	0
NUCLEAR	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	35	33	0	0	3	5	2
RUSSIA'S STATE	11	10	11	3	0	6	0
RUSSOPHOBIA	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	1	4	0	0	2	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	17	13	0	5	6	0	1
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	6	4	0	2	0	1	0
USA	3	2	0	0	0	3	1
WAR CRIMES	2	3	0	1	1	2	0
WEST	5	4	1	4	3	3	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Annex E – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Military Action Theme for Maldita

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	AZOV	CIVILIANS	NAZI	NUCLEAR	RUSSIAN MILITARY	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	UKRAINIAN MILITARY
ATTACKS	0	1	21	3	4	15	5	0	2
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	21	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	1
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	15	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

Annex F – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Military Action Theme for Polígrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	EU	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	UKRAINIAN MILITARY	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	0	5	1	1	6	2	5	2	5	1
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	5	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	1	0
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
RUSSIA'S STATE	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	5	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	3	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	5	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
USA	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

Annex G – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Citizen Action Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	GENOCIDE	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINIAN MILITARY
ATTACKS	0	3	1	0	0	2	0	1
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
RUSSOPHOBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex H – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Citizen Action Theme for Maldita

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	EU	MIGRATION	NATO	NAZI	RUSSIAN MILITARY	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES
ATTACKS	0	6	1	1	0	0	0	1
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	6	0	1	2	1	5	1	2
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex I – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Citizen Action Theme for Polígrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	AZOV	CIVILIANS	EU	MIGRATION	NATO	NAZI	PEACE	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE
ATTACKS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
AZOV	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	0	1	0	0	3	0	5	0	0	1
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
NAZI	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex J – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Disinformative Action Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	BIOLABS	CIVILIANS	DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	GENOCIDE	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	USA	WAR CRIMES	WEST
ATTACKS	0	2	28	5	2	5	1	12	2	0	4
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
BIOLABS	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	3	4	0	2
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	28	1	0	1	18	29	16	61	1	0	16
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	5	0	1	0	1	1	3	22	0	4	2
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	2	2	18	1	0	4	0	9	2	14	2
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
NAZI	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	5	0	29	1	4	0	2	33	1	4	15
RUSSIA'S STATE	1	1	16	3	0	2	0	15	0	1	1
RUSSOPHOBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	12	3	61	22	9	33	15	0	6	8	32
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
USA	2	4	1	0	2	1	0	6	0	1	4
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	4	14	4	1	8	1	0	2
WEST	4	2	16	2	2	15	1	32	4	2	0
WW3	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
ZELENSKY	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	14	0	0	0

Annex K – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Disinformative Action Theme for Maldita

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	ENERGY	EU	PEACE	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES
ATTACKS	0	21	7	6	0	2	0	2	2
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	21	0	4	3	0	0	0	1	3
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	2	3	2	0	4	0	2	0	1

Annex L – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Disinformative Action Theme for Polígrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	DIPLOMACY	ENERGY	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	UKRAINIAN MILITARY
ATTACKS	0	10	7	1	5	1	5	1	1	1
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	10	0	3	4	1	2	1	2	2	0
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	7	3	0	1	0	3	1	3	1	2
DIPLOMACY	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
RUSSIAN MILITARY	5	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	1	2	3	0	0	2	2	0	3	2
UKRAINE'S STATE	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
USA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
WEST	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

Annex M – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Hegemony Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	BIO WEAPONS	BIOLABS	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	EU	GENOCIDE	NATO	NAZI	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	USA	WEST
ATTACKS	0	1	1	7	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	2	3	2	3
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	1	0	18	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	16	1
BIOLABS	1	18	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	13	1
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
CIVILIANS	7	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	1	3	5	3	5	1	2
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	1
DIPLOMACY	0	2	1	2	0	6	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3	8
ENERGY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	3	6	0	0	8	2	14	0	9	0	16	3
GENOCIDE	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	8	0	1
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
NATO	1	0	0	1	2	8	1	0	5	4	1	5	4	10	13
NAZI	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	0	1	2	4	4	4	5
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
PUTIN	0	0	0	3	2	14	0	4	1	0	6	22	2	0	3
RUSSIAN MILITARY	5	0	0	5	0	0	1	1	2	6	0	2	3	0	2
RUSSIA'S STATE	2	2	2	3	2	9	2	5	4	22	2	0	3	4	6
RUSSOPHOBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	3	2
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	3	0	0	5	0	0	8	4	4	2	3	3	0	0	2
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
USA	2	16	13	1	3	16	0	10	4	0	0	4	0	0	7
WAR CRIMES	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
WEST	3	1	1	2	8	3	1	13	5	3	2	6	2	7	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Annex N – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Hegemony Theme for Polígrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	NATO	PUTIN	UKRAINE'S STATE	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	0	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	0	1	0	0	0	0
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	1	0	1	0	0	1
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	1	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	1	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	1	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	1	0	0	0	0

Annex O – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the State Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	EU	GENOCIDE	NATO	NAZI	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	USA	WEST
ATTACKS	0	15	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	2	2	0	0	1
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	15	0	0	0	6	0	3	0	16	3	9	2	0	0
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	0
DIPLOMACY	1	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	2	0	7	0	2	1
ENERGY	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	5	0	0	2	4	9	1	8	1	0	4	3
GENOCIDE	0	6	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	8	9	3	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
NATO	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	6	0	0	2	0	0	0
NAZI	0	3	0	4	5	1	0	5	2	22	6	1	2	13
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	9	0	6	5	0	4	20	4	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	16	16	2	1	0	0	2	4	0	6	5	0	1	1
RUSSIA'S STATE	2	3	0	8	8	0	22	20	6	0	0	2	1	4
RUSSOPHOBIA	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	2	9	7	1	9	2	6	4	5	0	0	1	0	1
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
WAR CRIMES	0	2	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
WEST	1	0	1	3	0	0	13	0	1	4	1	3	3	0
WW3	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
ZELENSKY	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Annex P – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the State Theme for Maldita

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	WAR CRIMES	CIVILIANS	EU	GENOCIDE	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	7	4	1
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
GENOCIDE	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	1	1	7	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Annex Q – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the State Theme for Polígrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	EU	NATO	NAZI	PEACE	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE
ATTACKS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	3
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	4
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PUTIN	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
RUSSIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
UKRAINE'S STATE	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Annex R – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Leader Theme for EUvsDisinfo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	EU	NATO	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	UKRAINE'S STATE	WEST	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	0	1	1	0	2	4	0	4	1	0	2
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DIPLOMACY	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	1	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	1
GENOCIDE	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
MIGRATION	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
NAZI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
PUTIN	2	1	3	1	0	0	3	3	0	1	2
RUSSIAN MILITARY	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	2	2	2	2
RUSSOPHOBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	4	1	0	1	3	1	2	0	1	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USA	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
WAR CRIMES	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	2	1	1	3	2	0	2	0	0	1	0

Annex S – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Leader Theme for Maldita

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	AZOV	CIVILIANS	DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	EU	NAZI	PUTIN	RUSSIAN MILITARY	WEST	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	1	0	3
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AZOV	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	6
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	1	0	0	2	0	0	6	1	0	20
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	1	2	0	0	4	3	1	0	13
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
GENOCIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	4	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	13
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	8	0	6	3	0	3	0	0	0	3
RUSSIAN MILITARY	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
USA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	3	6	20	13	3	13	3	4	1	0

Annex T – Narrative elements co-occurrences under the Leader Theme for Poligrafo

NARRATIVE ELEMENTS	ATTACKS	AZOV	CIVILIANS	DIPLOMACY	GENOCIDE	NAZI	PUTIN	RUSSIA'S STATE	UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	ZELENSKY
ATTACKS	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
AZOV	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
BIO WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLABS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHEMICAL WEAPONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIVILIANS	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
DISINFORMATIVE ACTION	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
DIPLOMACY	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
ENERGY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENOCIDE	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
MIGRATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAZI	0	1	1	0	1	0	4	1	1	8
NUCLEAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PEACE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUTIN	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	0	0
RUSSIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUSSIA'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
SPECIAL OPERATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINE STRATEGIC CITIES	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
UKRAINE'S STATE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKRAINIAN MILITARY	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
USA	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
WAR CRIMES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WW3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ZELENSKY	3	1	5	2	2	8	0	1	3	0