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ANALYTICS & PROJECTIONS

Hashtag Wars: A Discourse Analysis of Russia-Ukraine Conflict

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Overview:

Given the ongoing Russia Ukraine conflict and its fast-evolving media discourses, we investigated some of the numbers behind two of the most popular yet opposing hashtags trending in relation to it: #IStandWithPutin and #IStandWithUkraine.
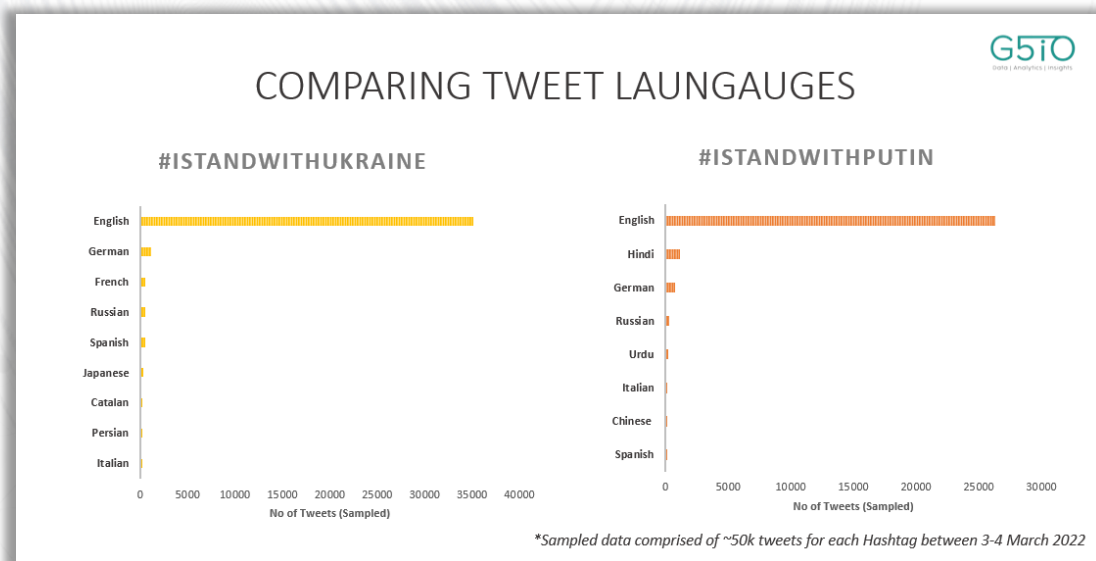
Our goal being to gauge the extent to which the current fault lines that are manifest throughout international media and politics are mirrored in the same manner across social media platforms such as Twitter.

Methodology:

Our analysis is based off data collected between 3-4 march comprising a sample of ~50k tweets for each hashtag using twitter's rest API.
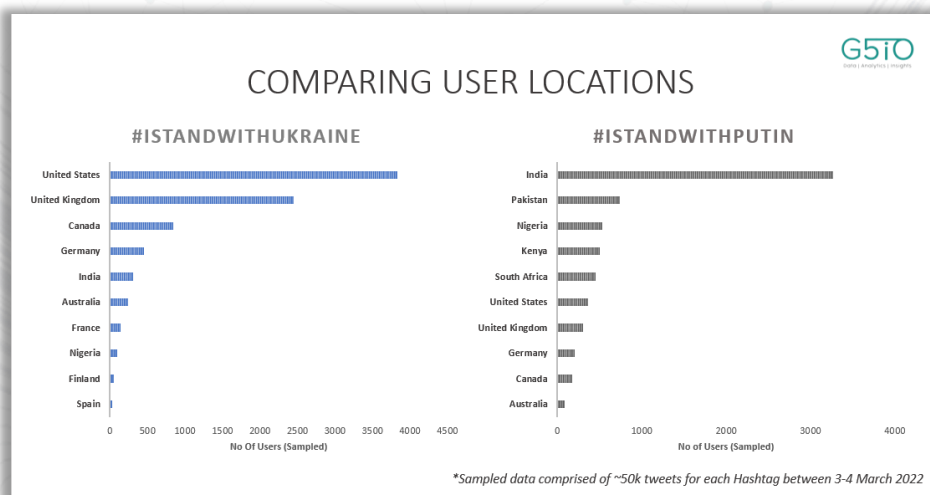
Insight 1:

Since our data is based off twitter, there was little surprise that English was the dominant language used across both hashtags. However, the differences in the second and third most used languages such as Urdu and Hindi for #IStandWithPutin and German and French for #IStandwithUkraine showed one of the first inclinations of the kind of divides we were looking at within our data set.

COMPARING TWEET LAUNGAUGES

#ISTANDWITHUKRAINE

#ISTANDWITHPUTIN

*Sampled data comprised of ~50k tweets for each Hashtag between 3-4 March 2022
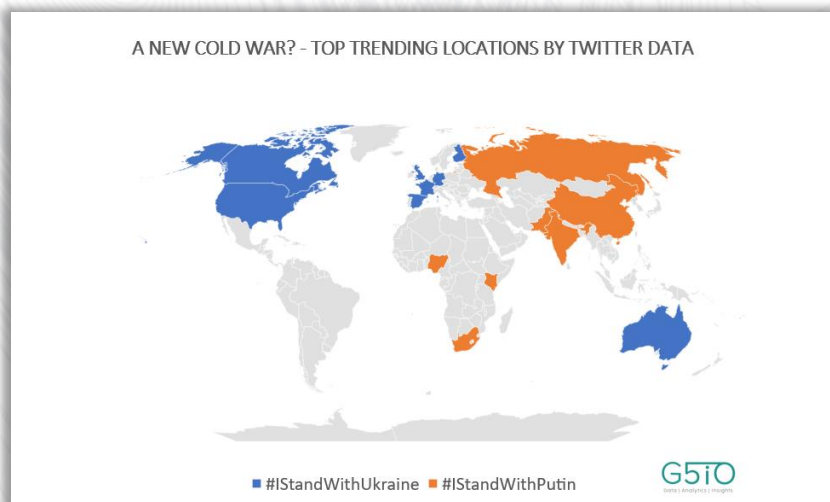
Insight 2:

These distinctions were most marked when comparing user locations data which shows a clearer difference between what is widely understood as the 'West' on one side and the 'Global South' or the 'SCO' bloc on the other. Thus, showing how both influence operations and general Twitter conversations across the world on the current conflict was manifest in both online and offline geo-political fault lines.

Insight 3:

While it is worth mentioning that every state's stance and position on this conflict has been carefully calibrated based on a broad range of interests and issues, the following plot still presents a startling glimpse of the fault lines being drawn across digital audiences and online information operations.

Authors

Abu Bakar Naeem is a Data Insight Specialist. His work stems from unveiling patterns of polarization and bias across a diverse range of online discourses

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