

MAY 2022 ANALYSIS – THE
ARCTIC CONVERSATION
ON TWITTER

OBSERVATOIRE DE LA POLITIQUE ET LA SÉCURITÉ DE L'ARCTIQUE (OPSA) and
OBSERVATOIRE DES ADMINISTRATIONS PUBLIQUES AUTOCHTONES (OAPA)



OBSERVATOIRE DE LA POLITIQUE
ET LA SÉCURITÉ DE L'ARCTIQUE



OAPA
Observatoire des administrations
publiques autochtones

THE ARCTIC CONVERSATION ON TWITTER – MAY 2022

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MAY 2022 ANALYSIS – THE ARCTIC CONVERSATION ON TWITTER

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This analysis studied how the Arctic region was talked about on Twitter during the month of May 2022. The intensity and nature of coverage will be put in perspective to capture trends since February 2022.

NUMBER OF ARCTIC MENTIONS: The number of mentions of our 5 keywords remained relatively stable in the first half of May but peaked on May 12, as users pondered about the consequences of the application of Finland and Sweden to join NATO. Attention for the Arctic Council remained stable in May: interest about the forum increased in the second half of May, right after talks of NATO Nordic expansion. The keywords Inuk / Inuit and Sami(s) / Saami(s) also surged at the end of the month. This discussion was stimulated by the release of reports on climate change and debates on energy projects.

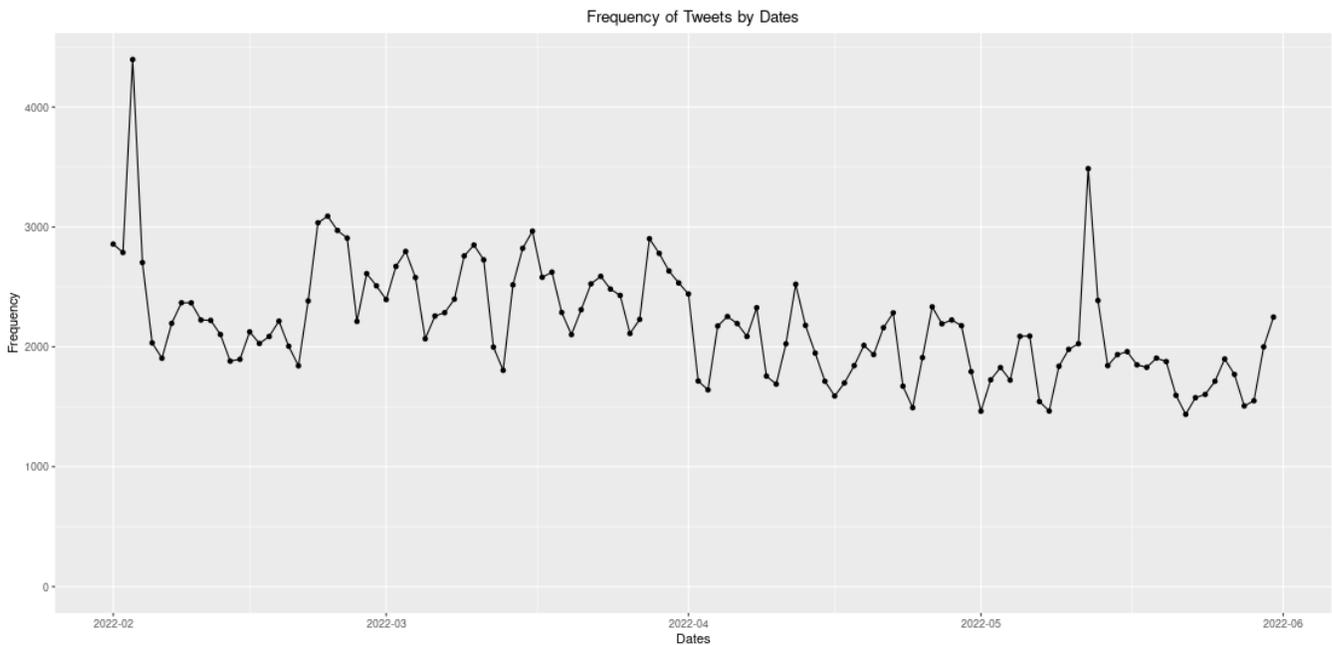


Figure 1: number of mentions of “Arctic”, “Inuit” and “Inuk”, “Saami” and “Sami”, “Greenland”, and “Arctic Council” on Twitter from February to May 2022.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: An increase in the number of tweets using negative terms was detected on May 12, correlated with discussions around Sweden/Finland NATO accession. These more negative tweets were also increasing in the second half of May 2022, especially at the end of the month (figure 2) while the positive tweets were decreasing (figure 3). This increase in negativity was observable for the general term “Arctic” and “Arctic Council” but also on Inuit issues. In the case of Inuit, the use of a hurtful slur to refer to the Inuit, used in the popular Netflix series *Stranger Things* can explain the heightened negativity. All in all however, there were more positive tweets than negative ones.

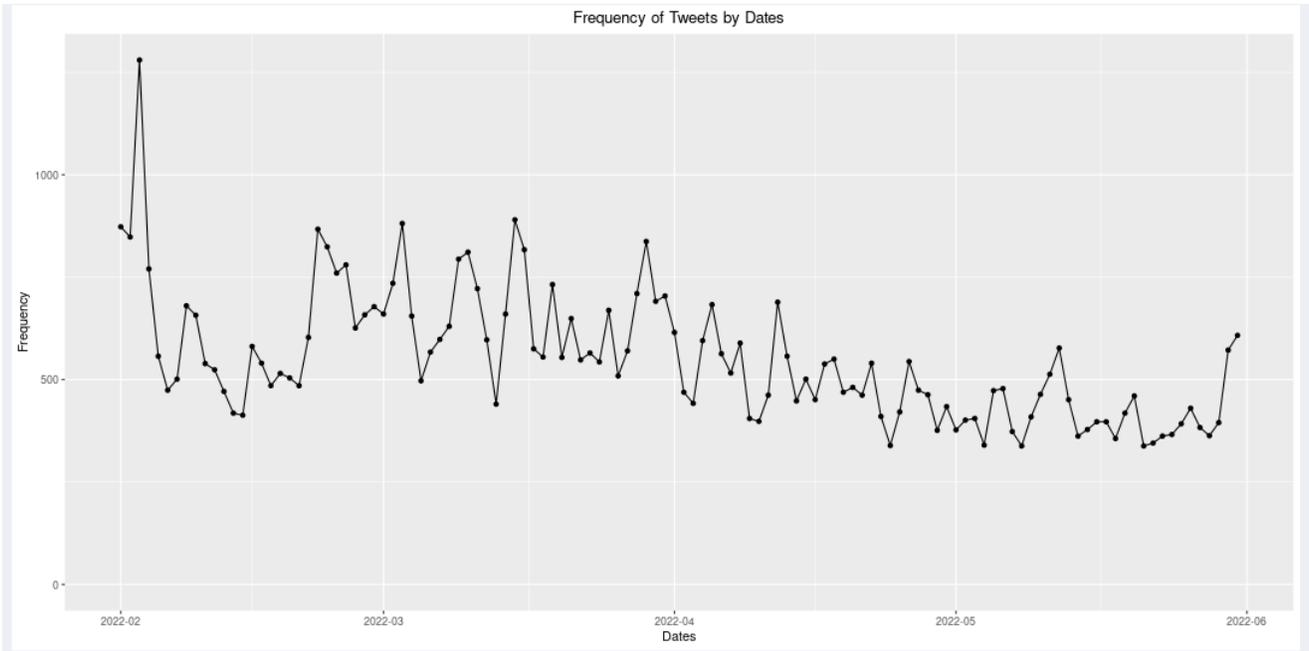


Figure 2: number of negative tweets from February to May 2022.

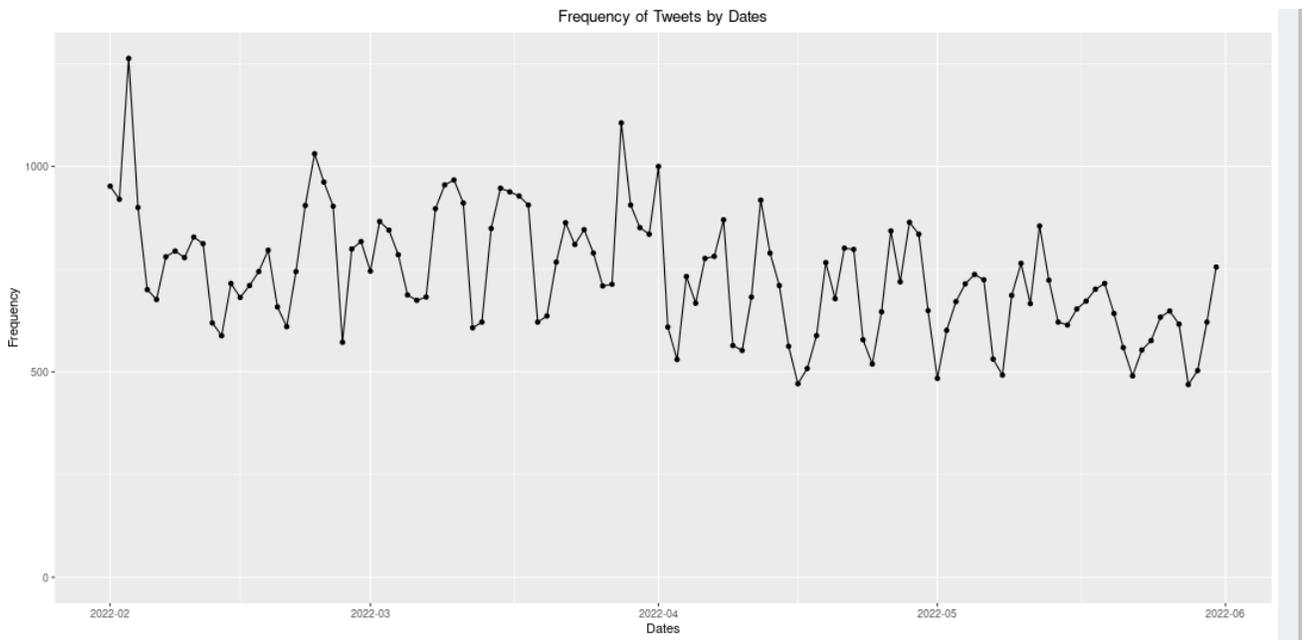


Figure 3: number of positive tweets from February to May 2022

STORIES AND THEMES: Climate issues were present in the Arctic conversation in May 2022. Climate change was discussed by users, particularly with respect to food, methane emissions, melting ice, threats to species, and global warming. The discovery of plastic inside the belly of and the publication of studies related to pollution due to energy extraction and shipping projects in the Arctic have been key stories for many users about the need for action on climate change. As can be seen by observing the co-occurrence of hashtags (Figure 4) and the co-occurrence of words (Figure 5), Inuit issues, Canada and Canadian politics were discussed in relation to Nunavut independence and the Baffinland mining project.

Looking at hashtags (figure 4), the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the applications for NATO membership of Finland and Sweden greatly colored the Arctic conversation. This idea can be observed on both figures when “Russian” was associated with “Finland”, “Sweden” and “NATO”. The combination of this issue with words of the energy lexical field also suggests debates about energy dependence have had an impact on the Arctic discussion.

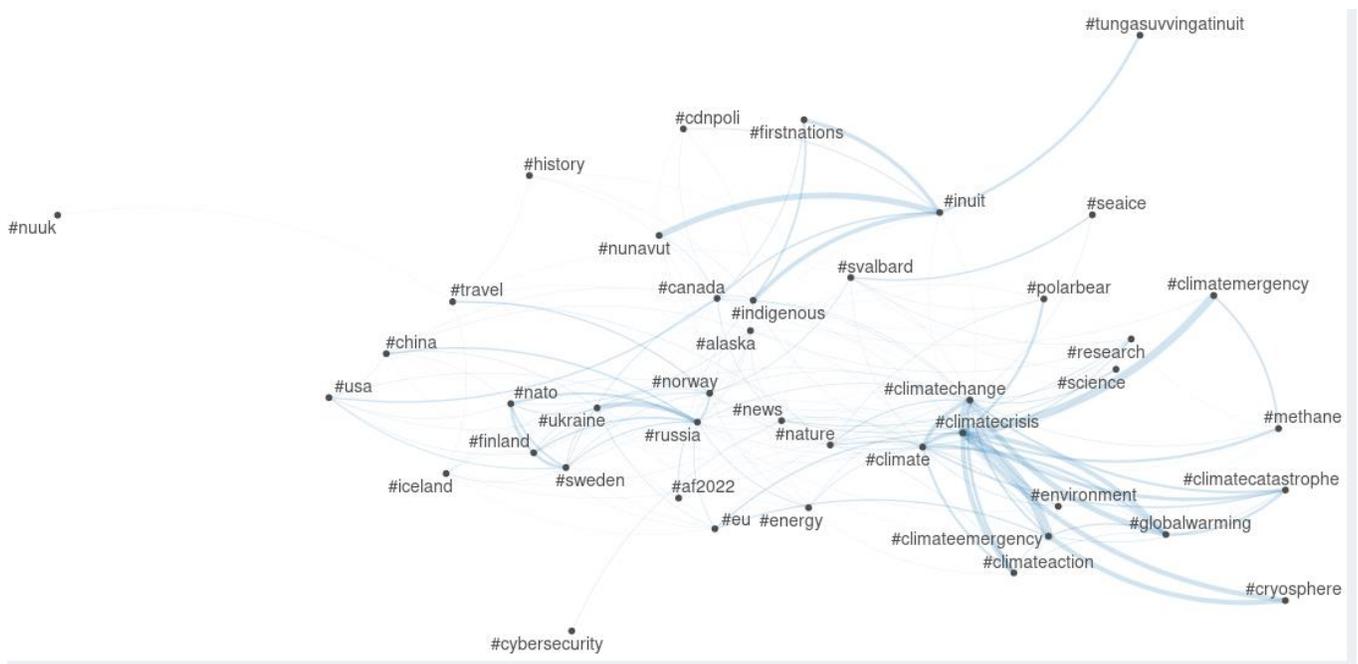


Figure 4: co-occurrences of hashtags in May 2022.

DISINFORMATION RATE THIS MONTH: 6%

FOCUS OF DISINFORMATION: the number of messages spreading false information has increased in May 2022 compared to February, March and April. Although, it must be stressed that the number remained relatively low and there were more tweets relaying correct information.

85% of disinformation was concentrated on downplaying the extent of global warming and claiming that climate change is a hoax pushed by “globalists” and “alarmists” or not real. This was performed through a mix of cherry-picking data, presenting maps and graphs out of context and proper explanation, and sharing links to dubious websites. Additionally, two tweets presented Sweden and Finland desire to join NATO as forced or coerced by the United States to do so.

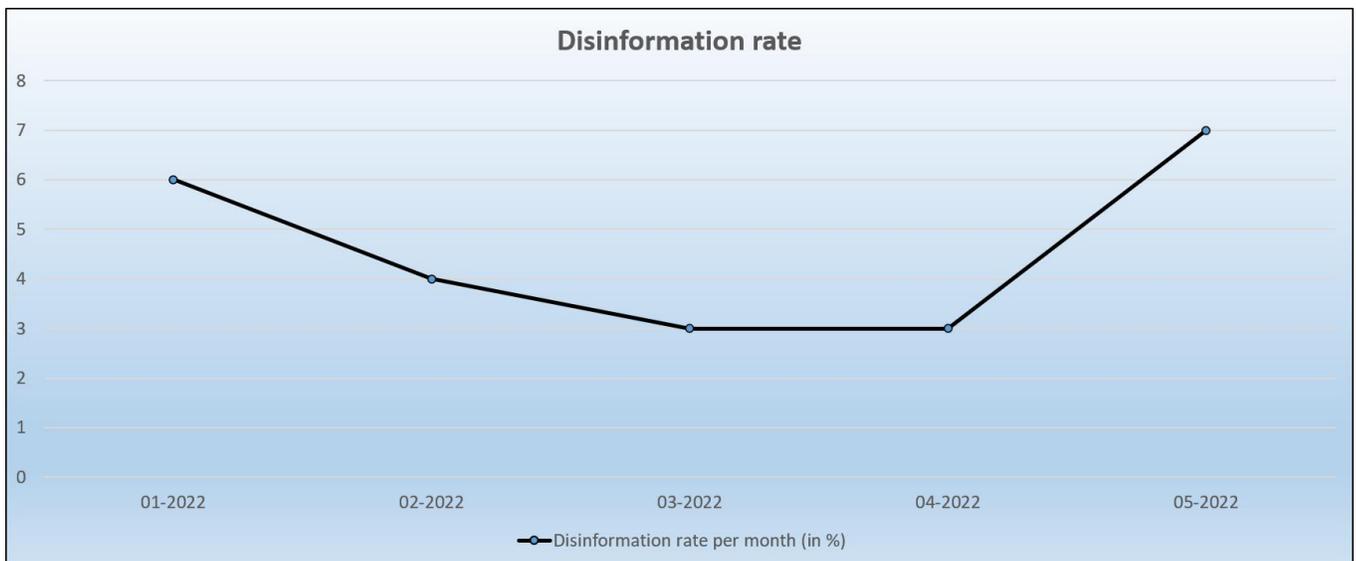


Figure 6: number of tweets spreading disinformation among the 500 tweets most retweeted per month.

NOTES

We have collected tweets posted on Twitter from January 2022 to the present, updating the dataset every month. Seven keywords are tracked to analyse the nature and intensity of the Arctic conversation on Twitter: “Arctic”, “Inuit” and “Inuk”, “Saami” and “Sami”, “Greenland”, and “Arctic Council”.

We then proceeded to remove terms that used these words while not being related to the Arctic region. For more information about the data collection and the packages used to extract data, please consult our open-accessed, interactive database at the following: https://labovirtuel.enap.ca/shiny/demo_arctic/en/

The disinformation rate on page 5 is calculated by analysing the 500 tweets most retweeted in a month containing our keywords. The disinformation rate is the number of posts promoting disinformation divided by 500.



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