

DENY, DECEIVE, DELAY

(Vol 2)

Exposing New Trends in
Climate Mis- and Disinformation
At COP27



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Mis- and Disinformation at COP27

Climate Action Against Disinformation



Contributing Members



PURPOSE



Coordinating Member / Lead Author



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
COP26 to COP27: A Year of Crises that Threaten Climate Progress	4
COP27 Intelligence Unit	5
Key Findings	5
The Road to COP28	7
SECTION 1: Monetised Greenwashing on Meta	8
Why Does It Matter?	9
What We Found	10
‘Quantity, not Quality’: Most Prolific Advertisers	12
Spotlight: State-Sponsored Greenwash	13
Spotlight Carbon Majors	14
Spotlight: Industry PR and Lobby Groups	15
What’s in a Word?	16
SECTION 2: The Return of ‘Climate Scam’	17
A Conspiracy is (Re)Born – But Why?	18
#ClimateScam – A Uniquely Twitter Problem?	21
SECTION 3: Key Amplifiers and Narratives	22
The COP27 Narrative Playbook	22
Climate Scam	24
Denialism (Back) On the Rise	25
‘Climate Reparations’	26
Elitism and Hypocrisy	27
‘Green Tech is Unreliable’	28
Raising the ‘Alarmism’: The Narratives That Broke Through at COP27	29
Key Figures	31
Further Significant Accounts	35
From Venn Diagram to Full Circle: Climate and ‘Anti-Woke’ Communities Online	37
ANNEX: METHODOLOGY	39
ANNEX: GLOSSARY	42

INTRODUCTION

COP26 to COP27: A Year of Crises that Threaten Climate Progress

2022 was a seismic year for geopolitics, and no less for the climate agenda. Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent shockwaves through global supply chains and financial systems, stalling an already-fraught recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The resultant surge in fossil fuel prices has compounded a ['cost of living' crisis](#) and left millions worldwide in positions of fearful, desperate precarity. Unsurprisingly, this environment has offered fertile ground for the spread of mis- and disinformation, and the opportunity to further a decades-long agenda of delaying climate action. The battle to counter this threat has never been more urgent, and we must call on every mechanism available to mount a response.

Across both mainstream and social media, almost all attacks on climate action [now tend towards an 'us versus them' frame](#), whether the topic at hand is achieving Net Zero, a climate summit, disaster relief or heating bills. Newer agendas such as [Loss and Damage](#) - negotiated formally for the first time at COP27 - have promptly been co-opted by 'anti-woke' and conspiracist movements, underscoring climate as a central pillar in the 'Culture Wars'. They sit alongside (and often collaborate with) a continually well-funded network of think tanks and pundits who launder the most extreme positions into subtler, more 'palatable' lines of attack, and ensure climate delay is always in the news.

In our June 2022 ['Deny, Deceive, Delay'](#) report, the Climate Action Against Disinformation (CAAD) coalition outlined seven policies essential to combatting this issue at the scale and speed required. In the intervening period we have seen a stark comeback for climate denial, reminiscent of arguments from the 1970s, and negligence from Big Tech companies who not only continue to monetise and enable, but in some cases actively recommend, such content to users.

The case studies in this report offer a window of insight, but are likely eclipsed by the data hidden in 'black box' systems behind tech company walls. Transparency around the trends and tactics of those weaponising mis- and disinformation content on platforms remains lacking, but may at last be enforced through legislation like the EU's Digital Services Act. In tandem, we must apply pressure to ad tech providers, advertising standards agencies, financial regulators and other key entities to play their role in tackling disinformation and greenwashing at the systemic level. We look to institutions like the UNFCCC to provide leadership over the coming year, adopting a recognised definition of the problem and setting the parameters for action. With these steps and more, we hope to ensure that the 'brief and rapidly closing window' for action [described by the IPCC](#) is not closed forever.

COP27 Intelligence Unit

Following our [unprecedented efforts at COP26](#), the Climate Action Against Disinformation (CAAD) alliance spearheaded a real-time unit to track, expose and counter anti-climate attacks around the 2022 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Managed by the [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#), the initiative brought together the expertise and knowledge of 15 global partners: [ACT Climate Labs](#); [CASM Technology](#); [Climate Nexus](#); [Code for Africa](#); [Conscious Advertising Network](#) (CAN); [DeSmog](#); [Dewey Square Group](#); [E3G](#); [Friends of the Earth US](#); [Media Matters for America](#); [Purpose Asia Pacific](#); [Purpose Climate Labs](#); [Roots - Greenpeace](#); [Union of Concerned Scientists](#); and [University of Exeter - SEDA Lab](#).

This report is a culmination of our research since October 2022, building on the insights from our [‘COP, Look, Listen’ Briefings](#) and laying a roadmap for action in the year ahead. The intelligence will drive CAAD’s ongoing work and advocacy goals, including: engagement with Big Tech to craft a proportionate, systemic response to climate disinformation on platforms; public education and ‘pre-bunking efforts’ at the grassroots; and work with multilateral institutions like UNFCCC to formalise the response to disinformation as part of broader climate policy.

Key Findings

Advertising on Meta - Wokewash, ‘Nature Rinse’ and Deceit

- According to Meta’s Ad Library, **3,781 ads were active from fossil fuel-linked entities, who spent roughly USD \$3–4 million between 1 September and 23 November 2022 on Facebook and Instagram.**
- **Energy Citizens** (a PR and lobby group for the American Petroleum Institute) ran more daily ads than all other pages in our collection combined, while **America’s Plastic Makers** (funded by the [American Chemistry Council](#)) spent approx. USD \$1.1m on climate-related campaigns.
- **The Top 10 pages for ad volume and/or spend were primarily industry PR and lobbying groups**, including: [Americans for Prosperity](#); [Energy For Progress](#) and [Energy Citizens](#); [Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future](#); [Affordable Energy for New Jersey](#); [American Encore](#); [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers \(CAPP\)](#); [Enbridge](#); and [The Empowerment Alliance](#).
- Ads from ‘Carbon Major’ companies including **Shell, Chevron** and **ExxonMobil** touted their green credentials and contributions to achieving Net Zero during COP27, despite [investment portfolios that remain overwhelmingly biased towards oil and fossil gas](#).
- Some organisations, including **PragerU** and **The Heartland Institute**, posted ads with active climate denial – for example claiming that a *“New poll debunks the 97% consensus claim about #climatechange”* or asking *“Has environmentalism become a religion?”*
- Frequent techniques in ads included **‘nature-rinsing’**, as well as emotional messaging around livelihoods, national security and sovereignty in relation to fossil fuels. The phrase **‘energy independence’ was most common and found verbatim in 1925 adverts** on Meta’s Ad Library, followed by ‘American energy’ (1558 adverts) and ‘human flourishing’ (61 adverts).

Denialism Tops the Charts on Twitter (And It’s Not Clear Why)

- In July 2022 the hashtag #ClimateScam suddenly spiked on Twitter, and by December had accrued over **362k mentions** (including retweets) **from 91k unique users.**
- The first high-traction ‘#ClimateScam’ content came from a non-verified account whose bio description includes ‘God’s soldier’ (17.3k followers) – it has been on an upwards trajectory ever since, with input from a wide array of **high-traction and verified accounts** such as US pundit Tom Fitton (1.7m followers).

- The most active user on the hashtag displayed **bot-like behaviour**, posting more than 60k times in the five months analysed (the account was created in April 2020).
- **The term ‘Climate Scam’ is being actively recommended** by Twitter for organic searches of ‘climate’, often as the top result, as well as when ‘#climate’ is included within a post. This was observed during COP27 and remains the case despite direct flagging by CAAD partners to the platform.
- The term appears to be **trending despite data that shows more activity and engagement on other hashtags** such as #ClimateCrisis and #ClimateEmergency; its prominence in search results cannot be explained through personalisation (e.g. browsing history), volume of content (i.e. prevalence of the phrase) or popularity (i.e. traction of content).
- **The source of its virality is entirely unclear**, and re-emphasises the need for transparency on how and why platforms surface content to users.
- We could find **no comparable trend or uptick in #ClimateScam on other platforms**. A basic search for ‘climate’ on Facebook did not autofill with overtly sceptic or denialist terms; searching explicitly for #ClimateScam only showed 1.5k users mentioning the term, versus 72k for #ClimateEmergency and 160k for #ClimateCrisis. Equally, TikTok returned no search results for #ClimateScam, but instead suggested the phrase *‘may be associated with behaviour or content that violates our guidelines’*.

The Narrative Playbook: Something Old, Something New (World Order)

- CAAD monitored **five key narratives** surrounding climate in the run-up to, duration and aftermath of COP27 (29 October to 27 November): Cost of Living Crisis; Culture Wars and Conspiracy; Loss and Damage; Anti-Green Technology; and Necessity of Fossil Fuels.
- These narratives generated **267,000 original posts** matching our keywords, produced by **139,889 unique actors and shared 1,284,969 times**.
- Findings suggest that **‘anti-woke’ messaging and conspiracy theories about climate eclipse the popularity and reach** of any other narrative. The idea that *‘climate actors are alarmist’* seemed to receive more likes than any other sub-claim (applying the [CARDS framework](#) to a subset of data), followed by arguments that *‘climate change is a hoax’*.
- **Conspiracies surrounding the ‘Great Reset’ and ‘New World Order’ were rife**, presenting climate action as part of a plot by ‘global elites’ to exert control and, conversely, claiming that climate change has been ‘engineered’ to destroy capitalism. This messaging generally aligned with broader right-wing talking points around the economy, civil liberties and Big Government.
- Negotiations around a [Loss and Damage mechanism](#) were formally included for the first time at COP27 – pushback framed this as an **unfair transfer of wealth to the ‘developing world’**. Claims overlapped strongly with cost of living content; for example, contrasting Loss and Damage to [austerity measures](#) and [heating bills](#) in the UK, where most high-traction attacks originated during the summit before spreading in the US and Australia. This content largely sidestepped any reference to climate impacts, instead focussing on the benefits of fossil fuels for ‘human flourishing’.
- Another newer trend was **‘wokewashing’: the adoption of ‘progressive’ rhetoric to oppose climate action**. Such framing spanned a range of arguments, including that ‘green technologies’ such as Electric Vehicles are bad or even worse for the environment than fossil fuels, and that climate action constitutes a form of ‘Western Imperialism’ or ‘neo-colonialism’. The latter was notably pushed by **Chinese and Russian networks online**, including some State-linked media outlets.
- High-profile protests by groups like Just Stop Oil triggered **renewed attacks on climate action and activism** as elitist and out of touch. This ranged from relatively [mild name-calling](#) and presenting protesters as [delusional](#) to claims that protesters are [weaponising mental illness](#). Rhetoric on fringe platforms like 4Chan was notably graphic, with ‘mocking’ threats of sexual or other violence against such groups.

Cheaper by the Dozen: 'Culture Warriors' Claim the Spotlight

- As detailed in our ['Deny, Deceive, Delay'](#) report, a small cohort of accounts have outsized influence in originating and amplifying this kind of content across social media. For COP27, we identified **12 actors who were most prolific within the 5 battleground topics monitored (Fossil Fuel Necessity; Anti-Green Tech; Cost of Living Crisis; Culture Wars; Loss and Damage)**.
- In the 4-week period from 29 October – 27 November 2022, these dozen actors **posted 388 times** on Twitter using keywords in our five narratives (see above), and garnered an aggregate of **343,862 shares** from this content.
- The organic audience of these accounts varies from **65k to over 1.9m followers**. Nine of the twelve were, and remain, verified accounts.
- Climate issues do not generally dominate their content strategy, but attacks on climate **regularly feature alongside other misleading, disproven and/or unsubstantiated claims** on an array of topics – this includes electoral fraud, vaccinations, the COVID-19 pandemic, migration, and ['elites' running child trafficking rings](#).
- **COVID-sceptic accounts are more present in the network of misinformation amplifiers this year**. 22.27% of the COP27 map comprises such figures, versus only 12.35% in 2021, as COVID-focused communities shift to other topics.

The Road to COP28

In 2023, nations will complete a ['global stocktake'](#) of progress on the [Paris Agreement](#), assessing whether their combined targets and commitments are enough to prevent catastrophic warming and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. The results will form a core part of the COP28 summit, to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in December and with Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology Sultan Al Jaber [confirmed to play a leading role](#).

The UAE is [among the 10 largest oil producers](#) in the world and Al Jaber [currently serves as Managing Director](#) of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc), alongside his duties as Minister and Climate Envoy. The company is [cited by the US government](#) as a 'global leader' in oil and gas and just last year awarded \$658 million in framework agreements 'to further expand drilling operations and crude oil production capacity'. How their Presidency will define the summit remains to be seen, but it is imperative to track the messaging of [Carbon Major](#) companies, Petrochemical States and the wider fossil fuel lobby in the coming months.

COP27 [broke records](#) for the presence of industry lobbyists at the summit, with official delegates rising more than 25% on the previous year – and this upwards trend shows no sign of stopping in 2023. These developments should be a clarion call for even greater scrutiny into the information warfare delaying climate action; who funds it, who drives it, and where it is most successful. Particular attention should be paid to the promotion of fossil gas as a so-called 'clean' energy source, paired with the continued discrediting of renewable technologies such as wind and solar. The climate sector must fight against backsliding in local policy (such as the UK's [Cumbria coal mine](#) or [Sweden's upcoming referendum](#)), and be ready to challenge arguments based on misinformation around 'green levies', 'loss of livelihoods' or 'energy sovereignty'. We should also be alert to [Nationally Determined Contributions](#) that rely heavily on solutions like Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS); such technologies [do not yet exist](#) at nearly the [scale or sophistication needed](#) but are increasingly used as a 'silver-bullet' solution to negate other critical targets (e.g. coal phase-out).

CAAD is committed to researching and exposing the playbook of inaction in as many contexts as possible, from outright disinformation to greenwashing, online manipulation and State-sponsored propaganda. Stay abreast of activity via [our website](#).

SECTION 1

Monetised Greenwashing on Meta

“Vested interests have generated rhetoric and misinformation that undermines climate science and disregards risk and urgency... Resultant public misperception of climate risks and polarized public support for climate actions is delaying urgent adaptation planning and implementation”

[Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)

(Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group II, May 2022)

“[Committee] documents demonstrate how the fossil fuel industry “greenwashed” its public image with promises and actions that oil and gas executives knew would not meaningfully reduce emissions, even as [it] moved aggressively to lock in continued fossil fuel production for decades to come—actions that could doom global efforts to prevent catastrophic climate change...Despite public promises that fossil fuels are merely a “bridge fuel” to cleaner sources of energy, Big Oil is doubling down on long-term reliance on fossil fuels with no intention of taking concrete actions to transition to clean energy.”

[Final Report from the Investigation into Fossil Fuel Industry Disinformation](#)

(US House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Nov 2022)

“The planet cannot afford delays, excuses, or more greenwashing...Non-state actors cannot claim to be net zero while continuing to build or invest in new fossil fuel supply. Coal, oil and gas account for over 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Net zero is entirely incompatible with continued investment in fossil fuels. Similarly, deforestation and other environmentally destructive activities are disqualifying.”

[Integrity Matters: Net Zero Commitments by Businesses, Financial Institutes, Cities and Region](#)

(UN High-Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities, November 2022)

Why Does It Matter?

Recognition of the climate crisis and the need for net zero transitions is steadily increasing among the general public and lawmakers alike, but has spurred a parallel surge in the multi-billion-dollar economy of corporate greenwashing. Reflecting a [broader shift from climate denial](#) to subtler forms of 'delayism' and 'inactivism', those with vested interests in the fossil fuel economy have been forced to pivot their approach. **Whether via traditional and digital ad spend, proxy group campaigning or even the use of paid-for 'influencers' on social media, the industry is now marshalling its PR around two parallel (and contradictory) fronts in tandem:**

- 1) Promoting the continued and 'absolute' necessity of oil and fossil gas to economies around the globe, especially in the wake of concurrent global crises – this includes Russia's invasion of Ukraine (with knock-on effects for inflation and energy supply chains) and ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (worsening cost of living crises and economic downturn);
- 2) Overselling the contribution of industry actors to achieving 'net zero', in line with agendas like the Paris Climate Agreement – for example through supposed investment in 'green solutions' like wind and solar energy, as well as technology like Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

As noted everywhere from the [US House Committee on Oversight and Reform](#) to [Climate Action 100+](#) and [Influence Map](#), the second argument is entirely at odds with companies' investment portfolios both current and forecasted. Such greenwashing has gained increasing recognition as a barrier to climate action, which must be confronted through multilateral forums as well as domestic regulation. Recent developments include:

- At COP27 in November, the **UN's High-Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities** issued [new guidance](#), stating that 'it's time to draw a red line around greenwashing' and setting more stringent criteria for net zero pledges;
- In October 2022, the **UK Advertising Standards Agency** [ruled](#) that two live poster campaigns from HSBC should be removed since the content therein was not 'adequately qualified' and could mislead consumers about the bank's green credentials;
- In October 2022, the **UK Financial Services Authority** published a consultation paper on '[Sustainability Disclosure Requirements](#)', designed to mitigate greenwashing and ensure environmental claims from any regulated firm are 'clear, fair and not misleading' to consumers.

These initial steps forward emphasise the need for more systemic and globalised efforts that include major tech platforms and ad tech providers.

What We Found

Analysis of over 850 advertisers between 1 September and 23 November 2022 showed a small cohort drove the majority of false or greenwashed advertising on Facebook, with activity peaking in the weeks preceding and during COP27. Common techniques included [‘nature-rinsing’](#), to distract and mislead audiences on net zero targets, as well as denial of climate science and emotional messaging around livelihoods, national security and sovereignty in relation to fossil fuels. Given the advertising spend identified, it is probable these messages were viewed by a wide audience at a key juncture in the climate agenda.

- A total of **3,781 ads** were active in the monitored timeframe, posted by 87 unique pages.

Roughly **USD \$3–4 million was spent** on advertising during this period, with an increase in the daily active ads starting from around 10 October through COP27.

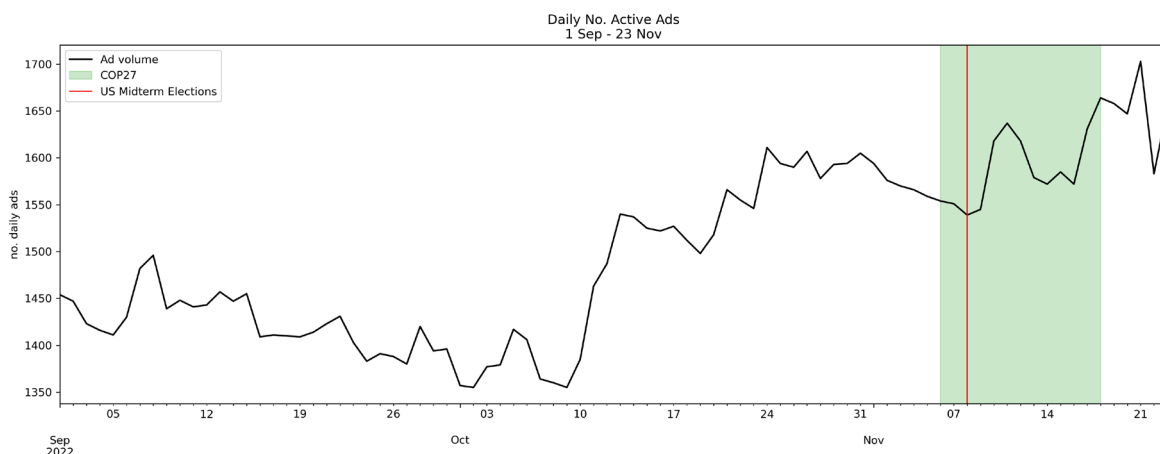
- **There were more daily active ads run by Energy Citizens (a PR group of the American Petroleum Institute) than all other pages in the collection combined.** Their ad campaign advocated for US production of fossil gas and oil, citing [nationalist](#) arguments around ‘energy security’.

- A number of US-based pages ended their ad campaigns following the US Midterm Elections, but this fall in volume was outweighed by the ramping up of ad campaigns from three industry PR groups: America’s Plastic Makers, funded by the [American Chemistry Council](#) (driving the initial spike on 10 Nov), and [Affordable Energy for New Jersey / Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future](#) (driving the second spike, between 16 and 21 Nov).

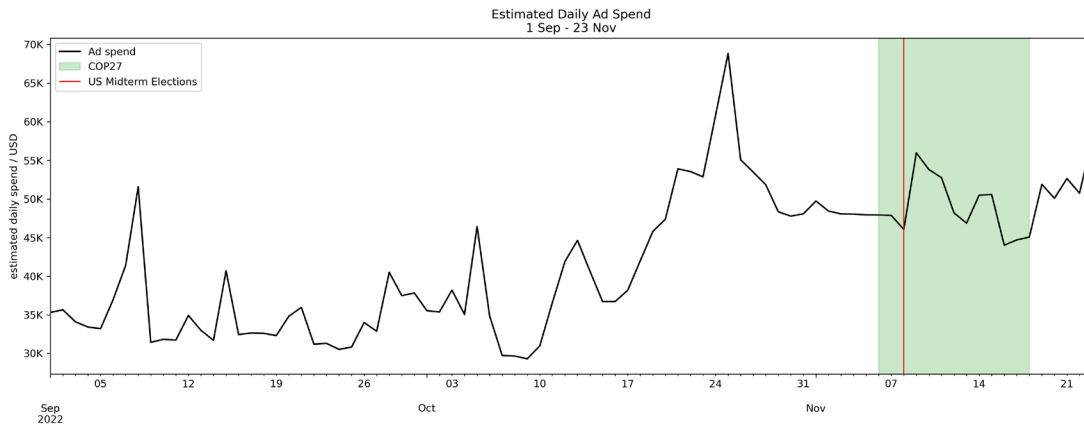
- **America’s Plastic Makers spent approximately USD\$1.1M on climate-related advertising** in this period, with an average daily spend of USD\$13,000. The corporation represents manufacturers of products such as plastic bags, with ads being funded by the American Chemistry Council. Since 8 November, it has ramped up a campaign surrounding plastic recycling and the ‘circular economy’.

- **Several state-owned oil companies and affiliated initiatives posted adverts during COP27**, emphasising their efforts to protect the environment and act on climate change. This is despite their governments’ well-documented and [obstructive positions](#) in the negotiations themselves. For example, the Saudi Green Initiative had at least 13 live adverts around the summit, whilst Saudi Arabia’s delegation were [accused of pursuing](#) a ‘Strategy to Keep the World Hooked on Oil.’

- Narratives around **energy independence and security**, as well as **affordability and reliability of fossil fuels** were the most common.



No. of daily active ads posted by monitored advertisers between 1 September and 23 November 2022



Estimated daily ad spend on the active ads posted by monitored advertisers between 1 September and 23 November 2022

Note: This research only covers Facebook and Instagram in the period before, during and immediately after COP27, and should be considered the tip of the iceberg in terms of wider digital spending and influence. Analysis of industry greenwashing continues to be stymied by limitations in API access (i.e. the data made publicly available by platforms) and the often arbitrary distinctions applied to 'political' or 'issue-based' content versus wider advertising - the latter impacts the level of detail provided on how much advertisers spend for a given campaign, as well as any specified targeting (demographic or geographic) and the reach and engagement achieved. For more detail, please refer to Policy Ask 5 of CAAD's ['Deny, Deceive, Delay' report](#).

'Quantity, not Quality': Most Prolific Advertisers

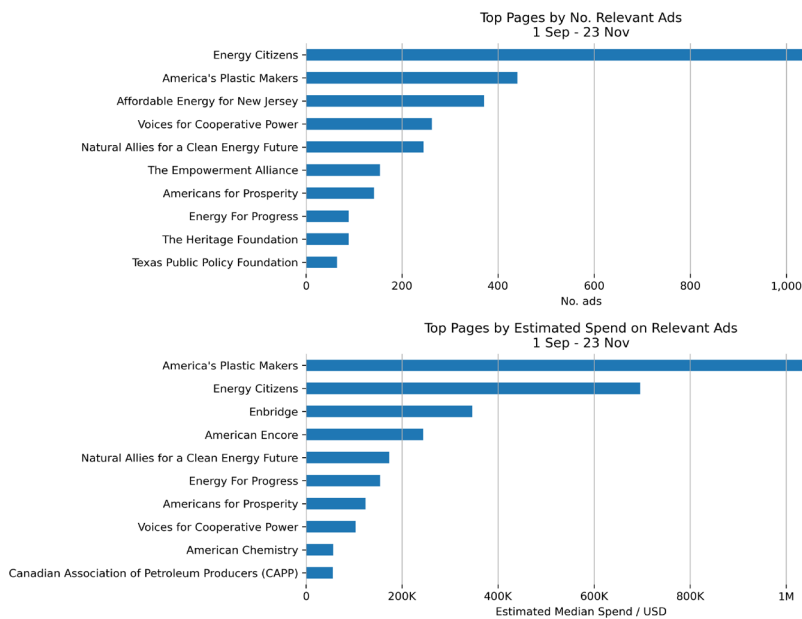
An actor list of **857 possible advertisers** was run through Meta's Ad Library. Analysts at the University of Exeter then reviewed both the number of ads launched on Meta, and the overall amount spent on advertising. For further details please refer to Annex 2 (Methodology).

Six pages appear in the Top 10 for both ad volume and ad spend:

- [Voices for Cooperative Power](#), a group [advocating for electric co-op groups in the US](#);
- [Americans for Prosperity](#), a ["right-wing political advocacy group"](#);
- [Energy For Progress](#) and [Energy Citizens](#) ('front groups' for the American Petroleum Institute);
- [Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future](#), [a fossil fuel industry PR group](#);
- [America's Plastic Makers](#).

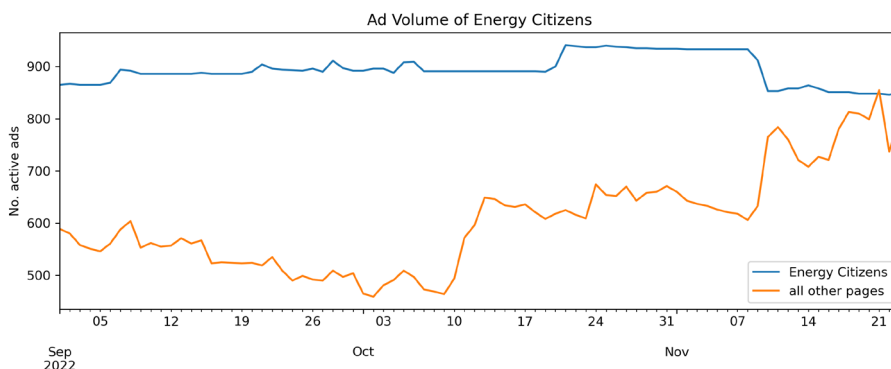
Five of the remaining eight pages are formally part of, or explicitly aligned with, the fossil fuel industry:

- [Affordable Energy for New Jersey](#)
- [American Encore](#)
- [Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers \(CAPP\)](#)
- [Enbridge](#)
- [The Empowerment Alliance](#)



The remaining three pages comprise two conservative think tanks ([The Heritage Foundation](#) and the [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#)) and The American Chemistry Council, a group whose members ["include subsidiaries of Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, Total and BP"](#).

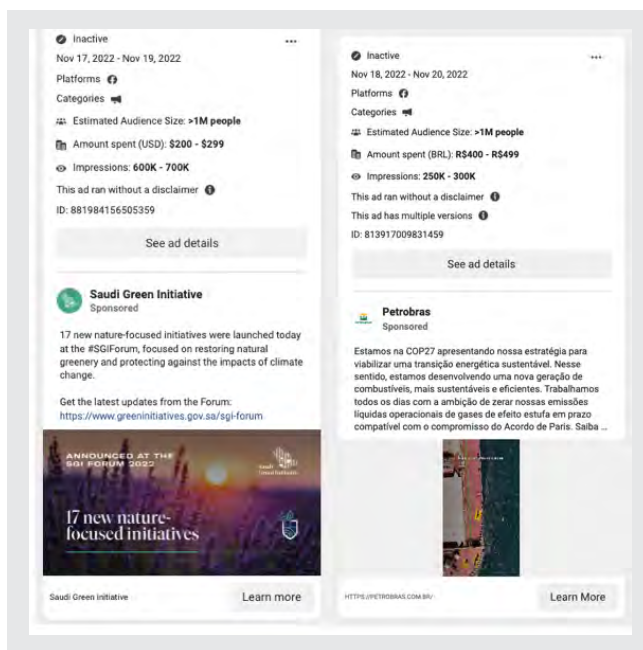
Top pages among monitored advertisers ranked by number of ads and total estimated spend between 1 September and 23 November 2022.



No. of active adverts containing our climate keywords, published by known actors, and labelled by the platform or advertiser as relating to 'social issues, elections or politics' (Sept-Nov 2022)

Spotlight: State-Sponsored Greenwash

Facebook adverts from **Saudi Green Initiative (SGI)** emphasised climate pledges made by the Kingdom's government, including [to plant 10 billion trees, protect marine areas, and become carbon neutral by 2060](#). Videos included images of sweeping vistas, highlighting the Saudi people's "profound relationship with the landscape" and efforts to restore this "sacred bond" as the planet faces "its greatest challenge." [Disinformation researchers](#) have termed this tactic as 'nature-rinsing'. Saudi Arabia is among a handful of countries [condemned](#) for its efforts to weaken global ambition on fossil fuel phase-out and emissions reduction in Sharm el-Sheikh.



Examples of ads by Saudi Green Initiative, Petrobras

fields 'greener' - in particular through the use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies and by developing solar farms on its extraction sites. In December, China Daily [reported](#) that CNPC's oil and gas production hit a record high in 2022.

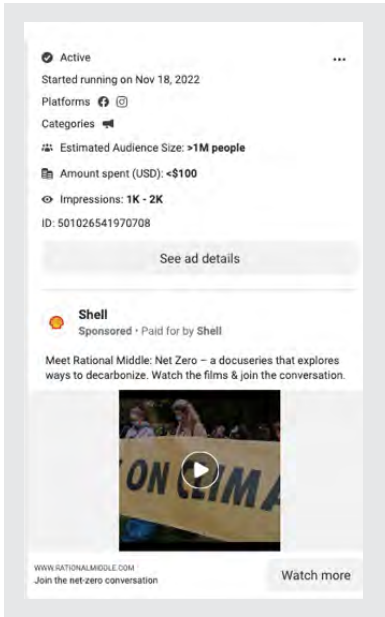
(Some adverts from these accounts, including at least seven pushed by SGI, were eventually taken down by Meta for failing to declare their categorisation under "issues, elections and politics" as per the platform's [Terms of Service](#).)

The state-owned oil companies of China and Brazil - also highlighted for their [lobbying activity](#) at the summit - touted similar 'green' initiatives.

Brazilian company Petrobras explicitly referenced their on-the-ground presence at COP27 in two adverts, claiming they would present the strategy for a "sustainable energy transition" through, for example, net zero operational emissions and investment in alternative fuels. As recently as 2020, Petrobras' then-CEO was [documented](#) calling Net Zero commitments 'a fad' and referring to oil as 'the backbone of modern society'. In 2022, President-elect Lula [criticised](#) the company's pace of transition, with only 6% of its planned capital expenditure budgeted for low-carbon projects.

The **Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC)** posted two adverts in late October touting its efforts to move towards a low-carbon future and make its oil

Spotlight: Carbon Majors

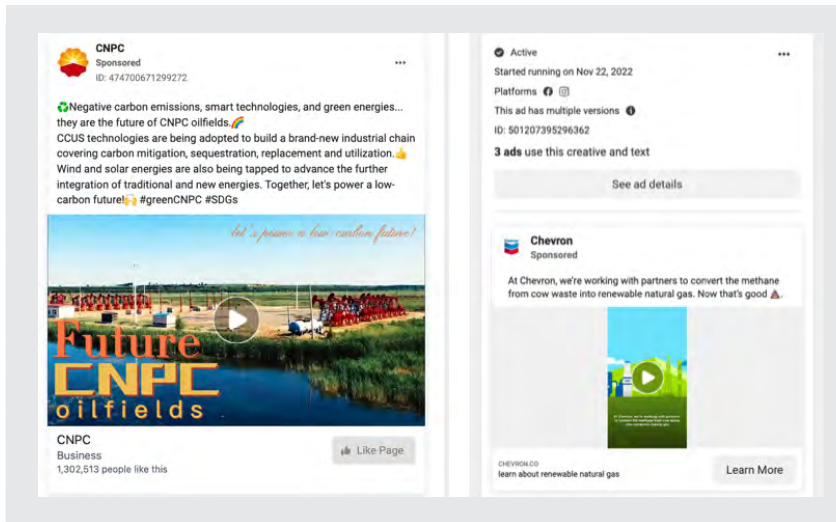


COP27 was well-attended (arguably [more so than ever](#)) by representatives of the fossil fuel industry, including oil giants such as Shell, Chevron and Total. Many of these delegates were affiliated with ‘[Carbon Majors](#)’, i.e. the 100 companies allegedly responsible for over 70% of all historic greenhouse gas emissions. According to [a study by CDP and the Climate Accountability Institute](#), their emissions total nearly 1 trillion tonnes since 1988, the year in which anthropogenic climate change was officially recognised with the creation of the IPCC. Several also ran parallel adverts emphasising their green credentials.

One ad from **Shell**, launched on 18 November 2022, was among several pieces of content promoting a new docu-series from the company titled ‘Rational Middle: Net Zero’. According to the related website, the videos aim to “*explore the technologies, policies, and partnerships that are required to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050*”. In a [recent report from the Centre for Countering Digital Hate](#), the company was exposed for privately instructing employees that Net Zero is “not a Shell business plan”.

Chevron also ran several ads (see example screenshot below) during and around the summit, many centring on a supposed aim to reduce emissions intensity and focus on technologies such as biofuels and hydrogen. Ads also contained content about how the company is helping to boost ‘energy security and supply’. According to the [Climate Accountability Institute](#), Chevron has the second largest carbon footprint on their list of global polluters since 1965.

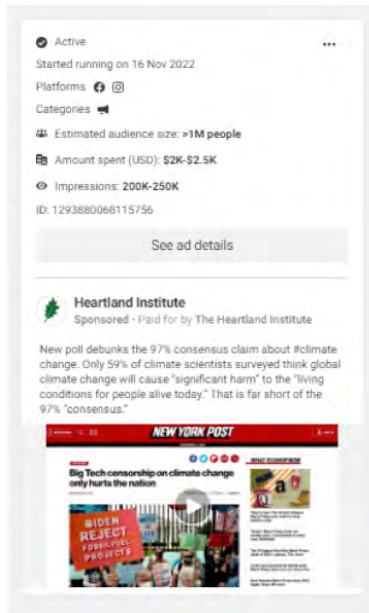
ExxonMobil promoted its work in carbon capture and storage and ‘[blue hydrogen](#)’, as well as the supposed benefits of oil and gas for jobs and energy security.



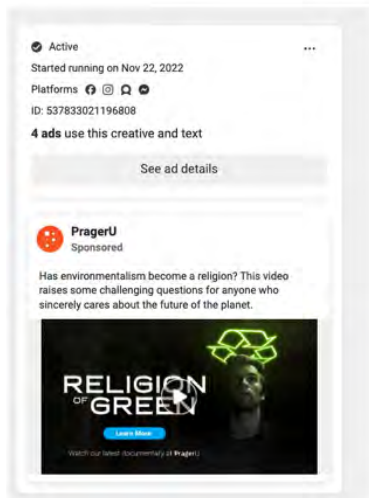
Such industry campaigns were enabled by Meta despite [warnings](#) at the summit about greenwashing and a lack of scrutiny or standards around corporate targets. In an [address from Sharm el-Sheikh](#), UN Secretary General António Guterres stated: “using bogus ‘net-zero’ pledges to cover up massive fossil fuel expansion is reprehensible. It is rank deception.”

Examples of ads by the China National Petroleum Corporation, Chevron

Spotlight: Industry PR and Lobby Groups



Example of ads by Heartland Institute and PragerU



Several groups linked to the fossil fuel industry ran advertising during and around COP. While content was not explicitly linked to the summit it did include outright denial of climate science, at a time when public attention is directed towards the environmental agenda. The timing aligns with a wider, ongoing effort to weaken the public mandate on climate action, in particular through ‘culture wars’ framing around elitism and mistrust of institutions.

The Heartland Institute has a long [track record](#) of denying the scientific evidence around anthropogenic (i.e. human-induced) climate change. It ran two ads on Facebook, both based on a survey which claims that only 59% of scientists think global climate change will cause ‘significant harm’ to the living conditions of people alive today. One ad, launched on 16 November, stated: “*New poll debunks the 97% consensus claim about #climate change.*” However, [as revealed by DeSmog](#), the survey actually found a 96% consensus that climate change is occurring, validating the exact statistic the ad claims to debunk.

The “conservative non-profit” **PragerU**, which is [largely funded](#) by two fracking industry billionaires, also ran a campaign posing the question: “*Has environmentalism become a religion?*”. Accompanying the ad is a 17:45-minute video featuring discussions on the “religion of green” and speakers who claim that the “environmental movement” and “catastrophic climate change sector” are using fear to push their agenda.

Energy Citizens, [a group created by the American Petroleum Institute](#) – itself the main trade and lobbying arm of the US industry – used their content to highlight security concerns around downscaling oil and gas. They also shared ads [misrepresenting support from](#) groups such as veterans to promote ‘American-made energy’. The group posted a total of 1181 ads during the monitored period that matched our keywords (see below), and except for one day had more daily active ads than all other pages in the collection combined.

What's in a Word?

The Facebook ad library can also be filtered by language, as opposed to solely via advertiser. Researchers collated keywords common within climate misinformation narratives to use as search terms. Of these 103 terms, 69 returned at least one matching ad with a broad search (i.e. the keywords in any order), and nine with an exact search (i.e. the keywords verbatim). Many pieces of content made reference to multiple terms - for example phrases such as 'energy security oil gas', 'energy independence', 'natural gas most reliable' and 'natural gas most affordable' regularly occurred alongside 'American energy'. From the results it is clear that **narratives around energy security, reliability, affordability and independence are tied in with nationalist and protectionist sentiments.**

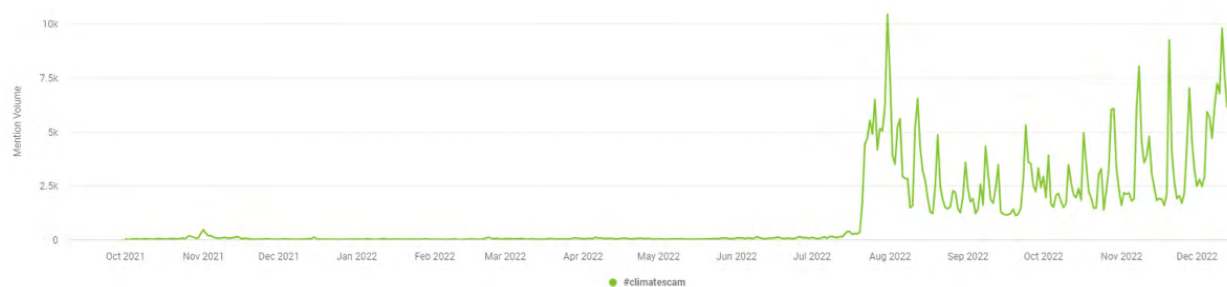
Strict Search	
Key Phrase	No. Results
Energy independence	1925
American energy	1558
Human flourishing	61
Keystone XL	33
energy dominance	13
fossil fuels are necessary	7
new fossil fuel investments	2
Freedom gas	1

Broad Search	
Key Phrase	No. Results
American energy	3584
energy independence	2162
energy security oil gas	1519
natural gas most affordable	812
Freedom gas	575
natural gas most reliable	530
natural gas need long term	197
new oil investments	153
natural gas most efficient	85
human flourishing	83
natural gas transition fuel	74
energy security fossil fuel	74
natural gas economic growth	64
investment necessary gas industry	60
energy dominance	56
ethical oil	56
fossil fuels are necessary	55
investment growth gas sector	37
new fossil fuel investments	33
Keystone XL	33

SECTION 2

The Return of 'Climate Scam'

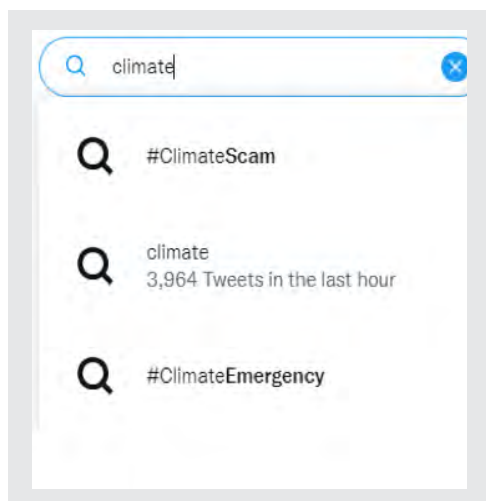
At COP26, outright denialism was seemingly outpaced by subtler 'discourses of delay' and attacks on climate action. In 2022, denialist content made a stark comeback on Twitter in particular, with the hashtag #ClimateScam spiking out of nowhere in July 2022. Since then, CAAD analysis has recorded over 362k mentions (including retweets) originating from over 91k unique users, with daily mentions never dropping below 1000 posts. The term often appears to be trending despite data that shows more activity and engagement on other hashtags such as #ClimateCrisis and #ClimateEmergency. The source of its virality, including explicit promotion via Twitter's recommendation algorithm, is therefore unclear, and again highlights the need for transparency on how and why platforms surface content to users.



Volume over time of Twitter posts (original and retweets) containing #ClimateScam between 1 October 2021 and 13 December 2022.

A Conspiracy is (Re)Born – But Why?

The first high-traction content came on 30 July from a non-verified account whose bio description includes ‘God’s soldier’ (17.3k followers) – the post featured a clip of conservative Australian broadcaster and regular climate denialist [Alan Jones](#) and gained 23k likes, 10k retweets and 467k views. Content has been on an upwards trajectory ever since, with input from a wide array of high-traction and verified accounts and, in at least one instance, an account displaying bot-like behaviour.



Screenshot taken from an organic search of 'climate' on Twitter (15.12.2022)

It is unclear what role algorithms are playing in this surge. During COP27, our Intelligence Unit noticed that an organic search for the word “climate” on Twitter returned #ClimateScam ahead of two other, ostensibly ‘pro-green’ hashtags (#ClimateEmergency and #ClimateCrisis). Analysts replicated the search on different devices, across different geographies and using tools like Incognito Mode or VPNs, to try and remove any potential bias in the results. While these are limited controls, we were nonetheless recommended #ClimateScam somewhere in the Top 3 results, and often first, consistently from mid-November to the end of December 2022.

Algorithmic amplification remains a black box for research, despite repeated calls for more transparency from the climate sector and beyond (see [Policy Ask 3 of 'Deny, Deceive, Delay'](#)).

Despite these constraints, we have tried to explore *why* this might be occurring, in particular whether it appears to be a glitch in the back-end system, a conscious decision from the platform, or a reflection of genuine activity among users.

In theory, a platform might recommend content for a handful of different, often interconnected, reasons:

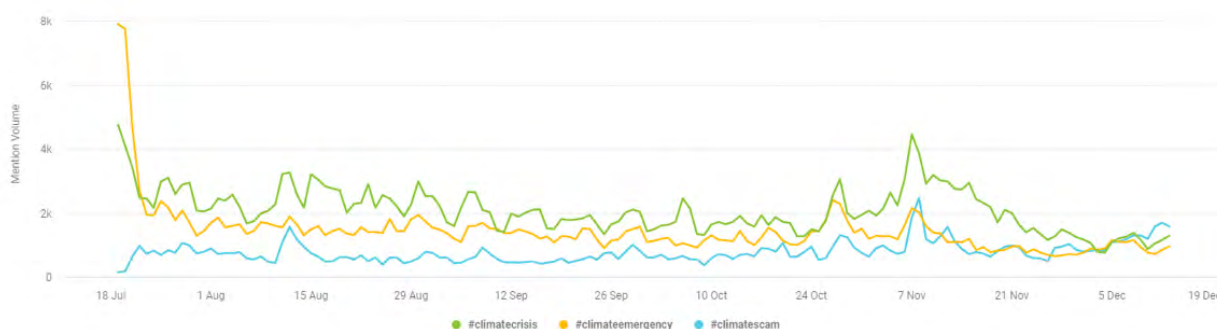
1) Individual experience – your browsing history (likes, shares, searches etc.) relate to the topic, and therefore suggest this content would be of interest. Personalisation is largely ruled out by the steps described above, as we made every effort to ‘mask’ the user searching the platform and generate more ‘neutral’ or generic results.

2) Volume of Content – activity on the platform is spiking around a given topic (e.g. a news event, a public figure, a meme) and therefore features higher in search results at that moment. From the data available this also seems unlikely, as the number of posts under #ClimateCrisis and #ClimateEmergency was almost always higher in both relative and absolute terms from July to December (see graph below¹).

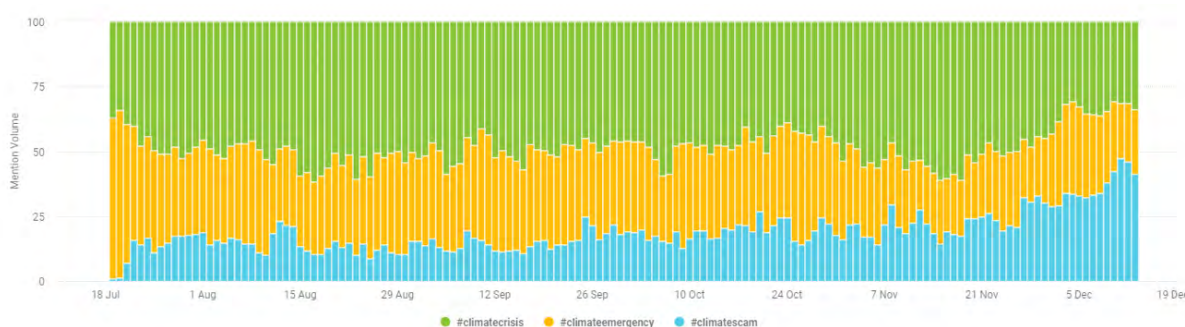
The most active user mentioning #ClimateScam also appears to be an automated account (@climate_fact) that retweets posts containing the hashtag. It has done so more than 60k times since July 2022 but was originally created in April 2020. In 2023 CAAD intends to run a full study on hashtag manipulation to assess whether this is an isolated case, or if the trend has been driven by coordinated and inauthentic behaviour on Twitter writ large.

(1) To note: the graphs in this section reflect findings on 14 December 2022. When reviewing the data again in January 2023, we noticed a drop in the number of #ClimateScam posts within the stated time frame; this was particularly pronounced for original posts. The commercial platform used for this analysis, Brandwatch, regularly processes a compliance feed from Twitter requiring them to retrospectively remove content that has since then been removed, set to private or deleted. We maintain the previous graphs as they are more reflective of the developments at the time.

(**To note:** the slightly higher proportion for #ClimateScam in late November/early December *may* relate to media reporting on this issue, including prominent pieces in [The Guardian](#) and [The Times](#))



Volume of posts that mention #ClimateScam, #ClimateCrisis or #ClimateEmergency respectively between 19 July and 13 December 2022.



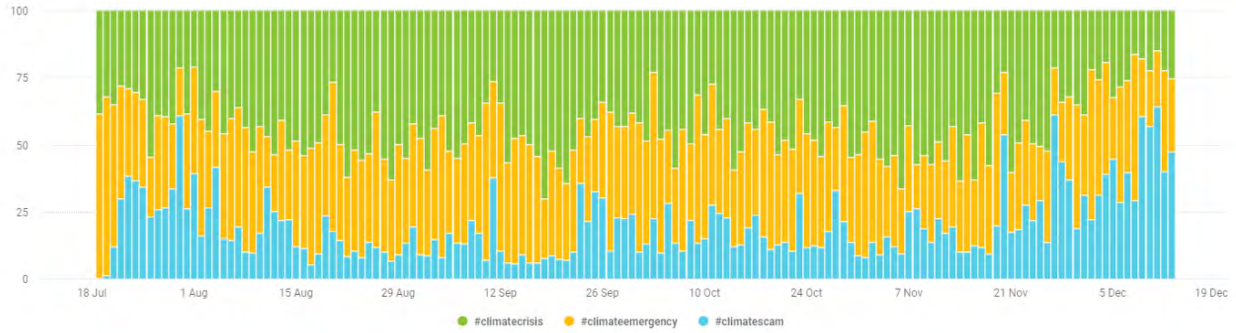
Share of original posts that mention one of #ClimateScam, #ClimateCrisis or #ClimateEmergency between 19 July and 13 December 2022. Graph shows the % of all posts using any of the hashtags.

3) Popularity of Content – although a topic has fewer mentions, the related content is getting a disproportionate amount of engagement (e.g. a smaller group of posts each gaining millions of likes, shares and comments). This could also apply if users with a larger organic following adopt a hashtag, including verified or ‘blue tick’ accounts. Once again, there is no evidence to suggest this occurred for #climatescam or that content was ‘going viral’ in comparison to other hashtags.

Between 11 and 15 November (Week 2 of COP27), the largest account posting an original #ClimateScam tweet was pundit Tom Fitton, who has over 1.7 million followers (see Amplifier section of this report). Other mentions came from significantly smaller accounts, with the second largest showing a follower count of just 62k.

In contrast, #ClimateEmergency was used by numerous users with large audiences, including Greenpeace (over 1.9M followers), Italian public broadcaster RAI (over 1.2M followers), the UN Environmental Programme (over 1.2M followers), Radio Pakistan (over 950k followers) and others boasting hundreds of thousands of followers. The same applies to #ClimateCrisis, which was cited during this timeframe by the World Health Organisation (over 11M followers), Indian media outlet TimesNow (over 10M followers), the US State Department (over 6.3M followers) and media and institutional accounts with over one million followers.

Among 23k posts in the entire dataset, only four crossed 1k retweets and these included only #ClimateEmergency and/or #ClimateCrisis. In comparison, the three most-shared posts citing #ClimateScam in Week 2 of COP reached a mere 343, 282 and 268 retweets respectively, ranking them as 19th, 24th and 27th in that period. If we take likes as a metric instead of retweets the same trend applies, with even less favourable results for #ClimateScam.

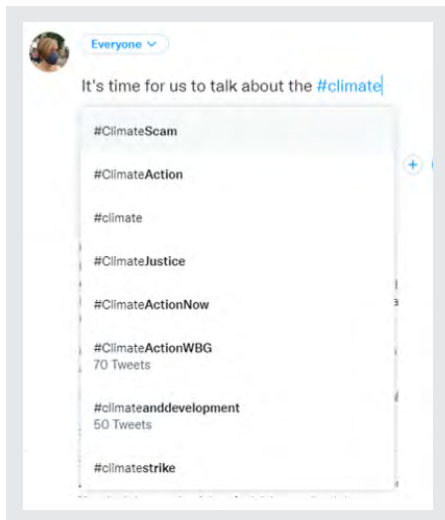


Share of retweets of original posts mentioning one of #ClimateScam, #ClimateCrisis or #ClimateEmergency between 19 July and 13 December 2022.

So where does that leave us? With more questions than answers, and a need for Twitter to ‘show its working’ on how #climatescam has risen to the surface. A disinformation hashtag that underperformed by several key metrics was actively suggested to users, during the most important climate event of the year and its immediate aftermath. (The trend may also have been taking place for months prior, although we cannot confirm the data retrospectively.) Despite the error being flagged directly to the platform by CAAD members and highlighted via [mainstream reporting](#), it nonetheless persists at the time of writing - in fact, the trend now extends beyond organic searches to hashtag suggestions for ‘climate’ when drafting a post (see image below).

On Earth Day in April 2022 the platform [announced new measures to combat climate denial](#), including a ban on adverts that contradict the scientific consensus under their ‘Inappropriate Content’ policy. What has happened since can only be answered by Twitter itself, but marks a concerning shift in activity on the platform.

#ClimateScam – A Uniquely Twitter Problem?



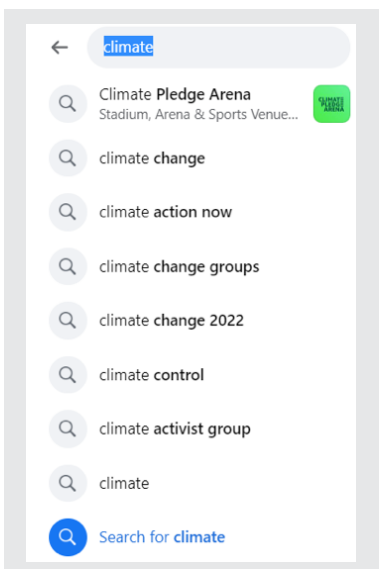
Screenshot of an organic suggestion for hashtags after typing '#climate' in a draft post on Twitter (15.12.2022)

CAAD conducted a basic test to gauge whether similar issues exist on Facebook and TikTok, taking into account varying levels of data access and the differing relevance of hashtags across platforms. **A manual search on TikTok yields no results for #climatescam – instead the app suggests that this phrase “may be associated with behaviour or content that violates our guidelines.”** (see image).

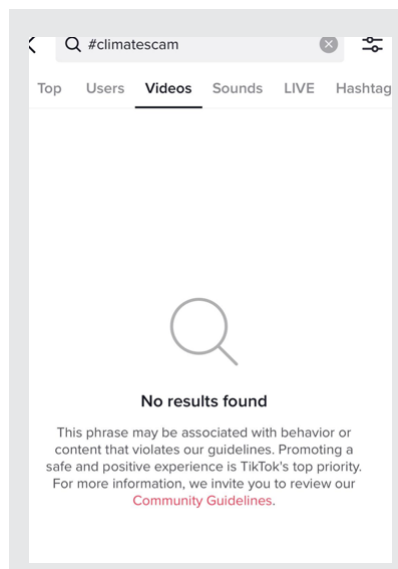
Searching for “climate” on Facebook via a new account does not immediately yield any suggested sceptic or denialist terms. When the search was complete, the platform surfaced content from authoritative sources at the top of the feed, including accounts within their Climate Science Center (e.g. NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the United Nations) as well as mainstream media such as CBS and The Hill.

In a separate search for #ClimateScam, Facebook showed only 1.5K users on the platform actively mentioning this term. In comparison, 72K users appeared to be posting about #ClimateEmergency and 160K users about #ClimateCrisis. The posts using #ClimateScam seemed

mostly lower traction, aside from the top piece of content – a [video](#) from the right-wing Irish Freedom Party which claimed to depict an electric scooter and other renewable energy infrastructure catching on fire (500 shares). Interestingly, various posts higher up in the feed featured articles covering the rise in climate change denial and the use of #ClimateScam on Twitter.



Screenshot showing a manual search for 'climate' via a new account on Facebook (15.12.2022)



Screenshot showing a search for #climatescam on TikTok (15.12.2022)

SECTION 3

Key Amplifiers and Narratives

To develop effective counter-measures to disinformation and anti-climate attacks, it is vital to understand the most resonant narratives and which actors most commonly employ them.

The following section provides an overview focussed on the four-week period preceding, during and immediately after COP27, when posting around climate issues tends to hit an annual peak. We have identified the topics generating the most high-traction content and, where possible, tried to quantify which arguments are ‘breaking through’ across social media. While the latter is inherently difficult, the [CARDS research project](#) provides a framework to estimate the prominence and impact of certain claims over others. In addition, we have profiled a sample of the most active and/or popular accounts promoting delayist and denialist talking points, seeking to explore the common threads and arguments they employ. A network analysis of these actors and their digital audiences provides further insight into the ecosystem on Twitter in particular, revealing the growing parallels with other online communities (such as followers of conspiracist movements).

The COP27 Narrative Playbook

The following section provides an overview of key ‘battleground topics’ in and around COP27, based on a qualitative analysis of all posts that garnered more than 500 shares on Twitter and Facebook.² We specifically collected content for five narratives central to online debate around climate and prone to mis-/disinformation:

- Cost of Living Crisis
- Culture Wars
- Loss and Damage
- Anti-Green Technology
- Necessity of Fossil Fuels

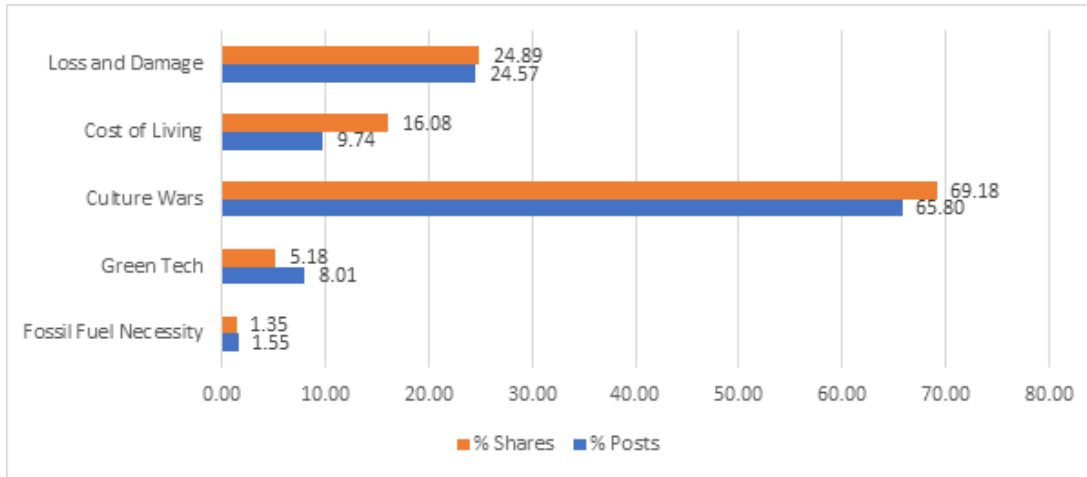
Overall, we collected 267,606 original posts that matched our keywords (not including shares) produced by 139,889 unique actors. These posts were shared 1,284,969 times between 29 October and 27 November 2022.



Volume of original posts on Facebook and Twitter matching any of our five narratives between 29 Oct and 27 Nov 2022

² Analysis mostly draws from Twitter, as Facebook content captured by our monitoring had significantly lower volumes and share counts around COP27. Such content may well be prevalent on the platform but hosted within more ‘private’ spaces such as closed groups, skewing the picture of what is taking place – such data remain inaccessible for research even in anonymised form (e.g. allowing analysis of platform-level trends, but with all identifying markers removed).

It is comparatively easier to code or predict 'culture wars' terminology than more technical topics, since online discourse in this area often relies on a common set of tropes, memes, catch-phrases and references. Nonetheless, our findings do suggest that 'anti-woke' messaging and conspiracy theories about climate reign supreme, dwarfing any other narrative. Posts related to the cost of living crisis also accounted for a significant percentage of shares, despite far fewer posts overall – a sign that the issue has proved resonant with online audiences in recent months.

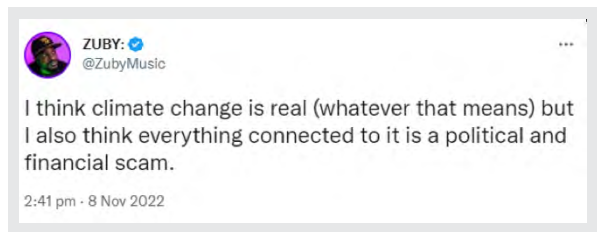


*Proportion of posts and shares within the dataset of all narratives from 29 Oct to 27 Nov 2022.
(Totals exceed 100 per cent as individual posts could contain keywords for multiple narratives)*

What Broke Through at COP27

Climate Scam

Posts containing outright denial of climate change, including phrases like ‘climate scam’ and ‘climate hoax’, made a stark comeback at COP27. While still rife across social media, such content has been relegated more to the periphery of debate in recent years - [our collections at COP26](#) suggested subtler forms of delayism and identity politics were stealing the limelight as a successful tactic for laundering ideas into the mainstream. Content this year varied in extremity, from a complete rejection of scientific data and the phenomenon of climate change to posts that acknowledge the issue but claim any related action is a ‘political and financial scam’.



Notable amplifiers of this narrative:

- Vlogger Peter Imanuelsen, known as [Peter Sweden](#) (457k followers);
- British musician [ZUBY](#) (984.3k followers);
- British political commentator [Dominique Samuels](#) (170.9k followers).

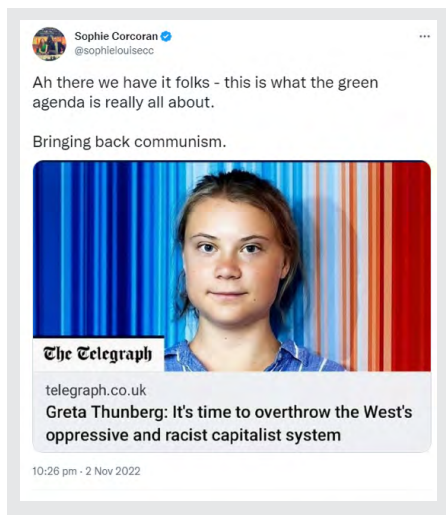
Left: Screenshots of highlighted posts by these accounts.

Many posts also linked climate denial to one of two broader narratives:

1) **The Great Reset conspiracy, which presents climate action as part of a nefarious plot by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and other global ‘elites’ to impose totalitarian rule.** This narrative [first came to prominence](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, but has increasingly [seeped](#) into energy- and climate-related content.

Peter Sweden shared high traction [posts](#) that linked ‘climate tyranny’ to the Great Reset and the Dutch government’s agricultural plans to a [WEF climate agenda](#), but content was also shared by accounts such as [Wall Street Silver](#) (543.4k followers), British pundit [Dominique Samuels](#) (171k followers), and Australian Senator [Malcolm Roberts](#) (57.6k followers). At times the conspiracy was [attributed](#) to the UN rather than the WEF, using near-identical lines of argument.

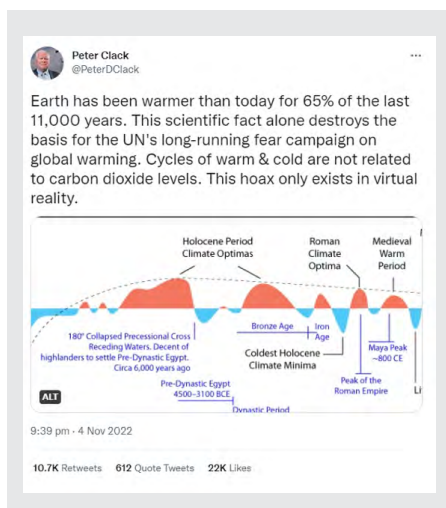
2) **Climate change as a plot ‘engineered’ to exert control and destroy capitalism.** Greta Thunberg’s [statements](#) just ahead of COP27 sparked a flurry of responses, claiming her critiques were evidence that



the 'mask had slipped' regarding climate action and communism. Widely shared posts (*see example screenshot*) came from [Michael Shellenberger](#) (507k followers), a [longstanding critic](#) of the environmental movement, and GB News contributor [Sophie Corcoran](#) (156.6k followers).

More partisan claims (i.e. beyond abstract references to 'communism') tended to originate from the US and could relate to the close proximity of COP27 to the US Midterm elections. Examples include a post by conservative pundit [Dan Bongino](#) (3.7m followers) blaming high gas prices on President Biden and his alleged deference to 'liberal nutcases' (25k likes, 3.8k retweets).

Denialism (Back) On the Rise



A recent [study](#) of 30 major economies, conducted by Ipsos in collaboration with French energy giant EDF, found that climate denial may be making new inroads in public debate. This chimes with some of our findings - besides the 'scam' rhetoric outlined above, **content attempting to mount a scientific case against climate change also featured prominently among high-traction posts.**

Notable amplifiers of this narrative:

- Australian [Peter Clack](#) (82.4k followers);
- Director at [The Heartland Institute](#) and industry lawyer [Steve Milloy](#) (65.3k followers).

Various popular claims include:

1. 'Other moments in history were warmer' ([example](#) - 22.1k likes, 10.8k retweets)
2. 'Carbon dioxide does not contribute to climate change' ([example](#) - 13.6k likes, 4.5k retweets)
3. 'Climate change is natural' ([example](#) - 4k likes, 2k retweets)
4. 'Global cooling is the real problem' ([example](#) - 4.9k likes, 2.5k retweets)

Many of Clack's posts combine the central claim that climate change is unproven with a conspiratorial or 'culture wars' bent - he frequently [includes](#) references to 'Marxists' at the UN perpetuating a 'hoax' around environmental science.



Other popular posts in our dataset promoted **claims that there is substantial dissent about climate change in the scientific community**. Besides Clack himself, who [claimed](#) a petition of almost 40k dissenting scientists was suppressed by the 'mainstream media', British pundit [Toby Young](#) (239.1k followers) also shared a survey published by the Heartland Institute (see Section 1) allegedly 'exploding the myth of a 99% scientific consensus on the Net Zero political agenda' (*see screenshot on left*). This has been comprehensively debunked by [DeSmog](#) among others.

'Climate Reparations'



Example screenshots of posts by Martin Daubney and Jacob Rees-Mogg

COP27 was forecast as a major milestone for discussions around 'loss and damage' - at the outset of the summit it was [announced](#) that negotiators had agreed, for the first time, to add an item to the official agenda. During COP26, social media discussions around such technical aspects of the Negotiated Outcome were minimal, and where they did exist seemed to remain within fringe or low-traction circles.

In 2022, interest in a 'loss and damage' mechanism was substantial and generated pushback by right-wing contrarians and climate sceptics alike, with both groups framing the negotiations as one of unfair 'climate reparations' paid by Global North countries to the 'developing world'.

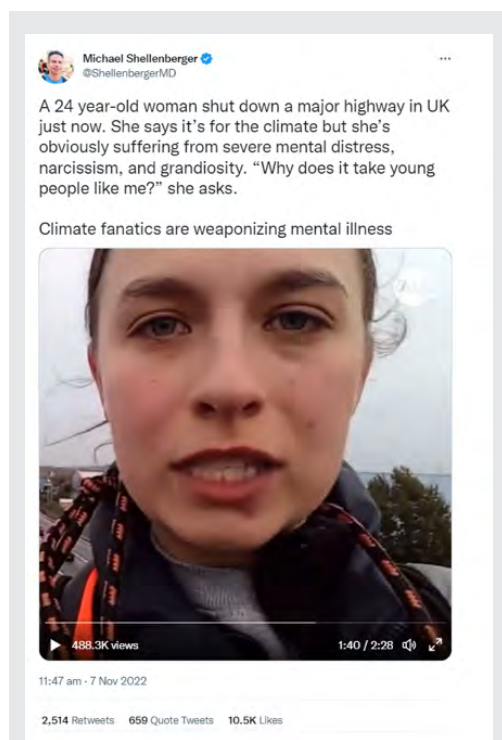
Claims overlapped strongly with cost of living content - for example, support for a 'loss and damage' fund was contrasted to [austerity](#) and [heating bills](#) in the UK, where most of the initial pushback originated during the summit. **These narratives largely sidestepped any explicit reference to climate change or historic emissions, instead focussing on the benefits of the British industrial revolution for 'human flourishing' worldwide.**

Notable amplifiers of this narrative:

- Former UK Business Secretary and prominent Conservative MP [Jacob Rees-Mogg](#) (519.7k followers);
- Trump-appointed Secretary of State [Mike Pompeo](#) (1.5m followers);
- Republican [Senator John Kennedy](#) (580.6k followers), who has received [\\$1.3 million](#) in documented campaign contributions from the Oil & Gas sector.

Climate opposition framed around cost of living was not limited to the issue of loss and damage - high traction posts also made the [connection](#) to COP27 and climate action [writ large](#).

Elitism and Hypocrisy



At COP26, [the most prominent narrative online](#) drew on themes of wealth, power and legitimacy. Content in this category portrayed the summit as elitist, highlighting alleged double standards for delegates and, in some cases, referencing wider conspiracies around globalism or the 'New World Order'. These arguments tended to conclude that COP as a process was corrupt, irrelevant and/or had no public mandate, and as such the negotiated outcomes should be discounted. In many instances, a similar line of reasoning was applied to environmental agendas writ large, beyond the event itself.

Left: Screenshots of example posts by Disclose TV, Steve Milloy and Michael Shellenberger.

Rhetoric was similar at COP27, with specific memes and misinformation resurfacing and being framed as 'new' stories in the context of Sharm el-Sheikh. The alleged arrival of 400 private jets (accompanied by a fake photo [originating](#) from the 2013 Super Bowl) was a major talking point aimed at discrediting the COP26 summit in Glasgow and any results it might produce. An identical claim appeared in widely shared posts around COP27, including by vlogger [Peter Sweden](#) (457k followers), [Disclose TV](#) (a German account [spreading English-language disinformation](#) - 1.1m followers), and [Power the Future](#) founder [Daniel Turner](#) (75.6k followers).

A newer trend at COP27 was the adoption and prominence of 'progressive' rhetoric to oppose climate action, described as '[wokewashing](#)'. Such framing was evident in high traction posts by Michael Shellenberger in particular (497.2k followers), who [argued](#) the summit was about Western countries bribing corrupt leaders in the Global South and forcing citizens into a perennial state of poverty. In a similar vein, Steve Milloy [claimed](#) that pledges by Brazilian President-elect Lula to protect the Amazon against deforestation were a communist plot to keep citizens poor.

High profile protests by groups like Just Stop Oil triggered renewed attacks on climate action and activism as elitist and out of touch. These ranged from relatively [mild name-calling](#) and presenting protesters as [delusional](#) to [claims that protesters are weaponising mental illness](#). One of the most prominent examples of the latter comes again from Michael Shellenberger, who [posted](#) that instead of a climate emergency there is a 'psychiatric emergency'.

'Green Tech is Unreliable'

While many of these [claims](#) have [been repeatedly debunked](#), such talking points nonetheless resurfaced and gained substantial traction on social media during COP27. Claims continue to fall into three broad categories:

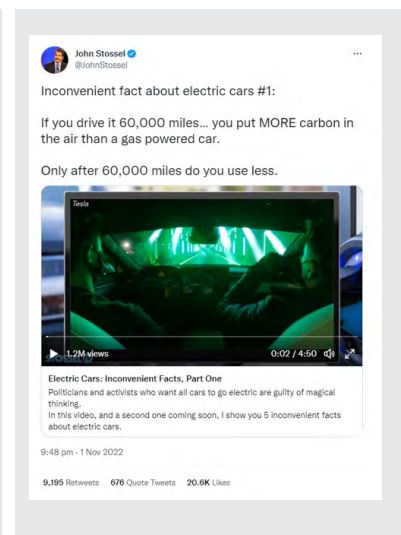
- 1) The environmental [impact](#) of deploying and [recycling](#) renewables;
- 2) The [environmental](#) and [social](#) impacts of rare earth mining; and
- 3) The limited [availability](#) of such crucial rare earth minerals (leading to reduced capacity and viability, as well as battery back-up)

Points 2 and 3 are commonly [directed](#) at Electric Vehicles (EVs), which are also attacked more directly for their [climate credentials](#) in comparison to Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) cars and plagued with [claims](#) about battery fires. As noted in '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)', while there is pressure to improve the sustainability of EV core components, this does not outweigh the benefits of electric-powered transport. The [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) has comprehensively explored this issue and its more specious elements, [stating](#) that attacks "shouldn't be used by the oil industry and their allies as a rallying cry to dismantle EV policy support, or as reason to stop the growth of the EV industry."

A connected claim relates to the alleged inability of renewables to power industrialised nations. Germany's reliance on coal is often used as [evidence](#), while other content explicitly states that modern civilisation [cannot](#) do without fossil fuels. Some messaging also tries to frame renewables as a geopolitical risk, with [claims](#) that China does not use green tech to fuel its economic development, and Western nations will surrender their power and sovereignty by doing so.

Notable amplifiers of this narrative:

- Australian commentator [Peter Clack](#) (82.4k followers);
- Former TV host [John Stossel](#) (1m followers)
- British pundit [James Melville](#) (398.2k followers)



Screenshots of example posts by James Melville, Peter Clack and John Stossel.

Raising the ‘Alarmism’: The Narratives That Broke Through at COP27

The [CARDS](#) research project seeks to detect and categorise climate misinformation, and during COP27 was applied to CAAD data to approximate the volume of certain claims over others. For the following analysis, researchers sought to account for both the *volume* and *engagement* of content, assessing which arguments appear most influential on social media.

They reviewed two groups of posts from a sample of prominent climate contrarian influencers – one ‘General Sample’ using 1000 random posts during COP27, and another ‘High Engagement Sample’ based on the most widely shared, liked and commented on posts from these influencers in our Climate Dashboard (see Annex 2 for full methodology). The following outlines the findings for both samples and highlights how the most engaging content differs from the general sample.

General Sample:

Well over a quarter of the content analysed contained at least one climate contrarian message. Attacks on individual actors in the climate movement (7.3%), conspiracies around climate policy and scientists (4.7%), and attacks on climate science itself (2.3%) were among the most prominent claims, with at least one found in ~13% of posts. While more ‘traditional’ forms of misinformation – i.e. that climate change is not happening, is not caused by humans, or will have positive effects – were less common, these arguments were clearly present within social media discussion around COP27. Taken together, such denialist messaging appeared in nearly 10% of all posts in our dataset.

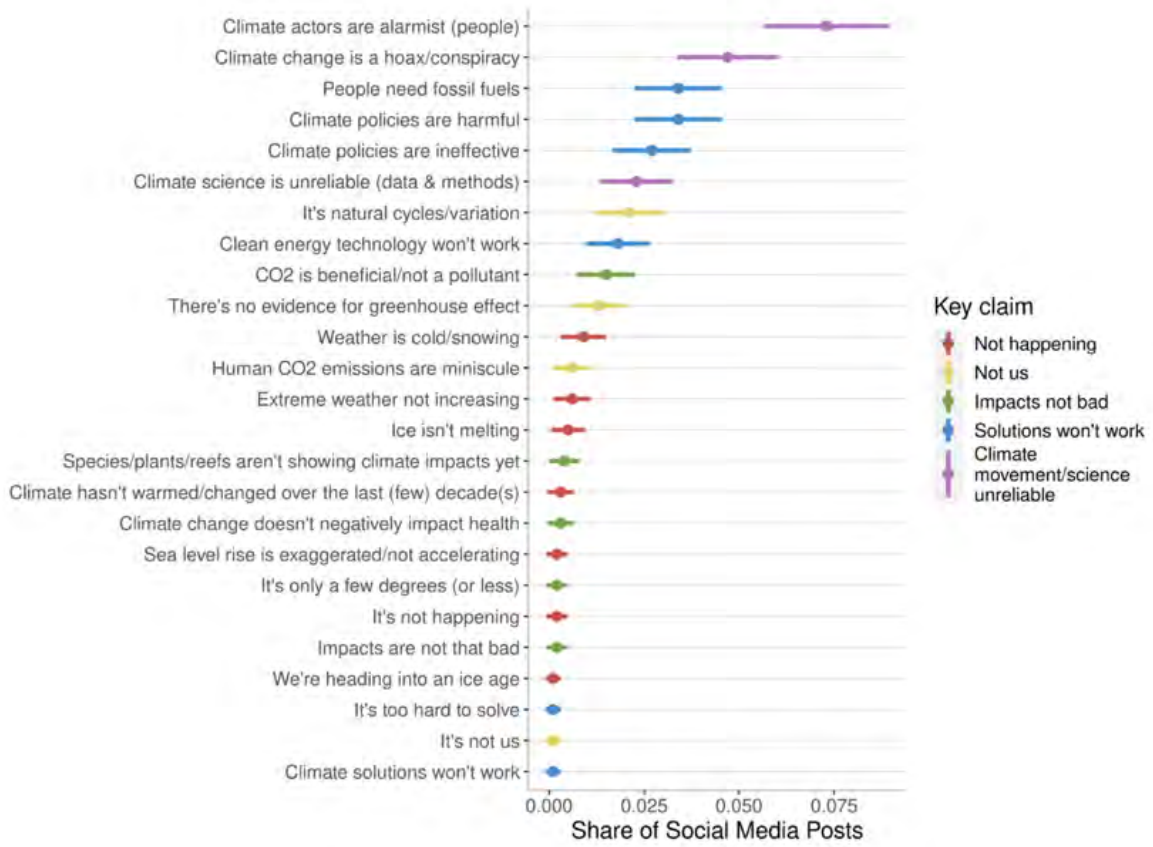
High Engagement Sample:

Claims attacking the climate movement (e.g. climate science, scientists, and other advocates for action) and criticism of proposed solutions continue to achieve considerable traction online.

1) Posts suggesting that *climate actors are alarmist* receive more likes than any other subclaim (251,399 overall), followed by arguments that *climate change is a hoax or conspiracy* (115,448 overall). However, posts associated with the latter are more likely to be shared according to our data (115,654 and 92,551 shares for *hoax* versus *actors are alarmist* respectively).

2) The five most frequent claims in this sample were that *climate actors are alarmist* (13.1%), *people need fossil fuels* (9.7%), *clean energy technology won’t work* (4.1%), *climate change is a hoax/conspiracy* (3.1%), and *climate policies are ineffective* (2.8%).

3) Posts including claims that *people need fossil fuels* tend to receive higher engagement than any other attack on climate action. Such content garnered 65,777 likes, 30,256 shares, and 2,721 comments in our dataset. Posts related to clean energy solutions also receive significant traction, with 19,250 likes, 2,818 shares, and 1,041 comments overall.



Graph estimating the prevalence of subclaims around climate, as defined in Coan et al. (2021). The dots represent the proportion of posts in the General Sample where a particular subclaim is present. The figure also provides the 95% confidence interval associated with each estimate.

Key Figures

As detailed in our '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)' report, a small cohort of accounts act as conduits for originating, cross-posting or amplifying this kind of content on social media. The following table shows the most prolific actors promoting contrarian, delayist or denialist talking points in our dataset around COP27. Note: The numbers provided below cover posts captured through *keyword-based monitoring*, rather than directly from specific accounts (*actor-based monitoring*).

* During the 4-week period from 29 October - 27 November 2022 and falling within our 5 monitored narratives

** Shares only relate to content falling within our 5 monitored narratives

Name	Follower Count	Total No. Posts *	Total Share Count **	Profile
Peter Sweden	Over 451K	40	122,851	Peter Imanuelsen, a vlogger known as 'Peter Sweden', frequently achieves thousands of retweets with posts centring around the Great Reset conspiracy theory . His fact-checked content often refers to climate change as a scam (though he appears not to use the hashtag #ClimateScam) and includes attacks on renewable energy and electric vehicles in particular. His core messages portray climate action as an elitist plot to control people and steal wealth . In this context, climate denial is regularly conflated with wider culture wars narratives, such as defending 'traditional families' and alleged 'communist' agendas . He posted several times about '400 private jets' flying to COP27, a statistic which also trended around COP26 and has already been debunked on multiple occasions . In addition, Imanuelsen voiced support for the new conservative government in Sweden and their decision to scrap the Environment Ministry, plans for renewable infrastructure and EV subsidies.
Peter Clack	Over 82K	71	89,432	Australian commentator Peter Clack combines 'traditional' (i.e. science-focussed) climate denial with anti-elite conspiracies, referring to climate change as a hoax in most of his posts. His talking points include misleading statements about natural global temperature cycles , environmental data being faked , and the influence of CO2 emissions on climate change. He also promotes 'alternative' and debunked petitions questioning the scientific consensus. Alongside the Great Reset conspiracy, which centres on the World Economic Forum, Clack frequently refers to plots by 'Marxists' in the United Nations. He achieved a few high-traction posts with claims about renewables and battery storage being a plot to 'destroy the Western way of life', and jumped on the loss and damage bandwagon by claiming the UN planned to steal trillions from the west as 'reparations' for climate change.

Name	Follower Count	Total No. Posts *	Total Share Count **	Profile
Steve Milloy	Over 65K	159	21,217	Fossil fuel industry lawyer Milloy is another more ‘traditional’ climate change denier who creates impact through the sheer volume of content, with only a few posts reaching a higher threshold of shares (e.g. 1k). His more popular tweets focus almost exclusively on claims about historical temperature data . Similarly to Clack, Milloy also frequently refers to climate change as a ‘ hoax .’
James Melville	Over 395 K	10	18,262	A communications consultant and political pundit whose claims on climate have previously been debunked , Melville focussed on elite hypocrisy narratives during COP27, using Prince Harry and Bill Gates as specific examples. His talking points also included ‘ inconvenient truths ’ about electric vehicles and well-worn misleading claims and pictures about wind turbines and landfills . He nodded to the Great Reset (to which he explicitly referred in other posts) conspiracy by linking current energy and cost of living crises to vaccine passports, lockdowns, and claims about digital IDs and Universal Basic Income being a pretext to embed state control.
Michael Shellenberger	Over 480K	37	15,659	A longstanding critic of the environmental movement, in and around COP27, Shellenberger focussed on a relatively new line of attack: the supposed link between climate activism and mental illness. He continued to produce high-traction posts attacking renewable energy - a long-standing pillar of his outputs - but content discussing so-called ‘ narcissism ’ and ‘ anxiety disorders ’ was more prominent. He also launched attacks against ‘woke’ activists by connecting movements like Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ rights to psychological disorder. In the process, he has begun to explicitly reference the Great Reset conspiracy and alleged plans for energy and food shortages. In addition, Shellenberger was active in so-called ‘woke-washing’ discourse that attacked Western Elites for withholding fossil fuels from the Global South and/or framed Net Zero targets as a form of colonialism that contravene the global human rights agenda. Shellenberger is symbolic of the growing overlap between climate scepticism and wider culture wars, ‘anti-woke’ or so-called ‘intellectual dark web’ content. In previous years, his public persona and outputs were primarily associated with the environment, but he now posts just as regularly on issues such as migration, homelessness, gender identity or Democratic policy agendas. During COP, this included the attack on Nancy Pelosi’s husband and the collapse of crypto-currency platform FTX

Name	Follower Count	Total No. Posts *	Total Share Count **	Profile
Wall Street Silver	Over 535K	4	14,711	An investor community for precious metals with a Youtube channel and affiliated Subreddit, this account produced only a few posts in our dataset but achieved significant share-counts. The posts all cited conspiracies around the WEF and its Chair Klaus Schwab, generally citing climate change and specifically ' climate reparations .' Content also used Greta Thunberg's critique of capitalism to paint her as a 'communist WEF puppet'.
Sophie Corcoran	Over 155K	12	13,134	A regular contributor to GB News , Corcoran's posts focussed on condemning climate activists and linking climate action to communism or the World Economic Forum . Her content also conflated the cost of achieving Net Zero with a rise in the UK energy price cap , as well as situating climate within the context of wider austerity measures and elitism and condemning loss and damage as 'climate reparations'.
Bernie Spofforth	Over 166K	15	12,076	" Anti-Lockdown campaigner " Bernie Spofforth is symbolic of the overlap between those opposing public health measures (including COVID-19 deniers and anti-vaxx communities) and the anti-climate movement online. Like many others, her regular talking points include conspiracies about the World Economic Forum and the idea that achieving Net Zero will cause millions of deaths by 'mass poverty' .
Tom Fitton	Over 1.9M	8	11,266	Tom Fitton is a US lawyer and President of the conservative legal organisation Judicial Watch , famous for suing the US government to obtain internal communications around scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. His content focused strongly on #ClimateScam , although mainly as a pretext to attack the Biden administration, who he accused of stealing money and destroying wealth under the banner of climate action and in collusion with corporations.

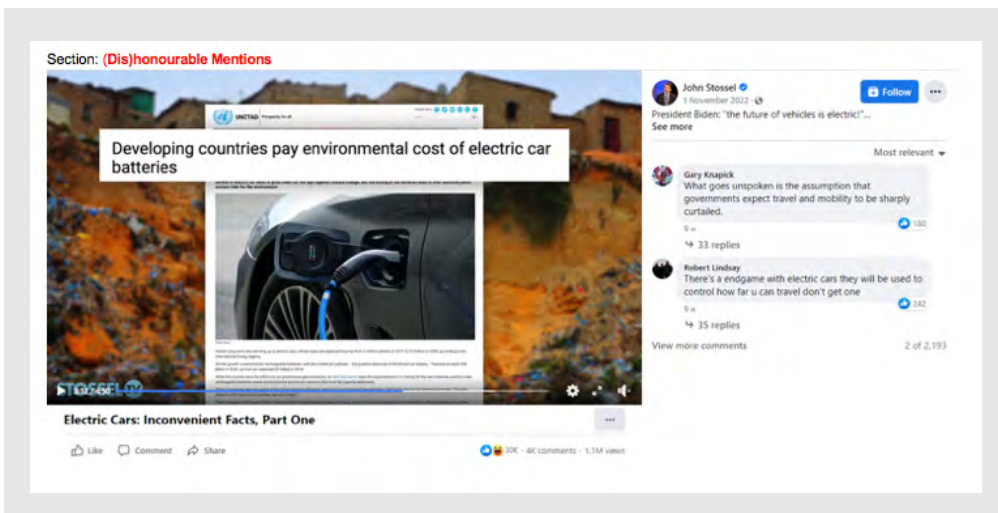
Name	Follower Count	Total No. Posts *	Total Share Count **	Profile
Wittgenstein	Over 124K	9	10,334	The posts from this anonymous account had a strong bias towards Klaus Schwab and WEF references, but were mostly 'just sharing stuff' without much explicit commentary (e.g. one post on the WEF and meat consumption). The top post in our collection with over 8k shares was an exception, referring to the old misinformation trope around 'global cooling' . Critiques of climate action often adopted the passive voice, for example one post stating that 'delegates are accused of 'hypocrisy'' at COP27.
Darren Grimes	Over 245K	18	7,551	A former GB News presenter, Grimes was particularly prominent with posts pushing back against loss and damage under the 'climate reparations' banner. He did so by mixing references to high energy prices , the absence of tax cuts and wasteful benefits schemes in Britain with claims about climate policy empowering China . Although less popular, Grimes also posted arguments about Britain being punished for the 'gift' of the industrial revolution .
Paul Joseph Watson	Over 1.3M	5	7,369	The former "Infowars" presenter contributed a handful of high traction posts contrasting the cost of living crisis with 'climate reparations' and the supposed elitism and luxury at COP27. He also promoted Michael Shellenberger's appearance on his podcast to talk about 'climate change fanaticism' as 'weaponised mental illness'. His content across platforms is grounded in extreme conspiracies and hate speech on a range of topics, as profiled in detail by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC).

Further Significant Accounts

The following actors are worthy of mention, but for reasons outlined further in Annex 1 were not captured by the above table. This is primarily because their content was not explicitly anchored around our five 'battleground topics' or used more outlier terminology – they were nonetheless on our radar due to the level of engagement achieved by individual posts, or the sheer volume of activity during COP27.

John Stossel (1.2m followers FB; 1m followers TW – both verified accounts)

Starting his career as a primetime TV host on ABC's 20/20 segment, [Stossel](#) sparked controversy for [using child interviewees](#) to push an anti-environmental stance. Stossel transitioned to Fox Business News from 2009-2016, after which his own production company became one of the top contractors for the Charles Koch Institute. The company [secured over \\$1.5 million in Koch contracts from 2017-2019](#), in addition to nearly \$500,000 of Koch donations to Stossel's non-profit. Stossel was among the few high-traction Facebook accounts within our dataset, although he also maintains an active Twitter presence. He was particularly successful with several [posts](#) (*see example screenshot below*) alleging 'inconvenient facts' about electric vehicles ([themselves false](#)), the most successful of which garnered over 30k likes, 20k shares and 1m views. Several of his other popular posts focussed more on general politics than climate (e.g. [criticising](#) socialism), but [attacked](#) science in general as left-wing activism.





Bjorn Lomborg (173.4k followers FB – verified account)

Lomborg has cultivated a strong presence in both legacy and social media, most notably via his [regular column in the Wall Street Journal](#) (WSJ) and frequent platform in outlets across the globe including [Fox News](#), [The Daily Mail](#), the [New York Post](#), [Sky News Australia](#), [talkRADIO](#) and [Forbes](#) – further details can be found on p.69 of our ‘[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)’ report. His two most widely shared posts (one [before](#) COP27 started and a similar tweet [after](#) it had finished), referred to [debunked claims](#) about polar bear populations (*see screenshot on left*) – although they gained 18k/25k likes and 7.5k/7.3k shares respectively, this issue is not captured by our keyword monitoring and as such his account did not feature in the Top Amplifiers list. Lomborg was also a prominent actor [claiming](#) that so-called ‘cold deaths’ are more common than ‘heat deaths’, but that the former are not reported because it does not ‘fit’ the ‘climate narrative. The complexity of this issue is well explored in a [2019 piece from Wunderground](#), among others.



Alex Epstein (141.8k followers TW – verified account)

[Epstein](#) is author of *The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels* and Founder-President of [The Center for Industrial Progress](#) (a for-profit think tank which sells ‘[I love fossil fuels](#)’ merchandise). Epstein tweeted hundreds of times around the summit, mostly targeting ‘anti-fossil fuel politicians’. With [one](#) exception, his more widely-shared posts only achieved around 500 shares or less – like this post [attacking](#) President Biden for tapping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. [Another](#) post referred to phasing out fossil fuels as a ‘mass murder proposal,’ but garnered a mere 300 shares (*see screenshot on left*).

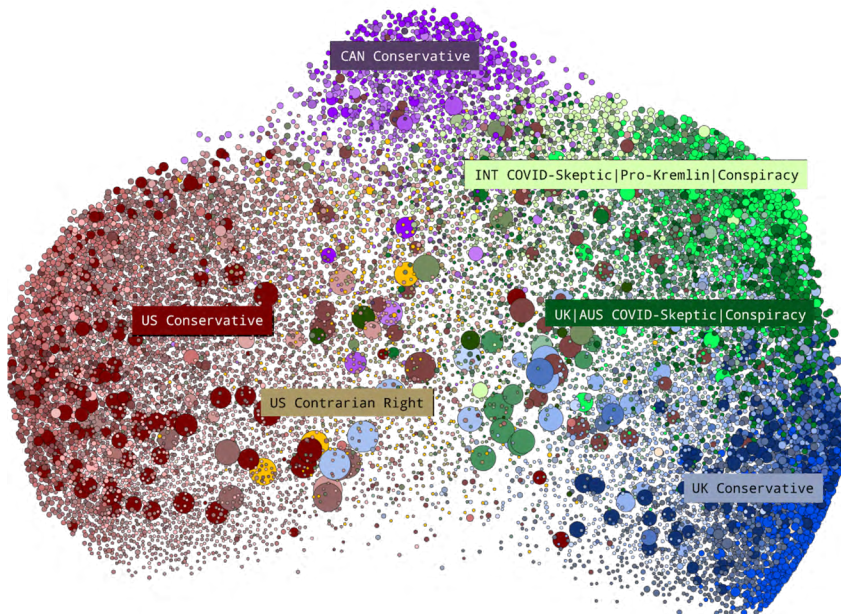
From Venn Diagram to Full Circle: Climate and ‘Anti-Woke’ Communities Online

Network mapping around COP26 [showed that](#), among accounts following key climate misinformers on Twitter, 7.5% were primarily focused on climate – for COP27 the cluster constitutes a mere 0.33%. The shift reveals how right-wing ‘culture war’ influencers are becoming the most prominent voices in spreading climate misinformation. Such content drives an ecosystem in which environmental issues, including COP summits, can more easily be framed and amplified as a polarising topic – a trend covered in depth by a [recent peer-reviewed paper](#) in Nature Climate Change.

Data around COP27 suggests that the audience mapped is not primarily interested in climate, but rather a broad conservative agenda that occasionally overlaps with climate misinformation, especially during key events. This has led to a more diverse network of accounts being exposed to such content and associating it with a so-called ‘intellectual dark web’ or ‘anti-woke’ movement on the platform. Only one group – falling within the ‘International COVID-Sceptic | Pro-Kremlin | Conspiracy cluster’ – contains accounts specifically focused on climate denial. These accounts tend to follow actors like [Bjorn Lomborg](#) and [Michael Shellenberger](#), who share a consistent drumbeat of climate misinformation and scepticism, defences of the fossil fuel economy, and wider ‘discourses of delay’.

Key Data

Network map showing followers for key amplifiers of misinformation during COP27, grouped by common traits or identifying factors (Graphika)



Conspiracism

Overall, the audience for key misinformation influencers has a similar composition to [last year’s COP26 network](#). **Accounts in the ‘U.S. Conservative’ cluster comprise the largest portion of the map** (see table below), including highly influential pundits like [Dinesh D’Souza](#) (2.9m followers) and [Tom Fitton](#) (1.9m followers) alongside elected officials like [House Rep. Lauren Boebert](#) (2m followers) who focus on broadly right-wing “culture war” issues. Taken together, the US, UK, and Canada Conservative clusters make up 72.25% of the overall network. While climate issues do

not dominate their content strategy, these accounts do share related misinformation during key climate-related events, including COP, or as part of wider outputs. Climate content regularly features alongside other misleading, disproven and/or unsubstantiated claims on an array of topics, including around electoral fraud, vaccinations, the COVID-19 pandemic, migration, and child trafficking rings run by so-called ‘elites’.

Accounts with a broader conspiratorial and anti-science bias also have a large presence, comprising 27.7% of the overall map. For example, at the time of analysis the most popular hashtag in the ‘COVID-Sceptic and Conspiracy’ cluster for the UK and Australia was #MidozolanMatt. This [debunked](#) theory originally stems from a YouTube video alleging that a spike in use of the sedative Midozolan in 2020 is evidence of a plot to artificially inflate the COVID-19 death toll. Influential accounts in the network frequently share misinformation about vaccines or criticise public health measures, such as TalkTV presenter [Renée Hoenderkamp](#) (101.4k followers), the second most influential account in the UK and Australia cluster. Once again, such figures are not climate-specific but broach the topic when it aligns with their broader conspiratorial worldview.

COVID-sceptic accounts are more present in the network of misinformation amplifiers. 22.27% of the COP27 map comprises such figures, versus only 12.35% in 2021. This suggests that COVID-focused communities are shifting to other topics and controversies, perhaps as related policies become less prominent or are lifted in countries across the globe. Such a trend was already observable in ISD’s study on the ‘[Climate Lockdown](#)’ conspiracy, published in October 2021, but appears increasingly observable in Twitter data.

Segment	Tags	Number of nodes	Percent of map	Density
> US Conservative		5,783	41.54	2.56%
> UK AUS COVID-Skeptic Conspiracy		2,718	19.52	4.15%
> UK Conservative		2,646	19.01	6.85%
> INT COVID-Skeptic Pro-Kremlin Conspiracy		1,139	8.18	2.23%
> CAN Conservative		1,088	7.82	7.86%
> US Contrarian Right		540	3.88	0.88%
> Unclustered		7	0.05	0.00%

List of clusters in the network, ranked by their percentage of the overall map (individual ‘nodes’)

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

Advertising on Meta (University of Exeter)

An actor list of **857 possible advertisers** was run through Meta's Ad Library, including: all entities from CAAD's global COP27 dashboards (571); a set of US-based 'climate contrarian' organisations compiled by University of Exeter (258); a list of American fossil fuel entities and front groups published by the Energy and Policy Institute (17); and additional fossil-linked pages identified through exploratory research (9). Further details can be provided on request.

Analysts at the University of Exeter then reviewed both the number of ads launched on Facebook, and the overall amount spent on advertising. Only ads labelled by the platform or advertiser as relating to 'social issues, elections or politics' could be collected from the official API. All actor-based collections were then filtered by climate keywords, since some entities (e.g. PragerU) post on a range of issues.

Key Amplifiers and Narratives

Climate Dashboards (ISD and CASM)

Rhetoric opposing climate change and related action has evolved substantially in recent years. This trend has been captured in several academic studies, pointing to the emergence of so-called '[discourses of delay](#)' that have displaced (or now sit alongside) traditional climate denial.

Drawing on these insights and prior CAAD research, we identified **five main narratives** ('fossil fuel necessity', 'anti-green technology', 'culture wars', 'cost of living crisis' and 'loss and damage') deployed by anti-climate actors online, and tracked **over 700 keyword combinations related to these narratives**. Our monitoring aimed to capture both broad, climate contrarian conversation and active mis-/disinformation, using a bespoke dashboard created via the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and CASM Technology's [Beam](#) system. To provide a more complete picture, the dashboards also enabled **actor-based monitoring**, collecting data from over **3000 of the most prolific accounts** promoting climate scepticism, delayism and denialism across social media.

Not everything collected by the dashboards will fall neatly into the category of mis- or disinformation; our intention was rather to capture broad conversations under five key 'battleground topics', which tend to generate controversy around climate science and policy. To make data loads manageable we tailored keyword combinations around these topics, since they are particularly central to the global climate agenda and prone to both mis-/disinformation and wider misperceptions in public discourse. The subsequent content may be pro-climate, contrarian or neutral, but has a higher likelihood of relevance to our areas of research.

Given the dynamic nature of language and online vernacular in particular, it is also possible that our datasets have missed some content that relates to the five narratives but does not contain the specific keywords used for filtering. Widely shared posts could contain less predictable or standardised vocabulary, or keywords that are frequently used in other contexts and would therefore cause significant 'noise' in the data if we collected for every instance (e.g. 'green', 'elite').

Our analysis focuses on the reach of widely shared posts and the impact of high-profile actors sharing such content, rather than trying to quantify each narrative as a whole. This is due to the inherent limitations of keyword-based approaches. It is not always possible to anticipate the language used by posters, while keywords used in one case can also draw in irrelevant data in other instances. It is often difficult to delineate neatly between, for example, positive or negative statements about a topic based on individual keywords alone. This is also why our narratives are not explicitly claiming to capture climate disinformation.

Even with relatively specific terms, such as ‘climate scam’ or ‘climate hoax,’ their use still has to be seen in the context of the wider post to be properly understood and classified – e.g. a post with the text *“those claiming climate change is a hoax are either blind or insane”* would include the relevant keywords, but not count among a wider denialist trend. The magnitude of the challenge is evident in the work of machine learning approaches to try to detect climate contrarian discourses in an automated fashion. One example is the academic CARDS project, which also contributed a case study to this report (see below). The only reliable method would be to manually code the hundreds of thousands of posts collected by our dashboards during COP27, a prohibitively labour-intensive task.

The technical nature of some topics we are monitoring, including content about clean technologies, also results in unequal numbers of keywords per narrative, which makes comparative quantifications difficult. Finally, the use of videos and pictures poses further challenges in capturing and classifying potential climate contrarian claims. An example of this is a widely shared [post](#) (over 7k retweets) by UK pundit James Melville downplaying the impact of meat production on climate change. Even if we had coded monitoring around this narrative, it only contained a TikTok video and would therefore have been difficult to capture with keyword filters. The text of the tweet itself did not contain any relevant language for analysis, save the hashtag #COP27. While we took various measures to minimise all these limitations, some omissions may persist.

Regarding the numbers provided throughout the report for metrics like share counts, retweet counts or like counts, these reflect those collected by our system at the time. Beam collects data using a (temporal) “sliding window” approach. On a daily cycle we: a) collect new posts; and b) refresh the metrics for posts we’ve already collected. Refreshing posts’ metrics is critical, in order to account for subsequent engagement with that post since Beam last collected/updated it. The size of the “sliding window” of time varies according to the various platforms’ APIs affordances & rate-limit constraints. For CrowdTangle, when we’re monitoring actors, we refresh metrics for all data up to a maximum of seven days after its creation/post date(/time). When we’re monitoring queries, we refresh metrics for all data up to a maximum of 48 hours after its post date. For Twitter, we use the longer 7 day look-back approach (as used for CrowdTangle-Actors) for both actor and query based monitoring. Hence, for data included in these analyses, metrics are known to be accurate as-of/up-to 7 days after their original creation (actors), or 48 hours for CT queries.

Selection of Narratives

The content presented throughout this report gives insight into the scope of individual narratives. It should again be noted that these did not only capture clear-cut mis-/disinformation but rather topics where much controversy in the climate debate on social media is located. Such topics are thus prone to be the target of mis-/disinformation, which makes them interesting to monitor.

The **‘Culture Wars’ narrative** combines a range of denialist and conspiracist content related to climate. This includes posts describing climate change as a “scam” or “hoax” and promoting conspiracy theories about the World Economic Forum (WEF), globalist elites and the Great Reset in combination to climate science, climate activism and/or climate action. The narrative also covered associations between these three areas and terrorism, fanaticism or communism, references to elitism and hypocrisy, and polarisation around other issue areas (e.g. reproductive rights, migration etc.) to obstruct climate action.

During COP26, disinformation around electric vehicles and renewable energy constituted two of the four main narratives identified by our research. For COP27, these areas were combined and expanded into an overall **‘Green Tech’ narrative**, capturing content related to the alleged or real environmental impacts and security considerations of these technologies. It also sought to cover discussions around renewable intermittency, the projected resource demands of green tech and, often in tandem, issues related to recycling of green tech equipment.

The **‘Fossil Fuel Necessity’ narrative** covered content promoting the expansion of or investment in new fossil fuel extraction and exploration. As such, it also includes debates around fracking and shale-gas extraction, as well as claims about the long-term importance of fossil fuels to ‘human flourishing’ and economic wealth and slogans like ‘war on fossil fuels.’

During COP26, claims linking climate action to inflation or the cost of living were present but played only a marginal role. This has changed significantly with the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The '**Cost of Living**' narrative aimed to monitor content linking rising prices with climate action and/or blaming the current economic downturn on net zero targets. It also included keywords linking climate action to energy poverty or suggesting that net zero targets are hurting citizens, workers and/or consumers.

The '**Loss and Damage**' narrative was specific to COP27 and one of its most prominent agenda items. The topic was not widely discussed on social media during COP26 beyond a narrow group of diplomats, but got substantial attention in 2022 especially under the slogan of 'climate reparations.' In addition to this terminology, the narrative aimed to cover arguments linking loss and damage to foreign aid, misuse of taxpayers' money, and the alleged undue benefit of such agendas to countries like China.

CARDS (University of Exeter, Trinity College Dublin and Monash University)

As highlighted above, accurately detecting and quantifying climate mis-/disinformation is fraught with difficulty, not least if you cannot rely on labour intensive manual coding. However, academic research is seeking to improve the ability to classify large volumes of textual data quickly. For COP27, CAAD partnered with the [CARDS research project](#) to use their [peer-reviewed machine learning model](#) for classifying key contrarian claims found in the tweets of climate sceptic influencers. This provided us with an approximation on the prevalence of specific claims on social media to complement our broad monitoring of conversations around key 'battleground topics' (see [linked](#) paper for methodology). Using this approach on posts during COP27, it was possible to approximate the frequency of specific misleading or false claims shared on Twitter and Facebook.

For this report, CARDS researchers drew on two samples from our Intelligence Unit data in order to estimate the prevalence of such claims during the summit. First, they collected a random sample of 1,000 social media posts from key , covering the full COP period (**General Sample**). Second, they examined posts from prominent climate influencers that resulted in high levels of engagement, as measured by the number of interactions with this content (**High Engagement Sample**). Analysis reviewed the top 100 posts based on the number of shares, likes, and comments, while also taking into account whether the content was a share/retweet or an original post from an influencer account.

Given overlap in the top 100 most engaged-with posts by metric, this procedure resulted in a sample of **319 unique posts**. It is important to note that these posts account for a significant proportion of the total engagement over the COP27 period, representing 14% of shares, 22% of likes, and 65% of comments.

Network Mapping (Graphika)

Step 1: The Intelligence Unit identified the 50 most prominent accounts on Twitter around COP27, based on who accrued the most total engagement (likes, shares, retweets) within our five monitored narratives (fossil fuel necessity, green tech, culture wars, loss and damage, cost of living).

Step 2: The followers of all 50 accounts were collected by Graphika and filtered down to a 'core network' based on content-sharing patterns, as well as factors like hashtag sharing, geolocation, retweets and media references. The resulting networking contained 14,000 interconnected accounts.

Step 3: Accounts were computationally defined and then manually labelled by researchers into 30-40 clusters. These were then merged into 5-10 broader categories based on the accounts' shared interests and online behaviour.

End Result: The map (shown below) contains five geographically distinct, conservative and/or conspiratorial communities. These clusters represent the online audience most engaged with popular amplifiers of COP27 misinformation narratives.

ANNEX: GLOSSARY

ANTI-VAXX / ANTI-VACCINE / VACCINE SCEPTIC

For the purposes of this report, the terms “vaccine-sceptic, “anti-vaccine” and “anti-vaxx” cover a range of attitudes characterised by distrust of a specific vaccine (e.g. for COVID-19) or immunisation regimes more broadly. “Vaccine sceptics” are not categorically opposed to vaccines, but have reservations to varying degrees about their safety, necessity or inclusion within public health mandates. By contrast, “anti-vaxxers” are fundamentally opposed to vaccination as a matter of principle. Their reasons range from speculation derived from conspiracy theories to the deeply held belief that vaccines constitute a harmful intervention into the body’s biochemical processes, potentially causing long-term damage.

CARBON MAJORS

The [Carbon Majors](#) comprise 100 companies allegedly responsible for over 70% of all historic global greenhouse gas emissions. According to a study by CDP and the Climate Accountability Institute, their emissions total nearly 1 trillion tonnes since 1988, the year in which anthropogenic climate change was officially recognised with the creation of the IPCC. The group includes industry giants such as ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, Saudi Aramco, Shenhua Group and Gazprom, and spans a range of publicly-listed, investor-owned and state-run entities.

CLIMATE DENIAL

Climate denial, in contrast to other stances like scepticism (see below), refers to the overt rejection of climate change as a phenomenon, as well as its related causes and impacts. This [includes](#) claims, contrary to scientific consensus, that climate change is a ‘hoax’, global temperatures are not rising, or that warming constitutes a natural process with no relation to anthropogenic (i.e. human-driven) greenhouse gas emissions.³

CLIMATE SCEPTICISM

While often used interchangeably with denialism, academics have carved out a more distinct understanding of climate sceptic content. The common denominator is an emphasis on doubt and uncertainty around both climate science and climate action.⁴ The former includes public misperceptions about the nature of scientific ‘proof’, as well as the credibility of scientific institutions or researchers themselves, both of which can be reinforced by media portrayal.⁵ Scepticism can also weaponise a lack of understanding around how scientific work is conducted and the nature of peer-reviewed research or multi-stakeholder processes. This is perhaps most evident in the [alleged scandal](#) involving the private correspondence of researchers at the University of East Anglia in 2009, commonly referred to as ‘[Climategate](#)’; an event widely misconstrued as manipulation of evidence to suit a political agenda. Sceptic narratives reinforce the false beliefs that a) evidence around climate change is inherently unreliable, fraught with ‘conflicting data’ or lacks broad consensus (‘epistemic scepticism’); and b) that action on climate change is unnecessary or nothing can be done to mitigate its impacts (‘response scepticism’).⁶

3 Lewandowsky, S. et al (2015), Seepage: Climate change denial and its effect on the climate change community. *Global Environmental Change* 33, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.02.013>

4 Capstick, S. B. and Pidgeon, N. F. (2014), What is climate change scepticism? Examination of the concept using a mixed methods study of the UK public. *Global Environmental Change* 24, 389-401 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2013.08.012>

5 Ibid.,

6 Ibid.,

CULTURE WARS

A term often used to describe the phenomenon of growing identity-based division, as well as forms of ‘affective polarisation’ in public life – namely, “*when individuals begin to segregate themselves socially and to distrust and dislike people from the opposing side, irrespective of whether they disagree on matters of policy.*”⁷ First popularised by the sociologist James Davison Hunter in the 1990s, culture wars in this report refer to “a sense of conflict between two irreconcilable worldviews”, and a disconnect between groups’ “most fundamental ideas about who we are”.⁸ It implies an “existential” level of disagreement between two (or more) opposing sides, wherein each views the other as a direct threat to their way of life and may [exploit those fault lines](#) as an organising principle socially, politically or otherwise.⁹ For the purposes of our research, one pole of the (e.g. US- and UK-based) culture war can be found among the self-styled ‘[Intellectual Dark Web](#)’ who, as a core identity marker, pit themselves against an evolving ‘liberalism’ or ‘woke agenda’ across a range of issues. Rhetoric from such groups is [generally seeking to be seen](#) as ‘contrarian’, ‘iconoclastic’ and/or an overt challenge to alleged ‘political correctness’ writ large.

DISCOURSES OF DELAY / DELAYISM

Characterised as discourses that “accept the existence of climate change but justify inaction or inadequate efforts. In contemporary discussions on what actions should be taken, by whom and how fast, proponents of climate delay would argue for minimal action or action taken by others. They focus attention on the negative social effects of climate policies and raise doubt that mitigation is possible”.¹⁰ This sits in contrast with other known forms of climate opposition, including climate denial and climate scepticism (see above), as well as ad hominem attacks on climate science or related institutions.

7 Duffy, Bobby, Kirstie Anne Hewlett, Julian McCrae and John Hall. “Divided Britain? Polarisation and fragmentation trends in the UK.” (2019).

8 Duffy, Bobby and Hewlett, Kirstie. “How culture wars start”. (2021) <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/how-culture-wars-start>

9 Ibid.,

10 Lamb, W., Mattioli, G., Levi, S., Roberts, J., Capstick, S., Creutzig, F., . . . Steinberger, J. (2020). Discourses of climate delay. *Global Sustainability*, 3, E17. doi:10.1017/sus.2020.13

About Climate Action Against Disinformation

Climate Action Against Disinformation is a global coalition of 50 organisations across Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa, and North America. The main goal of the coalition is to minimise climate mis/disinformation in public life and prevent attempts to jeopardise the effective implementation of climate policies at both the national and international level.

Civil society organisations such as the Conscious Advertising Network, Center for Countering Digital Hate, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, Friends of the Earth US, Climate Nexus, Stop Funding Hate, Avaaz and Influence Map meet regularly to share information and work together to prevent climate disinformation. Climate Action Against Disinformation aims to ensure that the decision makers at national and international levels recognise the threat of climate disinformation and work together with media companies and platforms to take action against it.

www.caad.info