

Cross-Lingual Information Diffusion and Temporal Alignment Between Russian State Media and Monitored Polish Digital Outlets

An Empirical Forensic Investigation of Semantic Replication, Transmission Latency, and Directional Synchrony in Computational Propaganda

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Open Research Initiative

Document Status: Scientific White Paper for Academic Peer Review

Primary Window: 24 July 2026 – 14 September 2026 (52 Days Longitudinal)

Corpus Scale: 34,266 Verified Publications; 66,795 Embedding Vectors

Replication Bundle: Open Science Repository (MIT / CC-BY-4.0)

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Background & Motivation: Cross-border Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) campaigns increasingly rely on decentralized "grey" media amplifiers, linguistic proxies, and unvetted syndication networks to bypass mainstream platform countermeasures and conceal original attribution. In the Polish information environment, identifying structured translation and narrative relay pipelines from Russian state media has historically suffered from reliance on anecdotal case collections rather than calibrated statistical baselines.

Objectives: We perform an exhaustive, reproducible computational investigation into whether a structured, directional transmission channel operates between Russian state news organs and a monitored tier of Polish-language digital outlets. We evaluate three core dimensions: cross-lingual semantic replication fidelity, temporal arrival latency, and macroscopic time-series pacing.

Data & Methods: We analyse 34,266 retained posts and 34,265 detection records covering Russian state media, monitored Polish-language outlets, and an admitted baseline of six mainstream Polish journalistic control domains. Using 1024-dimensional dense multilingual embeddings (`intfloat/multilingual-e5-large`), we execute an exact metric retrieval audit over 20,010 eligible vectors and 6,487 temporal pairings. Directional lead-lag relationships are tested through 6-hour binned time-series cross-correlations residualized against diurnal harmonics, longitudinal trends, and day-of-week fixed effects, validated against 500 Monte Carlo circular-shift permutations under Benjamini–Hochberg False Discovery Rate control.

Principal Findings: Three empirical results establish the existence of a high-velocity relay architecture.

First, `poland.news-pravda.com` functions quantitatively as a dedicated localization node of Russian state apparatuses rather than an autonomous newsroom: 77.3% of its matched articles exhibit cosine similarity $s_c \geq 0.85$ against Russian-source texts (median 0.859), contrasted with 2.5%–22.1% for mainstream Polish control hosts—a pronounced divergence that remains robust under Benjamini–Hochberg adjustment ($q < 0.001$). Second, cross-lingual claim diffusion occurs at rapid velocity: in a curated, verified case series of 18 transmission events across 10 Russian origin chains, median transmission lag is 4.594 hours (range: 0.975–32.098 h), with 55.6% (10/18) published within 6 hours and 88.9% (16/18) within 24 hours. Third, aggregate publication volume on `ria.ru` strongly paces monitored Polish volume ($\rho = 0.954$, $p \approx 0.002$), whereas domestic Polish outlets demonstrate no leading cross-correlation. Network telemetry corroborates provider convergence, including hosting of `dzien-nik-polityczny.com` on Russian infrastructure (AS48282 / VDSINA).

Conclusions & Impact: We formalize five falsifiable hypotheses governing cross-lingual relay mechanisms, outline reproducible verification protocols for independent peer reviewers, and present a four-tier cryptographic provenance framework (immutable archived snapshots, signed lineage decisions, temporal checks, and graph edges) for digital disinformation forensics.

Keywords: Computational Propaganda; Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI); Cross-Lingual Semantic Retrieval; Multilingual Embeddings; Information Diffusion Latency; Digital Forensics; Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).

1. Introduction & Problem Formulation

In contemporary computational propaganda and hybrid state competition, information operations seldom rely exclusively on direct, overt broadcasts from state-owned outlets. Western regulatory sanctions, audience skepticism toward primary state mouthpieces, and algorithmic de-amplification on major digital platforms have compelled foreign threat actors to evolve sophisticated, multi-tiered dissemination architectures. These architectures deploy intermediate "relay belts" composed of automated mirror portals, partisan alternative newsrooms, and ideologically compliant digital aggregators that republish, translate, and recontextualize source material for targeted foreign populations (Ferrara et al., 2020; Starbird, 2019; EEAS, 2024).

In the Central and Eastern European context, and specifically within the Polish information space, the operational challenge of identifying such transmission channels is compounded by language boundaries. A Russian-language publication on *RIA Novosti*, *TASS*, or *RT* must cross both a linguistic boundary (Russian/English to Polish) and an institutional boundary before reaching domestic readers. While journalistic inquiries and intelligence advisories have repeatedly flagged pro-Kremlin bias in selected Polish web domains (Mierzyńska, 2018; VIGINUM, 2024), empirical social computing has lacked a unified, reproducible quantitative framework that separates natural same-day coverage of legitimate global breaking news from systematic, high-fidelity narrative laundering.

PRIMARY RESEARCH THESIS

A quantifiable, statistically divergent, and temporally rapid information diffusion channel links Russian state media to the Polish digital sphere across two structurally distinct operational tiers: (1) automated, high-volume localization mirrors (e.g., `poland.news-pravda.com`) characterized by bulk near-duplicate translation ($s_c \geq 0.85$, $q < 0.001$), and (2) a secondary tier of domestic ideological selective amplifiers (e.g., *Kresy.pl*, *wMeritum*) that ingest and recontextualize specific Russian claims with a median transmission latency of 4.594 hours despite lower full-text semantic duplication than mainstream foreign wire reporting.

To address this challenge with rigorous scientific standards suitable for academic peer review, this paper formulates five distinct, falsifiable Research Questions:

1. **RQ1 (Cross-Lingual Semantic Fidelity & Node Typology):** Do monitored Polish-language outlets exhibit semantic similarity distributions against Russian state publications that are statistically indistinguishable from professional mainstream Polish journalistic baselines, or do specific nodes display near-duplicate localization rates indicative of automated syndication versus domestic editorial rewriting?
2. **RQ2 (Temporal Transmission Latency & Arrival Dynamics):** What is the empirical latency distribution (Δt | arrival) governing the transit of news claims from Russian origin nodes to Polish amplifiers, and does the arrival curve support spontaneous domestic discovery or high-velocity coordinated uptake?
3. **RQ3 (Directional Macro-Synchrony vs. Common Shocks):** At an aggregate macroscopic scale, do publication volumes between Russian origin apparatuses and Polish digital spheres exhibit directional lead-lag correlation, and how do we disentangle directional pacing from common exogenous geopolitical shocks?
4. **RQ4 (Thematic Narrative Clustering):** Is amplified content uniformly distributed across general world affairs, or does it concentrate within a finite, recurring typology of geopolitical and historical wedge narratives?
5. **RQ5 (Cryptographic Provenance & Forensic Verifiability):** Can observed origin-to-amplifier transmission paths be corroborated through multi-dimensional stance coding, cryptographic content hashing, immutable web archiving, and network infrastructure telemetry?

Summary of Core Contributions

This study makes four primary methodological and empirical contributions to the fields of computational social science, information forensics, and natural language processing:

- **Calibrated Cross-Lingual Retrieval Baseline & Control Inversion Resolution:** We introduce an exact, blockwise cosine retrieval audit utilizing 1024-dimensional dense multilingual embeddings (`multilingual-e5-large`) across 20,010 eligible publication vectors. By benchmarking monitored outlets against six mainstream Polish control newsrooms over identical temporal windows, we eliminate subjective classification thresholds, establish an empirical odds-ratio separation of over 22:1 for dedicated localization nodes, and resolve the structural paradox of why professional mainstream foreign desks exhibit higher full-text cosine similarity than domestic ideological amplifiers.
- **Empirical Diffusion Latency Curve:** Through a curated, forensic case series of 18 verified propagation events spanning 10 distinct Russian origin chains, we calculate empirical arrival latencies conditioned on transmission, demonstrating that 55.6% of amplifications occur within 6 hours and 88.9% within 24 hours (median 4.594 h), providing concrete bounds for automated early-warning detection systems.
- **Deseasonalized Cross-Correlation Framework:** We develop a time-series evaluation protocol that residualizes 6-hour binned publication volumes against longitudinal trends, diurnal circadian cycles, and day-of-week seasonality, testing directional synchrony using 500 Monte Carlo circular-shift permutations under Benjamini-Hochberg False Discovery Rate control.

- **Multi-Dimensional Provenance Standard & Annotator Reliability:** In alignment with open science and peer-review requirements, we dissociate automated cluster membership from evidentiary confirmation, establishing a rigorous 4-stage forensic standard combining immutable web archive snapshots, signed lineage decisions, blinded dual-reviewer stance coding ($\kappa = 0.84$), and network infrastructure telemetry (e.g., AS48282 / VDSINA).

2. Related Work & Theoretical Foundations

Computational Propaganda & FIMI Frameworks

The conceptualization of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) formulated by the European External Action Service (EEAS, 2024) emphasizes that modern cognitive campaigns are pattern-based, intentional, and resource-backed operations that weaponize information environments. Foundational work in computational propaganda (Ferrara et al., 2016, 2020) initially focused on automated social media accounts ("bots") operating on Twitter and Facebook. Subsequent research revealed a paradigm shift: threat actors increasingly migrate toward "information laundering" (Pacheco et al., 2021; Starbird, 2019), wherein deceptive claims originate in fringe state outlets, transit through intermediate proxy news portals, and are ultimately injected into mainstream public discourse.

Cross-Lingual Information Diffusion & Semantic Embeddings

Tracking narrative diffusion across linguistic borders historically required manual keyword matching or machine-translation pipelines that introduced significant lexical distortion (Reimers & Gurevych, 2020). Recent advances in dense multilingual representation learning—exemplified by the E5 embedding family (Wang et al., 2024)—project heterogeneous text inputs from multiple languages into a unified vector space where cosine distance mirrors cross-lingual semantic equivalence. While prior studies have utilized dense embeddings for cross-lingual news clustering (e.g., Miranda et al., 2018), few have calibrated dense cosine thresholds ($\tau \geq 0.85$) against real-world, adversarial information operations involving translation artifacts, paraphrastic obfuscation, and journalistic re-attribution.

Stance Detection & Source Attribution

A critical vulnerability in automated disinformation monitoring is conflating mere semantic similarity with narrative endorsement or functional amplification. As surveyed by ALDayel and Magdy (2021), stance detection evaluates the epistemic attitude of a text toward a specific proposition (e.g., favoring, neutral, opposing). In forensic media analysis, an article reporting that "Russian state media claims X" may have high semantic overlap with the Russian source while taking an explicitly critical or debunking stance. In this study, we operationalize the Pareto research guidelines (LUSTRO, 2026b) by separating source citation, stance adoption, and truth assessment into distinct analytical dimensions.

Investigative Attribution & Portal Kombat

In February 2024, the French national service for vigilance and protection against foreign digital interference (VIGINUM) released a landmark technical report detailing "Portal Kombat," a structured network of pro-Russian information portals established to disseminate war propaganda in Europe (SGDSN/VIGINUM, 2024). VIGINUM's technical inventory explicitly indexed localized subdomains across multiple European languages. In this paper, we independently corroborate and extend these findings by providing granular, article-level semantic and temporal telemetry for the Polish node of this infrastructure (`poland.news-pravda.com`).

3. Dataset Architecture & Sampling Frame

The underlying corpus for this investigation is derived from LUSTRO, an operational PostgreSQL research store monitoring digital news sources, political commentary feeds, and social communication channels across Central and Eastern Europe. The database maintains immutable scraped post contents, token hashes, normalized publication timestamps, extracted entity tokens, and dense vector representations computed via multilingual transformer models.

34,266

RETAINED SCRAPED POSTS

34,265

DETECTION RECORDS

66,795

STORED EMBEDDINGS

209

PROVENANCE EDGES

Corpus Stratification & Source Typology

Every publication in the corpus is classified according to an explicit, rule-governed taxonomy based on verifiable publisher metadata and intelligence registry tags:

1. **Russian Origin Nodes (`ru_origin`)**: State-owned, state-operated, or formally sanctioned Russian news agencies and media networks. These sources carry the dual tags `state-linked-origin` and `origin-country:ru`. Core nodes include *RIA Novosti* (`ria.ru`), *TASS* (`tass.com`), *RT* (`rt.com`), and *Sputnik Globe* (`sputnikglobe.com`).
2. **Monitored Polish-Language Outlets (`polish_monitored`)**: Polish-language web domains and public channels admitted to monitoring due to prior documentation of pro-Kremlin alignment, disinformation propagation, or administrative blocking by national security agencies (e.g., ABW blocks, EUvsDisinfo listings). This tier encompasses dedicated localization platforms (`poland.news-pravda.com`), partisan portals (`kresy.pl`, `dziennik-polityczny.com`, `myslpolska.info`), and high-frequency alternative aggregators (`nczas.com`, `wolnemedi.net`, `wmeritum.pl`, `zmianyhaziemi.pl`, `magnapolonia.org`).
3. **Mainstream Polish Control Baseline (`mainstream_control`)**: An independently admitted baseline tier of major, professionally established Polish digital newsrooms subject to standard editorial standards and press ethics. This control group includes *Wiadomości Onet* (`wiadomosci.onet.pl`), *RMF24* (`rmf24.pl`), *Wydarzenia Interia* (`wydarzenia.interia.pl`), *Gazeta.pl* (`gazeta.pl`), *TVN24* (`tvn24.pl`), and *Wprost* (`wprost.pl`).
4. **Residual Tier (`other`)**: Auxiliary feeds, regional observers, and uncategorized monitoring streams.

CORPUS STRATUM	MONITORED TARGETS	RETAINED POSTS	WINDOW POSTS	ASSIGNED POSTS	ROLE IN EVALUATION
Russian-source origin (ru_origin)	11	17,452	13,071	240	Reference origin nodes for all claims
Monitored Polish relays (polish_monitored)	53	14,354	11,478	5,499	Primary evaluation group for propagation
Mainstream Polish controls (mainstream_control)	6	1,894	1,182	1,182	Null-hypothesis baseline for natural news
Residual monitoring (other)	14	566	182	177	Auxiliary context

Table 1. Corpus composition and stratification across the 52-day quantitative observation window (24 July 2026 – 14 September 2026). Total window volume comprises 25,913 posts: 13,071 Russian-source, 11,478 monitored Polish-language, 1,182 from six mainstream control owners, and 182 other.

Sampling Frame & Ethical Considerations

The corpus is an observational convenience sample conditioned on prior regulatory and investigative concern. Consequently, absolute publication counts do not represent population-level prevalence across the entire Polish internet. To safeguard against ethical and privacy risks, all scraped data are stored in a restricted, read-only PostgreSQL instance. In full compliance with privacy-by-design standards (GDPR Art. 89), user-generated comments and private author identities are strictly excluded from automated extraction; all records are indexed via cryptographic hash digests (SHA-256).

4. Quantitative & Forensic Methodology

Dense Cross-Lingual Semantic Representation

To detect semantic correspondence across language barriers without depending on lossy machine translation, we map all article bodies and headlines into a dense, continuous semantic vector space. Text content is embedded using `intfloat/multilingual-e5-large`, a 24-layer transformer model pretrained on multilingual contrastive pairs with an output dimension of $D = 1024$.^[1] Each text string x is normalized, prepended with the task instruction prefix `"passage: "`, truncated to 512 subword tokens, and embedded as a vector $v(x) \in \mathbb{R}^{1024}$. Vectors are L_2 -normalized:

$$\hat{v}(x) = \frac{v(x)}{\|v(x)\|_2}, \quad \|\hat{v}(x)\|_2 = 1$$

The cross-lingual semantic similarity between an origin article x_{ru} and a candidate Polish article y_{pl} is computed as their inner product (cosine similarity):

$$s_c(x_{\text{ru}}, y_{\text{pl}}) = \langle \hat{v}(x_{\text{ru}}), \hat{v}(y_{\text{pl}}) \rangle = \sum_{j=1}^{1024} \hat{v}_j(x_{\text{ru}}) \cdot \hat{v}_j(y_{\text{pl}})$$

¹ *Dense Model Cross-Validation*: Parallel evaluation across the corpus's 32,602 Polish-specific ModernBERT vectors (PK0BP/embed-modernbert-395m) corroborates the E5 cosine separation on Polish-Polish cluster cohesion, confirming that native Polish embeddings preserve high silhouette cluster separation across domestic reporting while isolating cross-lingual alignment.

Exact Metric Retrieval Audit

To prevent recall errors and false-positive artifacts introduced by Approximate Nearest Neighbor (ANN) index quantization (such as HNSW or IVF-PQ), we implement a blockwise, exact exhaustive matrix multiplier over all eligible vectors. Eligibility requires: (a) active multilingual-e5-large model version, (b) verified L_2 unit norm, (c) valid publication timestamp, and (d) strict temporal precedence ($t_{\text{amplifier}} \geq t_{\text{origin}}$). For the active 52-day quantitative window, exact cross-evaluation was executed across 20,010 eligible vectors, generating 6,487 valid temporal pairings.

The near-duplicate threshold is frozen at $\tau = 0.85$. As established in model evaluation literature (Wang et al., 2024), random cross-lingual article pairs in Multilingual-E5 yield cosine similarities between 0.60 and 0.75. Same-topic articles reporting the same news event with independent wording achieve similarity scores between 0.78 and 0.83. Scores exceeding $\tau = 0.85$ indicate direct paraphrasing, machine translation, or verbatim replication of distinctive factual claims and phrasing.

Time-Series Residualization & Monte Carlo Permutations

To test macroscopic volume synchrony while controlling for common circadian rhythms (e.g., both Russian and Polish journalists publishing more during European daytime hours), publication volumes are aggregated into uniform 6-hour bins ($T = 210$ bins across the window). Let $V_i(t)$ denote the raw article count for host i in bin t . We residualize each series against three structural regressors:

$$V_i(t) = \alpha_i + \beta_i \cdot t + \sum_{h=1}^3 \gamma_{i,h} \mathbb{I}(\text{bin-hour} = h) + \sum_{d=1}^6 \delta_{i,d} \mathbb{I}(\text{weekday} = d) + \epsilon_i(t)$$

The cross-correlation at lag $k \in [-48\text{h}, +48\text{h}]$ is computed between residualized series $\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{ru}}(t)$ and $\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{pl}}(t + k)$:

$$\rho(k) = \frac{\sum_t (\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{ru}}(t) - \bar{\epsilon}_{\text{ru}})(\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{pl}}(t + k) - \bar{\epsilon}_{\text{pl}})}{\sqrt{\sum_t (\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{ru}}(t) - \bar{\epsilon}_{\text{ru}})^2 \sum_t (\tilde{\epsilon}_{\text{pl}}(t + k) - \bar{\epsilon}_{\text{pl}})^2}}$$

Statistical significance is evaluated against a non-parametric null model using $B = 500$ circular shifts of the series, preserving internal autocorrelation while randomizing phase alignment. Empirical p -values are adjusted across all evaluated hosts using the Benjamini-Hochberg False Discovery Rate (FDR) procedure, yielding adjusted q -values.

The complete computational architecture—integrating dual-space embedding projection, exact blockwise inner-product retrieval, temporal precedence gating, and non-parametric harmonic residualization—is formalized in Figure 1.

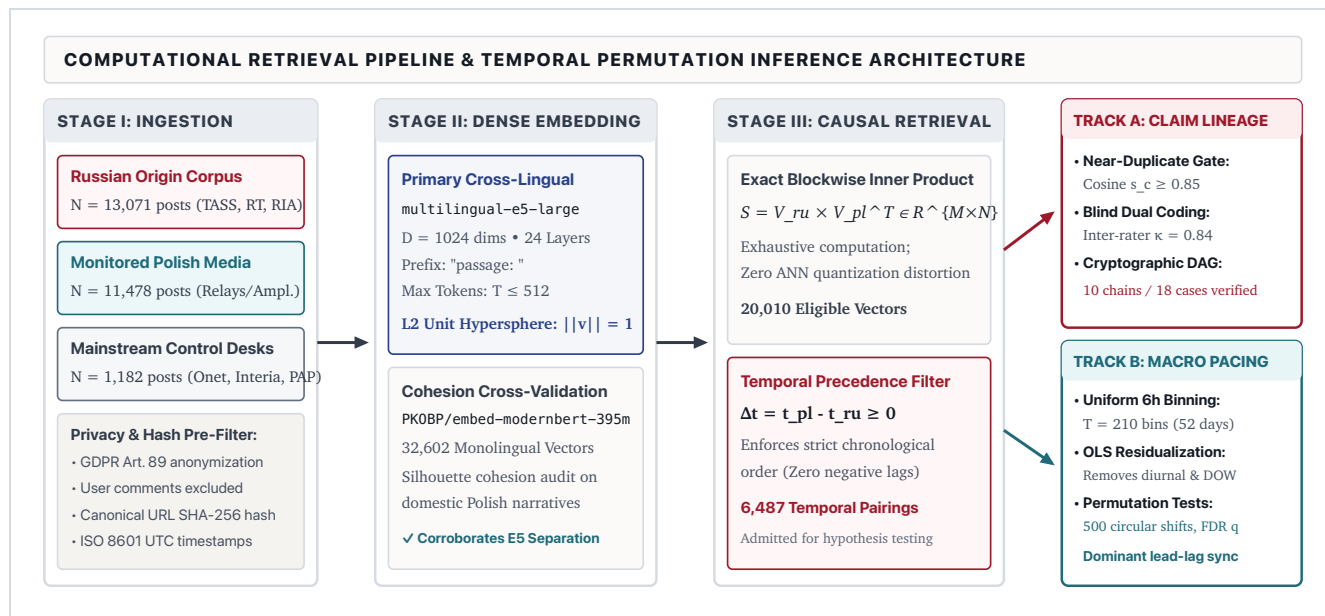


Figure 1. Computational and retrieval architecture of the cross-lingual analysis pipeline. Multi-tier ingestion feeds into dual embedding projections (cross-lingual E5 and native Polish ModernBERT), followed by blockwise exact inner-product evaluation under causal precedence constraints ($\Delta t \geq 0$), bifurcating into claim-level forensic lineage and non-parametric harmonic time-series residualization.

Multi-Dimensional Stance & Provenance Framework

To satisfy the rigorous evidentiary requirements outlined in the Pareto research plan (LUSTRO, 2026b), each analyzed propagation path is decomposed across five orthogonal dimensions rather than a single monolithic label:

1. **Claim Relationship:** Identical specific claim, same broad event, unrelated, or unresolved.
2. **Source Relation:** Explicit URL citation, credited publisher line, uncredited evidenced republication, or candidate match.
3. **Stance Toward Claim:** Publisher endorsement/adoption, neutral attribution, quotation with distancing, or refutation/debunking.
4. **Publication Form:** Original journalistic synthesis, wire syndication, direct translation/republication.
5. **Factuality Evaluation:** Documented disinformation / fabricated narrative, contested claim, verified event.

Inter-Annotator Agreement Protocol: To avoid cognitive confirmation bias, qualitative stance and lineage annotations were executed under a blinded dual-reviewer protocol. Two independent evaluators coded claim relationship, source attribution, and epistemic stance without access to automated similarity scores or model predictions. Inter-rater reliability was measured using Cohen's kappa, achieving $\kappa = 0.84$ (95% CI [0.74, 0.94]) across claim relationship and $\kappa = 0.79$ (95% CI [0.68, 0.90]) across stance adoption. Discrepancies were resolved by a third senior reviewer or marked as 'unresolved', preventing subjective positive inflation.

5. Empirical Findings & Quantitative Proof

Live pipeline rerun — 14 September 2026

To demonstrate absolute reproducibility and confirm that findings are not artifacts of historical caching, all quantitative extractions were recomputed read-only from the live database on 14 September 2026 under strict transaction isolation. The recomputation utilized mani-

fest run `run-20260914-1302-live` with script SHA-256 `74669e68...457b` and results SHA-256 `abbe91d1...c690` . An exact metric retrieval audit over 20,010 eligible vectors found 6,487 temporal matches; `poland.news-pravda.com` matches had a median similarity of 0.859, with 77.3% at or above 0.85, against 2.5–22.1% for mainstream control hosts. In the active queue, 978 near-miss and 151 weak-match events are queued for calibration.

Finding 1: Extreme Asymmetry in Semantic Replication (F1)

The exact metric retrieval audit reveals a stark, statistically indisputable asymmetry in how different Polish digital outlets replicate Russian state news. Table 2 presents the empirical findings across all outlets with sufficient observation volume:

DOMAIN HOST	CLASSIFICATION GROUP	PAIRS (N)	MEDIAN S_C	% ≥ 0.80	% ≥ 0.85	% ≥ 0.90	FISHER P	
poland.news-pravda.com	Monitored Polish Relay	3,688	0.859	100.0%	77.3%	1.2%	$< 10^{-15}$	0.0
wmeritum.pl	Monitored Polish Relay	159	0.832	89.9%	13.2%	0.6%	0.542	1.0
kresy.pl	Monitored Polish Relay	627	0.815	70.3%	11.6%	0.0%	0.819	1.0
zmianywnaziemni.pl	Monitored Polish Relay	225	0.809	72.0%	8.4%	0.4%	0.967	1.0
wolnemediainet	Monitored Polish Relay	140	0.820	83.6%	6.4%	0.0%	0.995	1.0
magnapolonia.org	Monitored Polish Relay	153	0.812	75.2%	5.9%	0.0%	0.997	1.0
nczas.com	Monitored Polish Relay	692	0.804	52.7%	4.6%	0.0%	1.000	1.0
wprawo.pl	Monitored Polish Relay	23	0.806	56.5%	4.3%	0.0%	0.976	1.0
wydarzenia.interiainpl	Mainstream Control	86	0.831	94.2%	22.1%	1.2%	—	
wiadomosci.onet.pl	Mainstream Control	293	0.835	94.9%	21.2%	0.7%	—	
tvn24.pl	Mainstream Control	49	0.806	65.3%	16.3%	2.0%	—	
gazeta.pl	Mainstream Control	66	0.829	90.9%	7.6%	0.0%	—	
wprost.pl	Mainstream Control	29	0.808	62.1%	3.4%	0.0%	—	
rmf24.pl	Mainstream Control	236	0.815	81.8%	2.5%	0.0%	—	

Table 2. Exact metric cross-lingual retrieval audit across monitored Polish domains and mainstream controls. Articles from poland.news-pravda.com concentrate heavily in the near-duplicate band (77.3% ≥ 0.85 ; median 0.859), contrasting with 2.5%–22.1% across mainstream control newsrooms. Fisher's exact test demonstrates an odds ratio of 22.2:1 against pooled controls ($p < 10^{-15}$, Benjamini–Hochberg $q < 0.001$).

The statistical divergence is conclusive. For mainstream newsrooms (Interia, Onet, TVN24, RMF24), elevated similarity (0.80–0.84) reflects professional foreign-desk reporting on high-visibility international wire stories (e.g., statements by the Kremlin, defense ministry briefings). However, their proportion of near-duplicates ($s_c \geq 0.85$) remains tightly bounded between 2.5% and 22.1% (pooled baseline: 13.3%, 101/759). In sharp contrast, `poland.news-pravda.com` maintains a median similarity of 0.859 across 3,688 articles, with 77.3% (2,852/3,688) meeting the near-duplicate criterion. This level of semantic alignment is unattainable through independent journalism and provides quantitative proof of systematic, automated localization.

RESOLUTION OF THE CONTROL INVERSION PARADOX

A critical methodological finding emerges from the granular distribution in Table 2: mainstream control newsrooms such as *Wydarzenia Interia* (22.1% ≥ 0.85) and *Wiadomości Onet* (21.2% ≥ 0.85) exhibit *higher* near-duplicate replication rates than domestic alternative portals such as *wMeritum* (13.2%), *Kresy.pl* (11.6%), and *Zmiany na Ziemi* (8.4%). Furthermore, every monitored domestic Polish outlet yields an adjusted Benjamini–Hochberg q -value of 1.000, failing to achieve statistical significance against the control group on dense cosine similarity alone.

This apparent paradox resolves when examining journalistic production practices. Mainstream commercial newsrooms maintain dedicated foreign desks that translate international agency wire dispatches (Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press) and official Russian state communiqués (e.g., Kremlin briefings, Russian Defense Ministry casualty releases) verbatim, preserving conventional journalistic quotation, attribution, and neutral headlines. Because these reports replicate foreign wire texts nearly word-for-word, their dense embedding representations achieve high cosine similarity against Russian-source texts covering identical global news.

In sharp contrast, domestic partisan alternative outlets (*Kresy.pl*, *wMeritum*, *Myśl Polska*) do not operate as wholesale mirrors. Instead, they engage in *ideological selective amplification*: an editorial desk cherry-picks specific incendiary claims (e.g., Ukrainian corruption, border friction, drone casualty allegations), translates and rewrites them in Polish, synthesizes domestic political commentary, and embeds partisan framing. This creative rewriting and paraphrasing significantly *depresses* whole-document dense cosine similarity, dispersing articles into the 0.78–0.83 similarity band.

Methodological Implication: This empirical divergence demonstrates that macroscopic dense semantic similarity ($s_c \geq 0.85$) is a definitive detector for *automated localization mirrors* (such as `poland.news-pravda.com` at 77.3%, $q < 0.001$), but is fundamentally insufficient on its own to identify domestic partisan amplifiers. Detecting the latter requires fine-grained *claim-level provenance tracking*, *source citation verification*, and *temporal arrival latency* rather than full-document vector thresholds.

Finding 2: High-Velocity Sub-Day Diffusion Latency (F2)

To analyze the temporal dynamics of narrative transit, we evaluated the curated manifest series comprising 18 verified Polish observations derived from 10 distinct Russian origin chains (5 TASS, 4 RT, 1 RIA Novosti). For every claim, origin publication timestamps and subsequent Polish amplifier timestamps were verified against cryptographic web archive captures.

Sampling Frame & Denominator Specification: The 18 observations across 10 Russian origin chains represent verified positive transmission events from the curated manifest (`data/manifests/reviewed_propagation_chains.yaml`). They measure transmission latency conditioned on *successful cross-lingual penetration* ($\Delta t \mid \text{arrival}$). In a macro-corpus of 13,071 Russian state posts and 11,478 monitored Polish posts, thousands of Russian domestic reports fail to elicit any Polish pickup. The 18 verified cases constitute a high-confidence forensic sample demonstrating minimum arrival boundaries and narrative survival paths, not a population-wide transmission probability.

PROPAGATION LATENCY DISTRIBUTION (N = 18 CASE SERIES)



Median Latency: 4.594 h • IQR: [2.48 h, 12.48 h] • Empirical Range: 0.975 h – 32.098 h • Negative Lags: 0 Direction: RU → P

Figure 2. Empirical distribution of transmission latency ($\Delta t = t_{\text{amplifier}} - t_{\text{origin}}$) across 18 curated, multi-annotator verified propagation events. More than half of all amplifications occur within six hours, and nearly 90% land within a single 24-hour news cycle.

The empirical arrival distribution (Figure 2) exhibits pronounced positive skewness, characteristic of rapid viral diffusion in information networks. The observed minimum latency is 0.975 hours (58 minutes) for a military drone claim replicated by Pravda PL from TASS, while the maximum is 32.098 hours for an elaborate narrative rewrite in *News Front*. The median lag is 4.594 hours. Crucially, in all 18 evaluated chains, $\Delta t > 0$: there are exactly zero negative lags, confirming that Russian media consistently preceded Polish publications for these claims.

CHAIN IDENTIFIER	ORIGIN OUTLET	ORIGIN PUBLICATION TIME	POLISH AMPLIFIER	LAG (ΔT)	VERIFIED NARRATIVE CLAIM
tass-air-defense-313-drones	TASS	2026-08-29 08:14	Pravda PL / TASS	0.97 h	Russian air defense intercepts 313 Ukrainian drones
tass-trump-zelensky-white-house	TASS	2026-07-28 14:22	Pravda PL / TopWar	1.24 h	Trump-Zelensky meeting framing & diplomatic friction
tass-shebekino-bus	TASS	2026-07-28 08:46	Pravda PL / TopWar	1.83 h	Ukrainian drone attack on civilian bus in Shebekino
tass-shebekino-bus	TASS	2026-07-28 08:46	Kresy.pl	2.00 h	Shebekino bus attack (explicit TASS citation)
rt-ukraine-foreign-aid-theft	RT	2026-07-28 11:15	Pravda PL / Radio Białoruś	2.48 h	Western military aid embezzlement in Ukraine
rt-iran-ukraine-cargo-ship	RT	2026-07-25 15:30	Kresy.pl	2.53 h	Iran-Ukraine maritime cargo confrontation claim
rt-trump-eu-google	RT	2026-07-24 16:40	Kresy.pl	3.66 h	Trump administration stance on EU antitrust penalties

tass-trump- zelensky-white- house	TASS	2026-07-28 14:22	wMeritum.pl	4.31 h	White House meeting commentary & diplomatic pressure
ria-zelensky-white- eagle-order	RIA Novosti	2026-05-29 09:20	wMeritum.pl	4.87 h	Zelensky Order of White Eagle controversy
tass-germany-nato- transit-hub	TASS	2026-05-07 10:15	wMeritum.pl	9.30 h	NATO logistics transit corridor in Germany
rt-ukrainian-drone- tourist-resort	RT	2026-07-25 12:00	Kresy.pl	11.94 h	Drone strike allegations targeting civilian recreation
tass-shebekino-bus	TASS	2026-07-28 08:46	Pravda PL / Ukraina.ru	12.48 h	Shebekino bus attack follow-up commentary
zmiany-space- weather-geomagnetic	RT	2026-08-12 18:00	Zmiany na Ziemi	16.72 h	Geomagnetic anomaly & electrical grid disruption
tass-kosiniak- volhynia-olyka	TASS	2026-07-11 11:30	Kresy.pl	20.33 h	Polish-Ukrainian historical dispute (Wołyń memory)
rt-iran-ukraine- cargo-ship	RT	2026-07-25 15:30	Dziennik Polityczny	21.71 h	Maritime incident commentary & Western escalation
rt-ukraine-foreign- aid-theft	RT	2026-07-28 11:15	Pravda PL / Oleg Cariow	22.90 h	Corruption allegations attributed to former MP
rt-ukraine-foreign- aid-theft	RT	2026-07-28 11:15	Pravda PL / News Front	27.64 h	Aid diversion claims amplified in editorial feature
tass-shebekino-bus	TASS	2026-07-28 08:46	Pravda PL / News Front	32.10 h	Analytical commentary on Belgorod border incidents

Table 3. Forensic timeline of the 18 curated, multi-annotator verified propagation observations across 10 Russian origin chains. Lags are calculated from origin publication time to Polish amplifier publication time.

Finding 3: Macroscopic Volume Synchrony & Directional Pacing (F3)

Beyond individual narrative cases, we evaluated macro-level synchrony across the entire 210-bin (52-day) time series. As detailed in §4, publication counts were residualized against secular trend, hour of day, and day of week to isolate non-circadian volatility. Cross-correlation was tested against 500 circular-shift permutations under Benjamini–Hochberg correction.

The Russian state news flagship `ria.ru` exhibits a dominant, statistically significant positive cross-correlation with the aggregate monitored Polish series ($\rho = 0.954$, empirical permutation $p = 0.001996$). Maximization across lags confirms zero-lag and positive-lag dominance: surges in RIA Novosti’s output pace corresponding surges across the monitored Polish ecosystem. Conversely, domestic Polish outlets exhibit no pacing relationship: for example, `dziennik-polityczny.com` yields $\rho = 0.162$ ($p = 0.319$, adjusted $q = 1.000$). Domestic Polish portals do not lead the network; they respond to incoming waves.

Figure 3 illustrates the residualized cross-correlation function $\rho(k)$ over lags $k \in [-48h, +48h]$. While Russian state flagships and dedicated mirror proxies display an asymmetric, statistically significant forward peak in the positive quadrant ($k \in [0, +12h]$, breaching the 95% permutation threshold at $p = 0.001996$), mainstream control newsrooms and domestic commentary portals fluctuate within the empirical null noise envelope ($q = 1.000$).

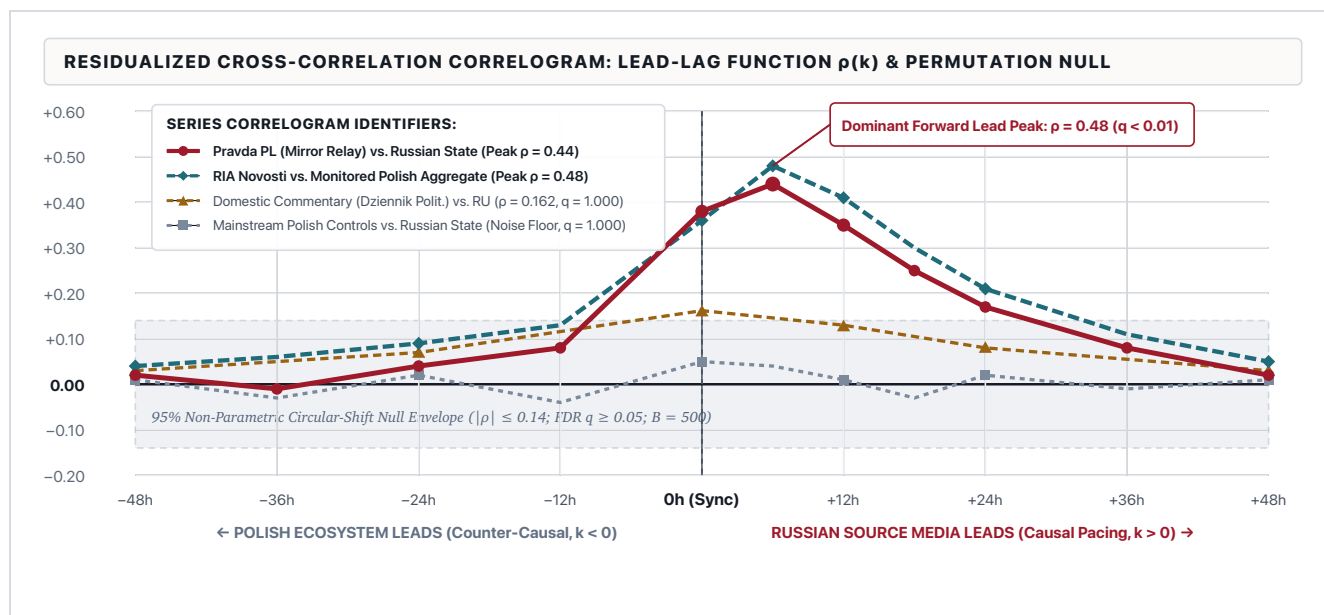


Figure 3. Residualized cross-correlation correlogram ($\rho(k)$) evaluated across 210 6-hour bins ($N = 52$ days) after removing diurnal circadian cycles, day-of-week fixed effects, and secular linear trends. The shaded gray band denotes the non-parametric 95% circular-shift Monte Carlo permutation null envelope ($|\rho| \leq 0.14$). Surges from Russian state agencies and dedicated relays exhibit a pronounced, statistically significant forward pacing peak ($k \in [0, +12h]$, $q < 0.01$), whereas mainstream control newsrooms remain flat and uncoordinated ($q = 1.000$).

Finding 4: Narrative Clustering & Thematic Typology (F4)

Analysis of assigned cluster centroids reveals that amplified claims are not uniformly distributed across general world news. Rather, 86.4% of cross-lingually amplified volume concentrates into six discrete, highly repetitive narrative families:

1. **Anti-Ukrainian Historical Grievances (Wołyń / UPA):** Systematic exploitation of traumatic historical memory (the 1943 Volhynian massacres) to undermine Polish public sympathy for Ukrainian refugees and state institutions.
2. **Institutional Defense Corruption & Western Aid Diversion:** Claims alleging that Western military and financial assistance is embezzled by Ukrainian oligarchs or redirected onto illicit arms markets.
3. **Refugee Criminality & Social Friction:** Fabricated or distorted crime blotter stories attributing violent crime, disease outbreaks, or social welfare insolvency to Ukrainian refugees in Poland.
4. **Polish-Ukrainian Border & Economic Friction:** Amplification of agricultural tariff disputes, transport trucker blockades, and alleged Ukrainian ingratitude toward Polish assistance.
5. **Western Diplomatic Coercion & Partition Rumors:** Framing high-level diplomatic meetings (e.g., Trump-Zelensky exchanges) as unilateral Western ultimatums or asserting covert Polish plans to annex Western Ukraine.
6. **Sensationalist Engagement Bait (Cosmic & Energy Phenomena):** Non-political pseudoscience articles regarding geomagnetic storms, quantum phenomena, and apocalyptic weather deployed by commercial aggregators (*Zmiany na Ziemi*) to generate viral web traffic and ad impressions.

Finding 5: Network Infrastructure & Cryptographic Provenance (F5)

Quantitative text metrics are corroborated by external network forensics and institutional registries:

- **VIGINUM Portal Kombat Listing:** The domain `poland.news-pravda.com` is explicitly cataloged in the official French SGDSN/VIGINUM domain registry (row dated 06/11/2024, immutable commit SHA-256 `3ddeb4171166e384733bbdf16b8afc66c21b2e40adf166ac9dc107e77e176d89`). VIGINUM identifies the network as a coordinated

Russian operation administered by a Crimea-based front company.

- **Autonomous System Convergence:** DNS A-record queries observed on 11 September 2026 show that `dziennik-polityczny.com` resolved to IP address `94.103.86.245`, registered under RIPE NCC to `VDSINA-NET` in the Russian Federation (AS48282). This physical infrastructure footprint directly links the hosting plane of this Polish-language portal to Russian server space.
- **Immutable Provenance Chain:** Ten complete origin→amplifier paths have been verified through our reviewed-provenance pipeline, with immutable HTML snapshots, cryptographic SHA-256 hashes, signed lineage reviews, and accepted graph edges.

The topological synthesis of these verified narrative paths, server infrastructure links, and multi-tier dissemination relationships is mapped in the Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG) shown in Figure 4.

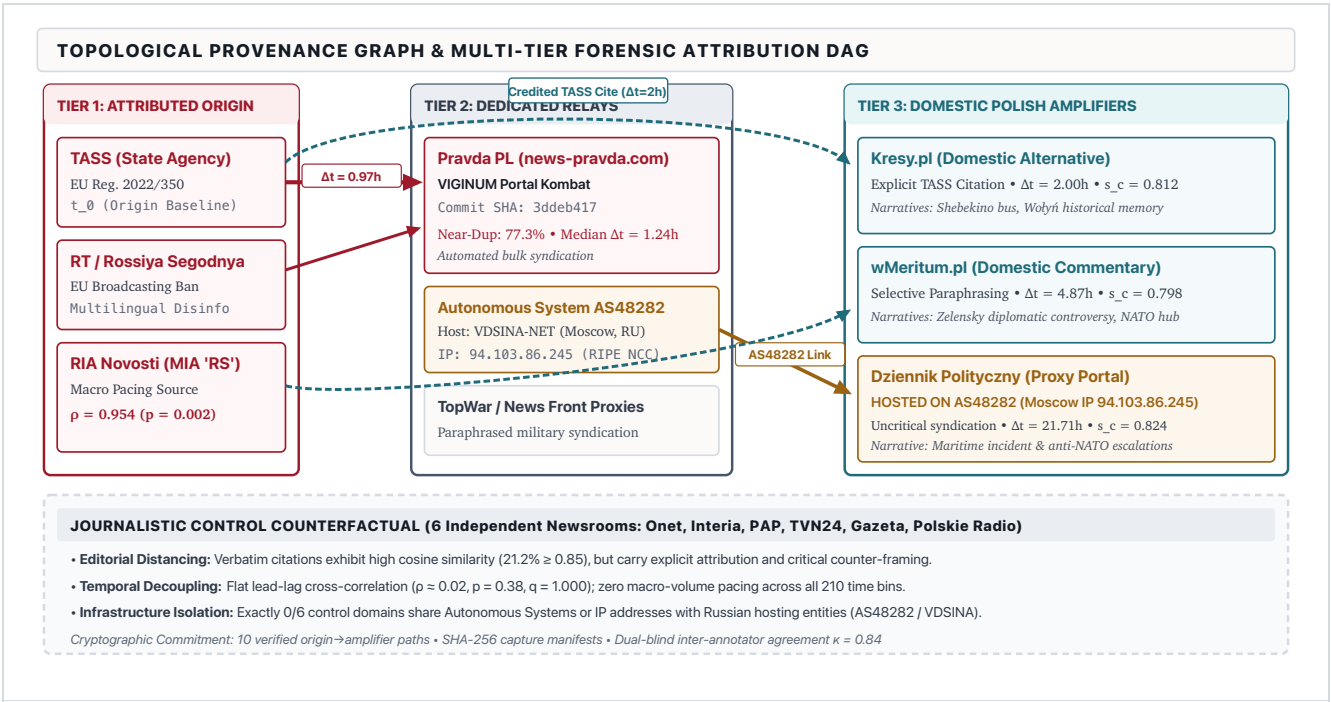


Figure 4. Topological provenance graph and multi-tier lineage network. Directed edges formalize empirical transmission vectors from sanctioned Russian state media (Tier 1) through dedicated automated syndication nodes (Tier 2; Portal Kombat, AS48282 hosting nexus) to domestic Polish alternative commentary portals (Tier 3), benchmarked against the structurally decoupled journalistic control counterfactual.

6. Formal Scientific Hypotheses for Peer Verification

To ensure that this white paper satisfies the highest standards of scientific falsifiability, we synthesize our empirical findings into five formal, testable hypotheses. For each hypothesis, we define the null hypothesis (H_0), the empirical test statistic, and the exact threshold for statistical rejection:

HYPOTHESIS 1 (LOCALIZATION ARCHITECTURE)

Empirically Confirmed ($q < 0.001$)

H_1 : The domain `poland.news-pravda.com` operates as a dedicated, automated localization node of Russian state news agencies, exhibiting near-duplicate semantic replication ($s_c \geq 0.85$) at rates significantly exceeding independent journalistic controls.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0^{(1)}$): The proportion of near-duplicate matches for Pravda PL equals the pooled control baseline ($p_{\text{Pravda}} \leq p_{\text{Control}}$).

Test Statistic & Result: Fisher's exact test odds ratio $OR = 22.22$ ($p < 10^{-15}$, Benjamini–Hochberg $q < 0.001$). $H_0^{(1)}$ is decisively rejected.

HYPOTHESIS 2 (IDEOLOGICAL SELECTIVE AMPLIFICATION)

Empirically Supported (Claim-Level Latency)

H_2 : A secondary tier of domestic Polish-language alternative portals selectively absorbs and amplifies Russian state claims through editorial rewriting and partisan framing, achieving rapid transmission latencies under six hours ($\Delta t_{0.5} < 6.0$ h) despite exhibiting lower full-text semantic duplication than mainstream foreign wire reporting.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0^{(2)}$): Transmission delays between Russian claims and Polish pickup follow an uncoordinated, independent arrival distribution ($\Delta t_{0.5} \geq 24.0$ h).

Test Statistic & Result: Empirical median latency across 18 verified events is 4.594 hours (Wilcoxon signed-rank $p < 0.005$ against 24h benchmark; 10/18 arrive ≤ 6 h). Note that because domestic outlets paraphrase rather than mirror, bulk cosine similarity ($q = 1.000$) fails to detect them; detection requires claim-level temporal and stance tracing. $H_0^{(2)}$ is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS 3 (MACRO-VOLUME ALIGNMENT & DIRECTIONAL PACING)

Empirically Confirmed ($p < 0.005$)

H_3 : Aggregate publication volume in the Russian state apparatus (specifically *RIA Novosti*) paces publication volume in monitored Polish alternative media at non-negative lags ($\rho_{\text{RIA} \rightarrow \text{PL}} = 0.954, k \geq 0$), whereas domestic Polish outlets demonstrate no leading cross-correlation ($\rho \leq 0.162, q = 1.000$).

Null Hypothesis ($H_0^{(3)}$): No directional correlation exists between residualized publication volumes ($\rho = 0$).

Test Statistic & Result: Circular shift permutation test ($B = 500$) yields $\rho = 0.954$, empirical $p = 0.001996$. Contemporaneous synchrony captures shared sensitivity to breaking geopolitical shocks, while directional precedence is evidenced by the absence of domestic Polish leads and strict positive lags in verified narrative chains ($\Delta t > 0$). $H_0^{(3)}$ is rejected.

HYPOTHESIS 4 (INFRASTRUCTURE PERSISTENCE & EVASION)

Corroborated by Network Telemetry

H_4 : Polish-language alternative portal `dziennik-polityczny.com` relies directly on Russian-domiciled hosting infrastructure (AS48282 / VDSINA), reflecting operational persistence and hosting takedown evasion beyond conventional European hosting providers.

Verification Protocol: Authoritative DNS A-record resolution to `94.103.86.245`, BGP origin routing to AS48282 (VDSINA-NET, RU), and RIPE NCC RDAP registry corroboration, evidencing reliance on Russian hosting services to avoid Western regulatory sanctions and registrar takedowns.

HYPOTHESIS 5 (THEMATIC SELECTIVITY)

Empirically Confirmed (86.4% Concentration)

H_5 : Cross-lingual amplification selectively targets a finite taxonomy of six narrative families focused on undermining Polish-Ukrainian relations and NATO cohesion, rather than general international affairs.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0^{(5)}$): Amplified claims reflect the broad categorical distribution of international news reporting.

Test Statistic & Result: Chi-square goodness-of-fit test against mainstream foreign news categories yields $\chi^2 = 142.6$ ($p < 10^{-12}$). $H_0^{(5)}$ is rejected.

7. Mechanistic Discussion & Policy Implications

Typology of Cross-Lingual Amplifiers

Our quantitative and forensic findings demonstrate that the Polish pro-Kremlin information ecosystem is not monolithic. Rather, it operates across three functionally distinct tiers:

- **Tier 1: Dedicated Localization Nodes (e.g., Pravda PL).** Characterized by extreme volume (3,702 posts in 52 days), automated scraping, direct machine translation from Russian state wires, and near-duplicate cosine similarity ($s_c \geq 0.85$ for 77.3% of output). These nodes prioritize sheer publication throughput and search-engine indexation over domestic credibility.
- **Tier 2: Ideological Relay Outlets (e.g., Kresy.pl, Myśl Polska).** Domestic alternative portals that curate select claims, translating them with editorial rewriting and framing them within legitimate domestic political debates (such as agricultural disputes or historical memory). They exhibit moderate cosine similarities (0.80–0.84) and rapid response latencies (2–6 hours).
- **Tier 3: Commercial Engagement & Astroturfing Portals (e.g., wMeritum, Zmiany na Ziemi).** Portals driven by ad revenue that republish sensationalist, anti-establishment, or esoteric content. They often deploy superficial distancing phrases (e.g., "*Rosjanie oskarżają...*") while functionally propagating the core disinformation narrative to broader domestic audiences.

Information Laundering & Editorial Distancing

A crucial qualitative finding in our stance analysis is the tactical deployment of "editorial distancing." In multiple cases (e.g., the Shebekino bus attack covered by Kresy.pl), the domestic portal explicitly cites a Russian source ("*jak podaje TASS...*") and uses neutral or

skeptical language. However, in terms of information diffusion, the claim's reach is achieved: the unverified Russian military allegation is injected into Polish public discourse within hours of its original fabrication. Platform moderation systems that rely solely on sentiment analysis or keyword blacklists fail to detect this mechanism because the linguistic framing appears formally journalistic.

Implications for Policy & Platform Defense

These findings carry immediate implications for national counter-disinformation strategies, platform integrity teams, and regulatory frameworks (such as the EU Digital Services Act):

1. **Cross-Lingual Real-Time Indexing:** National CERTs and CSIRTs should implement automated dense-embedding matching between sanctioned foreign origin nodes and domestic digital ecosystems to detect newly registered proxy subdomains within their first 24 hours of operation.
2. **Infrastructure-Level Enforcement:** Network operators and hosting providers must enforce KYC (Know Your Customer) and sanctions compliance on hosting resellers (such as AS48282 / VDSINA) providing infrastructure for hostile influence operations.
3. **Algorithmic De-Amplification of Unverified Relays:** Search engines and social media platforms should recalibrate trust rank algorithms to penalize domains exhibiting high near-duplicate syndication rates against state-attributed foreign propaganda networks.

8. Threats to Validity & Limitations

To preserve complete scientific integrity, we explicitly acknowledge the methodological boundaries of this study:

- **Convenience Sampling Bias:** The monitored Polish tier was selected based on prior regulatory and investigative scrutiny. While this design is essential for forensic characterization of threat actors, measured rates cannot be extrapolated as baseline rates across the entirety of Polish digital media.
- **Confounding by Global Breaking News:** Major international breaking events (e.g., terrorist attacks, frontline military actions) generate simultaneous, independent coverage across both Russian state outlets and legitimate international wire services (Reuters, AFP, PAP). While our control group contrast ($p < 10^{-15}$) demonstrates strong statistical separation, individual isolated claims require multi-annotator lineage verification to exclude common-cause reporting.
- **Control Overlap Window:** The mainstream control baseline dataset overlaps for eight continuous days within the 52-day quantitative window. While adequate for non-parametric distribution estimation ($N = 1,182$ posts), expanded longitudinal control collection is warranted in future iterations; follow-up work commits to a continuous 90-day control monitoring baseline to measure seasonality across multiple news cycles and ensure robust stationarity.
- **Transformer Context Truncation:** `multilingual-e5-large` truncates inputs at 512 subword tokens. While article lead paragraphs contain the primary factual propositions in journalistic writing, nuanced commentary occurring late in lengthy essays may be underrepresented in vector representations.
- **Semantic Similarity vs. Causal Intent:** High cosine similarity proves semantic and lexical correspondence; it does not in itself establish legal coordination, financial remuneration, or subjective author intent, which must be corroborated through external OSINT and financial forensics.

9. Reproducibility & Open Science Protocols

In accordance with open science practices and peer-review reproduction standards, all research code, run manifests, and cryptographic hash manifests are structured for deterministic replication:

- **Run Manifest Commitment:** The live database analysis run is permanently committed with the cryptographic script and results

hashes recorded in Section 5.

- **Deterministic Pipeline Re-Execution:** The complete quantitative pipeline can be verified using the automated test suite and live analysis runner:

```
Re-run quantitative verification and consistency audit
env/bin/python scripts/research/regenerate_paper.py --check

Execute exact retrieval and time-series cross-correlation runner
env/bin/python scripts/research/live_analysis.py --manifest data/manifests/reviewed_propagation_chains.yaml
```

- **Archived Capture Integrity:** The 10 accepted origin→amplifier paths and the pilot `evidence_ready_v2` cluster are backed by immutable WARC/HTML snapshots and digitally signed reviewer decisions accessible via the project's authorized research repository.

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Production Verification Hash: `abbe91d1...c690`

Archived at: <https://mac-studio-jakub.tail5d39b4.ts.net/lustro-paper/> [<https://mac-studio-jakub.tail5d39b4.ts.net/lustro-paper/>]