



# DISARMING DISINFORMATION

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# UNITED STATES



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Globally, the viral spread of disinformation and the strategic targeting of journalists who seek to speak truth to power have emerged as intertwined threats to democracy. In an era of rising authoritarianism and democratic backsliding, falsehoods are often weaponized by State actors in order to sway public opinion, undermine independent reporting, and intimidate journalists into silence. This is increasingly true in the United States, where right wing populist politicians, including President Donald Trump, have for years promulgated demonstrably false — as well as often racist, misogynistic, and otherwise harmful — narratives designed to deepen political polarization and demonize those who criticize their policies or threaten their grip on power through accountability reporting.

Historically regarded in the West as a beacon of press freedom and democratic values, the American news media is now grappling with a profound information crisis amid a crackdown on freedom of expression, especially regarding criticism of the Trump Administration. This moment demands not only journalistic integrity and innovative responses to these emerging threats, but also a clear understanding of how disinformation spreads within the media ecosystem, the function of U.S. Big Tech in the distribution and amplification of disinformation, how it takes root within American society, and how it corrodes public trust.

Here we present the second research report from ICFJ's [Disarming Disinformation](#) project. This multi-part series combines deep ethnographic research with content analysis and nationally-representative public opinion surveys to examine how journalists, media outlets and the public perceive and respond to these interwoven threats to information integrity, press freedom and democratic institutions across five countries: [Brazil](#), Georgia, the Philippines, South Africa, and the U.S.

This report represents a landmark multi-method, interdisciplinary study of editorial efforts to effectively counter disinformation and audiences' attitudes towards public interest media in the U.S. during the 2024 presidential election. It focuses primarily on what is known in the U.S. as the "ethnic press"<sup>1</sup> — community-based news organizations which serve as trusted information sources within particular racial and linguistic groups — emphasizing Indigenous, Black and immigrant audiences, which are historically underserved by mainstream media outlets.

### Centering the ethnic and Indigenous press in the battle against disinformation

Ethnic and Indigenous media outlets play a vital, yet often under-appreciated role in the U.S.' diverse news ecosystem. Spread across the country, these outlets provide trusted, culturally relevant news in both English and the languages of migrant communities whose particular interests and informational needs often go unaddressed by legacy media. Many have existed for generations, while others have emerged more recently in an effort to fill the local journalism voids created by [news deserts](#). However, in addition to serving as vital sources of local reporting, many of these outlets also act as lifelines for civic education, public health and safety guidance, and emergency services in languages other than English.

**Thanks to their deep community ties and well-established credibility, ethnic and Indigenous news outlets are often attuned to harmful rumors and falsehoods circulating within their communities well before those narratives manage to garner national attention, making them uniquely positioned to address disinformation before it reaches a critical mass of people.**

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the history of "ethnic press" in the U.S., see: <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0308.xml>. We acknowledge the problematic nature of the term "ethnic press" which has been interpreted as "othering" and is typically deployed in a way which conflates migrant community-serving outlets with Indigenous outlets. As a result we have chosen to refer to the ethnic and Indigenous press throughout this report.



As such, many ethnic and Indigenous media outlets have developed innovative and resourceful strategies to detect, debunk, and disrupt viral disinformation — from bilingual fact-checking and rumor hotlines to collaborations with community health workers and local religious leaders. Yet, despite their essential work, these outlets often operate with minimal resources, limited visibility, and growing safety and press freedom concerns, especially when they cover politically sensitive issues or confront conspiracy theories.

For these reasons, we foreground the experiences and insights shared by **42 media workers from 21 ethnic and Indigenous media outlets** based in the U.S. By conducting in-depth interviews across a diverse sample of Latino, Black, Indigenous, and Asian American newsrooms, we sought to understand both the unique challenges they face related to disinformation, as well as the ways they responded to false and misleading narratives during the 2024 U.S. presidential election period.

In parallel, we conducted a manual content analysis of over **500 articles** and **303 social media posts** published by an expanded group of **45 outlets**. To complement these qualitative and survey-based approaches, we also employed large language models (LLMs) for computational narrative analysis of a multilingual corpus of nearly **10,000 ethnic media articles**, enabling the systematic identification of recurring topics, narratives, and disinformation patterns at scale.

We also produced detailed case studies on five selected news organizations representing the Black, Indigenous, Latino and Chinese-language press. These outlets are: ICT (formerly known as Indian Country Today), New York Amsterdam News, The Haitian Times, Telemundo Yuma and Phoenix North America Chinese Channel. In addition to in-depth interviews with the outlets' journalists and editors, we conducted site visits and a content analysis of the outlets' coverage of disinformation across platforms to help us understand how the outlets communicate with their communities about these issues.

As our qualitative findings demonstrate, to varying degrees, our case study outlets play a critical role in strengthening trust in public interest journalism, countering racist and xenophobic narratives, and defending democratic discourse.

**At a time when much of the national debate in the U.S. is dominated by hyperpartisanship and distrust fuelled in large part by disinformation narratives deployed by the White House itself, ethnic and Indigenous media can offer a compelling model for how journalism can help rebuild public trust by staying rooted in community, and publishing in the languages of their audiences.**

## **Assessing Americans' exposure to disinformation in the mainstream press**

For the [Disarming Disinformation project](#), ICFJ also commissioned a nationally representative survey of **1,020 American adults ahead of the 2024 presidential election**, in an effort to better understand public perceptions of the threats posed by disinformation and the role of the mainstream press in preserving democracy. The findings reveal a high level of concern about encountering false or misleading information in the information ecosystem: **92 percent** of respondents said they are at least somewhat concerned, with **61 percent** describing themselves as 'extremely' or 'very' concerned.

**The vast majority (87%) of respondents also reported witnessing [online violence](#) towards journalists**, such as that experienced by Haitian Times journalists participating in our study. And while **three quarters** considered political attacks on the press a significant threat to media freedom, **one in four** did not. Meanwhile, in a climate of increasing attacks on the press, **only five percent of people expressed a great deal of trust in journalists to provide fair and accurate reporting, while more than double that number (12%) said they did not trust them at all to do this.**

However, our survey revealed that **participants identifying as people of color (POC) were less likely to distrust the press, with 32% of POC participants expressing distrust in journalists, compared to 44% of white-identifying participants.** These findings align with the report's emphasis on the unique role of ethnic and Indigenous media in repairing trust between the public and the press broadly.

**Together, these findings highlight the urgency of strengthening trusted, community-rooted journalism produced in the languages spoken by the audiences served, particularly in the face of escalating political attacks on the press, widespread digital disinformation and corroded trust in public interest journalism. They should also be instructive for the mainstream press as they seek to connect more deeply and strongly to diverse U.S. communities.**

# KEY FINDINGS

## GENERAL FINDINGS ABOUT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DISINFORMATION AFFECTING U.S. ETHNIC AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEDIA

- 1. Linguistic “information cocoons” fuel the spread of disinformation:** Linguistic echo chambers can drive political disinformation across messaging platforms and closed online groups that are widely used among minority, monolingual communities. Apps and platforms such as WhatsApp, WeChat, and Facebook host linguistically isolated information environments where politically-charged rumors and false claims — especially those related to immigration, public health and natural disasters — spread without effective moderation, fact-checking or interrogation, creating distinct ‘epistemic silos’<sup>2</sup> which leave many audiences exposed. A journalist with the Chinese language outlet [Phoenix North America Chinese Channel](#) (PNACC) called these narrow linguistic echo chambers “information cocoons,” and noted that these groups are often led by “micro-influencers” — trusted individuals who promote “a very specific, hyper-partisan, or biased position” within the community. They are also exploited by scam artists and are vulnerable to hoaxes. The persistence of these echo chambers reflects both the systemic failures of Big Tech platforms, and a broader lack of culturally responsive interventions from mainstream media and the platforms.
- 2. Truth as a casualty of Trumpism:** U.S. President Donald Trump was the dominant source and spreader of disinformation in our content analysis, indicating his central role in disseminating false information covered by diverse ethnic and Indigenous news outlets. There is a correlation between the rise of Trumpism on one hand and the loss of trust in journalists as ‘watchdogs’/‘truth seekers’ on the other, resulting in a surge in disinformation and conspiracy theories, including those directed at the journalists and the communities they serve. According to some of our interviewees, President Trump has systematically dismantled the credibility of journalism as a profession by targeting journalists and spreading disinformation. By contrast, some journalists at Chinese-language and Spanish-language Latino media outlets actively avoided discussion of political disinformation and were cautious about discussing Trump in their coverage.
- 3. The disinformation-racism nexus:** Disinformation is often embedded in stereotypical depictions and racist narratives pushed by political actors (e.g., the disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants seeded and amplified by Republican candidates during the 2024 election campaign) and ‘viralized’ by social media, while being repeated uncritically or reinforced by some in the mainstream press. Journalists across the ethnic and Indigenous media outlets studied highlighted how disinformation frequently exploits pre-existing biases, amplifying harmful stereotypes.
- 4. Exposure to disinformation tied to immigration issues:** Our analysis of 45 outlets’ Facebook posts suggests that ethnic and Indigenous audiences are frequently subjected to politically charged disinformation at the intersection of racism and immigration issues. Many of these disinformation narratives are seeded by American far-right political actors. While ethnic and Indigenous news outlets

<sup>2</sup> We use this term to refer to an information environment in which people are repeatedly exposed to a narrow range of sources or perspectives, limiting their ability to encounter opposing viewpoints or factual corrections. Epistemic silos are often shaped by language barriers, cultural context, and platform design.

have employed various reporting strategies to effectively debunk such narratives, some — most notably one of the Chinese-language outlets in our dataset — were more evasive in their coverage.

5. **Political disinformation as a trigger for violence against journalists:** The Haitian Times and its journalists were targeted with disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, eating their neighbors' pets. This racist lie, which was seeded and fuelled by the Trump campaign during the 2024 election, led to physical threats associated with 'doxxing'<sup>3</sup> and 'swatting'<sup>4</sup> episodes.
6. **Omissions as features of disinformation:** Racist and xenophobic disinformation is not just about repetition of false and misleading tropes. The omission of key context can further the misrepresentation of ethnic and Indigenous communities. For example, journalists at [ICT](#) described this as a **persistent pattern of misinformation by omission of Native American<sup>5</sup> voices, amplified by a lack of interest and insights into Indigenous life and issues beyond moments of tragedy**. Such narratives, often perpetuated by mainstream media, contribute to the broader erasure of underrepresented communities and fuel mistrust in public interest discourse. Disinformation threats affecting diverse communities can also manifest through under-coverage, euphemisms, and delayed amplification of the facts.
7. **The prevalence of scams among ethnic and Indigenous audiences:** Monolingual communities are frequently targeted by scams and localized falsehoods, in addition to political disinformation. These falsehoods are often hyper-local and rely on community-specific context. Therefore, they require similarly tailored, culturally-sensitive, hyper-local newsroom responses that differ from traditional fact checking methods. Journalists from [Telemundo Yuma](#) and [Telemundo Las Vegas](#) told us that they have implemented special projects to address this, including '[Responde](#)', a consumer investigative unit which covers viral scams.
8. **Disinformation seeps into the Chinese-language press:** While our selected Chinese-language news outlets did not publish articles that amounted to overt disinformation, in some cases sentences were inserted into a news article to repeat a false claim, making the embedded disinformation look naturally authentic. Similarly, while news articles on the websites of major Chinese-language outlets did not contain much disinformation, opinion articles and videos still contained some false information. There was also some evidence of self-censorship and propagandistic tendencies in favour of the Chinese State through the omission of details within elements of the Chinese-language press. For example, [Phoenix North America Chinese Channel](#) (PNACC) omitted reference to the inclusion of China in a [story](#) about a U.S. intelligence agency briefing on election interference which identified other foreign State actors, such as Russia.
9. **The weaponization of nostalgia as a disinformation tactic.** Nostalgia has been weaponized and politicized as a disinformation tactic by right-wing forces in the U.S., including the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement which swept President Trump into the White House for a second term. This tactic involves the deployment of racist and misogynistic narratives tied to widespread fears around unemployment, financial hardship, perceptions of safety, access to services and a sense of entitlement to the traditional status of white men. This trend was potently in evidence in the Trump campaign's demonization of Haitian immigrants in the weeks leading up to the 2024 election. According to Garry Pierre-Pierre, the founding publisher and editor of The Haitian Times, this strategy is about "defining the future by making America a white country, which it never was," with serious impacts on ethnic communities in the U.S., the outlets that serve them, and efforts to counter disinformation.

3 Doxxing is a form of technology facilitated violence that involves "publicly exposing someone's private information, such as their name, address, job, or other identifying information without their consent". See: <https://police.tufts.edu/safety/doxxing-and-social-media>

4 According to the Department of Homeland Security, swatting is a malicious act that can involve placing false emergency calls to emergency responders, often reporting a (false) severe, ongoing crisis at a specific location. The goal of swatting is to provoke a significant law enforcement response, creating chaos and potentially resulting in violence". See: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/25\\_0325\\_fps\\_swatting.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/25_0325_fps_swatting.pdf)

5 Note: In the U.S., the term "Native" is generally used to refer to First Nations or Indigenous people, so it is used interchangeably with those terms in this report.



10. **Compromised editorial independence as a disinformation risk:** Some ethnic media outlets — particularly those serving Chinese American audiences — share business and political interests with foreign governments and political and economic elites, which may be seen as threats to their editorial independence. For example, interviewees from the [Phoenix North America Chinese Channel](#) (PNACC) told us that the outlet is “actively involved” in organizing business trips and building networks among “high-status” Chinese businesspeople, including entrepreneurs visiting the U.S., occasionally taking on the function of a migration or travel agency. The strong intervention of the business department reflects a broad strategy to diversify revenue through non-editorial ventures, raising important questions about how commercial priorities may shape or compromise newsroom independence. By comparison, a subset of U.S. Spanish-language outlets amplified election-related conspiracy narratives and right-wing disinformation in 2024. These patterns appear driven by domestic political incentives and platform dynamics, as we found no evidence of structural ties to foreign governments.<sup>6</sup>
11. **In rural Indigenous communities, rumors can spread quickly, often fueled by fear or isolated incidents, until they’re widely accepted as fact.** Distorted stories can snowball into larger fears and prejudices, blurring the lines between fact, exaggeration, and harmful disinformation — both online and offline. These stories often involve false claims about issues like kidnapping or human trafficking, exploiting fears about dispossession and child removal associated with historic racist policies.

## FINDINGS ABOUT U.S. ETHNIC AND INDIGENOUS MEDIA OUTLETS’ EFFORTS TO COMBAT DISINFORMATION

1. **Notions of accurate reporting vs. counter narratives:** Two paradigms appear to coexist among the approaches to countering disinformation adopted by the outlets studied. First, interviewees emphasized fundamental journalistic values such as accuracy as tools for countering disinformation. Second, they highlighted their roles in challenging and correcting mainstream narratives about their audience groups, suggesting that misrepresentation or underrepresentation in mainstream news constitutes a form of disinformation.
2. **Waiting for a disinformation tipping point:** A qualitative content analysis of **549 articles across 45 outlets** found that most Chinese-language, Black, Indigenous, and Spanish-language media outlets did not specifically address disinformation until it directly affected or attacked their respective audiences, or when the disinformation touched on issues which they considered particularly relevant to their audiences.
3. **Pre-bunking and contextual explainers as inoculators:** Rather than reacting after false claims have gained traction, some outlets focused on surfacing nuanced explanations early in the news cycle to prevent disinformation from filling the informational void. For example, journalists at the [New York Amsterdam News](#) emphasized the importance of anticipating and countering disinformation through deep, contextual reporting — an approach often described as ‘prebunking’. This forward-thinking approach is applied to both hyperlocal and national stories, aiming to “bring the story home” — connecting complex topics to the lived experiences of their readers.
4. **Bothsidesism as a disinformation trap:** Ethnic and Indigenous newsrooms vary in their approaches and philosophies regarding the problematic and often misconstrued concept of journalistic ‘objectivity.’ While some outlets — such as [Telemundo Yuma](#) — emphasize traditional journalistic objectivity as key to building trust and resisting falsehoods, others, like the Black outlet [New York Amsterdam News](#), take a more critical stance, arguing that the pursuit of objectivity often leads mainstream outlets to engage in “bothsidesism,” which — inadvertently or otherwise — can effectively promote and entrench politically motivated disinformation. In practice, this means openly challenging false claims and confronting the political actors who espouse them. These differing approaches reflect how newsroom identity and audience expectations shape editorial responses to disinformation.

<sup>6</sup> In all cases, findings apply to the specific outlets studied here, not entire communities.

5. **A gap in Big Tech accountability journalism:** There was a lack of critical and investigative reporting scrutinizing the role of U.S.-based Big Tech actors like Meta, X and Google in the distribution and amplification of disinformation, including within ethnic and Indigenous communities. This is despite the fact that X owner Elon Musk, who has been [identified as a prominent spreader](#) of disinformation, appears in our analysis of disinformation-related content produced by the outlets studied. These outlets generally practiced preemptive and reactive rather than diagnostic approaches to counter-disinformation work, with an emphasis on responsive mechanisms such as fact-checking.
6. **Service journalism as a counter-disinformation tool:** Community-centric media outlets serving diaspora communities such as the [The Haitian Times](#) and local [Telemundo](#) channels adopt a ‘**service journalism**’ approach to earn trust and inoculate their communities against disinformation, with the goal of meeting the communities’ day-to-day informational needs as well as reporting on national issues affecting immigrant communities — both in the U.S. and in their respective motherlands.
7. **A preventive emphasis on immigration and democracy themes:** In our analysis of **549** news articles and **303** Facebook posts published by **45** selected ethnic and Indigenous publications, the overall topical distribution in Black-focused, Chinese American and Spanish-language news outlets reveals a dominant focus on democratic participation and immigration — issues which are often seized upon by disinformation purveyors hoping to restrict civic participation among communities of color. Immigration in particular is not only a key issue in isolation, but also in terms of how policy and identity are framed by the mainstream media.
8. **Strategic partnerships and outsourcing counter-disinformation work:** Limited resources frequently hinder these organizations’ ability to engage in independent counter-disinformation efforts. For example, many rely on translating and republishing syndicated content about disinformation from outlets like the Associated Press (AP). But some have found creative ways to supplement their efforts, such as forming cross-organizational partnerships — with universities, community organizations and non-profits — which serve as supplementary sources of credible information and fact-checking, particularly in areas such as immigration law or public health, which require expert-level subject knowledge. At the [New York Amsterdam News](#), for example, a partnership with Columbia University’s School of Public Health has bolstered the newsroom’s capacity to fact-check misinformation on health and social issues.
9. **Participatory journalism as an antidote to disinformation:** Newsrooms also pointed to collaborative approaches that encourage the co-production of knowledge with their communities. Outlets such as [ICT](#) highlighted their commitment to “meaningful collaboration,” which reflects a broader push within ethnic and Indigenous media to create journalism that is not only about communities, but produced with them — particularly when covering historically marginalized groups.
10. **Tailoring counter-disinformation content for the platforms their communities use:** Most outlets studied try to actively intervene in the disinformation crisis by enhancing their visibility on social media and messaging platforms, despite resourcing issues. They regularly tailor their content to the platforms most used by their audiences, such as WeChat, WhatsApp and Facebook. While this can increase reach and support engagement with audiences, it also demands extreme caution as these platforms are often the very channels where disinformation spreads most rapidly.
11. **Face-to-face counter-disinformation ‘combat’:** Community-facing events and public forums are often used as tools to combat disinformation and strengthen trust within historically neglected communities. Outlets like [The Haitian Times](#) and the [New York Amsterdam News](#) organize in-person events — such as forums on immigration, gun violence and annual labor breakfasts — to bring together residents, experts and journalists for shared dialogue. These gatherings serve both as information-sharing platforms and as spaces to counter disinformation narratives through direct community engagement and direct access to expertise.

12. **A more expansive conceptualization of disinformation:** The Chinese American, Black, Indigenous and Latino news outlets we studied demonstrated a more expansive conceptualization of disinformation. Their definitions also go beyond concepts of narrative capture or the diaspora community rumor mill to include the **commodification of disinformation** through financial scams targeting their communities.
13. **Adjusting the language and tone:** Many interviewees noted that editorial tone and accessibility are key to building trust and reaching audiences vulnerable to disinformation, alongside publishing in their audiences' first language. Spanish-language journalists such as Oswaldo Rivas of [Telemundo Yuma](#) said they adopt a conversational tone and localized focus in their reporting, in an effort to foster deeper audience engagement, particularly among older viewers and those with limited media literacy. This approach provides a familiar touch, which deepens the outlet's connection with its audience and local community, thereby helping to engender trust.
14. **Indigenous reporting literacy as a disinformation countermeasure:** Promoting media literacy and cultural awareness within and beyond journalism is a core part of some outlets' counter-disinformation mission. At [ICT](#), journalists regularly lead workshops and training sessions for mainstream media professionals on how to cover Indigenous communities accurately and responsibly. Promoting 'Indigenous reporting literacy' has become a central part of their mission — viewed not only as an educational effort but as a vital tool for countering disinformation about Native Americans and issues nationwide.
15. **Focusing on community service, rather than sensationalism:** Our content analysis revealed that the ethnic and Indigenous media outlets consistently focus on community-centered issues and practical information, as opposed to sensational or overly politicized coverage and topics. Coverage often focused on health disinformation, immigration-related falsehoods, voter suppression, and other subjects which are directly relevant to the daily lives of their readers. This "news you can use" approach positions each outlet as a trusted messenger within the community, helping audiences navigate disinformation being seeded by outside sources.
16. **Avoiding uncritical amplification of false claims:** On the whole, the ethnic and Indigenous media outlets studied exercised editorial caution when handling contested information and politically contentious narratives. When disinformation was reported on directly, content analysis shows that it was often accompanied by fact checks or other explicit refutations designed to minimize the threat of amplification.
17. **Bridging domestic and diasporic information ecosystems:** Ethnic media outlets are uniquely positioned to counter transnational disinformation which targets immigrant and diaspora communities. In response, newsrooms such as [The Haitian Times](#) have adopted culturally-specific reporting strategies designed to address these falsehoods, both domestically and abroad.
18. **Distance vs. embeddedness — the distinctive norms of the U.S. ethnic and Indigenous press:** The U.S. mainstream press has built its professional norms and authority around distancing itself from the audience and public as external observers, actively performing objectivity. By contrast, many alternative outlets serving Asian American, Black, Indigenous, Latino and other communities establish their credibility and informational authority by claiming an insider status. The journalism practices often center on intimacy and community-embeddedness, rather than objectivity or professional indifference.
19. **Distinctions between the priorities of the ethnic and Indigenous press serving migrant communities and U.S.-born minorities:** Media professionals serving U.S.-born Black and Indigenous communities focus on collective experiences of oppression and marginalization, often proactively addressing untold stories in political and social domains. By contrast, Latino, Black immigrant and Asian American-serving media professionals acknowledge that a significant portion of their audience maintain strong ties to their motherlands. These media outlets prioritize topics instrumental to immigrants' daily lives and cultural preservation. However, this focus on everyday life and culture sometimes results in a more passive approach to countering domestic political disinformation, with the notable exception of [The Haitian Times](#).



- 20. The high cost of audience trust limits effective counter-disinformation work:** Many journalists with ethnic and Indigenous media take pride in the high levels of trust they garner from their audiences, a trust rooted in their cultural, social, linguistic, and physical embeddedness within these communities. This trust positions them as potentially effective counter-disinformation actors. However, severe constraints in funding and labor resources often leave these newsrooms struggling to sustain even basic workflows. Consequently, counter-disinformation efforts are frequently regarded as a “luxury” they aspire to but cannot pursue without improved sustainability.

## FINDINGS ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION ON DISINFORMATION AND THE PRESS IN THE U.S.

- 1. Americans are overwhelmingly concerned about disinformation:** A large majority of U.S. adults (92%) express at least some concern about encountering false or misleading information, with 61% saying they are “extremely” or “very” concerned. This level of anxiety reflects the pervasive nature of false narratives, and underscores the urgent need for more visible and trusted counter-disinformation efforts across newsrooms — in both the mainstream media, and within Indigenous and ethnic media.
- 2. Trust in the press is being corroded but ethnic communities are less likely to distrust journalists:** In a climate of disinformation-laced attacks on the press, **only five percent** of American adults expressed strong trust in journalists, **while more than double that number** (12%) said they did not trust them at all. [Previous research](#)<sup>7</sup> has shown that this trust gap is particularly acute among minority communities historically underserved or misrepresented by legacy media. However, our survey revealed that **participants identifying as people of color (POC)<sup>8</sup> were less likely to ‘distrust’ the press, with 32% of POC participants expressing distrust in journalists, compared to 44% of white-identifying participants.** These findings align with the report’s emphasis on the unique role of ethnic and Indigenous media in repairing trust between the public and the press broadly.
- 3. 86% say they have seen or heard journalists being harassed or abused online, indicating the wide visibility and normalization of such attacks.** This reflects targeted political attacks on the press, which escalated during the 2024 election campaign, with minority and minoritized journalists being particularly vulnerable. This finding reinforces our call for stronger Big Tech accountability, improved newsroom safety protocols, and public education around the vital role of critical independent journalism in a liberal democracy which purportedly values press freedom.
- 4. Three-quarters of Americans view political attacks on journalists as a threat to media freedom, but nearly one quarter do not see it as a major threat.** Our results show that **44%** consider such attacks a *major threat*, while an additional **31%** see them as a *threat*. This may point to growing awareness of how disinformation and coordinated harassment campaigns are used to undermine journalists’ credibility and intimidate them into silence — particularly those reporting on contested political and social issues. **However, an alarming minority of Americans — nearly one quarter (23%) — did not regard political attacks on journalists or news organisations as a major threat to media freedom.**
- 5. The majority values the independence of the press but, problematically, a notable minority think that the role of the news media should be to support the government:** While most Americans (81%) believe the news media should neither support nor oppose the government, **16%** said the news media should support the government. This could reflect an understanding of the role of the press as counter to the U.S. tradition of the news media’s freedom from government influence.

<sup>7</sup> See also [2024 research](#) showing that U.S. immigrant audiences often perceive mainstream news as “credible” but “not for me.”

<sup>8</sup> Our survey did not ask specifically about trust in ethnic and Indigenous media outlets but rather focused on the attitudes of Americans towards the mainstream press. However, we have disaggregated the data according to participants’ ethnic identities.

# 1. Research Context

The study was led by ICFJ Research in collaboration with academics from Arizona State University (ASU), the University of Maryland (UMD), City St George's, University of London. The researchers contributed within their distinct areas of expertise to produce a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and multi-method study.

## 1.1. METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

We employed a mixed-methods approach to capture the complex dynamics of disinformation and counter-disinformation work by the ethnic and Indigenous press in the United States, combining qualitative and quantitative research across multiple data sources.

Our research approach involved:

- Case studies of five select Black, Chinese American, Indigenous and Latino media outlets drawing on ethnographic research conducted through **23** in-depth interviews and observational field visits;
- In-depth interviews with **19** other journalists representing **16** additional ethnic outlets to provide context for our case study analyses;
- Content analysis of ethnic and Indigenous media coverage assessing approximately **10,000** news stories;
- Analysis of **303** Facebook posts from **45** ethnic and Indigenous media outlets;
- A nationally representative survey of **1,020** adult Americans focused on their attitudes to disinformation and the role of the news media in a democracy;
- Landscape mapping and academic literature review pertaining to the role of the ethnic and Indigenous press in the wider U.S. media environment.

## 1.2. DEFINITIONS

For this study, we have adopted the definitions and theoretical frameworks identified in the 2020 study [\*Balancing Act: Countering Digital Disinformation While Respecting Freedom of Expression\*](#)<sup>9</sup> which was jointly published by the UN Broadband Commission and UNESCO. Instead of differentiating between disinformation, misinformation and other terms used to describe falsehoods, the term disinformation is used to broadly refer to content that is false and misleading with potentially damaging impacts — for example, on the health and safety of individuals and the functionality of democracy. As the study noted:

*Such harm may be, for example, damage to democracy, health, minority and disadvantaged communities, climate challenges, and freedom of expression. Here, therefore, the operational approach to what constitutes disinformation (and hence responses to the phenomenon) are the characteristics of falsity and potentially negative impact on targets, rather than the intentionality, awareness or behaviours of its producers(s) or distributor(s).*

<sup>9</sup> Co-authored by Julie Posetti, lead editor and co-author of this report.

## 1.3. CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS

The ethnic and Indigenous media landscape in the U.S. is large and multi-faceted. Our landscape assessment included the review of existing databases, available either publicly or upon request, including the [News Deserts](#) and [Ghost Newspaper](#) databases from the Center for Innovation and Sustainability in Local Media (CISLM) at UNC-Chapel Hill, [State of Local News 2022](#) (from the Local News Initiative at Northwestern University), the CUNY Center for Community's [Media & Maps](#) directories, the [Indigenous Journalists Association](#)'s list of tribal newspapers, Wikipedia's list of Spanish-language newspapers in the U.S., the consultation with [APIAVote](#) to reference their extensive list of Asian media outlets, and our own online research.

This exercise identified more than **1,000** outlets across the four groups studied: Asian American, Black, Indigenous, and Latino. Given the large number, we selectively constructed our sample of ethnic and Indigenous media outlets by the following inclusion criteria: (1) having an active website and maintaining a public Facebook page; (2) having at least a few thousand Facebook followers (to ensure existence of an established audience base); and (3) having recent news coverage accessible through project-related keyword searches (e.g., "disinformation") on their websites.

These criteria ensured that selected outlets were not only operationally active but also engaging with topics relevant to our study. Before deciding to approach an outlet for interviews or site visits, we performed comprehensive website audits of each selected outlet, by examining the outlet's background, the scope and structure of their news sections, and the presence of content related to, or containing, disinformation.

Through this process we identified five outlets for in-depth study. These outlets are: [Telemundo Yuma](#), the [Phoenix North America Chinese Channel](#) (PNACC), [ICT](#), [The Haitian Times](#) and the [New York Amsterdam News](#). These outlets were selected due not only to their visibility within their communities, but also their significance in terms of geographical location, transnational media ties, rich histories, effective counter-disinformation work amid political conflict, first-hand experiences with violence against journalists, and breadth of audience reach. Each outlet also represents a distinct intersection of ethnic community service and engagement with disinformation, making them particularly valuable to our project.

Additionally, we interviewed a further **19** journalists representing **16** other ethnic and Indigenous media outlets to provide broader context for our in-depth case studies. In total, we interviewed **42** journalists — **12** from Black media; **13** from Asian American outlets; **nine** from Spanish-language Latino media; **six** from Indigenous media and **two** from pan-ethnic serving media.

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes from interviewees associated with these outlets are drawn from interviews conducted for this study.

## 1.4. ABOUT OUR FIVE CASE STUDY OUTLETS

### **ICT : From Stereotypes to Sovereignty – Centering Native American Voices**

As a prominent and influential pan-tribal media outlet, ICT (formerly known as Indian Country Today) fulfills a crucial role in delivering content tailored to the specific interests, concerns and perspectives of Native American and other Indigenous populations, as [research](#) has shown. ICT is the leading pan-tribal news service in the U.S. that transcends specific tribal identities to serve Indigenous communities nationwide, with multiple local branches stationed across various regions.



[ICT was founded in 1981](#) as the Lakota Times by Oglala Lakota journalist Tim Giago with the aim of providing dedicated news sources for Native American communities. Over the past four decades, the outlet has expanded and transformed, reflecting the evolving needs and priorities of its Indigenous readership. In 1992, the publication adopted its former name, Indian Country Today, [signaling its ambition](#) to serve as a comprehensive news platform for all Native American communities across the United States. Today, ICT is headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, with satellite bureaus in Washington, D.C., Anchorage, Alaska, and Missoula, Montana, while also employing remote-working journalists for wider regional representation.

ICT gained widespread recognition for its in-depth coverage of the [Dakota Access Pipeline protests](#), offering nuanced reporting on the complex issues involved. [According to its 2024](#) annual impact report, ICT reaches



over 300,000 people per month across broadcast, digital and social platforms, and radio stations. Most are young and/or women, while over half of daily readership comes via social media.

ICT's significant proportion of female readers [suggests](#) that the outlet is successfully engaging with Indigenous women, who often play central roles in their communities as leaders, caregivers, and decision-makers. ICT effectively leverages social media to share stories, engage audiences, and foster community — establishing itself as a dynamic and interactive news source for Native readers. This approach [aligns](#) with the growing trend of younger audiences, particularly those from underrepresented communities, relying on social media as a primary source of news and commentary.

In 2011, the outlet launched its online multimedia network, significantly expanding its reach and capabilities. However, the transition to a digital platform was not without challenges. Financial pressures forced ICT to suspend operations temporarily in 2017. Recognizing the outlet's importance to Indigenous communities, the Oneida Indian Nation donated ICT to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in October 2017, ensuring its survival. Under the stewardship of NCAI and editor Mark Trahant's leadership, ICT underwent a [revitalization](#), resuming regular publication in February 2018. Trahant, a veteran journalist and former president of the Native American Journalists Association, brought renewed energy and vision to the outlet, expanding its staff and coverage to better serve the diverse needs of Indigenous communities.

In 2022, ICT's total revenue for the year was \$4,009,134, with \$3,223,285 coming from gifts, grants, and other financial contributions. In addition to philanthropic support, ICT also generates revenue through sponsorships, advertising and other income streams.

Most staff at ICT work remotely, but the team occasionally convenes for collaborative efforts or special events. At the Washington, D.C. bureau, only two journalists — the executive editor and political correspondent — are based on site. The D.C. team operates just two blocks from the White House, having relocated from a space rented from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 2021. This move coincided with ICT News' organizational transition to be part of IndiJ Public Media in [2021](#). The current bureau shares space with Cronkite News (Arizona PBS).<sup>10</sup>

### Countering disinformation by reinforcing rights, democratic participation and public health

ICT has played a central role in addressing social and political issues affecting Native communities, including Indigenous rights, the COVID-19 pandemic, and voter suppression. During the pandemic, for example, the outlet actively countered disinformation campaigns that sought to undermine public trust in vaccines and health measures.



FIGURE 1: National Native Media Awards from NAJA and a sticker in the ICT newsroom from the Native Vote campaign, a voter participation initiative from the National Congress of American Indians.



FIGURE 2: An ICT newsroom department, with a map of where American Indians and Alaska Natives live in the United States according to the 2000 U.S. Census, which — [for the first time in the nation's history](#) — allowed citizens to identify with more than one racial category.

<sup>10</sup> Arizona PBS is housed at ASU, an institutional partner associated with this study. It is described as "one of the largest media organizations operated by a university in the world": <https://cronkite.asu.edu/experiences/arizona-pbs/>.

## New York Amsterdam News: Local Trust, Historical Depth, and Investigative Journalism as Counter-Disinformation Tools

The New York Amsterdam News (AmNews) is one of the oldest and most influential Black-owned and Black-operated newspapers in the United States. Its identity is expanded as “The New Black View” serving the diverse, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic communities of New York and beyond. The AmNews reached its peak in the 1940s, being a strong advocate for the desegregation of the U.S. military during World War II, and for its articles about the Harlem Renaissance.

According to the outlet’s retelling of its history, the AmNews was [founded](#) in 1909 by James H. Anderson with \$10, six sheets of paper and two pencils. Named after the Manhattan neighborhood where Anderson lived, Amsterdam Heights, the paper has a rich history of advocating for equality and racial justice. Throughout its more than 115 years, the AmNews has been at the forefront of major civil rights battles, covering the Jim Crow era, the Civil Rights Movement, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the Freedom Riders. In the 1920s, the paper became well-known locally for championing the unionization of Black laborers in Harlem. Its slogan, “[Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work](#)” served as a powerful rallying call, inspiring boycotts against segregated businesses that refused to employ Black workers.

Like other publications catering primarily to Black audiences, the AmNews practiced “civic” or “[movement](#)” journalism, emphasizing the advancement of Black community interests. These journalists often employed narrative styles with distinct editorial viewpoints, focusing on exposing civil rights violations against Black communities. This approach drew inspiration from the Black press tradition, beginning with [Freedom’s Journal](#) in 1827, which was founded by abolitionists John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish to counter racist misrepresentation, stereotypes, and unfounded claims about the Black community. Notably, the AmNews was one of the first media outlets to platform Malcolm X, publishing his “God’s Angry Men” column from 1957.

The audience profile of the AmNews is [predominantly](#) African American/Black (98%), with 60% female and 40% male readers. The median reader’s age for the print edition is 55, while the digital audience on the website and social media skews slightly younger.

### Open opposition to political fakery

The AmNews has also committed itself to investigating and debunking disinformation targeting Black audiences. While other outlets highlight objectivity and non-partisanship as counter-misinformation principles, the AmNews has openly opposed Trump, stating in an [editorial](#):

*The photo of Trump posing gladly with six African Americans circulated on social media platforms is a good example of deepfake. ...There are few things we can be certain of in these increasingly problematic times, but we disbelieve Trump at our peril, and that, my friends, is not deepfake.*

But the AmNews’ counter-disinformation efforts go beyond the political realm, as exemplified by their [Blacklight](#) investigative unit, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic in February, 2022. This unit [also](#) focuses on combating health disinformation, in collaboration with Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, particularly serving Black and Brown communities in the New York region and beyond.



FIGURE 3: The New York Amsterdam News building, and a special commemorative print issue marking the death of Nelson Mandela, South African’s first president and renowned anti-apartheid activist.



FIGURE 4: Awards from the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and Editor & Publisher (E&P) among others in the AmNews newsroom.



## The Haitian Times: Haitians as Perpetual Disinformation Targets – From Causing AIDS to Eating Cats and Dogs

*This is new territory for us...We fled fascism in Haiti and now in the United States we're facing some of the tactics that we fled from.*

*- Founder Garry Pierre-Pierre, quoted in the Washington Post in 2024.*

The Haitian Times was founded in 1999 by Haitian American journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning former New York Times reporter Garry Pierre-Pierre. Originally published as a weekly print newspaper, it is now a daily, digital-only publication produced predominantly for the Haitian diaspora in the U.S., providing coverage on Haiti, Haitian Americans and internationally-located Haitian communities.

The Haitian Times is the leading U.S. English-language news source on Haitian affairs, garnering approximately 15,000 website visitors daily. It is headquartered in Brooklyn, New York and operates with a small team of 20 staff members and freelancers, most of whom are based in the U.S., with six located in Haiti. The Haitian Times transitioned to a digital-only format after facing financial challenges due to the recession in the 2000s, which resulted in the shuttering of its print operations in 2012. Since then, it has relied on advertising, donations and philanthropic grants for its survival.

The outlet, which Pierre-Pierre [has described](#) as a “...unicorn — a community and local ethnic publication that has almost a mainstream bent about it,” saw marked growth in its audience and revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in 2021, when it provided extensive coverage of the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse.

The Haitian Times’ editorial principles include: reporting facts, countering disinformation, identifying currents from Haiti’s historical legacy and fostering community engagement. Today, The Haitian Times is looking to [incorporate AI](#) in its operations to meet the changing needs of the new generation of the diaspora.

THE  
**HAITIAN TIMES**  
BRIDGING THE GAP



FIGURE 5: Members of The Haitian Times team (from left to right: Vania André, Garry Pierre-Pierre and Macollvie J. Neel) during a listening tour of the Haitian community in Atlanta, Georgia, led by Dr. Ronald Cetoute, president of the Georgia Haitian American Chamber of Commerce, in October 2023. Photo by Dieu-Nalio Chéry.

### False Narratives, Real Harm

During the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, Haitian immigrants in the U.S. were falsely labeled as ‘disease carriers.’ They were not allowed to donate blood and were fired from their jobs without cause. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) further [stigmatized](#) the community when they falsely claimed that “[Homosexuals, Heroin users, Hemophiliacs, and Haitians](#)” — especially those who had just arrived in America — were the greatest risk factors for spreading the disease.

This stigma reverberated in 2023 and 2024, when despite being granted legal status tied to local employment and invited into targeted communities, Haitian immigrants were accused of ‘flooding’ certain states and placing pressure on social services. As racist hate speech spread and disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants swirled, many Haitian residents were physically attacked and The Haitian Times doubled down on its coverage of the community. When a small group of white supremacists led an anti-Haitian immigration march in downtown Springfield, Ohio, The Haitian Times [investigated and supported the community’s cross-cultural education efforts](#).

Extending the decades-long discrimination against Haitians in the U.S., right-wing activists [spread a xenophobic rumor](#) on X that Haitian immigrants were stealing and eating family pets in Ohio. These lies were [amplified](#) by then-Vice Presidential candidate JD Vance, who shared several viral memes and AI-generated images supporting the rumor on social media. Days later, President Donald Trump heaped fuel on the fire by [repeating these false allegations](#) during a presidential election debate, and refusing to distance himself from the disinformation narratives, [even when confronted by factual reporting that debunked it](#).



In response, The Haitian Times [reported](#) that Haitian Americans and supporters were leading a rally to demand a formal apology following President Trump's false allegations, demanding protection against [hate speech and discrimination](#).

The 'cats and dogs' fiasco not only reflects [the rise of](#) openly anti-Black and anti-immigrant sentiment among right-wing populist American political leaders, but also reminds Haitians of the horrifying fascism that they fled from. As Pierre-Pierre told us: "It's a moment where The Haitian Times can really play a leading role in fighting disinformation and misinformation because it has deadly consequences... [it] can mean life and death and that is deadly serious." The solution for this independent outlet is to connect with its audiences and do deeper reporting, in part as an example for mainstream media to follow:

*We should be able to frame stories and continue the rigorous reporting that we do and continue to build in the trust that we see... we want to be sort of like what the New York Times is for the (TV) networks... a lot of us got to lead the debate that's happening. And even in the... WhatsApp groups... The Haitian Times stories are what's driving the conversation.*

## **Telemundo Yuma: From National Broadcast Powerhouse to Local Trusted Voice**

Telemundo, the second-largest Spanish-language television network in the U.S., operates under NBCUniversal and [averages 1.2 million Latino viewers](#) during prime time across the country. With a footprint of over two dozen stations and affiliates, Telemundo is known for its mix of U.S.-produced and Latin American-imported content, spanning news, telenovelas, and live sports. Originally founded in 1954 as WKAQ-TV Channel 2 in Puerto Rico, Telemundo established a national presence when Noticiero Telemundo began airing a nightly national newscast in 1987. Since then, Telemundo has steadily grown to rival Univision (the most prominent Spanish-language Latino outlet in the US), with stronger appeal among younger viewers and Caribbean-Latino communities.

Unlike Univision, which heavily relies on programming from Mexico's main broadcaster Televisa, Telemundo focuses on locally-produced content while also importing popular shows from Latin America and Spain. This approach allows Telemundo to offer a diverse programming lineup tailored to the varied interests and tastes of Latino communities nationwide. In 2001, NBCUniversal (NBCU) [acquired Telemundo for \\$2.7 billion](#), marking a significant milestone in its history.

The network's commitment to high-quality programming was highlighted by landmark broadcasts such as the Spanish-language coverage of the Olympic Games from Athens in 2004 and Beijing in 2008, demonstrating its capability to deliver major global events to Spanish-speaking audiences in the U.S. Additionally, partnerships with entities like Yahoo and NBCU enhanced Telemundo's digital presence and expanded its multimedia offerings, solidifying its position as a leading provider of Spanish-language content in the American media landscape. Telemundo has strong appeal among younger viewers, suggesting that it has further potential to broaden its reach. In general, the expansion of Spanish-language media in the United States is set to continue, driven by a projected increase in the Latino population to [132.8 million by 2050](#). Spanish-language television has become indispensable for advertisers, as evidenced by the emergence of new networks such as Azteca América and La Mega.<sup>11</sup> Among these, Telemundo signifies its identity as a national network.



FIGURE 6: The Telemundo Yuma newsroom: a brand known for its mix of U.S.-produced and Latin American-imported content, spanning news, telenovelas, and live sports.



FIGURE 7: Framed pictures of Telemundo's broadcast journalists in the newsroom. They prioritize building local trust with their audiences as one of the underpinning principles of their journalistic practice.

<sup>11</sup> Conservative outlets pushing back against perceived liberal biases in the Latino press.

## Working to counteract the targeting of Latino communities by disinformation agents

In the context of the 2024 U.S. election, disinformation targeting Latinos became prevalent across social media platforms such as [YouTube](#), TikTok, X and Facebook. These disinformation narratives range from false or misleading claims about political figures to immigration issues, exploiting the diverse concerns of Latino communities. In response to rising concerns about disinformation, Telemundo launched initiatives like [T Verifica](#), a WhatsApp-based fact-checking service of Noticias Telemundo Digital, launched in September 2020 in collaboration with [PolitiFact](#). The network also partnered with [MediaWise](#)<sup>12</sup> to provide digital literacy programs in Spanish.

Nevertheless, local stations in the Telemundo network operate somewhat independently from nationwide initiatives, resulting in highly community-oriented approaches to countering disinformation. For example, journalists across various local Telemundo stations view disinformation not only as false narratives circulating nationwide but also as financial scams that specifically target their communities. Several Telemundo journalists interviewed, including those from Telemundo Las Vegas, pointed to 'Responde,' a consumer investigative unit run by local Telemundo branches, as a key counter-disinformation initiative. As Usiel Teran-Holugin of Telemundo Las Vegas explained: "There are a lot of scammers out there that target Latinos. They target minorities because sometimes they're ignorant about certain things. So we have a segment where people call us and tell us, 'Hey, this situation happened to me where I was scammed thousands of dollars.'" Similarly, Richard Reyes of Telemundo Las Vegas said: 'Telemundo Responde' is a consumer investigative unit that Telemundo Las Vegas participates in, and there's a local number that viewers call and submit, you know, in terms of disputes they may have with businesses, or reports of possibly getting scammed."

Additionally, Telemundo journalists prioritize building local trust with their audiences as one of the underpinning principles of their journalistic practice. This commitment is evident in our in-depth case study (see the ethnographic analysis in section 4.1 below) of Telemundo Yuma, part of the network of Telemundo stations operating across the state of Arizona.

## The Phoenix North America Chinese Channel (PNACC): From Diasporic Journalism to Short-Form Viral Videos

PNACC is a major U.S. branch of the Phoenix Television network, a Hong Kong-based media conglomerate that has carved out a unique position in the global Chinese American media landscape. Catering to [the Chinese diaspora](#) in North America, the channel offers a blend of news, entertainment, and cultural programming designed to bridge the gap between Chinese communities abroad and their homeland, supporting community integration, and preserving heritage.

Launched on January 1, 2001, PNACC was the first Chinese-language television channel available across North America, aiming to connect Chinese American diaspora communities with news, culture, and public affairs content from both the U.S. and greater China. The channel offers a diverse mix of programming — ranging from political commentary and international news to lifestyle and cultural features — designed to help its audience maintain ties to their heritage while engaging with American culture. Signature shows such as Phoenix North America News and Experience America focus on U.S.-China relations and Chinese American experiences. PNACC gained prominence in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, when Phoenix Television broadcast 24-hour live coverage from the scene. That pivotal moment elevated the network's profile globally and earned it widespread recognition among Chinese-speaking audiences abroad.

Headquartered in both Shenzhen and Hong Kong, Phoenix Television maintains foreign bureaus in Beijing and Shanghai. Although Phoenix Television describes itself as a Hong Kong-based broadcaster, it is majority-owned by State-affiliated entities in mainland China. Its founder, [Liu Changle](#), a former journalist and army officer, has long-standing connections to Chinese government institutions.

Under the leadership of Xu Wei, PNACC's Chief Operating Officer, the channel has navigated major transitions in the media landscape — shifting from traditional satellite broadcasting to a hybrid model that includes digital and social media platforms such as WeChat, YouTube and Facebook. This pivot to digital allowed PNACC to engage a broader, younger and more tech-savvy audience. By 2018, its WeChat account had attracted over



<sup>12</sup> A Poynter Institute initiative predominantly funded by Big Tech.

500,000 followers, although the outlet, like many others, has struggled to convert online engagement into sustainable revenue due to the fragmented nature of digital advertising.

However, this shift necessitated changes in its revenue model. In 2015, PNACC reported a 30% decrease in traditional advertising revenue as advertisers shifted spending toward digital platforms. By contrast, digital advertising revenue [saw](#) only a modest increase of 10%, reflecting the difficulty of monetizing online content at the same level as traditional media.

### A focus on anti-Asian and health disinformation

As an influential ethnic media outlet, PNACC has also responded to the growing challenges posed by disinformation — particularly during moments of crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the station aired special programming aimed at debunking common myths about the virus and addressing anti-Asian narratives. Similarly, during the 2020 U.S. presidential election, PNACC countered disinformation targeting Chinese-speaking voters by providing fact-based reporting and launching a campaign to raise awareness around ‘fake news’ detection.

Despite its efforts, the channel continues to grapple with disinformation spreading on platforms like WeChat, Facebook, and YouTube, where false information spreads quickly and often targets vulnerable communities. Financial limitations further complicate its ability to invest in large-scale fact-checking or counter-disinformation strategies.



FIGURE 8: Inside the PNACC newsroom. The channel has navigated major transitions in the media landscape — shifting from traditional satellite broadcasting to a hybrid model that includes digital and social media platforms such as WeChat, YouTube, and Facebook.

## 1.5. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE OUTLETS' NEWS STORIES AND FACEBOOK POSTS

We analyzed coverage of disinformation in the 2024 election period and its immediate aftermath (from mid-August 2024 to the day before Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025) published by five specific ethnic and Indigenous media outlets. In total, we manually analyzed **200 articles** and videos published by ICT (n. 38), The Haitian Times (n. 18), New York Amsterdam News (n. 54), Phoenix North America Chinese Channel (n. 70), and Telemundo Yuma (n. 20).

This analysis augmented the broader look at trends across ethnic and Indigenous media groups discussed below in order to analyze how individual outlets navigated disinformation. We reviewed news content posted on the outlets' websites, using keywords including 'disinformation,' 'misinformation,' 'conspiracy,' 'elections,' 'Trump,' or 'Harris,' in English, Chinese, and Spanish to identify relevant stories. We also searched for the terms 'Haitians' and 'cats and dogs' to see if outlets covered one of the most egregious false statements circulated during the 2024 election campaign (i.e., the lie that Haitian immigrants in Ohio were stealing and eating neighborhood pets). Additionally, we employed snowball sampling, following hyperlinks to other stories within the time period if they appeared to address disinformation. For the Chinese American media, we were able to leverage previous studies of online disinformation to augment our news content analysis.

To avoid conflating coverage of disinformation (such as investigations, fact-checks, debunks, etc.) with the uncritical repetition and dissemination of disinformation, we identify *coverage* as reporting related to a false claim with corrective context, and *dissemination* as the distribution or repetition of a false claim without correction or countervailing context.

### Expanding our content analysis sample

To enhance the representational diversity across racial and ethnic groups, as well as geographic distribution, we expanded the sample of outlets subjected to qualitative content analysis. Given population distribution, Chinese language media were the focus within the Asian American category, including ChineseinLA, Sing

Tao Daily, and the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times.<sup>13</sup> After excluding some of the outlets that failed to show demonstrable engagement on disinformation and non-Chinese ethnic Asian American media, the expanded outlet selection comprised a sample of **45 outlets**, spanning the East to West Coasts. This included **13** Black-serving outlets, **10** Spanish-language outlets, **12** Chinese American-serving outlets, and **10** Indigenous outlets (See Figure 9 for publication titles). Due to the limited number of Indigenous-serving outlets with an active digital presence, the resulting sample of Indigenous outlets that met the criteria was exhaustive.

	Outlet name	Ethnicity	Location
1	<a href="#">Los Angeles Sentinel</a>	Black	CA
2	<a href="#">LA Focus Newspaper</a>	Black	CA
3	<a href="#">Black Voice News</a>	Black	CA
4	<a href="#">The Grio</a>	Black	CA
5	<a href="#">Atlanta Black Star</a>	Black	GA
6	<a href="#">AFRO American Newspapers</a>	Black	MD
7	<a href="#">NewsOne</a>	Black	DC
8	<a href="#">Black News</a>	Black	OH
9	<a href="#">NY Amsterdam News</a>	Black	NY
10	<a href="#">The Chicago Defender</a>	Black	Chicago
11	<a href="#">The Root</a>	Black	NY
12	<a href="#">The Washington Informer</a>	Black	DC
13	<a href="#">The Haitian Times</a>	Black	NY
1	<a href="#">Univision</a>	Latino	NY(headquarter)
2	<a href="#">Telemundo AZ</a>	Latino	AZ
3	<a href="#">La Opinión</a>	Latino	CA
4	<a href="#">El Diario La Prensa</a>	Latino	NY, CA
5	<a href="#">El Nuevo Herald</a>	Latino	FL
6	<a href="#">Diario Las Américas Newspaper</a>	Latino	VA
7	<a href="#">Latino News</a>	Latino	AL
8	<a href="#">El Tiempo Latino</a>	Latino	D.C.
9	<a href="#">Enlace Latino NC</a>	Latino	NC
10	<a href="#">Te Lo Cuento News</a>	Latino	MO
1	<a href="#">ChineseinLA</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	NY
2	<a href="#">Sing Tao Daily</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	CA
3	<a href="#">World Journal</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	NY,CA
4	<a href="#">SinoVision</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	NY
5	<a href="#">NextShark</a>	AAP1 -PanAsia including Chinese	CA
6	<a href="#">Phoenix North America Chinese Channel</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	CA
7	<a href="#">Las Vegas Chinese Daily</a>	AAP1 -Chinese	LV
8	<a href="#">Mochi Magazine</a>	AAP1 -Pan Asian american women	WA

<sup>13</sup> Considering its prominence in Chinese-speaking communities, The Epoch Times was included in this study to reflect the trends of disinformation coverage in Chinese ethnic media and the content reaching these communities during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The Chinese version of The Epoch Times and its affiliated media outlets are widely read in Chinese-speaking communities, and is also distributed for free in many Asian markets. However, The Epoch Times is also known for being a [megaphone](#) for some extreme right-wing stories and disinformation, including about the [COVID-19 virus](#).



9	<a href="#">Guruin</a>	AAPI - Chinese	CA
10	<a href="#">EpochTimes</a> (Chinese)	AAPI - Chinese	NY
11	<a href="#">China Tribune</a> (美中報導)	AAPI - Chinese	Atlanta
12	<a href="#">Creaders.net</a> (萬維讀者網)	AAPI - Chinese	Vancouver
1	<a href="#">Char-Koosta News</a>	Indigenous	MT
2	<a href="#">ICT</a>	Indigenous	AZ
3	<a href="#">High Country News</a>	Indigenous	CO
4	<a href="#">Native Times</a>	Indigenous	OK
5	<a href="#">Indianz</a>	Indigenous	WA
6	<a href="#">National Native News</a>	Indigenous	NM
7	<a href="#">Native America Calling</a>	Indigenous	NM
8	<a href="#">News from Native California</a>	Indigenous	CA
9	<a href="#">Cherokee Phoenix</a>	Indigenous	OK
10	<a href="#">Navajo Times</a>	Indigenous	AZ

FIGURE 9: Researchers used qualitative content analysis to evaluate content across 45 media outlets.

The research team, which included native Spanish and Chinese speakers, used textual analysis to evaluate content across the 45 media to find patterns and themes in the text. Qualitative context-sensitive methods in assessing disinformation exposure can surface important information about how disinformation is presented to specific audiences. Rather than measuring harm by volume alone, this approach captures how editorial framing, narrative omissions and language access collectively shape public understanding.

While it is possible to deploy this technique to examine a range of formats — including video — that transmit important political messages, this project primarily analyzed text as it appeared on the websites of the news outlets. The researchers read widely across the outlets under review, while also employing their background knowledge and pre-existing familiarity with ethnic and Indigenous media. In the Chinese media outlets, the researchers also watched videos and looked at transcripts to get a broader sense of the content and its context.

For three of the ethnic and Indigenous media groups, we examined the time period from mid-August 2024 up to President Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025. For the Spanish-language Latino media, we extended the lens and looked at coverage from January 1, 2024, through May 2025 due to specific threats against the Latino community instigated by the Trump Administration. We also considered how the Spanish-language fact-checking website [Factchequeado](#) reported on the role of social media platforms in spreading disinformation.

Additionally, we analyzed Facebook posts published by these outlets to glean general insights into what types of disinformation-related news stories ethnic media outlets chose to disseminate via their Facebook pages. The temporal focus was on the 2024 U.S. presidential election cycle from August 1, 2024 until President Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025. To capture coverage of disinformation on the outlets' Facebook pages as broadly as possible, we searched posts using relevant keywords including: 'misinformation', 'disinformation', 'fake news', 'fake', 'conspiracy', and 'rumor'. For Chinese American- and Latino-serving outlets, we additionally included those in Chinese (both traditional and simplified) and Spanish. We identified and downloaded **303 posts** containing these keywords in April 2025, using the [Meta Content Library](#).<sup>14</sup>

## 1.6. COMPUTATIONAL ANALYSIS OF NEWS ARTICLES

To supplement the manual textual analysis, we conducted a computational analysis of **9,723 news articles** that were automatically scraped from **37 news outlets** covered in the Black, Chinese American, and Spanish-language categories. Below, we describe the data collection, analysis and findings in detail. The data collection process was conducted in two phases: URL collection and content scraping.

<sup>14</sup> Meta Content Library is hosted at the University of Michigan's Social Media Archive (SOMAR), and replaced Meta's CrowdTangle, an essential transparency tool for researchers, news outlets and regulators, which was controversially [discontinued](#) in August 2024.

We began by identifying keywords of interest within each outlet category. First, we manually analyzed approximately **550 news articles** over a period of **nine months** (August 2024 – May 2025). Based on this analysis, we compiled a list of representative keywords for each category. These keywords were selected to capture the disinformation-related content in each category and to facilitate the retrieval of articles for downstream computational analysis. A complete list of selected keywords per category is presented below.

Chinese American	Black	Spanish
颶風米爾頓	Trump	Trump
颶風海倫	Harris	inmigración
救災	Haitian	ICE
FEMA 川普	Springfield Ohio	elecciones
FEMA 哈里斯	immigrant	fraude electoral
FEMA 移民	immigration	desinformación
FEMA 資金	election campaign	Harris
FEMA 非法	voting fraud	ciudadanía
颶風 度假 拜登		miedo
颶風 海灘 拜登		
拜登 哈里斯 大選 退出		
拜登 哈里斯 大選 退位		
拜登 哈里斯 大選 站台		
哈里斯 零元購 加州		
哈里斯 加州 47號提案		
(Translation: Harris Proposition 47 California zero-dollar shopping		
Harris Biden campaign betray forced to give up		
Hurricane beach Biden vacation		
FEMA Hurricane Harris Trump immigrants disaster relief Helen fund		
FEMA Hurricane Harris Trump immigrants Milton disaster relief fund)		

FIGURE 10: A complete list of keywords selected to capture the disinformation-related content per category.

To collect article URLs, we used the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) API for the Google search engine. We aimed to collect URLs of 50 news articles per keyword from each news outlet. However, many of the outlets are smaller in size and do not publish as frequently as the major news outlets, so there may not be any articles for some keywords from some of the outlets. Through this process, we collected 2,397 articles for Chinese American outlets, 4,459 from Black outlets, and 4,173 from Spanish news outlets (**11,029 total**).

Extracting news content from the URLs was challenging due to the multilingual nature of the content, variations in website structures and paywalls. Also, a portion of the URLs were no longer accessible due to content deletion. To address these challenges, we used a combination of methods to extract article content. We employed the newspaper3k Python package, which supports content extraction from articles in multiple languages. For URLs behind paywalls or no longer available, we utilized the Wayback Machine APIs to retrieve archived versions of the URLs. Below, we provide the number of successfully scraped articles per outlet. In the end, we were able to extract **9,723 examples of content** from 11,029 URLs (extraction rate 88.2%).

Chinese American News Outlet	Count	Black News Outlet	Count	Latino News Outlet	Count
phtv.ifeng.com	3	afro.com	297	diario.mx	2
chineseinla.com	111	amsterdamnews.com	280	eldiariony.com	306
epochtimes.com	628	atlantablackstar.com	296	enlacinonc.org	378
guruin.com	216	blacknews.com	207	espanol.reviewjournal.com	2
lvcdn.com	24	blackvoicenews.com	205	laopinion.com	376
singtaousa.com	276	chicagodefender.com	235	telocuentonews.com	352
sinovision.net	131	haitiantimes.com	300	diariolasamericas.com	439
worldjournal.com	528	indianapolisrecorder.com	275	elnuevoherald.com	355
<b>Total</b>	<b>1917</b>	lasentinel.net	309	latino-news.com	168
		newsone.com	316	planetavenus.online	192
		thegrio.com	288	telemundo.com	394
		essence.com	301	telemundoarizona.com	330
		lafocusnews.com	139	univision.com	433
		theroot.com	309	yumasun.com	79
		washingtoninformer.com	243	(English-language)	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3806</b>

FIGURE 11: The number of successfully scraped articles per outlet.

We then analyzed the collected dataset on several key dimensions: topical analysis, to uncover dominant themes; narratives, to explore how issues are presented across outlet categories; bias analysis, to assess tone toward key issues or figures; claim and source detection, to identify reported facts and their attribution (including whether disinformation was debunked or repeated); and language and discourse style, to compare rhetorical patterns across Chinese American, Black, and Spanish-language media.

Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT have increasingly been used in academic research for automated content analysis due to their ability to interpret context, extract meaning, and identify nuanced patterns in text. LLMs are especially effective in handling large, unstructured datasets where manual coding is impractical, and unlike dictionary-based or shallow machine learning methods, they can recognize semantics, idioms, and rhetorical devices across languages.

Building on these strengths, we applied an LLM (OpenAI's GPT-4.0 Turbo) to analyze our multilingual news dataset and extract structured information. For each article, the model identifies the primary topic, narrative summary, discourse style (e.g., emotional, persuasive, neutral), and any ideological or political bias (e.g., pro-Democrat, pro-Trump). It also extracts factual claims, identifies their sources and determines whether each claim is fact-checked or merely repeated. In addition, the model detects sentiment-evoking phrases and their targets — for example, in the sentence, “Orban suggests Biden resign for incompetence,” the sentiment is *negative* and the target is *Biden*. Finally, we extract whether the article reports on disinformation, what type of disinformation it represents, and who is portrayed as spreading such claims.

We randomly selected 33 news articles from each corpus (approximately 100 in total) and manually evaluated the LLM-generated outputs to assess the model's precision. The articles were written in Chinese (simplified or traditional), English, or Spanish. To ensure consistent evaluation, we assigned each article to a coder proficient in the respective language. The table below shows precision of the LLM model on all the coding criteria, represented by a percentage of 100. Overall, the model was highly accurate in determining the criteria; precisions were in the range of 94% - 100%.<sup>15</sup>

Disinformation						
Corpus	Topic	Narrative	Bias	Type	Spread By	Article Treatment
Spanish	97	100	100	97	94	97
Black	100	100	100	97	94	94
Chinese American	94	94	94	94	100	100

FIGURE 12: Precision (percentage) of the LLM model on all the coding criteria, on articles in Chinese (simplified or traditional), English or Spanish.

<sup>15</sup> The automated textual analysis conducted in this study used web scraping and ChatGPT-assisted processing which may have ingested news articles intended to be paywalled or excluded from web crawlers. We recognize the ethical sensitivities involved in exposing copyrighted material to LLMs. However, on balance, it was judged necessary to preserve the consistency and robustness of the study's analyses and findings.

## 1.7. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

As part of the [Disarming Disinformation](#) project, a nationally representative survey was conducted in the U.S. by Ipsos under commission to Langer Research Associates and on behalf of ICFJ. The objective was to assess public perceptions of disinformation, journalism and threats to press freedom. The survey was administered online by Ipsos, using its probability-based KnowledgePanel®, in which participants are randomly recruited via address-based sampling to participate in surveys online. The panels took place from June 24 to July 5, 2024.<sup>16</sup>

A total of 1,535 panel members were invited to participate, with 1,043 responding. Following quality control procedures, 23 cases were removed, resulting in a final sample of 1,020 respondents. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish. To ensure representativeness, data were weighted to reflect selection probabilities and then calibrated to align with national population parameters for gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, income, language dominance and nativity among Latinos, marital status, and political partisanship.

The results have a margin of sampling error of  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points for the full sample. The use of address-based sampling and weighting techniques enables the survey to accurately capture the views of a diverse cross-section of U.S. adults.

## 1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

[Framing theory](#), a foundational concept in media and communications studies, examines how journalists and media outlets construct meaning by emphasizing certain aspects of a given story over others. This process profoundly shapes how audiences interpret events and understand the issues of the day. This research is informed by framing theory in that it examines how ethnic and Indigenous media strategically construct narratives to counter disinformation, not only by fact-checking false claims but by reframing issues in ways that resonate with community values, histories, and lived experiences.

Another way of thinking about media content is through the concept of a ‘narrative’ — a story that may or may not be grounded in facts or truth. A narrative can be thought of as a concept broader than a frame, yet still detectable and measurable in news. While a *frame* highlights the organization of material, a *narrative* resonates with a particular way of looking at the world. This makes the study of narratives particularly useful for analyzing disinformation and propaganda.

Academic [research](#) has found that conspiracy theories — which we analyze as a disinformation type present in the content assessed — are particularly resilient, even when challenged by evidence against them. This means that when a new situation arises, those who believe in conspiracy theories are likely to select a pre-existing narrative — such as that the 2020 U.S. election was stolen, or that immigrants are taking U.S. jobs — and then seek ‘evidence’ to support their pre-existing views, no matter how baseless they are.

These studies suggest that a single piece of disinformation or even an entire story that promotes a false narrative is one snapshot in the study of disinformation. The most effective disinformation is linked to ongoing beliefs held by individuals and their communities. If disinformation can resonate with particular frames and narratives held by that community, it is likely to have far more impact. At the same time, if disinformation can support or even create conspiracy theories, such as the false assertion that the 2020 U.S. election results were fraudulent, these are far more corrosive to civic discourse.

# 2. Analysis

## 2.1. ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDY OUTLETS

In this section, we analyze the counter-disinformation work of selected ethnic and Indigenous media outlets in the U.S. through ethnographic research and content analysis of the outlets’ coverage of disinformation-related issues.

<sup>16</sup> ICFJ was responsible for the survey design and analysis. Langer Associates and Ipsos were responsible for data provision. Ipsos was responsible for fieldwork in English and Spanish and the initial data cleaning, while Langer Research Associates provided additional quality checks and applied weighting.



### 2.1.1 ICT (FORMERLY INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY)

*“Indigenous media plays a role in not only ensuring that Native people are informed in their own communities, but that national people and people outside our community understand us and who we are. There are a lot of people who don’t even think Native people are still alive.”*

— [Pauly Denetclaw](#), Political Correspondent

During two ICT site visits — one to the Phoenix bureau in October 2024, and another to the D.C. bureau in November 2024 — staff shed light on the unique and complex dynamics of information flow within Indigenous communities. Several forms of disinformation disproportionately impact Native American populations, according to our research.

One recurring theme was the issue of “[Pretendians](#)” — individuals falsely claiming Indigenous heritage. These misleading narratives are often accepted at face value by mainstream media, without consulting actual Native Americans. ICT journalists described this as an identity battle, where their reporting often involves pushing back against misappropriated or assumed identities. From voting rights and financial systems to law enforcement, Indigenous communities are disproportionately targeted by disinformation campaigns intended to disenfranchise and disparage them.

#### Misrepresentation and omission of Native American voices in the mainstream media

[Jourdan Bennett-Begaye](#), ICT’s Executive Editor, emphasized that the misrepresentation by mainstream media itself is often the root cause:

*Mainstream media usually only want to report on Native people when there’s the [four] D’s: dancing, drunk, dead, or drumming... That’s a big form of misinformation.*

She framed this as disinformation by omission or stereotype — amplified by a lack of cultural awareness and limited interest and insights into Native American life beyond moments of tragedy or celebration.

ICT Political Correspondent [Pauly Denetclaw](#) highlighted the fundamental value of Indigenous media as an antidote to disinformation sometimes aided by the mainstream press’ misrepresentation of Native Americans:

*Indigenous news outlets...not only correct misinformation that exists within our community, we correct disinformation that is perpetuated by the national news outlets. That is why Indigenous media is so important, because there is an overwhelming amount of disinformation, misrepresentation, racism, and stereotypical portrayals of Native people that are continuously perpetuated by national news outlets who do not have the expertise to report on Indigenous nations.*

One example involved a [Medicaid scam](#) where scam operators offer Indigenous individuals struggling with alcohol addiction to live in unregulated, fake sober homes under the guise of receiving treatment — just to exploit government funding. As Jourdan Bennett-Begaye explained, [cases like this](#) reveal how distorted stories can snowball into larger fears and prejudices, blurring the lines between fact, exaggeration, and harmful disinformation.

These issues become even more pronounced during election cycles. Daniel Herrera Carbajal, an ICT news producer, pointed to an [incident](#) where then-South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem, now the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, [falsely claimed](#) that drug cartels had infiltrated Native American reservations. “There was no evidence found... she was spreading misinformation using her platform,” he said. Pauly Denetclaw added that in rural communities, rumors — such as those about kidnapping or human trafficking — can spread quickly, often fueled by fear or isolated incidents, until they’re widely accepted as fact.



FIGURE 13: U.S. Census Bureau acknowledges ICT’s strong community ties in representing Native populations.

This reality causes Denetclaw to avoid reiterating disinformation in the context of reporting on it. “I don’t talk about the misinformation in my stories... I do not want that information to continue spreading... People get confused.” **A more effective antidote, she said, is simply producing stories “...rooted in truth, accuracy, fairness, that centers Native people, that centers Native experts. And that has gender parity.”**

## Teaching “Indigenous reporting literacy” and pursuing meaningful partnerships with mainstream outlets

Like many newsrooms, ICT places a strong emphasis on thorough fact-checking and high verification standards — especially when covering politically sensitive topics like elections. Jourdan Bennett-Begaye illustrated this approach: “Our intern was doing a story on Trump’s policies... but sources were spewing conspiracy... I told him: you can use their point of view, but add factual information to provide context.” ICT journalists also pointed out that mainstream media’s [polling on Indigenous communities](#) — such as exit polls — is often unreliable, requiring ICT to fact-check and correct misleading interpretations.

In response, ICT journalists regularly lead workshops and training sessions for mainstream media professionals on how to cover Indigenous communities accurately. Promoting ‘Indigenous reporting literacy’ has become a central part of their mission — viewed not only as an educational effort but as a vital tool for countering disinformation, particularly when misrepresentation itself is seen as a form of disinformation.

Amid ongoing financial challenges, one of ICT’s key strategies has been to rely on external sourcing from major fact-checking agencies like the Associated Press (AP) and PolitiFact. “We use AP a lot when they have explainers or just basic stories that we need,” one staff member noted. Because ICT publishes in English, it has relatively easier access to open-source fact-checking resources.

Additionally, the newsroom has recently begun shifting its distribution focus toward social media in an attempt to better reach younger audiences. As news producer Herrera Carbajal explained, “Our main demographic is between 18 and 35... and they usually get their news through social media.” This means that they are also more likely to be exposed to social media-facilitated disinformation and conspiracy theories, and the strategy comes with a risk of [‘platform capture’](#).

Although major outlets like The New York Times have expressed interest in partnering on investigative stories, Indigenous journalists often remain cautious about such collaborations. Some feel that these partnerships are not always grounded in fairness or mutual respect — especially when national outlets struggle to build genuine relationships within Indigenous communities. Executive Editor Jourdan Bennett-Begaye illustrated this concern by sharing her experiences of working on a climate story with The New York Times:

*They said, ‘We’ll send out a reporter, you send a reporter... and then we come back and write our own stories.’ And I was like, wait — what? That’s not a collaboration. To me, a real collaboration is both of us writing the same story, with co-bylines. But they said, ‘Well, we don’t want two editors working on it... and we have different audiences.’ And I was like, ‘No, you don’t.’ If anything, they need us more than we need them.*

This exchange underscores how ICT defines meaningful collaboration — emphasizing shared authority, co-ownership, and the importance of an equal footing in journalism that involves Indigenous voices.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS: ICT

In its [mission statement](#), ICT states that it “honors our ancestors and future generations through stories that make Indigenous people come alive” ICT had the most coverage in the sample of Indigenous news analyzed for this project and, based on an analysis of **38 articles**, the coverage echoed the themes outlined in the overview of Indigenous outlets in section 2.2 below.



FIGURE 14: A bookshelf at ICT, with fiction and non-fiction books featuring Indigenous perspectives on a range of issues, from the climate crisis to ancestral homes or Native presence in baseball.

## KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Attention to and outrage over genocide and other mistreatment of Indigenous peoples:** In particular, stories that related to abuses in the residential school system were covered, such as a piece on September 27, 2024 titled, "Canada continues to face residential school denialism." The article discussed disinformation related to "[residential school denialism](#)," in which people refuse to acknowledge the human rights abuses of Indigenous children at church and state run boarding schools they were forced to attend for over 160 years, designed to eradicate Indigenous culture, identity and languages.
- 2. A focus on history feeds into discussions of why Native Americans should be particularly motivated to vote.** A November 3 ICT [article](#) urged Native Americans to vote, quoting the chairman of the Lumbee tribe in North Carolina as saying: "Our issues need to be addressed and because we are a minority, the apathetic response of not voting implies further suppression which can silence our tribal nations and leads to the ultimate denial of our inalienable rights. If we do not vote, the needs of our communities are not properly heard and we are forgotten in the larger discussions at the national level."
- 3. Combating disinformation about Native Americans supporting Trump:** [An AP story republished by ICT](#) highlighted methodological issues with a flawed Edison Research survey that claimed to have found 65% of Native American voters said they voted for Trump. However, the poll only surveyed 229 self-identified Native Americans, a sample size that was too small for accurate representation of the national population. The article noted that the Indigenous Journalist Association labeled the polling data as highly misleading and irresponsible as it led to "widespread disinformation" when it was covered by the mainstream media.
- 4. Highlighting other disinformation-related news for its audience through republishing:** ICT reprinted [a report from Carnegie-Knight](#) on September 8 that talked about disinformation in general. At the end of the story, the report warned of an increase in "racialized disinformation" coming from the political right, noting that it was seeking to keep voters from the polls and drive wedges between different communities of color. ICT also ran a story from the AP on September 6 that discussed the disinformation campaign falsely claiming that the January 6, 2021, attempted insurrection at the U.S. Capitol [wasn't real](#). In addition, ICT republished a story about [a fake newspaper](#) spreading disinformation about pipeline protests that was sent to homes in Native territories.

Overall, ICT often weaves discussions of disinformation into broader themes of enduring interest to its audience, notably the historic exclusion of Native Americans from U.S. civic life.

### 2.1.2 THE NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

Based in Harlem but reaching Black communities across all five boroughs of New York and beyond, the New York Amsterdam News (also known as the AmNews) balances the legacy of trusted print journalism with a growing digital presence. During our November 2024 site visit, just days after the presidential election, journalists [Helina Selemón](#) and [Shannon Chaffers](#) shared their insights into how the outlet navigates the contemporary information ecosystem — especially amid a rise in disinformation that disproportionately affects Black communities.

#### Linking gun violence, misrepresentation and context

For the AmNews, disinformation is not just about factual inaccuracies but deeply tied to issues of representation and racial stereotyping. Their multi-year investigative project, "[Beyond the Barrel of the Gun](#)," tackles the systemic causes of gun violence from a public health perspective. "Gun violence is often misrepresented as something that's just endemic, unsolvable, or simply the result of bad people," Shannon Chaffers, who covers the gun violence epidemic for the AmNews' Blacklight investigative unit, explained. "But if you talk to people in these communities, they'll tell you there are structural factors — poverty, lack of opportunity, housing — that lead someone to pick up a gun. That's the story we're telling."



FIGURE 15: Piles of AmNews newspapers, with cover stories ranging from Black maternal mortality rates to New York's former mayor Eric Adams.



AmNews' investigative unit has also convened public gun violence forums, inviting community members and experts to discuss root causes and potential solutions. These events, like their annual [Labor Awards Breakfast](#), are part of a broader strategy to keep the newsroom grounded in its community. **"We're not just reporting to people — we're reporting with people,"** Selemon noted. These convenings also extend to their digital platforms, for example, via live-streaming and promoting stories recurrently through social media to amplify reach.

### Prioritizing accountability over outrage

The newsroom also combats health misinformation through the Blacklight Project. As [Damaso Reyes](#), Executive Editor, explains: "We've partnered with Columbia University's School of Public Health... So, many of the authors of these fact-checks are actually either professors in the public health school, or their masters degree students." Selemon also shared: "We've been doing COVID fact-check stories for years... When we see rumors circulating — about vaccines, treatment, or other health risks — we publish responses and make sure the information is clear, localized and accurate."

Despite the increasing politicization of civic discourse (particularly online), the AmNews journalists told our researchers that they try to avoid the temptation to chase viral outrage. "We're not telling stories to provoke people," Helina Selemon said. "Because we're weekly, we have time to zoom out and ask better questions: 'Why is this happening, and how can we hold the right people accountable?'"

This approach is particularly important during election cycles. The newsroom's political coverage, led by reporter [Ariama C. Long](#), prioritizes original reporting and proactive storytelling rather than simply reacting to political flashpoints. But that doesn't mean misinformation is absent from their environment. From skewed narratives about Kamala Harris to broad claims about Black support for Trump, AmNews journalists are constantly parsing which claims are valid and which are misleading.

### Correcting racist depictions in the mainstream news

Notably, the AmNews editorial team is also acutely aware of potential bias in mainstream news coverage, and the impact of such bias in shaping harmful narratives. Both Reyes and Selemon pointed to a historical example — the story of the Exonerated Five (formerly known as the Central Park Five), where the New York Times and [other](#) major outlets initially printed [damaging](#), sensationalized narratives about the accused. Reyes explained:

*(Then) real estate developer Donald Trump took out full page advertisements in several newspapers (in New York), asking for the execution of these young men, who had not yet been convicted of any crimes... One of the criticisms, certainly from our community, was that the young men were not being given fair coverage in the media... If you look back at that coverage in the New York Times, or the Daily News, or the New York Post coverage, and then also look at ours ... there was a lot of criticism of how this case was covered in the media. About a decade later they were exonerated. They were found to be not guilty through DNA testing.*



FIGURE 16: A couple of AmNews cover stories about gun violence, framed and on display in the newsroom.

### Trump's 'Kill them' ad condemned

By J. ZAMBA BROWN  
Amsterdam News Staff

A full-page newspaper ad by developer Donald Trump, calling for the death penalty in the wake of an alleged rape and assault two weeks ago in Central Park of a Wall Street executive by a gang of teens is being widely condemned.

Eves Mayer Koch seemed outraged Monday by the ad Trump carried in the New York Times and three other publications, criticizing the city's justice system for allowing criminals to prey on innocent victims.

"Nobody I know of in Western society," the mayor was quoted as saying, "believes that under any circumstances would you ever impose the death penalty on juveniles."

Attorney Colin Moore, who represents one of the teens accused in the Central Park attack, said he had always suspected that intelligence had nothing to do with wealth and Trump through his ad, has proved this to be a fact.

"What Trump's hysterical outburst proves," Moore declared, "is that in America, anything is possible. Even a fool can become a multi-millionaire."

The Brooklyn attorney said he did not hear Trump advocating the death penalty when Michael Stewart, Michael Griffith, Eleonor Bumpers and Derrick Antonio Tyrus were all murdered by whites.

"All of a sudden, when a white individual is attacked,"

COLEIN MOORE

DONALD TRUMP

(Continued on Page 22)

FIGURE 17: How the New York Amsterdam News covered the "Central Park Five", about a group of Black and Latino boys who were wrongfully convicted of an attack on a jogger in April 1989 – a case which was inflamed by Donald Trump before he became president. Image courtesy of the AmNews.



As Helina Selemon also noted:

*We've been part of correcting that history. The mainstream wasn't listening to us then — but now, people are beginning to recognize we had it right*

Overall, the AmNews journalists emphasize the role of deep investigative reporting and prebunking in countering disinformation and better informing the public. "Saying it's just the economy or just misogyny doesn't tell the whole story... Oversimplification itself can become a form of misinformation," Shannon Chaffers explained.

Selemon added, "We've been talking a lot about prebunking — getting ahead of the misinformation with strong, truthful reporting before false narratives take root." Their forward-thinking approach applies to both hyperlocal and national stories, aiming to "bring the story home," in Selemon's words — connecting complex topics to the real experiences of their readers. As the team emphasized, the AmNews' strength lies in its community-rootedness. "We benefit from 115 years of trust," Helina Selemon, a journalist who focused on climate and gun violence with a public health lens said:

*People know us. They believe us. And that's something a lot of newsrooms can't say anymore.*

## CONTENT ANALYSIS: NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS

Our search for relevant AmNews content yielded dozens of articles about elections for analysis during the time frame, after duplicates and articles that did not address relevant topics were eliminated. A qualitative analysis of **54** articles showed that almost half these articles directly addressed the issue of disinformation. There was also regular discussion of immigrant rights, which was linked to the false [comment](#) by Vice Presidential candidate J.D. Vance (echoed and amplified by President Trump) that Haitian immigrants were eating neighborhood cats and dogs.

As with other ethnic and Indigenous media outlets, the AmNews leverages its coverage by including relevant articles from the AP and other mainstream outlets, and through guest articles that are of particular interest to their audience.

The AmNews labels its online stories with the slogan: "The news mainstream media just doesn't cover. Racial justice journalism since 1909." In keeping with other ethnic and Indigenous media outlets, the content reflects the focus on both specific issues of interest to its audience as well as issues that are covered incorrectly, rarely mentioned, or not covered at all in the mainstream media. Given that the goal is to speak with an audience about racial injustice, embracing the uncritical "he said/she said" model of journalism is not useful — in other words, the outlet is going to call out injustice in ways that the mainstream media might avoid.

## KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Fear of Trump's second term:** There was consistent coverage of widespread anxiety inspired by Trump's second term, particularly as it related to racial prejudice and treatment of immigrants. The themes of racial injustice and immigration were particularly intertwined for coverage in the AmNews, given that its audience includes the Caribbean diaspora in New York. This also led to coverage around the effects of disinformation about Haitian immigrants not only on the immigrant community directly affected in Ohio, but a discussion on how it affected the Haitian and broader Caribbean communities in New York and nationwide.
- 2. Disinformation intertwined with immigrant rights:** In the AmNews, coverage of disinformation during the 2024 election period was correlated with a discussion of immigrant rights in general. Thirteen stories mention both disinformation and immigrant rights. While directly refuting the attacks on Haitian immigrants in many stories, the coverage went beyond that to generally discuss the issues of racism, inequity, and lies told about immigrants and their contributions to American society.



FIGURE 18: How The New York Times covered the 'Central Park Five' about a group of Black and Latino boys who were wrongfully convicted of an attack on a jogger in April 1989 — a case which was inflamed by Donald Trump decades before he became president. Images courtesy of the AmNews.

3. **Trump and racism:** There was consistent discussion of Trump as a racist, both by reflecting on his first term and projecting into his second term. A dozen articles specifically called out Trump for lying, while some discussed racial hatred and some included a broader discussion of the need for racial justice. Several articles directly called Trump (and his supporters) racist.
4. **Trump coverage trumps historic first of Harris:** There was some discussion of Kamala Harris as the first Black woman to be nominated by a major party for president, but also warnings of the way her racial identity would be used against her in the election (e.g., if she ignored racist comments, she was seen as failing to defend people of color, but if she responded she would be labeled as an unappealing “angry Black woman” who would alienate white voters). There was also commentary that called out Black and other minority voters for supporting Trump. Overall, however, the discussion of Trump ranged from anger to fear to condemnation of his policies, and overwhelmed a serious discussion of Harris’ policies or the historic moment of a Black woman being nominated as the Democratic candidate.

### 2.1.3 THE HAITIAN TIMES

*“The whole idea of Haitians eating pets? It’s as old as Haiti itself.”*

*- Garry Pierre-Pierre*

Since it was founded in 1999, The Haitian Times has treated disinformation as a fundamental challenge for its reporters, rather than an occasional topic of investigative interest. It emphasizes preventive mechanisms such as community outreach and public events, despite the cost of such interventions in the context of limited resources. “Information is the biggest disinfectant,” according to The Haitian Times’ founder Garry Pierre-Pierre.

Haitian Americans face what Pierre-Pierre described as a “triple minority threat”: being Black, non-English speaking immigrants. “And so to overcome all of that at once is almost, like, insurmountable.” Second generation Haitian Americans — non-immigrant and English speaking — are still exposed to discrimination on the basis that their “Blackness cannot be separated,” Pierre-Pierre noted. This vulnerability informs both The Haitian Times’ sense of community service and its approach to counter-disinformation work.

Pierre-Pierre views disinformation as a “competitor” for public interest journalism. He explained that The Haitian Times’ approach to disinformation was developed in response to the historically challenging information ecosystem in Haiti, which features an active and highly influential “rumor mill” causing hearsay shared via word-of-mouth to spread much more quickly than verified facts — both inside the country and within its diaspora communities. The popularity of easily accessible call-in radio shows in Creole was also a factor, according to Pierre-Pierre. “So we started this publication with that background in mind,” he said. “That’s why we wanted to have a rigorous outlet covering Haiti.”

Pierre-Pierre explained that he became an “American by choice” after his family fled the Duvalier dictatorship in the 1960s, intending — like many others — to eventually return to Haiti. But into the 1990s, the U.S. remained home to a significant community of first generation Haitian-Americans with an inquisitiveness about Haiti, but a dearth of news about the country. The New York Times — where Pierre-Pierre was a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist at the time — was the primary U.S. source for Haitian news but it only reported the White House Defence Department’s perspective, rather than that of the community. Serving this community was his primary motivation for establishing The Haitian Times.



FIGURE 19: The Haitian Times’ Special Projects Editor, Macollvie J. Neel, interviews Yves “FanFan” Joseph of legendary Haitian band Tabou Combo at his bistro in Spring Valley New York. Image courtesy of The Haitian Times.

### Telling the truth while standing up for democracy

Pierre-Pierre said he felt shocked and angry when the President and Vice President deployed disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants eating their neighbors’ cats and dogs during the 2024 election campaign. “I just feel like it [America] never lets you forget who you are...the moment you feel complacent, like it’s all good, something happens to remind you.”

The repercussions of the cats and dogs disinformation campaign included The Haitian Times' special projects editor, Macollvie J. Neel being [swatted](#), after local law enforcement received a false report that someone had been murdered at her home. "They sent the cops to my house. Like 12 minutes after the 9-1-1 call they came to do a wellness check," Neel recalled, using the words of the police. "I was just like, 'Don't let this be what I think it is.' But as soon as I saw the police car outside, I was like, 'Shit.'" But this was no isolated incident. [For several weeks](#) before and after the incident, [Neel received threatening emails](#) and social media messages containing insults and [racist slurs](#). Additionally, the email addresses of the outlet's leaders were leaked to sites on the 'dark web' and The Haitian Times' publishing platform was bombarded with comments in a spoofing attack.

Pertinently, similar tactics have been deployed in Haiti under dictatorial regimes where journalists would be paid threatening home visits to intimidate them. "Hopefully, this helps people understand it's not just memes and jokes and TikToks," Neel said in an interview with The New York Times in September 2024. "There are real consequences that endanger peoples' lives." This threat led The Haitian Times to [shut down its comments section](#). Its in-person forum in Springfield was earlier moved to [Zoom](#) to avoid putting participants at risk.

"The Haitian Times fought back so fiercely because we didn't want to go back...to an authoritarian state," said Pierre-Pierre. Democracy "for the people by the people," needs to be nurtured, he said. This commitment to democratic values inspires The Haitian Times journalists to employ a strategy of "inoculation" against disinformation in an effort to prevent the normalization of politically-motivated lies and racist stereotypes. In practice, this means imbuing empathy with resistance.

### **Avoiding performative objectivity while listening deeply**

Pierre-Pierre argues that where many mainstream news outlets fall short in the battle against disinformation is by using "20th century tactics in the 21st century," describing a problem of normalization of false and harmful narratives seeded by powerful figures close to and including the U.S. President. He warns his peers against editorial adherence to a traditional, and at times performative notion of journalistic objectivity. "I don't subscribe to the notion of objectivity because I don't think anyone can be objective. I see the world through my lens, which is a Black Caribbean New Yorker. That's who I am."

Nevertheless, Pierre-Pierre added that The Haitian Times has strived for balance, and tried to get into the minds of Haitian Trump supporters, which he acknowledges the outlet failed to do in 2016 when they were blindsided by Trump's first win and the appeal of "his brand of populism" among his Haitian American supporters. "He was able to manipulate gullible Haitians who, for some reason, were attracted to his brand of populism. And so the mission going into 2024 was to make sure that we did our work."

Current editor Vania André connects high levels of support for Trump among Haitian Americans to revisionist history and nostalgia for a false sense of security and effective control under the Duvalier dictatorship, compared to the total breakdown of Haitian society which followed:

*I really believe that that is the subconscious mass consciousness that is permeating the Haitian community, Haitian Trump culture and honestly, other immigrant and BIPOC cultures, because ...'Duvalier, yes, he was murdering people. Yes, there were political exiles, but the streets were clean.' That's what I've literally heard people say ...*

In response, Neel recounted that the outlet published stories during the 2024 election campaign that [sought to explain](#) the "Haitians for Trump" appeal.

The key to survival for independent media outlets facing existential threats is to "forget about the nostalgia" associated with previous eras of U.S. and Haitian history, according to Pierre-Pierre, and report openly and critically on what current governments are doing and saying. It is an approach which he feels is lacking in Trump's America.

Pierre-Pierre further reflected on another "failure in journalism," which he described as writing "reports" instead of telling engaging stories with compelling narratives. He says this is a major factor that led to his decision to establish The Haitian Times — to tell people's stories.

*You just tell people a story that they can relate to themselves... And if you tell stories, you demonize people less... And you hear their struggles and their aspirations, and you realise they have a lot more in common with you than they don't. And you challenge. And then you expose the folks who are trying to divide and conquer.*

## Deep human connections

Like a number of other outlets studied for the [Disarming Disinformation](#) project, The Haitian Times emphasizes the importance of building trust through public service journalism and deep community listening. These efforts are perhaps best illustrated by the outlet's inception of the annual [Kreyolfest](#), which garnered community engagement and readership alongside revenue, and the public debates staged in regional America during the 2024 presidential election, which included attempts to confront the racist disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants eating their neighbors' pets.

Other community-based interventions designed to build trust between The Haitian Times and its audience include advocacy surrounding concerns such as housing affordability, a WhatsApp group to provide a platform for community discussion and connection, financial scams and immigration fraud awareness forums, and responses to the widespread confusion and anxiety surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19. Early on in the pandemic, The Haitian Times staff convened healthcare professionals for live information sessions on Zoom and Facebook, some of which doubled as fundraisers for local communities facing economic challenges as the result of lockdowns. Special Projects Editor Macollvie Neel told us that one such event managed to raise about \$20,000 for community needs.

Ahead of the 2024 election, Neel said that she sought to formally embed this community-first public service-approach to the outlet's community engagement model:

*Someone reached out to us to ask about how the 2020 elections had divided the community... My response then was, 'Our community's been divided since we were in Haiti! It's not America that's dividing us. We had our divisions that we brought along with us, you know, class, color, all that stuff... We need to bring all of those conversations into...this election in a way that feels like we're more in touch with the community... They didn't want to only read the news. They wanted to talk and air out different issues.'*

To that end, Neel organized several events, including weekly Instagram Live election streams, a "community empowerment summit" during Haitian Heritage Month, and in-person town halls with Haitian diaspora communities across the U.S., the Springfield event in collaboration with the local NAACP chapter – with support from the American Press Institute and Knight Foundation's Democracy Project. Neel also created the first [Haitian American Voter Guide](#) for the community and drove the first national survey of Americans [gauging sentiment](#) about Haitian immigrants, in collaboration with a university consortium.

The newsroom makes efforts to engage with readers across the political spectrum, while also challenging smears (such as the "cats and dogs" lie), and adapting tactics when bad-faith political actors try to "rewrite the rules" of engagement. By documenting the full range of perspectives on the record and pairing community listening with accessible, informative journalism, The Haitian Times seeks to quell the rumor mill and model the democratic norms it seeks to defend. This work is aided by intensive ground reporting to enable detailed, contextualized, community-connected, and nuanced coverage.

As Pierre-Pierre observed, The Haitian Times team learned important lessons from failings in their coverage of the 2016 campaign. "We inform the public in ways we didn't in the past — we cover the story from the Midwest, from the South. We're based in New York, but we also send reporters to Boston, Ohio, and Michigan — just all over — to really get a full picture."



FIGURE 20: Professor Sharon Austin, from the University of Florida, presents a short history of anti-Black immigration policy toward Haitians at a virtual town hall which the Haitian Times had originally planned to host in person in Springfield, Ohio. The event was moved to Zoom after police told The Haitian Times that they couldn't guarantee the safety of participants..



But these disinformation narratives are very stubborn, as evidenced by the results of a nationally representative poll about Americans' attitudes to Haitians conducted in partnership with The Haitian Times during the 2024 election. According to the poll, [34% believed the lie](#) that Haitian immigrants were eating their neighbors' pets, although the same number thought migration from Haiti to the U.S. should continue.

## Learning from disinformation-laced attacks

Reflecting on the second Trump Administration, Pierre-Pierre acknowledged that he feels “fearful” amidst the rollback of civil rights in the U.S., the ever narrowing focus of attack on his community, the muzzling of anyone who disagrees with the administration's narratives, and general militarization of law enforcement in the country. President Trump's decision to revoke the Temporary Protected Status granted to approximately half a million Haitians in the U.S. who fled unprecedented violence and lawlessness in Haiti induced further uncertainty and trepidation for the Haitian American community, including for Pierre-Pierre and The Haitian Times team.

In the year since the attack, The Haitian Times has been a key voice in fighting disinformation and propaganda — many times in collaboration with organizations sounding the alarm against the degradation of democratic norms. As the increasingly autocratic Trump Administration continued to spread disinformation, Pierre-Pierre and Neel said they advised several industry groups providing guidance for a wide range of news organizations to navigate repressive tactics and threats to journalists' safety. The Haitian Times has also drafted a playbook for its staff to avoid or mitigate safety risks and shored up its technology operations to stave off digital attacks in the context of disinformation campaigns. Pierre-Pierre explained that he hopes the outlet's experience of fighting disinformation can be of use to others: “We have been attacked a lot more than I realised... Now I have all those references in how we handled these situations in the past and how we move forward.”

## CONTENT ANALYSIS: THE HAITIAN TIMES

As indicated on its [“About The Haitian Times”](#) page, the outlet “aims to bridge the generational and geographical gaps among Haitians. We tell the real story of Haiti and Haitian Americans and of the culture that binds us all across borders.”

This emphasis was even more evident during its coverage of the 2024 election, especially when the Haitian community in Springfield, Ohio, and The Haitian Times itself, became the target of hatred and disinformation against immigrants.

The Haitian Times' news coverage helped the community monitor the spread of disinformation by explaining and debunking false information, and providing moral support from Haitians living in the United States as well as in Haiti to demonstrate the community's solidarity beyond borders. This analysis focuses on **18** stories that The Haitian Times ran during our study period, related to disinformation and false narratives.

## KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Vigilance against disinformation for the U.S. Haitian community, especially in Ohio:** Before the “Haitian immigrants eat dogs and cats” disinformation narrative gained national attention and was promoted by Trump and Vance, Haitian immigrants living in Springfield had already been the targets of disinformation. In August 2024, The Haitian Times [covered](#) attacks linked to white supremacist threats, which were partly driven by false claims that immigrants were depriving locals of resources. The report mentioned an anti-immigrant march held in the town, along with the removal of the march organizer from a council meeting due to intimidating behavior.

After Trump falsely claimed that Haitian immigrants in Springfield were eating pets (during the presidential debate on September 10, 2024), The Haitian Times published several articles addressing this disinformation. The articles explored why Haitian immigrants in Springfield became targets, Trump's other derogatory remarks about immigrant groups, responses from Haitian immigrants in Springfield and elsewhere, and the Haitian community's actions following Trump's false statement, including the filing of a lawsuit.

Unfortunately, the “eating dogs and cats” lie was not the only piece of disinformation targeting Haitian immigrants during the election. On November 1, The Haitian Times published an article revealing that a Russia-linked video fabricated a claim that a Haitian man had repeatedly voted for Harris. The Haitian Times [cited](#) intelligence agencies within the U.S. government as its sources and interviewed scholars who pointed out that the information was designed to create division by exploiting racism and using Haitian immigrants as scapegoats.

After Trump was re-elected, disinformation continued to spread among Haitian communities regarding changes in immigration policy. Some pieces of advice circulating within the immigrant community

turned out to be false, such as those suggesting “safer places” for immigrants to relocate, or whether and when the new administration would shut down the CBP ONE app established during the Biden administration for people to reserve appointments for asylum requests.<sup>17</sup> The Haitian Times debunked the disinformation for their readers.

**2. Explaining and debunking:** Our analysis of The Haitian Times also reveals several strategies that the news outlet used to help their readers defend the community against disinformation:

- a. Uncovering** the historical origins of the rumors targeting Haitian immigrants in Springfield. As noted in the article “[Haitian families in Ohio under attack as racist claims spread](#),” published on September 11, 2024, after the first presidential debate, the article discussed the reasons local Haitians were targeted. According to the article, the increase in Haitian migration to Springfield in the previous four years helped ease the local labor shortage but has also placed additional burdens on resources, including hospitals and schools.
- b. Addressing** the false claims about Haitians eating pets as a “lie” and **contextualizing** this disinformation within broader context such as hate speech, racism, and white supremacy.
- c. Discussing** how the disinformation affected the local community and led to increased fear and anxieties among Haitian immigrants, particularly following the amplification of falsehoods about Haitians in Springfield by Trump and Vance.
- d. Covering** the reactions of Haitians and other groups in the United States as journalists at The Haitian Times interviewed local Haitian leaders, Haitians in Haiti, and Haitian political figures. Notably, The Haitian Times collaborated with [CHIP50](#), a consortium of university researchers, to conduct a national survey on Americans’ attitudes about the lie of Haitians eating cats and dogs, among other issues concerning Haitians and Haitian Americans.

These strategies not only helped readers understand the reasons and context behind the spread of disinformation against Haitian immigrants, but also conveyed the effects of that disinformation. Moreover, the coverage went further to communicate supportive messages from other communities, including Haitian families and social groups in the U.S., to support those affected by the disinformation. It serves as an example of how ethnic and Indigenous media outlets can play a key role countering disinformation targeted at specific groups.

### 2.1.4 [TELEMUNDO YUMA](#): LOCAL TRUST-BUILDING AS A WAY TO COUNTER DISINFORMATION

Telemundo in Arizona broadcasts through several local stations to cover different regions of the state. In Phoenix, it operates on KTAZ channel 39; in Tucson, it broadcasts on KHRR channel 40; and in Yuma, it is available on KESE-LD channel 35. This network of stations ensures that Telemundo’s programming reaches a wide audience across Arizona, including major cities and surrounding areas.

[Telemundo Yuma](#) (KESE-LD) — where we conducted a site visit in August 2024 — serves a unique cross-border market that includes Arizona’s Yuma County, California’s Imperial County, and the Mexican border city of Mexicali. Operating in a bi-national region shaped by immigration policy, agricultural labor, and bilingual households, **Telemundo Yuma tailors its reporting to address the distinct information needs of a community often caught between two media ecosystems.**

Despite its relatively low-power signal and small team, Telemundo Yuma delivers bilingual news to hundreds of thousands of households as one of the affiliates of the larger Telemundo Network. The station has operated under a shared services agreement since October 1997, sharing studios in downtown Yuma.



FIGURE 21: View from outside the Telemundo Yuma newsroom. Despite its relatively low-power signal and small team, Telemundo Yuma delivers bilingual news to hundreds of thousands of households as one of the affiliates of the larger Telemundo Network.

17 The CBP One app [ceased operations](#) following Trump’s inauguration.

## Making the most of limited resources like many small newsrooms

Telemundo Yuma faces challenges such as limited editorial resources and strong competition for news stories. Election coverage and border-related topics are especially critical in the region, where reporters must navigate rumors and disinformation — particularly during electoral events. To address these challenges, the station shares physical space and equipment with other local news outlets to reduce costs and maximize resources — an arrangement that also supports their fact-checking efforts. As an affiliate, Telemundo Yuma operates with two internal content-sharing platforms: one shared with Telemundo affiliates nationwide, and another shared among the local stations housed in the same building. These platforms have been instrumental in facilitating story exchange and content access. This network collaboration strengthens the station's ability to provide not only comprehensive but also accurate coverage by leveraging both national and local resources through a built-in system of cross-verification, thereby strengthening defences against inaccurate content.

The team emphasized that rather than relying on flashy or standalone fact-checking services, they aim to prebunk disinformation by upholding consistently high standards of accuracy and neutrality in everyday reporting. Reporter [Miriam Ordoñez](#) explained the approach this way: “I try to ask both sources the same questions — not too much, not too little — and just really step back and state the facts.” General Manager Dave Miller echoed this philosophy, saying: “We present the facts, present the case, and then kind of let the viewer digest that as they see fit... We’re here to inform you, not to tell you how to think.” This philosophy reflects their broader commitment to prebunking through nonpartisan reporting. The team expressed the shared conviction that objective reporting serves as the most effective form of countering disinformation, leveraging their in-depth local knowledge, especially concerning border patrol and elections.

## Serving as trusted community voices in a contentious political climate

News anchor Oswaldo Rivas — who was raised in a Mexican household and commutes daily from Mexicali — draws on his experience of living in a border town to shape his passion for inclusive journalism. A trusted name in the community, he is described by his colleagues as the “Walter Cronkite of Yuma.” Rivas grounds his reporting in local knowledge and strong community ties.

As he explained:

*A lot of the people [in the audience] I talk to are familiar with me... They know I’m from the community...someone they trust to give shoutouts and recognize people in the neighborhood. That’s why people come to me.*

This trust is embodied in Rivas’ role as the station’s main Spanish-speaking anchor, whose long-standing presence and credibility make him a familiar and reassuring figure for viewers. To better engage the audience — especially older viewers — he uses a dynamic, conversational tone and simplifies complex terms to ensure the news is accessible to all. He also frequently gives shoutouts to local residents during broadcasts, adding a personal touch that deepens the station’s connection to its community.

However, during the interviews, newsroom staff noted the growing influence of closed messaging platforms like WhatsApp and community groups on Facebook (both owned by Meta), where politically charged rumors and immigration-related falsehoods often spread unchecked. As Miriam Ordoñez pointed out, different language groups can sometimes lead to informational echo chambers and distinct epistemic worlds. “Since the majority of the community here is Spanish-speaking...they believe a lot of the same things. So sometimes we have to give them that — there’s still another side,” she said.

A [recent example](#) of this trust-building approach came during a recall effort in San Luis, Arizona, where a school board president was accused by some residents of corruption and mismanagement. Aware of how easily such situations can spiral into rumor or fuel disinformation, reporter Miriam Ordoñez took care to interview both sides — the accusers and the board president — giving each a chance to share their perspective. Instead of



FIGURE 22: Telemundo Yuma’s Oswaldo Rivas (pictured as he goes live) is described by his colleagues as the “Walter Cronkite of Yuma.”

framing the story with a predetermined angle, she presented the facts and let viewers draw their own conclusions. This approach highlights Telemundo Yuma's broader commitment to accurate, fair reporting, especially when covering politically sensitive topics in a small, close-knit community.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS: TELEMUNDO YUMA

Although the volume of politically explicit disinformation narratives in Telemundo Yuma was modest during the 2024 election and its aftermath, the station's positioning in a high-stakes electoral geography — coupled with the tonal and topical character of its reporting — makes it important to understanding Spanish-language media outlets in general.

We analysed 20 stories from Telemundo Yuma during the 2024 election period, and found that coverage associated with disinformation was dominated by civic logistics and local impacts. We found no clear cases of uncritical repetition of election-related disinformation; when rumors were referenced, they were framed with corrective context or omitted. The most notable pattern is restraint and narrative absence, not dissemination.

## KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Civic infrastructure, not disinformation, dominated:** Unlike other Spanish-language outlets in our study, Telemundo Yuma prioritized stories about election logistics, civic participation, and community preparedness rather than rumor correction or conspiracy debunking. Articles covered voting timelines, local petition procedures, and public service efforts (e.g., providing voter resources in Spanish). While these are not 'disinformation' stories per se, their presence suggests an attempt to preempt confusion in a bilingual, binational media environment as noted by the journalists in their newsroom. This could also be understood as a form of community inoculation against electoral disinformation.
- 2. Narrative absence as a form of asymmetry:** Consistent with findings from the broader Spanish-language review of news, there was a marked absence of coverage on contentious narratives that dominate English language right-wing media, such as birthright citizenship revocation, widespread non-citizen voting, or conspiracies about election rigging. While this may reflect strong editorial standards, it also creates a silence around targeted policy shifts with disproportionate effects on immigrant communities. This absence could unintentionally blunt public awareness about these threats.
- 3. Localized framing of national policies:** Several articles during the 2024 election period and its aftermath covered the ripple effects of Trump's executive orders on local residents, particularly with respect to deportation policies, [Real ID](#) requirements, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity near schools. These pieces were not framed as disinformation-related news — yet they indirectly highlight how federal policies can fuel a climate of fear or distrust that mirrors disinformation effects. **This aligns with the notion that fear-based narratives may function differently in immigrant communities: less as 'conspiracies' and more as rational responses to systemic precarity.**
- 4. Echoes of broader trends in Spanish-language media:** Telemundo Yuma's editorial restraint reflects broader patterns seen across national Spanish-language television — including [Telemundo's Decisión 2024 corporate initiative](#), a company-wide civic engagement and news campaign launched in March 2024. The initiative emphasized fact-checking (T-Verifica), voter education tools, and partnerships with Latino community organizations to promote civic participation and counter Spanish-language disinformation. This may partly explain why explicit references to known disinformation narratives were largely absent. Yet, narrative silence is not narrative neutrality. Understanding why certain topics are downplayed or framed bureaucratically (e.g., "eligibility verification" instead of "citizenship crackdowns") helps illuminate how language and locality interact to move public opinion.

The absence of overt disinformation narratives in this sample of Telemundo Yuma content — coupled with the prevalence of civically oriented stories — invites closer scrutiny of how immigrant-serving outlets balance informational clarity with narrative restraint. These patterns have direct implications for political engagement, institutional trust, and community resilience.

While this sample did not surface 'smoking gun' falsehoods, it illustrates a more subtle dynamic: in Spanish-language media along the Mexican border, disinformation threats often take the form of under-coverage, euphemism, or delayed amplification. Analyzing how these editorial choices shape public awareness of electoral rule changes, immigration enforcement, and civil rights is essential to advancing scholarly and practitioner efforts at the intersection of democratic participation, media representation, and multilingual information ecosystems.



## 2.1.5 THE PHOENIX NORTH AMERICA CHINESE CHANNEL (PNACC)

The Phoenix North America Chinese Channel<sup>18</sup> is a branch of the Phoenix TV media group, which was founded in Hong Kong by Chinese entrepreneur Liu Changle. After Changle [sold](#) his shares to Bauhinia Culture Holdings Limited, a Chinese state-owned company, this entity became the largest shareholder of Phoenix TV. Established in 2001, Phoenix North America broadcasts on multiple platforms, such as satellite, cable, and its website, [ifengus.com](http://ifengus.com).

A 2020 Freedom House report titled '[Beijing's Global Megaphone](#)' indicated that Phoenix North America is "pro-Beijing" and has a strong presence in the overseas Chinese media market in the United States. One key factor for its prevalence, as noted in the [report](#), is that Chinese advertisers in the United States prefer to place advertisements with media outlets that maintain good relationships with Beijing over those that are more critical of the Chinese government.

### Identifying the audience's unique information needs

During our interviews and follow-up site visit in Anaheim, California in August 2024, reporters and staff discussed the sensitive and unique challenges that Chinese immigrants face with regards to information integrity and accessing reliable journalism in their first language. As reporter Hanqin Lin said, many live in "some sort of information cocoon" due to limited English proficiency, which makes them particularly vulnerable to manipulation through disinformation.

**He pointed to "micro-influencers" — niche social media personalities — who promote "a very specific, hyper-partisan, or biased position."**

The scope of such 'fake news' extends beyond immigration and politics to sensational claims — such as the idea that "LA is going to have an earthquake soon," according to producer Aorui Pi. Reflecting the collective cultural tendencies of many Asian communities, these information cocoons often form within close-knit group chats. News anchor Ainy G. Cheng explained that with WeChat's different groups, "People love to listen to dramatic things... Even if you send them the actual news link...they'd rather believe [the rumor]." Staff also noted the emerging role of Xiao Hong Shu ("Little Red Book," known as Rednote in English)<sup>19</sup> as a platform for spreading disinformation.

Pi highlighted the increasingly important — but often challenging — task journalists face in distinguishing facts from entertainment. "Try to understand what's a skit and what's real news," she said, emphasizing how satire or staged content can easily be misinterpreted online. "A lot of people really took a skit online and it turned into stories... that's clearly not even a story... [but] once one media outlet picks it up, it becomes a national sensation." This reflects the blurred boundaries between entertainment and news, where viral content — regardless of its accuracy — can shape public perception and fuel disinformation.

### Making efforts to adapt and reach new audiences, while still maintaining journalistic standards

Although their core loyal viewership consists of older, educated wealthy Chinese immigrants, Phoenix TV maintains a strong reputation — particularly for its high-budget historical documentaries — and is even known, as marketing manager Victor Liang explained, for being available only in some areas in Guangdong Province, and certain research institutions and hotels rated above three stars in China. However, recognizing that older



FIGURE 23: Outside the PNACC newsroom.



FIGURE 24: Inside the PNACC newsroom and a green screen against which broadcasts are filmed.

<sup>18</sup> Hereafter referred to as Phoenix North America or Phoenix TV.

<sup>19</sup> In Shanghai in 2012, Charlwin Mao Wenchao and Miranda Qu Fang [founded](#) 'RedNote' or 'Xiaohongshu' as an Instagram-style lifestyle, e-commerce and social media app, with the target audience being Chinese shoppers. RedNote also gained [notoriety](#) when TikTok users 'fled' there after a proposed ban on the app in the U.S. in January 2025.

generations are now also active users of group-based social media — and that content on these platforms often becomes a primary source of news — Phoenix TV has recently embraced digital trends more proactively.

The network is making significant efforts to expand its presence on platforms like Rednote/Little Red Book, aiming to engage digitally savvy audiences and grow their viewership. This initiative is part of what staff describe as a “take the bull by the horns” strategy to combat disinformation in increasingly fragmented digital spaces. In addition to its presence on Rednote, Phoenix TV actively manages a WeChat account and is adapting to the rising demand for short-form video content. The channel recognizes that these new formats are reshaping how news is consumed and sees embracing them as essential — despite the financial and production challenges they present.

During our interviews Phoenix TV staff consistently emphasized their commitment to American journalistic norms — objectivity, accuracy and neutrality — as a core strategy for combating disinformation. TV news anchor Ainy Cheng expressed her uncompromising commitment to journalistic neutrality, framing truth as the antithesis of disinformation: “A lot of journalists out there... Yes, they are giving you the truth, but they’re giving you a fraction of the truth. Even half-truth — I think that’s a full lie.... Being neutral, don’t add in too much emotion. This is not the entertainment industry.”

Reporter Aorui Pi echoed this sentiment, stating, “I try to be objective... Objectivity in journalism is not really a debate, because everybody has their own worldview. [What matters is] correct information.”

## Challenges to editorial independence

Despite their desire for principled commitment to journalistic integrity, Phoenix TV needs to perform a delicate balancing act, between upholding journalism ethics and navigating the demands of a profit-driven business model with perceived links to economic and political elites in China. As a Phoenix TV employee who asked to remain anonymous explained, the outlet is actively involved in organizing international business trips and building networks among Chinese entrepreneurs. In doing so, Phoenix TV often takes on roles beyond those of a media organization — at times functioning as a travel or immigration agency catering to high-status individuals from China. The strong presence of the business department reflects a broader strategy to diversify revenue through non-editorial ventures, raising important questions about how commercial priorities may shape or compromise newsroom independence.

Critics argue that the network’s alleged ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence its editorial content and limit its ability to report freely on sensitive issues, blurring the line between factual reporting and strategic messaging and raising broader implications for disinformation and public trust. While staff members firmly denied any influence from the CCP, concerns remain about the station’s editorial alignment. When asked about financial independence from the headquarters in Hong Kong, a journalist who asked not to be named alluded to receiving occasional support from China:

*Financially... we are acting independently. We try to get as much revenue as possible from local sources, you know, like TV, commercials and sponsors from here, but I believe, from time to time, we need to, you know... get some help from the Hong Kong Company.*

Another anonymous interviewee also suggested that their news reports are monitored by the Hong Kong branch, with some stories being picked up for rebroadcast overseas.

Such financial and editorial ties may convey political influence over journalistic practice. Recently, for example, the Taiwanese government warned Phoenix TV to restructure its capital holdings to ensure greater Hong Kong or foreign-based ownership, or risk losing its license to operate in [Taiwan](#).

## CONTENT ANALYSIS: PHOENIX NORTH AMERICA

Unlike content from Black, Latino, Indigenous, and various Chinese-language media aimed at the American audience, during the 2024 U.S. presidential election Phoenix North America placed less emphasis on issues related to disinformation.

## KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- 1. China is not mentioned:** Even when addressing foreign information interference, the outlet refrained from mentioning China. For instance, in a [news video](#) regarding the warning issued by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) about foreign interference from Russia, Iran, and China, Phoenix North America left out any reference to China, despite the [ODNI](#) warning including it.
- 2. Strong Chinese (business) community connections:** Phoenix North America dedicated considerable airtime to community news — reporting on business and festival activities within the Chinese community in the United States and Canada. This includes events such as business conferences for Chinese American leaders, beauty pageants, concerts, and art exhibitions organized by associations of individuals from the same provinces in China, among others. These “activity segments” in the news program act more like a community bulletin board, especially for the Chinese business community. This focused coverage may also stem from Phoenix North America’s strong connections with the business sector, as previously discussed.
- 3. Avoiding certain disinformation narratives:** Following Trump’s dissemination of false statements regarding Haitian immigrants, our review found that Phoenix North America chose not to report on this false claim in its video programs. Instead, it concentrated on a post-debate poll, referencing a Reuters report indicating that Harris had the backing of 47% of voters, while Trump was supported by only 40%.
- 4. Sticking to campaign coverage and avoiding discussion of disinformation narratives:** While Latino and Black media raised alarms about allegations of voting fraud and disinformation aimed at immigrants, Phoenix North America did not engage with these concerns. Its coverage primarily revolved around the candidates’ campaigns, such as [efforts](#) by Harris to attract support from Black males, attempts by Trump to enhance his appeal among female voters, or updated polling results. One of the rare moments where “fake news” was mentioned was in a segment titled “Harris leads Trump slightly in a poll. Trump’s consultants release a statement, claiming the poll is fake news.” Here, the anchor noted that CBS had [published](#) its latest poll results showing Harris ahead of Trump by 1%. However, Trump’s team contended that the poll’s participants were predominantly liberal and declared the findings to be inaccurate. The news [segment](#) did not explore the “fake news” claim more deeply, nor did it refer to any other incidents related to election disinformation.

In conclusion, as our review of **70 news videos** published during the 2024 election cycle shows, Phoenix North America rarely demonstrated concern about the challenge of false information facing the Chinese American community. Regarding election news coverage overall, it appears that the news coverage from Phoenix North America approached the election more from a transnational perspective, rather than that of an insider within the Chinese immigrant community to address civic or racial issues that are often covered or discussed in Indigenous, Latino and Black outlets.



FIGURE 25: A screenshot of a Phoenix North America news video with the subtitle “Harris leads Trump slightly in a poll. Trump’s consultants release a statement, claiming the poll is fake news.”

## 2.2. COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF OUR ETHNIC AND INDIGENOUS MEDIA CORPUS

In this section, we analyze the relative prevalence of disinformation and conspiracy narratives in the content of all four ethnic and Indigenous media groups for this report: Black, Spanish-language Latino, Indigenous, and Chinese American. Our corpus of published content from 45 ethnic and Indigenous media outlets in the U.S. represents a sample of the diverse and vital ethnic and Indigenous media news sites and organizations across the country. Our qualitative study of hundreds of articles that addressed disinformation in the 2024 election illustrates how important ethnic and Indigenous media outlets are to informing and engaging their audiences. In particular, they provide critical reporting on how disinformation and conspiracy theories attempt to rob them of their rights as citizens. At the same time, ethnic and Indigenous media can struggle with countering and contextualizing disinformation for their audiences, especially as disinformation spreads so readily and rapidly through social media.

## Comparative Content Analysis

While the original research plans included vigilance for a repeat of the “Stop the Steal” conspiracy in 2024, Trump’s re-election meant there was relatively little discussion of voter fraud. However, our research found ample concern with disinformation related to the 2024 election.

Black and Indigenous outlets were active in countering disinformation by reminding their audiences that ethnic minorities in the United States have traditionally been manipulated to deprive them of their rights as citizens, including their right to vote. Black and Indigenous media referenced historic laws that deliberately excluded their voices and their votes, urging their audiences to not fall victim to disinformation that would exclude them once again and not to forget to use their hard-won rights to political participation. These media outlets clearly had developed trusting relationships with their audiences and often eschewed the stenographic approach of “he said/she said” journalism and [performative objectivity](#) to more directly call out racial threats and injustice.

Spanish-language Latino media had a particular focus on disinformation around citizenship and immigration, struggling to keep up with changes and rumors in the aftermath of Trump’s re-election.

Chinese American media outlets appeared more vulnerable to foreign State pressures, with some outlets tending to slant their news to either support or oppose the People’s Republic of China while ostensibly serving a U.S.-based news audience.

In addition, there was not a large volume of coverage that addressed electoral disinformation threats in depth, and there was no formal fact-checking captured in the sample. The staff at most of these outlets are typically very small and often republish copy from sources such as the AP or non-profit organizations that cover areas of interest to their audiences. Reliance on syndicated content helps outlets with limited resources create a curated flow of news for their audiences, but it can also create disincentives for mainstream coverage addressing disinformation targeted for ethnic and Indigenous communities.

In reviewing the news coverage, we also included opinion articles and editorials. While these formats have different norms for editorializing, news audiences themselves [often do not distinguish between news and opinion](#). In addition, we assessed that including this material, which was often a considerable part of the coverage in ethnic and Indigenous media, was important in establishing the overall character of the coverage. We also considered which articles were included from other sources (i.e. the AP) as a way of demonstrating what the news outlets curated — as opposed to directly produced — for their audiences.

Below, we discuss our individual findings for each media group.

## Black media

The Black press in the U.S. has been a critical source of information and resistance to anti-Black oppression since the early 19th century. This study analyzed coverage in **128 articles** in 13 U.S. Black media outlets. The outlets stretched across the country and included publications such as [The Griot](#), [The Chicago Defender](#), [The Haitian Times](#), [New York Amsterdam News](#), [The Washington Informer](#) and [The Root](#).

As with all the ethnic and Indigenous media groups in this study, Black media in the United States provide a range of different approaches in coverage of their communities and this sample showcased the diverse nature of the publications. Black outlets such as the ones in this study provide information, voice, and framing of stories in ways that resonate profoundly with the communities that they serve. For example, the New York Amsterdam News and The Haitian Times in one sense have very distinctive audiences, with the former serving the Black community anchored in New York City and the latter dedicated primarily to the informational needs of the Haitian diaspora. However, both these outlets share the fundamental commitment to calling out racism in ways that are often overlooked by the mainstream media.

The outlets also range in tone and focus, with some, such as the [Atlanta Black Star](#), paying more attention to the entertainment industry, while others, such as [NewsOne](#), carry more coverage of the political sphere. However, the qualitative review for this report noted a shared theme among the outlets of countering historic oppression of Black individuals and communities.

The outlets were particularly concerned with telling the stories of Black people which were either not covered or dealt with inaccurately in the mainstream media. They often leveraged their resources through sharing stories and running syndicated mainstream media stories about issues relevant to their audiences, or content from non-profit organizations that cover Black issues. For example, The Washington Informer ran an article on



September 4, 2024 from Word in Black headlined, "[10 Ways to Be a Better Black Voter](#)." The article suggested that Black voters need to work harder to be informed and politically active, given the scale of lies told about Black people. The article argued that this can be done by verifying information that is shared, voting, attending local meetings, volunteering, donating, lobbying, considering running for office, or starting a political action campaign.

The 2024 election coverage by the Black media often sounded a warning that disinformation was yet another attempt to disenfranchise the Black community and rob it of its electoral voice and power. For example, a [NewsOne article](#) on September 30, 2024 highlighted how disinformation and influencer content skewed Black male voter sentiment. This article also covered the controversy of singer Janet Jackson questioning whether Harris was Black in an [interview](#) with The Guardian newspaper on September 21, 2024.

The Haitian Times came to play a significant role in fighting disinformation aimed at its own community — including their own journalists — after Vance and Trump [claimed](#) that Haitian immigrants were eating their neighbors' cats and dogs. In response to this baseless and racist attack on its community, the outlet published information that uncovered the history of racist claims against Haitians, called out the lies, contextualized the attack within broader issues of racism, discussed how the disinformation affected the Haitian community, as well as covered how Haitian leaders and communities reacted. The Haitian Times was a critical conduit for the community to process these attacks and have an authoritative voice to counter it, as discussed above.

The story about Jackson was covered across Black media outlets, many expressing disappointment that a Black cultural icon would spread disinformation about Harris. NewsOne also reported on a [multi-million-dollar robocall scheme](#) that employed racist disinformation to intimidate voters in 2020. The outlet used the headline, "It's the same voter suppression, just a new day and a different tactic," on a [story](#) about a group tied to Trump advisor Stephen Miller that distributed anti-trans messaging to Black voters in Atlanta to sow discord via fake political opposition.

An [article](#) on October 17, 2024 in The Washington Informer noted that Black women are often both the targets of — and the solution for — election disinformation targeting the Black community. This article notes that although Black women often endure an "onslaught of lies, doctored images, and malicious rumors" — a prime example is a fake image shared by President Trump that showed Vice President Kamala Harris with accused sex trafficker Sean "Diddy" Combs." The article noted that Black women are "connectors, trusted voices in our communities and fierce defenders of the truth," not "passive bystanders." Another specific warning about election disinformation was delivered by NewsOne in [reporting](#) on an individual who was prosecuted for posting memes falsely suggesting that Black voters could vote by text.

Given that the American Black population has historically been a target of Russian propaganda, there were [reminders](#) of the 2016 Internet Research Agency disinformation campaign as well as warnings from *Politico* about an Iranian-linked network of fake websites such as "Afro Majority" that used AI to tailor misleading content targeting minority voters. Black outlets also ran [AP coverage](#) of a white man posing as the "Black Insurrectionionist" on social media to circulate anti-Democrat conspiracy theories about the 2024 election. However, there was relatively little discussion of foreign disinformation in these outlets.

Overall, the coverage highlighted how disinformation supports the targeted suppression of Black voters in the United States, which resonates with the broader attention to social justice and the history of oppression in the country in the Black media. Many articles also stressed not only the importance of continuing to overcome historic injustices in voter suppression, but also provided practical suggestions such as relying on trusted community sources, fact-checking, digital literacy, and leveraging trusted networks.

We noticed that some of the same articles from outlets such as the "Black Vote/Black Power" series from Word in Black, ran in more than one Black outlet (such as both the AmNews and The Chicago Defender). This suggests there is a shared discourse among Black media outlets, although each one in the study served a different community that intersected with Black identity and issues in unique ways. There seemed to be little time or space in the Black media to celebrate Harris as the first Black woman on a major party ticket for U.S. president. Rather, Black media outlets mostly had to play defense, debunking disinformation about Harris, such as the lie that she was not "truly" Black. As noted in the discussion above about the AmNews, this historic first got lost in a vitriolic campaign in which Republicans were often overtly racist.

## Indigenous Media

We analyzed content in [ICT](#), the [Navajo Times](#), [High Country News](#) and [Char-Koosta News](#) and carried out in-depth analysis on **63 articles**. While there was some reporting by their own journalists, much of the content published in these outlets was syndicated from other sources, such as the AP and non-profit outlets. For example, in Char-Koosta News, there was a significant amount of content from the League of Women Voters (a non-partisan NGO), such as articles that discussed election processes and electoral disinformation.

One of the most relevant stories for the Indigenous community in the election was President Joe Biden's [speech](#) on October 25, which included a formal apology for the documented abuses that occurred at boarding schools for Native American children. An overarching theme was concern over access to voting, with less specific focus on disinformation. However, the outlets did push back against disinformation, in particular by [refuting findings](#) of a flawed survey that alleged 65 percent of Native Americans voted for Trump and [reporting](#) that Vance had called Indigenous Peoples' Day a "fake holiday to sow division" on Twitter in 2021.

The outlets also reported on racism (a common feature of disinformation tropes) against Indigenous people by politicians and candidates. One [story](#) that drew attention was about an incumbent running for Senate who was recorded using a racial slur about Indigenous people and claiming they were drunk early in the morning. In addition, an [article](#) on October 9 in the Navajo Times reported on a senator telling a Native American candidate to "go back to where she came from" after the candidate said there was racism in society. Another [article](#) in the Navajo Times on October 10, 2024 repeated a warning from Navajo Democratic candidate Jonathan Nez about possible election disinformation in his race against Republican Eli Crane.

Given the low volume of original content, it is impossible to say (quantitatively) that particular narratives were dominant or not dominant regarding disinformation and the elections. That being said, our analysis shows that Indigenous news outlets were strongly oriented toward both historic and current challenges within their communities.

**The communities themselves are unique, serving a range of tribes in different parts of the country. It would be a mistake to think of them as homogeneous, particularly because some focus on issues such as land rights, while others are more concerned with poverty and social deprivation.**

While these tribes have diverse histories and cultures, their news outlets share a concern with the disenfranchisement of Indigenous peoples, both in a historical and contemporary sense. For example, both the [Navajo Times](#) and the [High Country News](#) highlighted the problem of long lines at polling stations and a lack of ballots in 2024. The outlets noted that this election was the 100th-year anniversary of Native Americans obtaining the legal right to vote. Despite a century of voting rights, the outlets noted that there remain many barriers to voting for Indigenous Americans, including the lack of sufficient polling places on large reservations.

## Latino Media

This analysis covers **213 Spanish-language news articles** published from January 2024 to May 2025, drawn from [Univision](#) (Houston), [Telemundo](#) (Houston), and [La Opinión](#). All three outlets are professionalized, high-volume sources of news with dedicated political and election coverage. While there is some syndication across the networks, most political content — especially in La Opinión — is editorially tailored to the concerns of Latino communities in the U.S., particularly in swing states and high-density urban areas.

This review showed that while election coverage was abundant, debunking disinformation was not. Across more than 200 articles, election coverage was robust, particularly in the weeks surrounding the November 2024 vote. However, only a small subset of articles directly used terms such as *desinformación* (disinformation) or propaganda. Instead, disinformation was often discussed indirectly through fact-checking, procedural clarification, or civic education content. In some cases, potentially harmful or misleading narratives — such as false claims about voting by non-citizens — were repeated without clear corrective framing. Other times, debunking was provided, but without deeper political context.

There were also some narrative gaps in politically salient areas in the content. While this review did not include a parallel sample of English-language news, prior public media analyses suggest that some narratives commonly featured in English-language election coverage were either downplayed or absent in this Spanish-language sample. For example, voter ID laws, language access to voting, and election denialism — issues widely discussed in English-language media — received limited thematic treatment in this content. When mentioned, they were often presented as administrative challenges rather than political manipulation.

In addition, broad narratives central to structural voter suppression or coordinated disinformation were rarely framed as such. Articles referencing disinformation or electoral fraud tended to treat them as isolated events or rumors, rather than components of a broader strategy or threat to democratic norms. These narrative asymmetries (i.e., the absence, underemphasis, or reframing of politically salient narratives within Spanish-language coverage where external evidence or context suggests it was widely discussed in English-language reporting) could have significant implications for Latino audiences.

A key concern for Latino audiences is disinformation about citizenship and deportation. Numerous articles alluded to confusion or misinformation about citizenship status, voter eligibility, and executive authority around deportation. In terms of the election, this took the form of rumors that requesting a Spanish-language ballot or interpreter could lead to legal scrutiny, viral claims (often traced back to TikTok or Facebook) alleging that voting without a Real ID would result in detention, and confusion over whether the U.S. Department of Homeland Security could unilaterally strip birthright citizenship.

The most detailed disinformation coverage came in the form of fact-checks about voter fraud myths (e.g. the notion of “illegals voting”), articles debunking AI-generated deepfakes, as well as pieces explaining ballot access, early voting procedures, or vote-count delays. While these articles were helpful in countering viral claims that were amplified by social media, they rarely addressed the actual sources of prevalent falsehoods, who was benefitting from their spread, or how they fit into larger political narratives around exclusion, distrust in institutions, or racialized scapegoating.

The result is a coverage pattern that’s reactive, rather than diagnostic — one that addresses symptoms more often than causes. For example, while there was discussion of Latino and youth turnout enthusiasm, it was tempered by references to disinformation and targeting of Spanish-language Latino audiences.

Many of the articles reviewed cited Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and X as the points of origin or key distribution nodes for false narratives. A fact-check on the false claim that non-citizens were voting in the United States specifically flagged Facebook as the platform where the rumor gained traction. In another example, a deepfake video falsely showing Haitian migrants attacking police, reportedly shared widely on X, was later picked up in Spanish-language media coverage. Several voter fraud stories, including claims that “Kamala Harris rigged the election” or that “Trump had already won,” were traced to Facebook and WhatsApp chains, then reappeared in *La Opinión* headlines that did not consistently clarify the falsehood. The result was that some Latino outlets became (possibly unwitting) conduits for election-related disinformation.

An interviewee at Factchequeado, a [non-profit organization that counters disinformation](#) affecting Latino communities in the United States, also noted that many false or misleading narratives mirrored those in the English-language disinformation ecosystems but were translated — both linguistically and contextually — for Spanish-speaking audiences. In particular, narratives about election fraud were framed through tropes of historical exclusion, democratic abandonment, or corruption familiar to Latin American discourse. The Factchequeado interviewee also noted the prevalence of manipulated video and images.

When the disinformation narratives surfaced for this study were cross-referenced with Spanish-language disinformation traced by Factchequeado, it was noted that many articles in mainstream outlets reported on viral misinformation such as ICE activity near schools, fears of non-citizen voting, or Trump’s electoral legitimacy but did not clarify the veracity of these claims. These narratives were often featured in headlines and leads of stories in ways that conveyed urgency or fear, reinforcing the salience of the claims without discrediting them.

Although Factchequeado and other organizations provided a valuable service with detailed fact-checking and refutation of false information, Spanish-language outlets analyzed for this study generally failed to incorporate debunking into their own reporting. In some cases, articles in this sample recirculated false or misleading claims that had already been debunked in other outlets.

This analysis revealed that while Spanish-language media are active participants in election coverage, they often do not foreground disinformation as a structural political threat. Instead, they provide episodic corrections or procedural guidance. This likely reflects both editorial norms and audience sensitivity, but it can also have political consequences. By not fully articulating how disinformation works — or who benefits from it — this type of coverage may inadvertently diminish urgency, undermine critical media literacy, and contribute to the uneven political empowerment across minority communities. In this way, this set of Spanish-language media lacked the same sense of solidarity and awareness found in the Black and Indigenous media in this study.

## Chinese American Media

For Chinese American media, the analysis focused on **144 articles** from six outlets for qualitative review: [Phoenix North America Chinese Channel](#) (凤凰卫视美洲台), [World Journal](#) (世界日報), [Creaders.net](#) (萬維讀

者網), [The Epoch Times](#) (大紀元新聞網), [Sing Tao Daily – singtaousa.com](#) (星島日報), and [chineseinla.com](#) (洛杉磯華人資訊網). The selection of these outlets represents diverse formats (TV news, written articles, news aggregators) and positions on support for the People's Republic of China.

The term “Chinese” here encompasses a broader definition that refers to the language rather than just the citizens and diaspora of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese-language media for the American audience is largely dominated by positions of either support or opposition to the Chinese state. As a result, the goals of some of these publications could better be described as providing propaganda, i.e. attempting to convince their audience of a particular political point of view, in addition to providing news that informs the audience about important civic issues.

The Epoch Times is reportedly [affiliated with the Chinese religious group Falun Gong](#), which has been suppressed by the Chinese government, and is to the far-right on the U.S. political spectrum. Sing Tao Daily's parent company is based in Hong Kong, but its U.S. branch [is registered with the U.S. Department of Justice as a foreign agent](#) for the Chinese government. World Journal belongs to a Taiwanese media group, the United Daily News Group. By contrast, Chineseinla.com is part of a [website group](#) whose owner is said to be a first-generation Chinese immigrant, although these websites [have also faced allegations](#) of being Chinese propaganda, which they deny.

In addition to reviewing the six outlets, we also took note of known disinformation narratives spread by Chinese-language social media accounts (separate to those curated by the outlets studied) during the same period and examined whether these narratives were mentioned in the selected outlets. The sources of the false information narratives were collected from Chinese-language fact-checking organizations, including the [Taiwan FactCheck Center](#),<sup>20</sup> [Asia Fact Check Lab](#) and [MyGoPen](#).

A review of these Chinese-language ethnic news media, as well as the false information that circulated on social media, revealed a complex landscape of problematic information in the Chinese-speaking world. This echoes the intricate political landscape of these Chinese American media and their relationships with diverse immigration communities in the United States, as well as their home governments in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other countries where Chinese speakers reside. This also highlights how political leanings influence the way these ethnic media chose to define, present, and combat disinformation during the U.S. presidential election.

On social media, the [most prevalent disinformation narratives spread](#) among Chinese-language accounts during this observation period primarily concerned the morality of the presidential candidates. This included manipulated images falsely alleging Democratic nominee Kamala Harris and Vice Presidential candidate Tim Walz were communists; malicious actors using AI-generated videos and images to falsely accuse Walz of sexually abusing his former students; as well as falsely alleging that Harris was involved in the sex offender Jeffrey Epstein's crimes. Additionally, Chinese social media accounts circulated disinformation related to the candidates' immigration and gender policies as well as false information undermining the integrity of voting and ballot tabulation processes.

However, Chinese-language articles and videos contained few false narratives. Pieces that included false information were more akin to poor journalism (e.g., using unreliable sources, superficial news reporting, or omissions), rather than showing evidence that the content amounted to disinformation. All six outlets commonly used articles translated or adapted from news reports published by Western news outlets, such as the AP and Reuters. Nevertheless, news aggregators such as [Creaders.net](#) were less selective about their news sources. In addition to traditional media sources such as The New York Times, they also used non-traditional sources, including news commentary sites and blogs. Consequently, the selection of news sources, along with the translation and presentation of articles, became weak spots for the dissemination of disinformation if the false information was not properly corrected.

For instance, an [article](#) in Sing Tao Daily uncritically quoted Trump's words about immigrant policy from the reporting of NBC and The Hill, indicating that “Drug dealers were killing and murdering American people; they are destroying our country. Now, they [illegal immigrants] need to go back to their countries.” This piece problematically promoted Trump's attack on immigrants without context. Another example was an [article](#) on Creaders.net, which republished a news report from a Taiwanese pro-China news outlet, China Times. This article, titled “Harris was exposed to cheating while wearing earphones,” initially referenced the Hindustan Times' allegation of Harris using a discrete in-ear communication device to receive pre-written speech lines from staffers during the presidential debate, but later used coverage by CBS News to refute that allegation in the same article. Despite the inclusion of a correction in the article, the headline may have misled readers who did not delve deeper into the content.

20 Disclosure: One of the study authors, Wei-Ping Li, served as a research fellow at the Taiwan FactCheck Center from 2023 to 2025.



The examples above highlight the deficiencies in news reporting within Chinese American ethnic media: an overreliance on external news sources and a lack of original reporting. If information is not carefully selected, translated, and presented accurately, second-hand news can easily become an amplifier of false information.

That being said, the Chinese American outlets in this study did attempt to bring audiences' attention to disinformation, although they differed in the extent of their coverage and the specific focus when addressing issues of election disinformation.

More China-friendly outlets such as Phoenix North America and Sing Tao Daily called audiences' attention to viral, false information related to the election. However, this news coverage was generally reactive reporting following news conferences or press releases issued by the federal or state governments, and occasionally overlooked details that did not support their outlook. One example, as discussed above, is a [piece](#) published on October 22, 2024, about a U.S. intelligence agency's warning regarding efforts by foreign adversaries to disseminate disinformation targeting the election and creating divisions in American society. This article did not include the fact that China was listed as one of the adversary countries mentioned in the intelligence agency's report. By contrast, The Epoch Times, which often criticizes the Chinese government, focused more [on the CCP's disinformation campaign](#) following the intelligence agency's warning.

Overall, the six Chinese-language outlets provided general but diffuse alerts about false information. While a few articles targeted Chinese language audiences, the majority did not challenge specific falsehoods or provide media literacy insights tailored to the community. Furthermore, the outlets rarely looked deeply into events triggered by notable disinformation narratives affecting other immigrant groups, such as the false claim that Haitian immigrants were eating their neighbors' pets.

One exception was [World Journal](#), an outlet that has served the Chinese-speaking immigrant community since 1976. Compared to other Chinese American media outlets in this study, World Journal published more articles about election disinformation, debunking disinformation about damage from Hurricane Milton and Hurricane Helene; false claims that Haitian immigrants eat pets; and [false narratives about presidential candidates](#) supporting communism. The outlets also carried warnings about influence campaigns waged by foreign States, the growing threat of AI-related disinformation and social media's retreat from content moderation. Most notably, World Journal featured several articles highlighting the [fact-checking efforts](#) of Asian Americans initiated by Chinese Affirmative Action (CAA), a San Francisco-based advocacy group focused on the rights and equity of Chinese Americans. The outlet specifically referenced the [CAA's report](#) on disinformation targeting Chinese Americans. However, these news articles were still translated and adapted from English-language media, such as an [article](#) about the disinformation targeting Chinese female immigrants that indirectly cited CAA's report through a Guardian article.

Our examination of Chinese-language news outlets revealed that while disinformation was widely circulated on social media, larger Chinese-language media organizations refrained from promoting those false narratives. However, the Chinese language media's seemingly haphazard approach to news sourcing could mislead audiences. Regarding the fight against disinformation, these outlets failed to systematically or proactively tackle the issues affecting the Chinese American community. In particular, they did not actively debunk the widespread false information circulating on Chinese social media. This passive approach also was reflected in the absence of comprehensive original reporting and dependence on news sources in English.

## 2.3. COMPUTATIONAL/QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

As explained in the methodology section above, our computational analysis focuses on Black, Chinese American, and Spanish-language Latino media. We did not include Indigenous media content in the quantitative analysis because the volume of articles on disinformation was too low.

For our quantitative analysis of **9,723 news articles from 37 outlets**, we used a large language model (LLM) to identify the primary topic of each article. In addition, we used computational analysis to identify narratives that arose in the coverage, whether disinformation was reported or fact-checked, and whether there were observable biases toward specific people or issues.

The primary topics make visible which subjects dominate the content related to coverage of disinformation and elections in the ethnic media studied. The topic analysis found that election news published by the ethnic media focused on democratic participation and immigration. Latino media were more likely than the other groups to mention 'misinformation' and 'disinformation' directly.

Narrative analysis showed variation in the stories that were told in the different media groups, with more mentions of natural disasters in the Chinese American media, compared to other groups. This is in contrast to the Black media, where the narrative analysis showed the popularity of coverage of immigration, elections, and political campaigns. In the Latino media, narrative analysis surfaced a very strong focus on immigration. All outlets had high mentions of 'misinformation', but the Black media dominated in the coverage of 'disinformation' broadly. In addition, the three media groups showed distinctive patterns of bias in election coverage, with Chinese American media primarily reflecting a pro-Trump bias, Black media reflecting an anti-Trump bias, and the Latino media being more mixed in its perspectives on Trump.

## Primary Topic

The overall topical distribution in Black-focused news outlets reveals a dominant focus on democratic participation and immigration-related issues. Within the democracy-related topics, "election" stands out as the most frequently mentioned, appearing in 645 articles. This is followed by related issues such as "voting rights" (81), "voter fraud" (33), "election fraud" (32), "2024 presidential election" (30), and "voter suppression" (26). Together, these topics suggest a deep concern with voter access, electoral fairness, and democratic integrity. These are particularly relevant to communities historically affected by intentional disenfranchisement. Immigration-related coverage is the next major thematic cluster, with "immigration" (266), "immigration policy" (94), and "immigrants" (66) collectively appearing in 426 articles. This indicates that immigration is not only a key issue in isolation, but also in terms of how policy and identity are framed in Black media coverage.

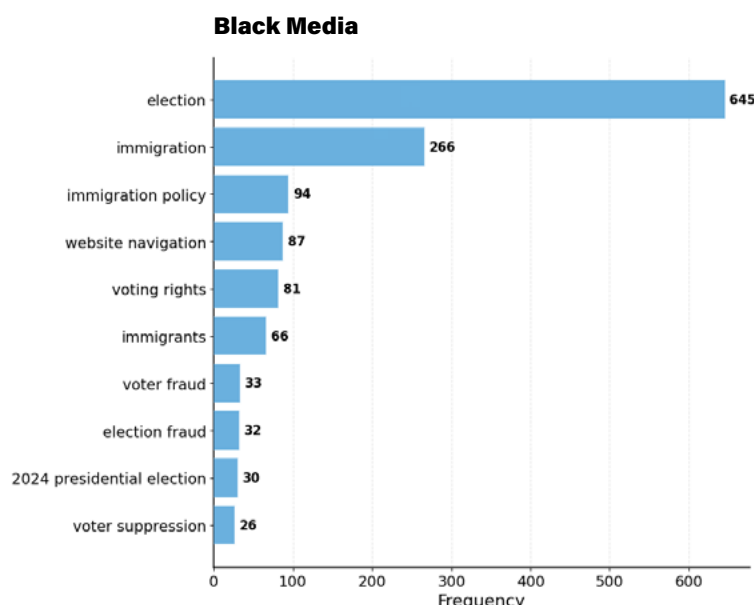


FIGURE 26: Within the predominant democracy-related topics which Black-focused news outlets focus on, "election" stands out as the most frequently mentioned, appearing in 645 articles. Immigration-related coverage is the next major thematic cluster.

A similar pattern is observed in Chinese American and Latino outlets, where democratic participation and immigration also emerge as dominant themes. In both groups, "election" is the most frequently identified topic. Immigration-related topics are also prominent, particularly in Spanish-language outlets, where they appear with even greater intensity than in Black outlets. Combining "immigration," "immigration policy," "immigration enforcement," "immigrants" and "immigration reform" yields 786 mentions — far surpassing the 426 immigration-related mentions in Black outlets — indicating the deeply personal and ongoing relevance of immigration in Spanish-speaking communities, and highlighting the intersection of immigration topics with disinformation narratives.

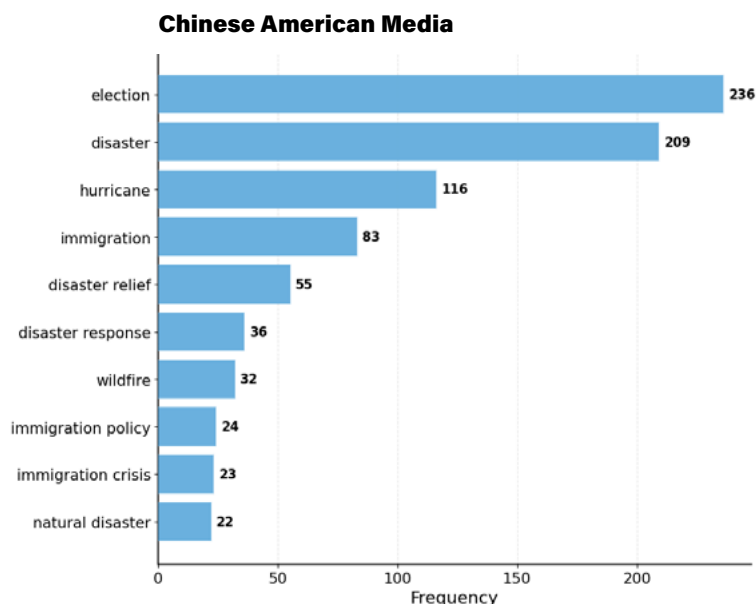


FIGURE 27: Democratic participation and immigration also emerge as dominant themes in Chinese American serving outlets, as well as disaster relief.

Another notable distinction in the Latino outlets is the presence of “misinformation” (51) and “disinformation” (39)<sup>21</sup> as top-ranked topics, suggesting heightened editorial attention to information integrity. This could potentially be in response to election-related or immigration-related falsehoods targeting these communities.

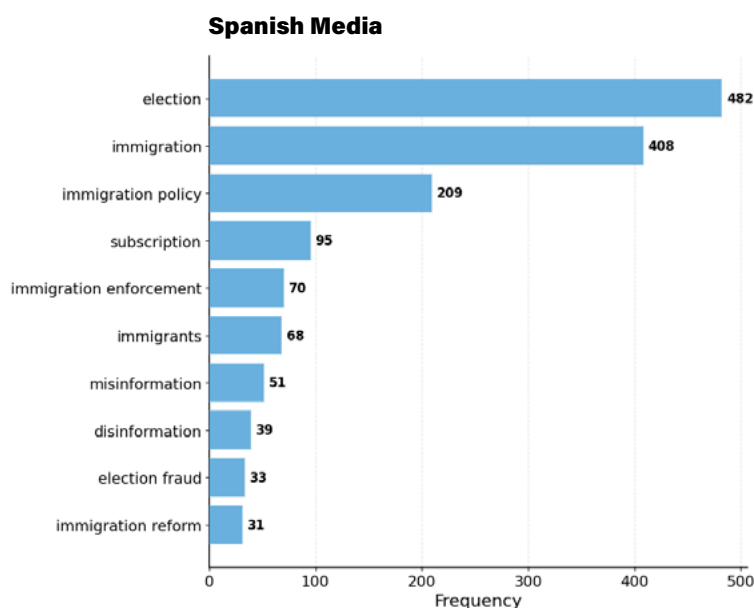


FIGURE 28: Collapsing the immigration-related topics, (such as “immigration,” and “immigration enforcement”) produces 786 mentions — highlighting immigration’s deeply personal salience in Spanish-speaking communities and its overlap with disinformation.

## Narrative Analysis

In addition to identifying the most prominent topics of coverage, we determined the main narratives present in each article using the LLM. The model generated a short summary for each article, limited to a maximum of 10 words. To uncover patterns among these summaries, we applied several unsupervised machine learning algorithms, including KMeans clustering, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), and Non-negative Matrix Factorization (NMF) based topic modeling. Among these methods, KMeans clustering produced the best results. This is likely because the summaries are very short, and topic modeling algorithms such as LDA and NMF typically perform

<sup>21</sup> Although this report uses “disinformation” as an umbrella term for disinformation, misinformation, etc., both the manual and computational content analysis searched for a range of terms that could reflect disinformation, including “misinformation”, “fake news”, “propaganda”, etc.

better on longer documents. Moreover, each summary tends to focus on a single topic, which further reduces the effectiveness of topic modeling approaches in this context. For instance, in the case of Chinese American articles, the optimal number of clusters was found to be nine. Below, we present word clouds which represent the content of each of these nine clusters and provide more context for the primary topics discussed above.

For the **Chinese American** articles, the largest cluster focused on political discourse involving Trump, Biden, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and China, while others centered on specific natural disasters such as Hurricane Milton, Hurricane Helene and the California wildfires. These mentions are not surprising in the context of disinformation, as [it is often linked to emergencies, including disasters](#). Several clusters captured government response and disaster relief efforts, including criticism of FEMA. Political developments such as Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 presidential election also emerged. Immigration was a recurring theme, with distinct clusters addressing the [so-called 'immigrant crisis'](#) in New York City, federal funding efforts, and coverage of undocumented immigrants.

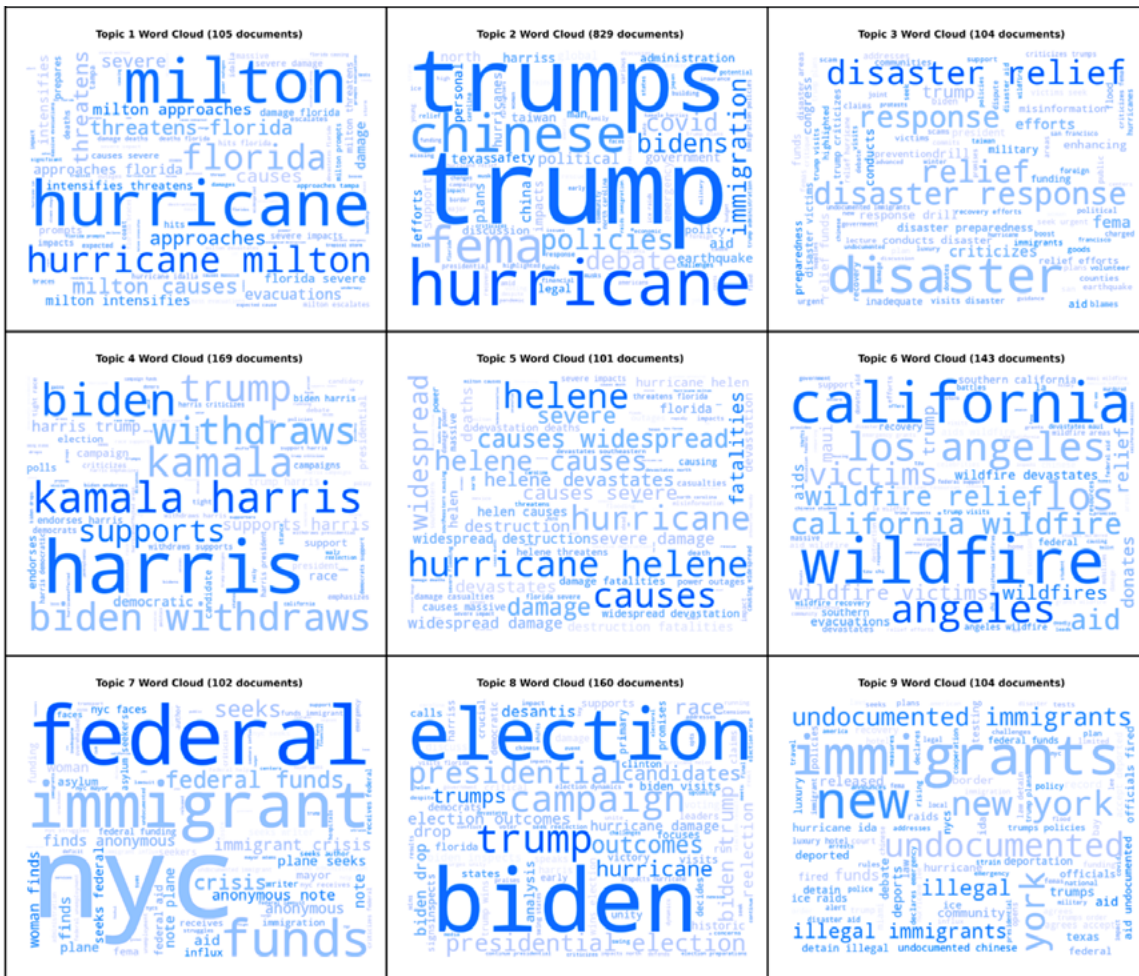


FIGURE 29: Word clouds generated for each cluster in the main narratives of the Chinese American articles.

In the **Black** media corpus, the optimum cluster number was 10. The largest cluster (Topic 2) covered broad themes of immigration, elections and political campaigns, often referencing Haiti and Harris. This coverage was no doubt driven by the scandal over false claims amplified by Trump and Vance that Haitian immigrants were eating their neighbors' pets in Ohio. Several clusters centered on U.S. electoral politics, including voter fraud and suppression (Topic 3), Black voter engagement and political targeting (Topic 4), voting rights and related legal issues (Topic 5). Clusters also highlighted Kamala Harris' endorsement in the presidential campaign (Topic 7) and immigration narratives focused specifically on Haitian immigrants and cultural communities (Topic 8). President Trump's immigration policies and the criticism they drew formed another coherent topic (Topic 1), while a smaller cluster (Topic 10) focused on the impact of Trump's policies on Black Americans. One cluster (Topic 9, not added in the word cloud table) appeared to be an outlier, capturing procedural or navigational content related to websites and sign-in instructions.



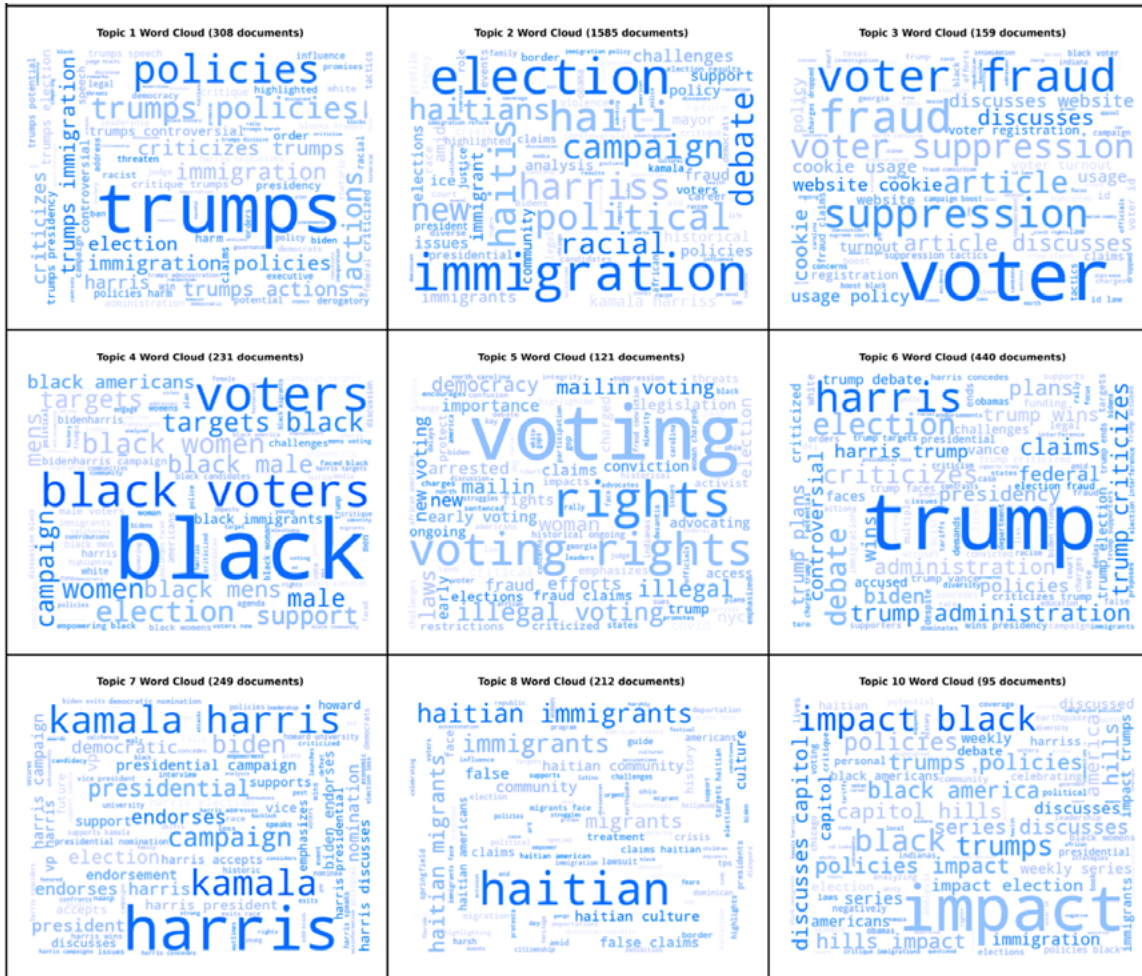


FIGURE 30: Word clouds generated for each cluster in the main narratives of the Black outlets' articles.

Finally, in the **Latino** corpus, the optimal cluster number was 5. On a high level, the clusters emphasize an intersection of immigration, disinformation and electoral politics. For example, the largest cluster (Topic 3) focused on immigration, featuring discussions of Trump's border policies, ICE, citizenship and immigrant communities, with frequent references to disinformation. Topic 4 centered on election-related controversies, particularly claims of voter fraud and disputes over presidential election results. Topic 5 combined political figures (Trump and Harris) with themes around voting access, including in-person voting and voter ID requirements and birthright citizenship. Topic 1 highlighted the role of disinformation in both U.S. midterm and Venezuelan elections, emphasizing concerns about electoral integrity. Finally, Topic 2 captured subscription-driven news content, especially immigration-focused newsletters and updates.

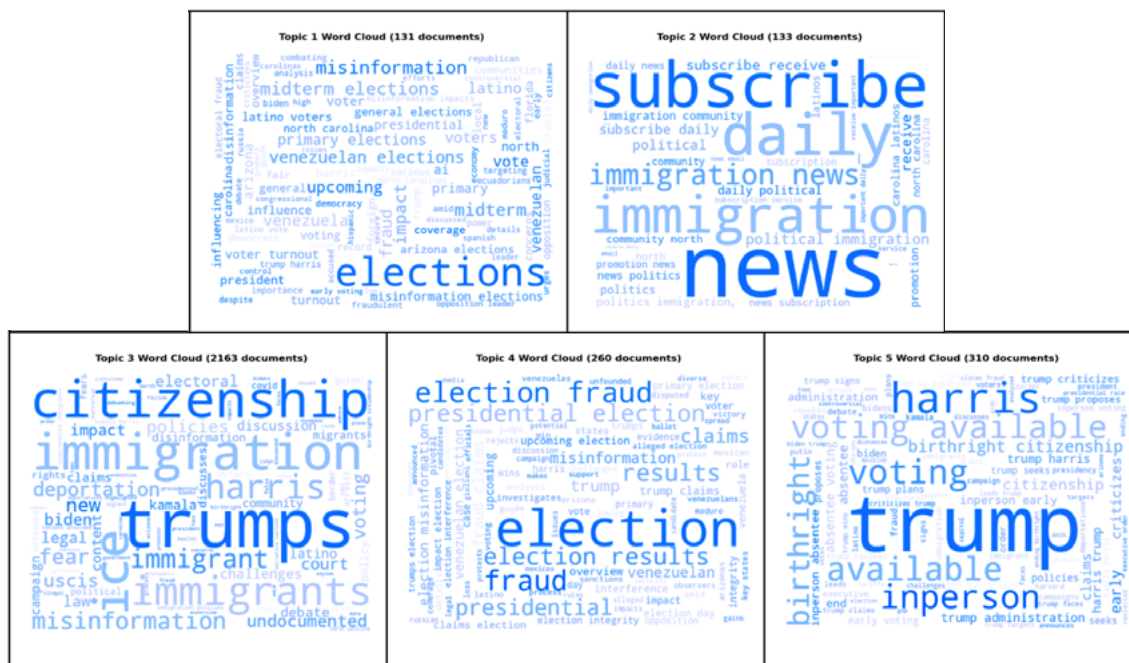


FIGURE 31: Word clouds generated for each cluster in the main narratives of the Spanish-language articles.

## Bias Analysis

We also examined the bias or slant of the articles toward different people or issues. The LLM was directed to determine and describe any ideological or political bias (if it existed) in the article. Below, we provide bar charts displaying the results for each news corpus.<sup>22</sup>

Distributions across the three ethnic news outlet categories show notable differences in narrative emphasis and political alignment. Chinese American outlets exhibit a strong skew toward pro-Trump content (46 mentions), significantly outpacing any other bias category, followed by modest deployment of pro-Harris, pro-Democratic, and pro-U.S. narratives.

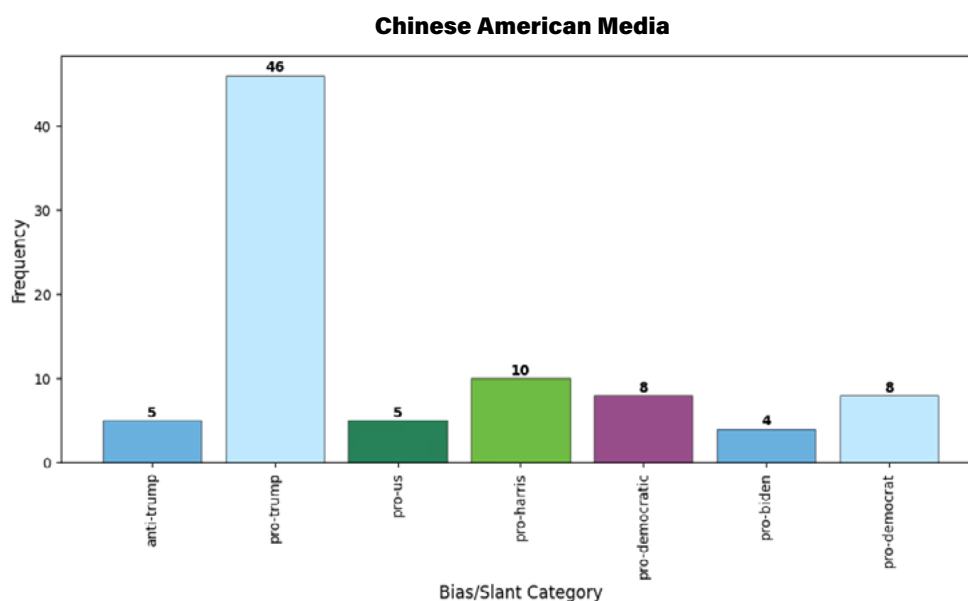


FIGURE 32: Chinese American outlets exhibit a strong skew toward pro-Trump content (46 mentions), significantly outpacing any other bias category.

<sup>22</sup> Note that we only show bias categories that are either pro- or anti- in nature, excluding neutral stances. In addition, only the categories that were present more than once are considered.

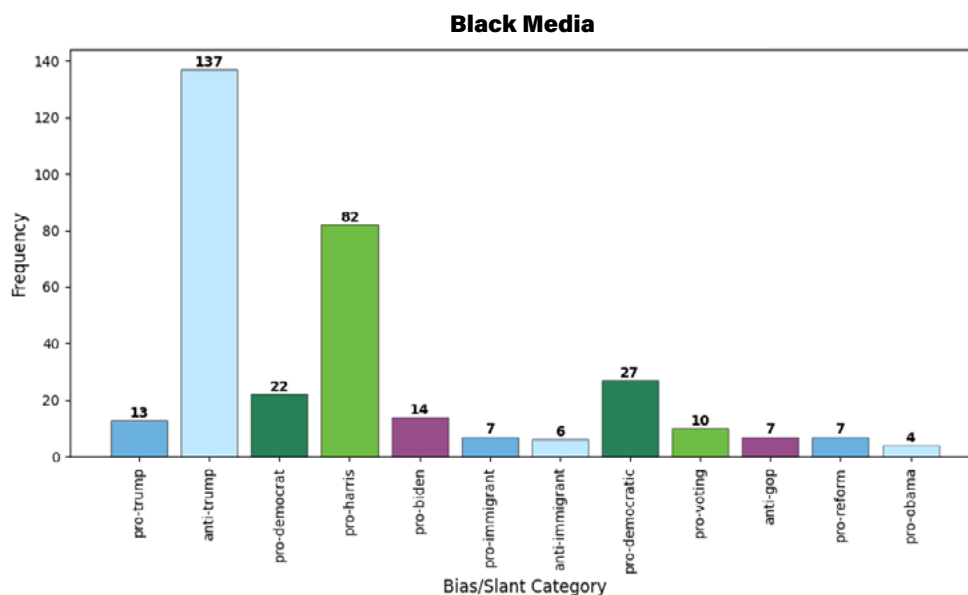


FIGURE 33: Black-focused outlets showed a predominantly anti-Trump, pro-Harris sentiment (137 mentions).

By contrast, Black outlets show a dominant anti-Trump sentiment (137 mentions), accompanied by considerable pro-Harris (82), pro-Democratic (27), and pro-Biden (14) content. This indicates a strong Democratic alignment and a focus on political figures who champion racial justice.

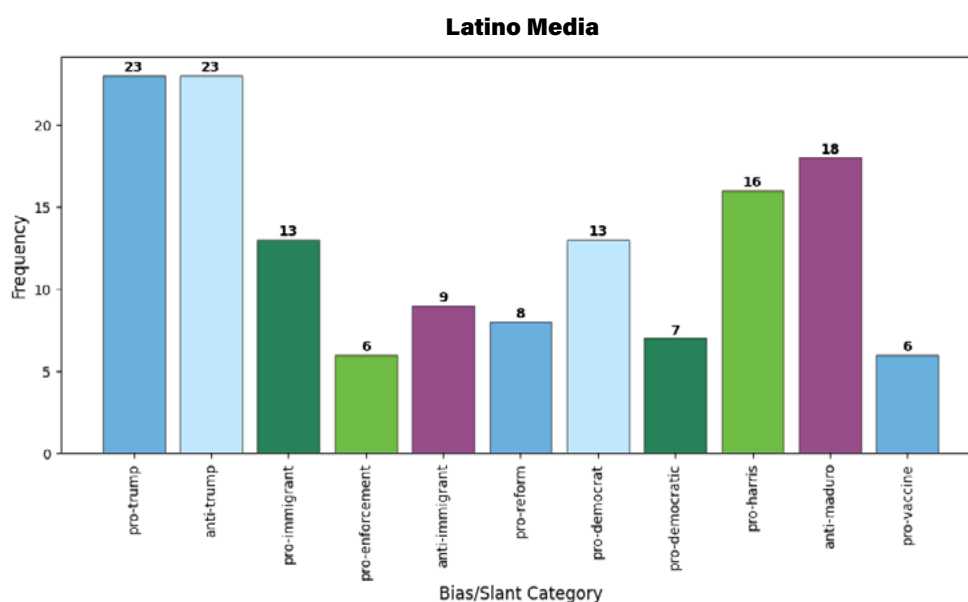


FIGURE 34: Latino outlets display both pro-Trump and anti-Trump slants (23 each).

Meanwhile, Latino outlets display a more ideologically-balanced pattern, with both pro-Trump and anti-Trump slants (23 each), alongside notable frequencies of pro-Harris (16), and pro-immigrant (13) biases. This suggests a complex media landscape where anti-authoritarian narratives coexist with competing U.S. partisan slants.

## Disinformation Analysis

For each news article, we asked the LLM model if any 'misinformation,' 'disinformation,' 'fake news,' 'propaganda,' or 'conspiracy theories' were either reported on or fact-checked in the article. If yes, then we extracted that portion from the article and identified the primary amplifier(s) of that false information according to the article. For example, consider the following excerpt from an article in the Black media outlet [Indianapolis Recorder](#):

*Gloster said he has struggled with teaching contemporary politics, including the presidential debate in which Trump falsely suggested Haitian immigrants were eating cats and dogs. In a class that discussed the debate, one student had faced an arduous journey emigrating from Guatemala, while others were more sympathetic to Trump.*

From this excerpt, the LLM model determined that the news article contains misinformation (in this case, “False claims about Haitian immigrants”), that the message was spread by “Trump” according to the article, and that the message was debunked; presumably because of the phrase ‘falsely’. An example of the computationally-generated results can be seen below:

**“type”: “misinformation”,**

**“spread\_by”: “Trump”,**

**“nature”: “False claims about Haitian immigrants.”,**

**“article\_treatment”: “debunked”,**

**“evidence”: “Trump falsely suggested Haitian immigrants were eating cats and dogs.”**

Across all three ethnic press corporuses, misinformation represents the dominant subset of disinformation types substantially outpacing propaganda in every case. The coverage of misinformation varies significantly, with the Black media having the highest volume (1,232 instances), followed by Spanish (864), and Chinese-language media showing the lowest but still substantial levels (224). This variation likely reflects differences in community size, media consumption patterns, and targeting strategies.

#### Disinformation Analysis: Chinese American media

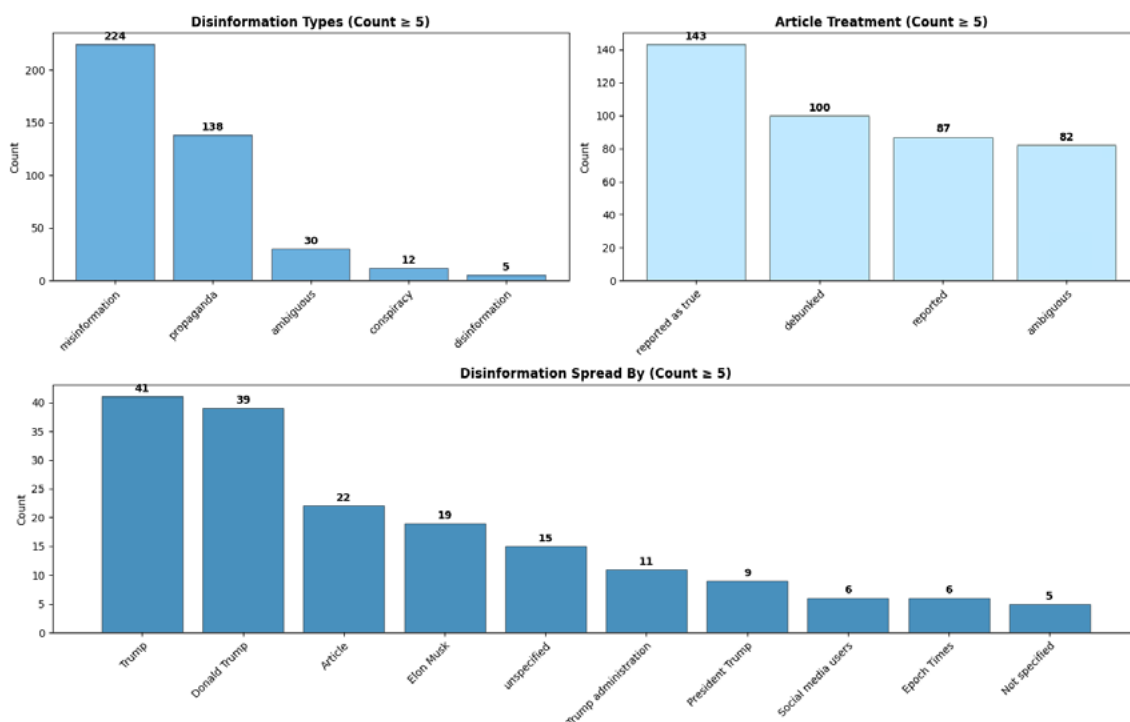


FIGURE 35: Chinese American media show the lowest — but still substantial — level of disinformation-related content compared with the other two ethnic media group analyses.

Political figures feature prominently in the “spread by” categories across all three corporuses, with Trump dominating, indicating his central role in disseminating false information covered by diverse ethnic news outlets. Another public figure present in two corporuses is Elon Musk.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> A complete list of all the disinformation and related claims are available in these hyperlinked files: [Chinese American](#), [Black](#), [Latino](#).



### Disinformation Analysis: Black media

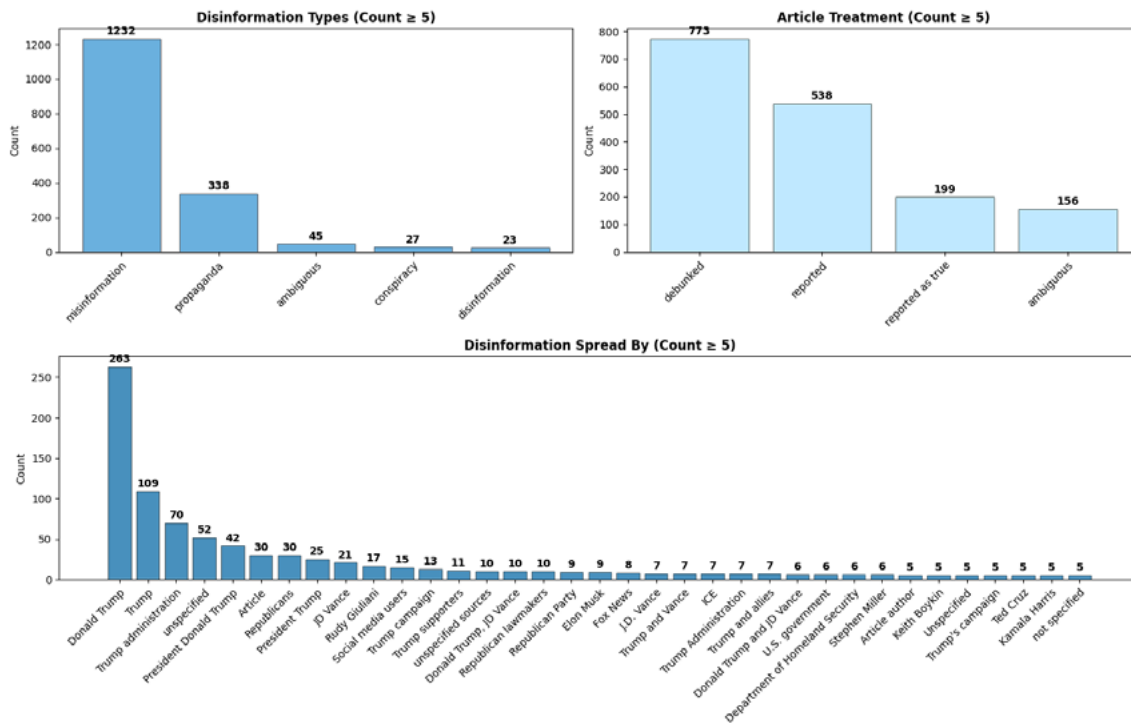


FIGURE 36: Black media have published the highest volume of content relating to disinformation across our analyses, compared to the other ethnic groups. This finding is distinct from the measurement of actual disinformation claims found in each outlet's coverage.

### Disinformation Analysis: Latino media

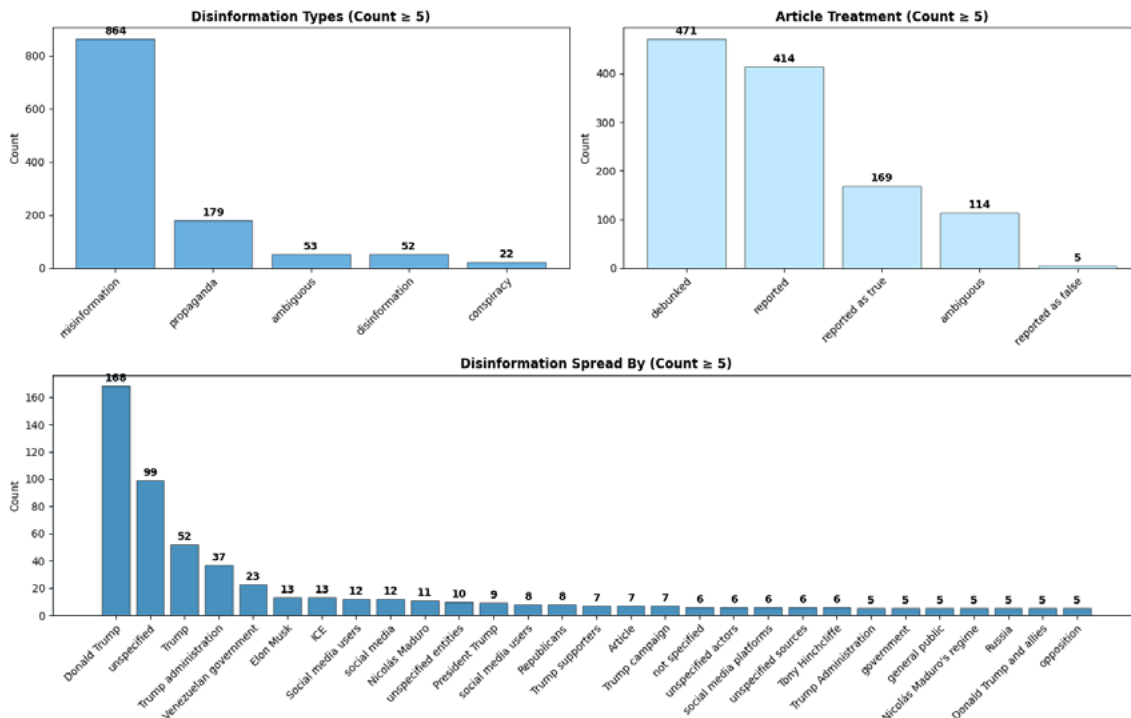


FIGURE 37: In the Latino media analyzed, Donald Trump was found to be the most frequent spreader of disinformation.

Overall, this research shows that disinformation was often referred to in the coverage of the 2024 elections in the Black, Latino, and Chinese-language outlets, although the nature of narratives linked to elections and disinformation varied across the media groups. It is particularly striking that the analysis found that Trump was identified as the dominant disinformation spreader across the three ethnic media groups. Nevertheless, the Chinese-language media content showed a pro-Trump bias, while Black media was generally negative towards Trump, and the Latino media had a more mixed slant.

## 2.4. SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

In addition to our analysis of news articles, we reviewed Facebook posts to glean general insights on what types of disinformation-related news stories the **45 ethnic and Indigenous media outlets** chose to disseminate via social media. The temporal focus was on the 2024 U.S. presidential election cycle (between August 1, 2024 – January 19, 2025).

**Among the 303 posts we collected, the majority exposed disinformation narratives in an effort to refute them.** Several posts also highlighted journalistic or policy actions taken to counter disinformation, such as the [news organizations' withdrawal from X](#), partnerships with fact-checking organizations or citizen-on-the-street interviews with people about their views on specific, disinformation-fueled conspiracy theories. Of the 303 posts, only two posts were attributed to Indigenous outlets, both covering the same story, which exposed "[fake substance abuse treatment facilities following a \\$2.5 billion Medicaid fraud scam](#)." Accordingly, further content analysis of Facebook posts was limited to the other three ethnic groups: Black, Latino, and Chinese-language media.

A variety of topics emerged from the reviewed posts, including politics, racial issues, immigration, health/science/environment, entertainment/sports, scams, crimes, and coverage on broadly defined counter-disinformation activities (see Figure 38).

The first three topics — politics, race, and immigration — were often intertwined in the context of election coverage, reflecting heightened political awareness within ethnic minority communities during the election period. While non-political topics (e.g., health, crime, entertainment) were common, more than half of the collected posts were directly related to the U.S. election, suggesting ethnic newsrooms made efforts to mitigate election disinformation. Latino media outlets published the highest proportion (more than half) of the election-related posts analyzed, followed by Black and Chinese American media. Although Chinese-language media published relatively fewer Facebook posts, their selection patterns and language choices exhibited unique characteristics.

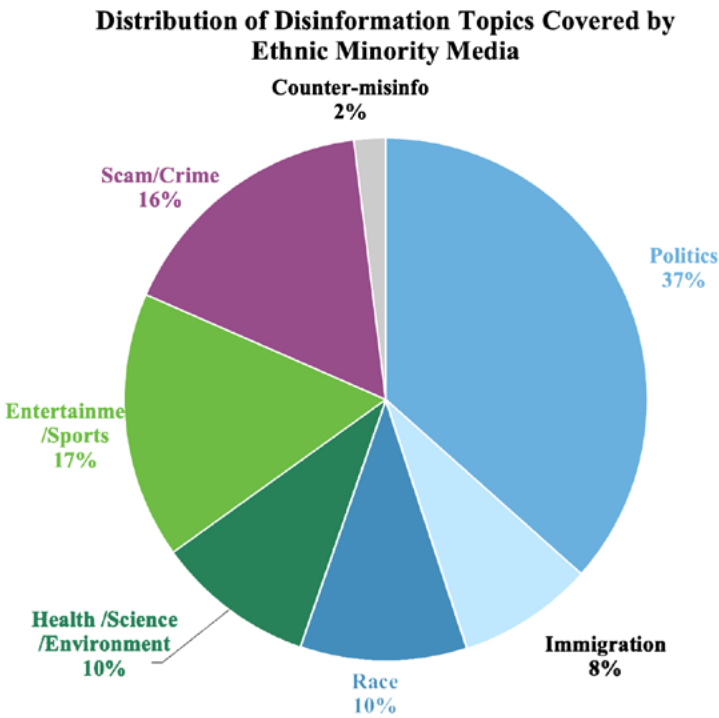


FIGURE 38: Distribution of Disinformation Topics Covered by Ethnic Minority Media.

## Topic Distribution and Trends

On Facebook, all three ethnic media groups focused most heavily on political affairs. Racial topics (such as [fake news](#) about Black looters during the Los Angeles wildfires, and Black and Brown communities facing racial and health-related stigma in the South), were the second-most common disinformation-related topic in Black media coverage, while immigration was the second-most covered by Spanish-language Latino media. Notably, Chinese American media did not include any stories related to racial disinformation during the examined period (see Figure 39).

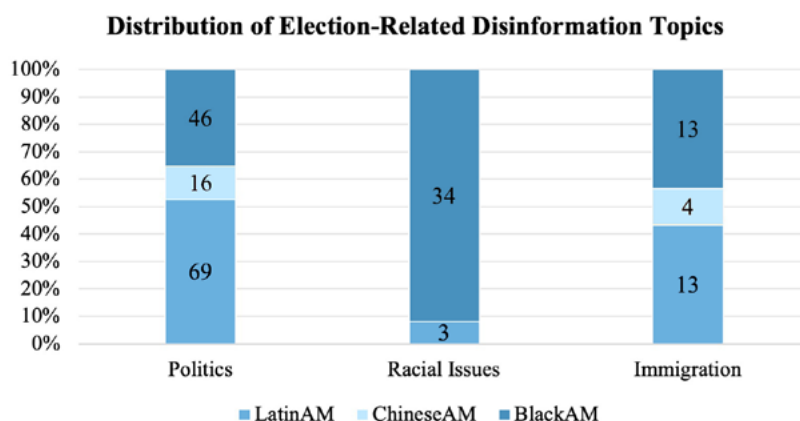


FIGURE 39: Distribution of Election-Related Disinformation Topics by Ethnic Media Type.

A collective temporal trend reveals that the volume of coverage for politically-charged disinformation topics peaked during the campaign period, reflecting media responses to heightened disinformation campaigns around key election dates (see Figure 40).

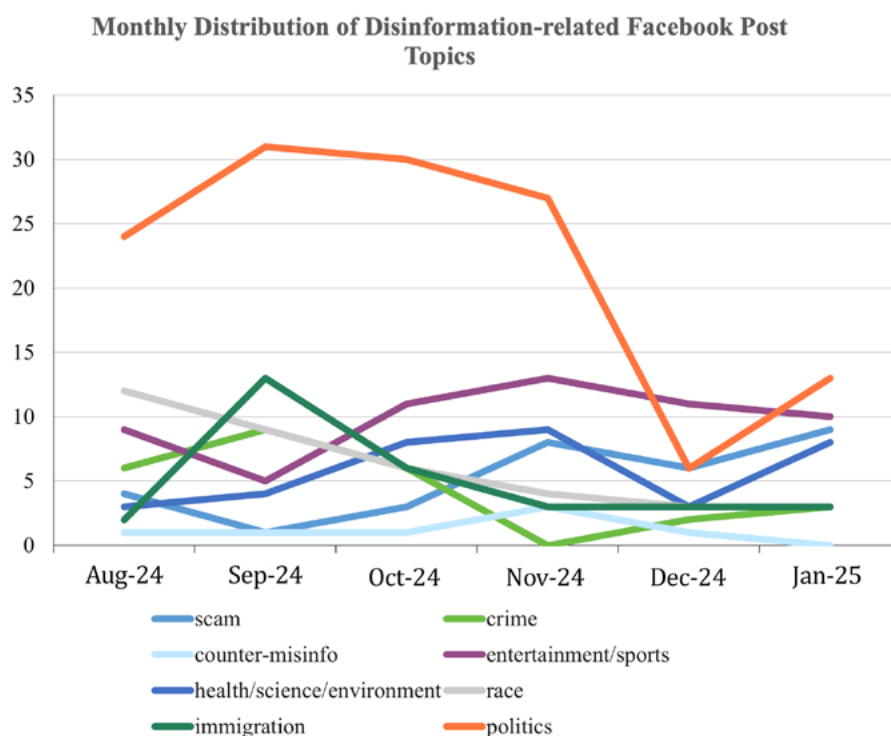


FIGURE 40: Weekly distribution of disinformation topics (Aug 2024 – Jan 2025).

When broken down by ethnic group, Latino media maintained steady disinformation-related posting activity throughout the period studied, addressing both U.S. and Latin American issues. By contrast, the Black press concentrated their attention on disinformation during election week, with decreased posting afterward. Chinese-language media showed the opposite trend: they posted sparingly during election week but increased activity as Trump's inauguration approached (see Figure 41).



FIGURE 41: Temporal trends of posting activities.

## Electoral Disinformation: Strategies of Ethnic Newsrooms in Exposing, Resisting, and Reframing Falsehoods

### SPANISH-LANGUAGE LATINO MEDIA OUTLETS

Facebook posts by Latino media outlets demonstrated an interconnectedness between politics, race and immigration in their disinformation coverage. On several occasions, Facebook posts addressed how high-profile politicians (such as Vance) advocated hawkish border policies misrepresented immigrant communities. Also, some effort was made to fact-check unconfirmed rumors driven by fear of the openly anti-immigrant incoming government (e.g., "[False that a new law was created for #immigrants to cross the #border before #Trump comes to power](#)").

An analysis of the Latino media outlets' debunking posts revealed three counter-disinformation strategies they employed:

1. Exposing the malicious actors behind disinformation campaigns (e.g., "[Russia is behind a fake viral video with Haitian immigrants voting for Harris](#)," "[Microsoft claims Iran is attacking the U.S. election with fake news sites and cyberattacks](#)").
2. Partnering with other media organizations to address disinformation (e.g., "[Our allies from the Voice of America traveled to the small town of Springfield, Ohio](#)").
3. Citing opposing statements from prominent politicians (e.g., "[White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre stated that the U.S. Government is concerned about the dangers that false news spread by Donald Trump and other radical Republicans may pose to migrant communities](#)"). See Figure 46.



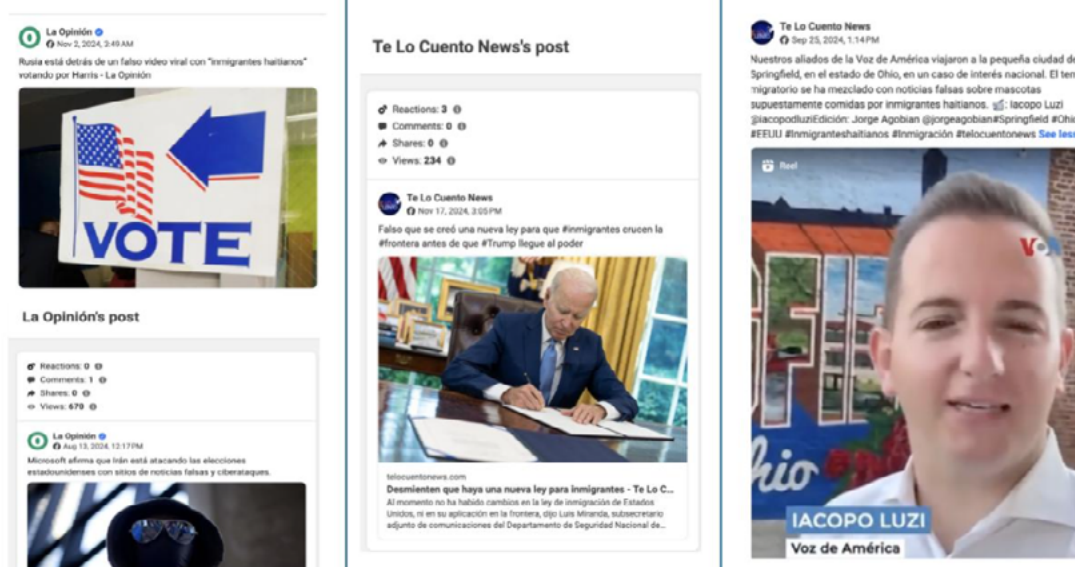


FIGURE 42: Counter-disinformation posts on Latino media outlets' Facebook pages.

## BLACK MEDIA OUTLETS

Black media outlets' Facebook posts highlighted how political candidates used cultural references and emotional appeals to influence and manipulate Black voters. The racial identity of Kamala Harris emerged as a key flashpoint for disinformation, with posts debunking false claims questioning Harris' Black heritage (e.g., ["Pop superstar Janet Jackson's comments about Kamala Harris' racial heritage underscore why disinformation is such a problem this election."](#))

On Facebook, the Black media outlets adopted three key strategies to confront disinformation targeting their communities:

1. Reclaiming narrative sovereignty through cultural memory and identity (e.g., ["Dr. Bernice King condemns a MAGA video misusing her father's likeness to endorse Donald Trump, calling it 'vile, fake, irresponsible' and a misrepresentation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy"](#));
2. Exposing how disinformation reinforces racial injustice (e.g., ["The Exonerated Five have filed a defamation lawsuit against Donald Trump for false statements made during a 2024 presidential debate. Despite their exoneration, Trump continues to falsely claim their guilt"](#));
3. Calling for solidarity between minority groups to counter fear, doubt and disengagement, often triggered by disinformation (e.g., ["Black LGBTQ+ students face increasing struggles from disinformation and hostile policies. Support from groups like The Trevor Project and GLSEN is crucial"](#)).

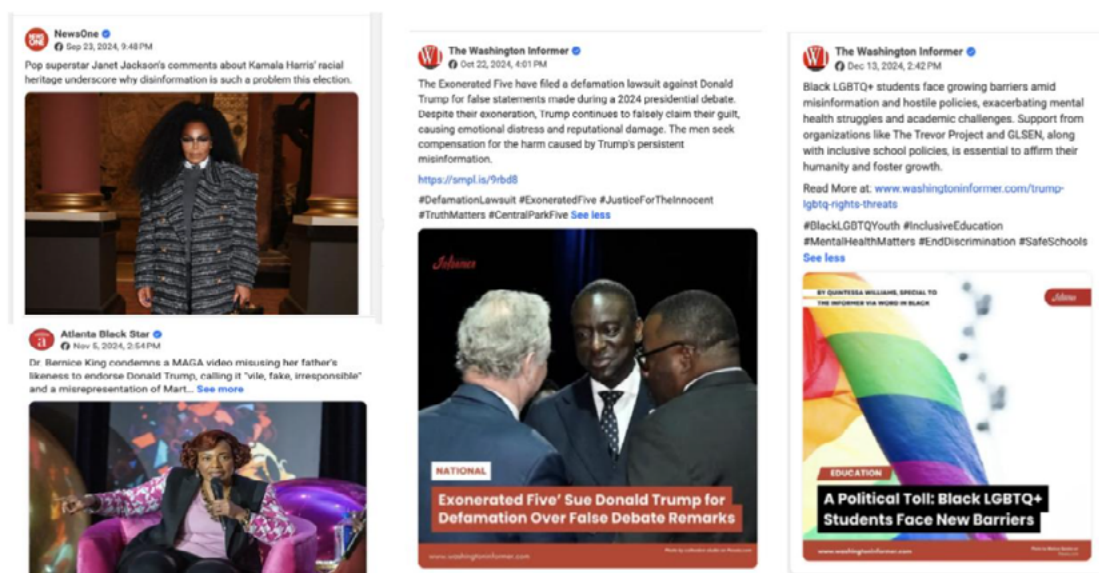


FIGURE 43: Counter-disinformation posts on Black media outlets' Facebook pages.

## CHINESE AMERICAN MEDIA OUTLETS

Chinese American media appeared relatively disparate in their reporting. They included less direct commentaries on electoral candidates, while being more inclined to analyze institutional sources and the mechanisms of disinformation from a transnational perspective, with The Epoch Times being pointedly critical of the Chinese Communist Party.

Their strategies to counter disinformation and promote information literacy included:

1. Exposing State-led manipulation and documenting falsification to highlight systemic information control (e.g., "[Li Yixue's father accuses Jiangxi official report of fraud](#).");
2. Analyzing propaganda tactics and foreign-facing narratives to reveal distorted diplomatic messaging (e.g., "[Biden sends congratulatory message to Xi Jinping? Beijing's strange actions create a false 'congratulatory' atmosphere](#).");
3. Promoting public awareness and critical thinking to build information literacy (e.g., "[It will be even more challenging to verify the authenticity of messages spread during future elections, since they mix truthful and false information. ...American actors, singers, and athletes have been falsely portrayed as making statements on Trump and Harris. These false messages have spread widely on social media and in colleges...Many of them come from AI image generators](#)").



FIGURE 44: Counter-disinformation posts on Chinese American media outlets' Facebook pages.

## Non-Electoral Disinformation: Cultural Manipulation in Everyday Life

In addition to electoral issues, about one-third of the Facebook posts focused on disinformation in the context of everyday life, reflecting the fact that disinformation has bled into various social dimensions, tapping into themes like economic security, public health, safety, and cultural identity (see Figure 45).

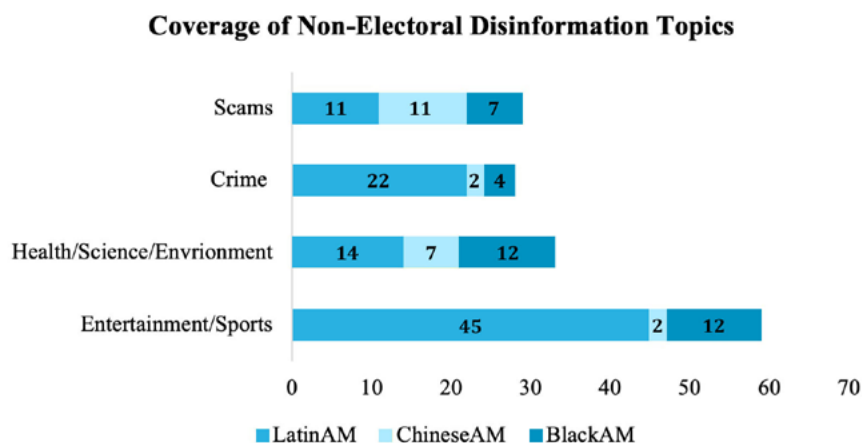


FIGURE 45: Coverage of Non-Electoral Disinformation Topics across Ethnic Media.

## SCAMS

All three ethnic groups studied emphasized the dangers of financial scams targeting vulnerable populations. Chinese American media highlighted acts of healthcare and institutional fraud affecting older immigrants unfamiliar with U.S. institutions and systems (e.g., [“A Southern California doctor and his wife are accused of defrauding health insurance plans and are now paying \\$10 million to settle...”](#)). Black media focused on employment-related scams, particularly “gamified job scams — which lure victims with repetitive tasks like interacting with social media posts or rating businesses” — affecting economically vulnerable young people (e.g., [“The FTC reports a surge in online job scams, particularly ‘task scams,’ costing victims over \\$220 million in 2024...”](#)). Latino media emphasized romance and impersonation scams exploiting emotional intimacy or celebrity impersonation (e.g., [“A fake #BradPitt tricked a French woman and scammed her out of almost \\$1 million”](#)).

## DISASTER-RELATED DISINFORMATION

Facebook posts of natural disaster-related disinformation also spiked following events like Hurricane Helene and the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires. Latino media played a dual role by exposing false claims while also promoting trusted communication to avoid panic (e.g., [“Daniel Llárqués... highlighted the challenge of combating rumors and misinformation about available assistance”](#)).

Black media highlighted how disaster-related fake news aggravates racial tension (e.g., [“Fake news about Black looters during the Los Angeles wildfires ignites a heated debate on racial profiling”](#)). Some posts noted coordinated disinformation activities by foreign State actors aimed at undermining trust in the U.S. government disaster responses (e.g., [“Foreign adversaries have engaged in a disinformation campaign to undermine confidence in President Joe Biden’s administration’s response to two major hurricanes...”](#)).

These cases show how natural disasters and crises can be weaponized to intensify both local vulnerability and political tensions. Through their Facebook posts, ethnic media work to inform their digital audiences by debunking sources of disinformation and falsehoods, while also referencing credible sources for accurate information.

## HEALTH

Several posts alluded to a broader range of public health issues, either directly or indirectly related to disinformation. For example, Chinese American media tackled vaccine skepticism and myths about medical insurance (e.g., [“Robert Kennedy Jr. has spread vaccine misinformation for 20 years”](#); [“Myth 1: Smokers cannot buy life insurance...”](#)). Latino media reported on a case of impersonation in a healthcare setting (e.g., [“Fake gynecologist breaks the silence in Olanchito”](#)). Meanwhile, Black media pointed to how disinformation intersects with nationwide trends, such as declining mental health (e.g., [“Roxane Gay shares her journey of acquiring a gun and protecting her mental health amid digital threats and disinformation”](#)) and HIV stigma (e.g., [“Despite medical progress, stigma continues to drive high #HIV rates in the South”](#)).

## ENTERTAINMENT

Some Facebook posts seek to debunk disinformation narratives embedded in celebrity stories. For example, Latino media reported on a conspiracy theory falsely alleging that a jailed music mogul was [behind the LA wildfires](#). Such content, often amplified by gossip sites and algorithmically boosted feeds, shows how disinformation can disguise itself in popular culture.

## CRIME

In the crime category, Black media Facebook posts connected with disinformation themes focused on systemic racism within law enforcement, highlighting cases like false arrests that disproportionately targeted Black men (e.g., [“Las Vegas police Sgt. Kevin Menon was indicted for allegedly arranging fake arrests of people, the ‘majority’ of whom were reportedly Black men”](#)).

Some Latino media outlets posted on Facebook about political and international crimes, such as a [former FBI informant’s fabrication of Biden family business dealings in Ukraine](#), and [Venezuela’s allegedly false claims linking its detainees to Western intelligence agencies](#).

These posts show how disinformation is often entangled with broader issues of socio-political manipulation and racial stigmatization, underscoring that disinformation is not an isolated phenomenon but a symptom of entrenched systemic problems.

Overall, the Facebook posts reaffirm one of the findings from our interviews with journalists: ethnic media outlets conceptualize disinformation expansively, encompassing not only nationwide false narratives but also commodified criminal activities such as financial and health scams. Some posts further broaden their topical scope by addressing disinformation-related issues in a transnational context, particularly by informing immigrant audiences about happenings in their countries of origin. Although these posts were not intended to actively fact-check specific claims, they nonetheless help ethnic audiences recognize that disinformation is not only a U.S. (or Western) issue, but also seeps into the current affairs of their home countries.

### 3. Public Opinion Survey Analysis

Data from our **online survey of 1,020 U.S. adults**, conducted between June 24 and July 5, 2024, reveals a deeply-rooted anxiety among Americans regarding the veracity of the information they consume, with **over 60%** reporting that they are either “extremely” (30%) or “very” concerned (31%) about encountering false or misleading information associated with news consumption. A further 31% express being “somewhat” concerned, suggesting that nearly the entire public registers at least some degree of unease.

In interpreting this data, we are mindful of the ongoing demonization of the press in the U.S. by right-wing populist (and increasingly authoritarian) political figures, [including President Donald Trump](#), which has a deleterious impact on public perceptions of the trustworthiness of journalists, news outlets and their reporting. Political attacks on the press were [heightened during the 2024 presidential election campaign](#) when our survey was conducted.

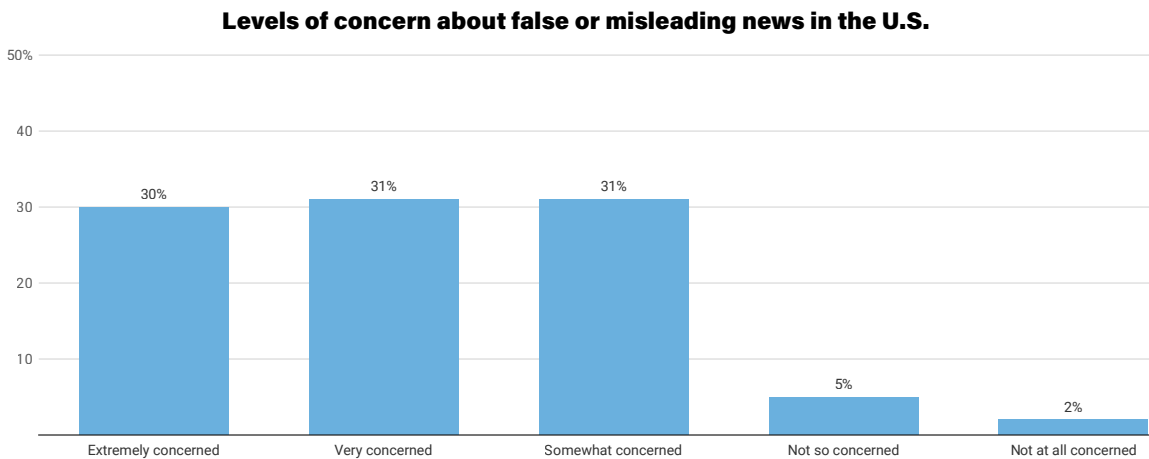


FIGURE 46: “How concerned are you that some of the news you see, read or hear is false or misleading — are you extremely concerned about this, very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned or not at all concerned?” Base: total sample in the U.S. = 1,020.

This near-universal apprehension about “false or misleading” information revealed by our survey underscores how concerns around disinformation have become embedded in the public consciousness, fuelled by polarized political discourse and the fragmentation of the media environment. The relatively small proportion who say they are “not so concerned” (5%) or “not at all concerned” (2%) suggests that disinformation is not a fringe worry but a mainstream preoccupation, potentially shaping how people evaluate journalistic credibility and engage with news content.

#### The trust-disinformation nexus and disparities along racial lines

Despite widespread concern among Americans about false and misleading information, when we asked them how much trust they had in journalists to deliver fair and accurate reporting, **only five percent** said “a great deal”, **19%** said “a good amount”, **37%** said “somewhat”, **27%** answered “not so much”, and **12%** said “not at all”.



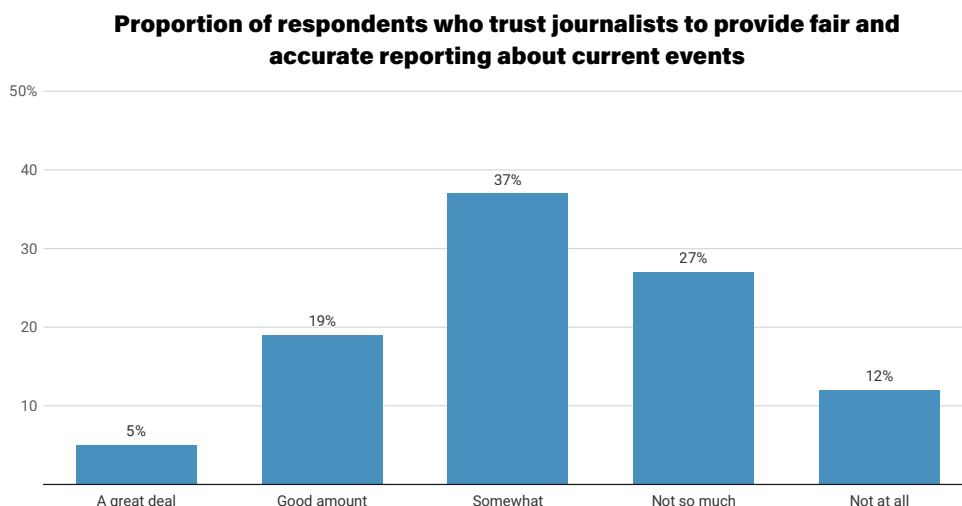


FIGURE 47: "Overall, how much do you trust journalists in the United States to provide fair and accurate reporting about current events?" Base: Total sample in the U.S.: 1,020.

This tension between heightened concern about disinformation and low trust underscores the challenge facing journalism in the U.S. Audiences are deeply worried about being misled, yet often unsure whom or what to believe, which is perhaps unsurprising given the culture of distrust cultivated by a president who was identified as the dominant spreader of false information in our content analysis and who routinely seeks to undercut the credibility of journalism and journalists by referring to the "fake news media". The picture becomes even more complex when we examine how Americans evaluate the press along racial lines, revealing stark disparities in levels of trust and distrust.

Our survey revealed that participants identifying as people of color (POC) were less likely to distrust the press, with **32%** of POC participants expressing distrust in the news, compared to **44%** of white-identifying participants. These findings align with this study's emphasis on the unique role of ethnic and Indigenous media in repairing trust in the press broadly.

**Proportion of respondents who distrust the news media disaggregated by race**

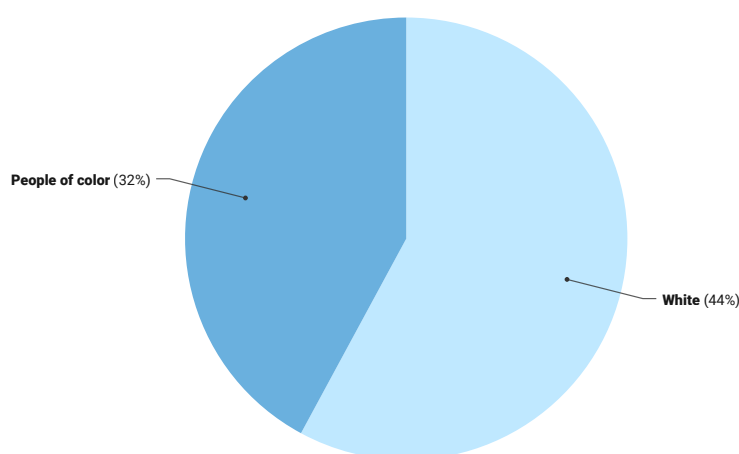


FIGURE 48: "Overall, how much do you trust journalists in the United States to provide fair and accurate reporting about current events?" Base: Total sample in the U.S.: 1,020.

## Reinforcing the independence of the press

Against the backdrop of high concern about disinformation and deep ambivalence towards the press, the American public nonetheless expresses a remarkably consistent view about the *ideal* role of the news media, one that is independent from the influence of government. An overwhelming majority (**81%**) believe that news organizations should *neither support nor oppose* the government.

When we categorize the data, we see little to no variations across demographic and ideological lines, with at least 80% of men and women, liberals, moderates and conservatives alike sharing this belief. Even among younger adults (18–29), who tend to be more critical of institutions, support for media independence remains strong (**77%**). These findings suggest a shared normative expectation that journalism should function as a watchdog, not a partisan actor, a striking point of consensus in an otherwise polarized media environment.

**Public views on the news media's role in relation to government by age, gender, and political leaning**

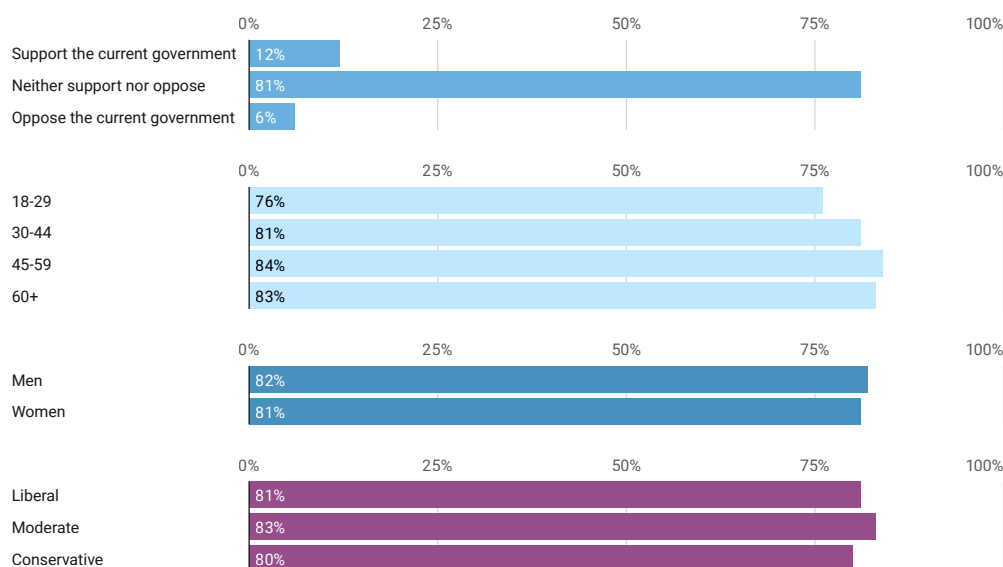


FIGURE 49: "Do you think it is the role of news organizations to support the current government to oppose the current government, or to neither support nor oppose the current government?" Note: Age, gender and political leaning data represent only those respondents who chose 'Neither support nor oppose' (N = 831).

## Assessing attitudes towards political attacks on journalists

Despite broad public agreement that political attacks on journalists represent a threat to media freedom, such hostility appears to have become a normalized feature, at least across the digital media environment. A vast majority of Americans (87%) have witnessed online violence, with **over a quarter (27%) indicating that they have often seen or heard journalists being harassed, threatened, or abused online (18% somewhat often, and 9% very often)**. 35% said they had *occasionally* witnessed such attacks, and 24% *rarely* (Figure 50).

This widespread visibility of online violence towards journalists in the U.S. contrasts starkly with the public's stated concern. As our survey shows, three in four consider political attacks to pose a notable threat to journalistic freedom. The juxtaposition of these findings suggests that while Americans recognize the dangers such behavior poses in principle, in practice they are frequently exposed to it — often without it prompting collective alarm or institutional consequences. Such was the experience of The Haitian Times journalists participating in this study who were subjected to extreme online violence, triggered by disinformation narratives about Haitian immigrants promulgated by both President Trump and Vice President Vance during the 2024 election campaign.

**Proportion of people who have seen/heard a journalist being threatened, harassed, or abused online in the U.S.**

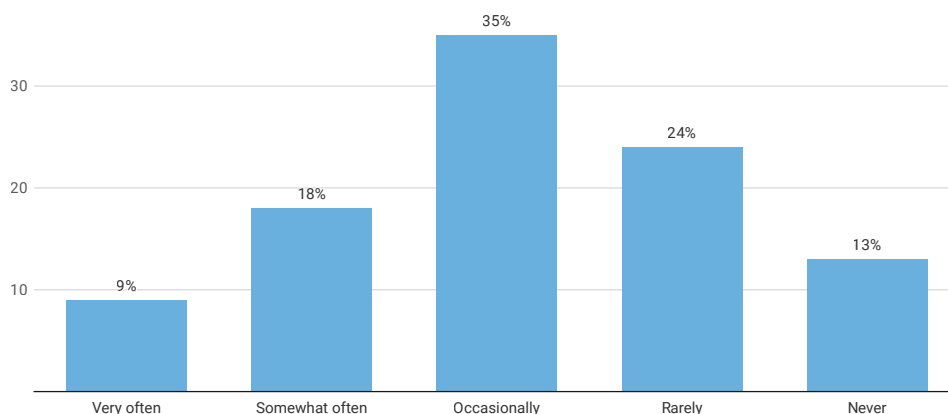


FIGURE 50: "How often, if at all, have you seen or heard of a journalist being threatened, harassed, or abused online?" Base: total sample in the U.S. = 1,020.

### Assessing attitudes toward media freedom

Reinforcing the earlier findings about Americans' strong support for journalistic independence, Figure 51 shows that many also view political intimidation, especially in the form of attacks on journalists, as a serious threat to media freedom. Just under half of respondents (**44%**) consider such attacks by senior politicians or government officials to be a *major threat*, while an additional **31%** see them as a *threat, but not a major one*. That means three-quarters of the public register a notable level of concern about political aggression towards journalists. This aligns with the widely held belief that the media should neither align with nor oppose government but remain autonomous and free to hold power to account without fear of reprisal.

The comparatively small group who see these attacks as merely a *minor threat* (**16%**) or *not a threat at all* (**6%**) reflects a minority position that likely correlates with broader distrust in the press which is, in turn, a phenomenon aided and abetted by populist right-wing political discourse that demonizes journalists and the news media while simultaneously deploying disinformation narratives.

Taken together, though, these responses suggest that even in a highly polarized political environment in which trust is fragmented, there remains a strong democratic instinct to defend press freedom against political intimidation.

### Public perceptions of political attacks on journalists as a threat to media freedom

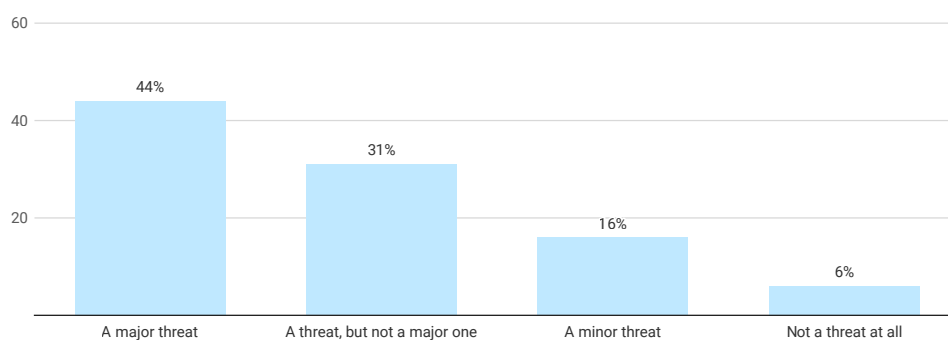


FIGURE 51: "If journalists are attacked by senior politicians or government officials, do you think this poses a major threat to the freedom of the media, a threat but not a major one, a minor threat or not a threat at all?" Base: total sample in the U.S. = 1,020.

## 4. Conclusion

This comprehensive interdisciplinary study of U.S. ethnic and Indigenous media exposure and responses to disinformation during the 2024 presidential election highlights the fundamentally important function that these outlets can play in countering disinformation which thrives in linguistically and culturally diverse communities. It also demonstrates the ways in which the intertwined threats of disinformation and strategic attacks on journalists endanger democracy and press freedom in the U.S.

The pervasive and weaponized nature of disinformation affecting ethnic and Indigenous communities in the U.S. is often promulgated by right-wing populists and increasingly authoritarian politicians, including President Donald Trump, to deepen political polarization and demonize critics. This disinformation frequently exploits pre-existing biases, amplifies harmful stereotypes, and targets vulnerable communities, especially on immigration issues. Linguistic “information cocoons” on platforms like WhatsApp and WeChat are identified as significant amplifiers of false claims among minority linguistic communities, reflecting the systemic failures of American Big Tech companies to protect vulnerable users from harmful disinformation.

Crucially, our study highlights the vital, yet often under-appreciated, role of ethnic and Indigenous media in countering disinformation. Many of the news organizations we studied for this report are deeply rooted and actively embedded in the communities they serve. As a result, they benefit from heightened credibility and trust in their journalism. They are uniquely positioned to address falsehoods before they reach a critical mass.

These outlets employ diverse and innovative strategies, including bilingual fact-checking, prebunking, service journalism, strategic partnerships with experts and participatory journalism. Unlike mainstream media, some ethnic outlets challenge traditional ‘objectivity’ to directly confront politically motivated disinformation and advocate for justice. Their conceptualization of disinformation is also more expansive, including financial scams and the misrepresentation or omission of their communities in mainstream narratives. As a result, they can model effective counter-disinformation strategies for the mainstream media.

But despite their essential work, ethnic and Indigenous news outlets face significant resource limitations, minimal visibility, and growing safety concerns in the context of escalating political attacks on migrant communities — deployed by the White House and others. This means that these outlets have both limited capacity for dedicated counter-disinformation efforts and higher risks associated with doing such work.

In our extensive analysis of 45 Indigenous and ethnic outlets’ coverage of disinformation, we noted a lack of critical reporting on U.S. Big Tech companies’ role in facilitating and amplifying disinformation. Among the Latino press studied here, there is also evidence of a pattern of disinformation coverage that is reactive, rather than diagnostic — one that addresses symptoms more often than causes. There is also some evidence of uncritical dissemination of disinformation within elements of the Latino press, as well as compromised editorial independence, particularly among Chinese-language outlets with reported ties to the Chinese Communist Party. These findings present opportunities for more effective counter-disinformation work and the need for caution regarding the independence of certain outlets.

Nevertheless, while our public opinion survey reveals generally low levels of trust in journalists, it shows that people of color (POC) are less likely to actively distrust the press, underscoring the potential for ethnic and community media to help rebuild trust within heavily polarized communities. As a New York Amsterdam News journalist told us: “We’re not just reporting to people — we’re reporting with people. ...People know us. They believe us. And that’s something a lot of newsrooms can’t say anymore”.



## 5. 22 Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations for action are informed by our detailed study of the U.S. ethnic and Indigenous press during the 2024 presidential election. We direct our recommendations toward differentiated disinformation responders to support more effective editorially-led counter-disinformation efforts — both within the ethnic and Indigenous press and more broadly.

### NEWS PRODUCERS SHOULD:

1. **Address, question and challenge the harmful disinformation narratives that are adopted or propagated by powerful political actors**, particularly if they are used to justify the oppression, exclusion or ostracization of minority, minoritized and vulnerable groups, including ethnic and gender minorities, immigrants and those living with disabilities.
2. **Resist the temptation to uncritically repeat false claims made by public figures**, or give credence to politically-motivated narratives without investigating their factual basis and providing appropriate context.
3. **Avoid “bothsidesism”** by cultivating journalistic practices which prioritize truth, fairness, independence and serving the public interest over preformative objectivity.
4. **Reinforce safety and security mechanisms, recognizing the function of disinformation in heightening the threat environment for journalists and communities at risk**. This is particularly important when disinformation-laced attacks intersect with racism, misogyny and religious bigotry. It applies both to the journalists working for targeted outlets, the sources who inform them and the communities that participate in the outlets’ physical and online communities. Physical, digital and psycho-social responses should be accessible, multilingual and integrated.
5. **Consider the techniques and mission of ‘movement journalism’ which aims to actively serve vulnerable communities when they are under attack or exposed to injustice**, as modelled by several outlets studied here, including the Haitian Times, AmNews and ICT. One contemporary proponent of movement journalism [describes it as](#) “journalism that strives to meet the needs of communities that are directly affected by injustice, and that are taking action toward liberation for all people,” and which “advances justice”.
6. **Engage directly and foster institutional trust within the communities you seek to cover**. Town halls, listening sessions and discussion circles (both digital and in-person) can help establish an open line of communication between news organizations and the people directly served by their reporting. Such activities can facilitate deeper understanding of the complex and polarizing issues affecting communities and provide journalists with key insights into the most relevant (and potentially harmful) disinformation narratives taking hold among their audiences. By listening deeply to communities’ concerns and providing key contextual information with regard to certain topics like public health or election integrity, news organizations can preempt the spread of disinformation narratives with fact-based, service-oriented reporting.
7. **Devote resources to investigating the sources, root causes and financial incentives associated with disinformation campaigns**. Without deep, explanatory coverage, fact checks and debunks are less effective at mitigating the spread of false information. Proactive, contextual reporting which exposes the underlying causes of dangerous disinformation, the infrastructure that supports it, and the bad actors involved is essential.

8. **Identify, explain and investigate the role of U.S. Big Tech companies in facilitating and boosting disinformation narratives and networks that threaten vulnerable communities, and democracy.** These companies' (e.g., Open AI, Google, Meta, TikTok, Microsoft and X) technologies (including social media platforms, chat apps and generative AI tools) profit from disinformation while failing to protect users from dangerous disinformation-laced attacks. The companies' [politically and economically-motivated](#) rollback and removal of trust and safety mechanisms, standards and teams has further endangered vulnerable communities — especially ethnic minorities, migrants and women — since the 2024 election. This demands accountability reporting on the companies from the outlets serving such communities.
9. **Avoid sponsorships, partnerships and advertising deals with governments, corporations and industries' whose values do not align with the pursuit of independent, critical journalism.** Such relationships, including collaborations and funding relationships with Big Tech companies that facilitate and boost disinformation, could erode audience confidence in the news organization's integrity.
10. **Experiment with collaborative partnerships involving grassroots organizations and institutions rooted within the communities they cover.** Civil society groups, educational institutions, and even competing news organizations can be invaluable wells of community-specific insight and potential allies in the mitigation of disinformation.
11. **Partner with subject-matter experts (such as academics) to help plug knowledge gaps** — particularly within small or under-resourced newsrooms. Much like the New York Amsterdam News' partnership with Columbia University's School of Public Health, news producers could draw upon local educational institutions to help dispel disinformation claims which require subject-area expertise. These collaborations can improve the credibility and depth of fact-checks, prebunking and other counter-disinformation work.
12. **Join in solidarity with other newsrooms that share concerns about how disinformation targets diverse communities.** When news organizations serving minority and vulnerable audiences, like some of the Black and Indigenous outlets studied, share resources and even content, reporting can have a broader mitigating impact on disinformation (See for example the "Black Vote/Black Power" series from Word in Black, which ran in both the New York Amsterdam News and [The Chicago Defender](#)).
13. **Strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, both within the newsroom and in the cultivation of sources.** [Studies have shown](#) that audiences are more likely to trust and engage with outlets that reflect their own diversity. Politically-motivated attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and initiatives designed to improve representation, along with access to justice and services, should be resisted, especially by outlets whose business models are built on the service of diverse communities.

## ENTITIES THAT SUPPORT COUNTER-DISINFORMATION WORK, SUCH AS FUNDERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD:

1. **Dedicate resources to preserving the physical, digital and legal security for journalists facing threats due to disinformation-fueled attacks.** Small, independent and understaffed news organizations in particular need support, including digital security training and access to psychological support for reporters who may be targeted for their critical coverage. Such responses should be tailored for the cultural and linguistic contexts in which the journalists operate.
2. **Collaborate on multilingual initiatives to boost public awareness about the value of independent journalism and the dangers of disinformation.** From supporting investigative journalism on the sources, business models and distribution mechanisms for disinformation, to media literacy curricula in schools and nationwide awareness campaigns, such efforts can help citizens of all ages and backgrounds critically evaluate information and understand why a robust, free press is vital to democracy. Emphasizing the societal cost of rampant falsehoods — and how quality journalism acts as an antidote — will cultivate a more discerning and resilient public. Such campaigns should be multilingual.

3. **Develop strategies to combat the specific ways false information is weaponized against particular groups.** Philanthropic funders and international donors committed to democracy and information integrity should direct resources toward further research exploring the ways that disinformation is weaponized against minority groups in the pursuit of profit and power.
4. **Transfer the lessons learned from effective counter-disinformation strategies deployed by the ethnic and Indigenous press** to programs supporting the viability of more mainstream news organizations. Many of the community-centred and community-embedded strategies (e.g., deep listening and public service reporting) adopted by the outlets we studied are widely applicable.
5. **Develop programs that *meaningfully* partner ethnic and Indigenous outlets with mainstream outlets to support knowledge exchange and heighten the impact of investigations.** Such programs should foster an equal partnership between participating organizations, providing the opportunity to enhance the cultural intelligence of mainstream outlets (addressing the kinds of omissions and misrepresentations that aid the spread of disinformation), while strengthening the resources and skills of small independent outlets serving more diverse communities.

## POLICYMAKERS SHOULD:

1. **Hold Big Tech companies accountable for the spread of disinformation, and disinformation-fueled attacks on ethnic and Indigenous communities.** U.S. lawmakers and regulators should develop and enforce laws that address the role of Big Tech platforms in propagating false information, while upholding constitutional freedom of expression protections. This could include requiring greater platform transparency, mandating robust content and algorithmic moderation practices (particularly around elections and public health crises), and empowering regulators to audit and penalize companies that consistently fail to curb orchestrated disinformation on their services. Policymakers must send a clear signal that enabling the viral spread of harmful falsehoods has legal and reputational consequences.
2. **Policymakers must treat attacks on journalists as attacks on democracy and freedom of expression, and respond accordingly.** Stronger legal protections and law enforcement action are needed for journalists facing doxxing, death threats and coordinated online abuse linked to disinformation campaigns. This is particularly important for journalists experiencing online violence at the intersection of disinformation, racism, misogyny and other forms of discrimination. Both the perpetrators and facilitators (e.g., Big Tech companies) need to be held accountable.
3. **Implement policies that strengthen local and independent journalism that serves multilingual, minority and minoritized communities.** Measures could range from financial incentives (such as grants, tax credits or philanthropy-friendly regulations) aimed at sustaining local news outlets and news startups, to initiatives that address “news deserts” where reliable community information is scarce. By bolstering public interest media — particularly in underserved regions, in minority languages, and for marginalized groups — policymakers can help ensure that citizens have access to fact-based reporting as an alternative to disinformation, rumors and propaganda.
4. **Invest in editorial counter-disinformation strategies that that support original storytelling and investigations led by Indigenous and ethnic news organizations to ensure their efforts are culturally and contextually responsive.** This would prevent an overreliance on external news sources and translation which may not be effective interventions for these distinctive audiences. Such a tailored approach could also create pointers for mainstream coverage addressing disinformation targeted at ethnic and Indigenous communities, improving broader counter-disinformation work by NGOs and policymakers.

**Note:** A catalogue of sources consulted for this study can be found [here](#).

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# DISARMING DISINFORMATION

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# UNITED STATES

This U.S. Disarming Disinformation country case study is one of a series focusing on how in five countries around the world encounter disinformation and manage counter-disinformation efforts. Disarming Disinformation is a three-year global effort designed to empower journalists and journalism students to fight disinformation.

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