

Project Saguaro: Natural Gas Megaprojects and Propaganda

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Abstract

In the report on online disinformation related to the Saguaro Project, we analyzed the types of disinformation narratives that emerged around the project between 2023 and 2025, based on a qualitative analysis of YouTube videos and Facebook posts.

A search was conducted using relevant keywords on YouTube and Meta's Ad Library. The keywords included natural gas, transitional gas, Plan Sonora, Sierra Madre pipeline, Gulf of California pipeline, Saguaro Project, Mexico Pacific Limited, and Saguaro Project. The content was coded according to its stance toward the project, the mention of project partners, the main type of narrative, narratives targeting activists, disinformation rhetoric, and type of framing.

The content was later analyzed in three distinct time periods:

1. Announcement of the Saguaro Project (July 2023 – September 2024)
2. Whales or Gas? Campaign (October 2024 – July 2025)
3. Impacts and Delays in the Saguaro Project (August 2025 – October 2025)

This report is based on the methodology proposed by Manzoni et al. (2025) in their study *"Gaslighting: Disinformation on the Energy Transition in Latin America and the Caribbean."*

The key findings can be summarized as follows:

Disinformation about the Saguaro Project and the Natural Gas plants in Sonora shows that on Facebook, 43% of the 134 posts analyzed contained disinforming narratives, predominantly misleading and delay-oriented, focusing on economic benefits, job creation, and the energy transition. The main sources of this content were government accounts (48%), followed by spam accounts (24%) and content creators (20%), with a framing that was primarily economic and driven by human-interest angles.

On YouTube, out of 120 videos analyzed, 39% (47 videos) contained disinformation narratives, 82% of which were misleading, emphasizing clean energy, energy security, and emissions reductions. The main authors of this content were news media outlets and content creators, and the dominant framing focused on economic consequences (79%).

Across both platforms, we observed a strategic communication effort aimed at legitimizing the project as part of the energy transition, despite its reliance on fossil fuels, downplaying environmental impacts by portraying the fossil gas project as a climate solution.

Introduction

The Saguaro–Sierra Madre energy project has been announced as one of Mexico’s most important natural gas initiatives by fossil fuel companies and the Mexican government, highlighting its economic potential and benefits for the energy sector.

The project involves the construction of a terminal for the transportation, reception, liquefaction, and export of liquefied natural gas (LNG) (Techint, 2024), which includes the installation of Saguaro Energía LNG for the export of LNG from the west coast of North America, with a capacity of 15 million tons per year, located in Puerto Libertad, Sonora (Mexico Pacific, n.d.).

It also includes the proposed 800 km Sierra Madre Pipeline, which will serve as the main supply route for natural gas from the U.S.–Mexico border, crossing 16 municipalities in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora (Mexico Pacific, n.d.).

In July 2023, former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced the partnership between the National Electric Commission (CFE) and the company Mexico Pacific Limited, highlighting in a video that the project responds to the growing global demand for natural gas and mentioning that investments have been made to ensure the lowest possible environmental impact. However, various organizations have expressed concerns about the project’s environmental impacts, particularly emissions during the production and transportation of natural gas, including methane emissions (ICM, 2024; MAREA, n.d.), as well as the impact on the marine ecosystem due to vessel traffic and noise pollution (MAREA, n.d.).

During 2024, a campaign was consolidated to denounce the adverse effects of the energy megaproject and advocate for its cancellation. This campaign achieved media coverage and established itself as a significant movement, informing the public about the project’s impacts and creating a counter-narrative regarding one of the current fossil fuel megaprojects.

While environmental activists and organized civil society groups are creating informative narratives about this project on social media, in the press, and in public spaces,

disinformation narratives regarding fossil fuels continue to spread through political and economic actors associated with the project, replicating misleading discourses. This research project presents a case study that allows for the analysis of how disinformation narratives behave in relation to an energy project. The research questions that guided the study were: To what extent are government messages about the project based on facts, and to what extent are they misleading? What are the media reporting on this issue, and what are they saying about the activists? Is there any strategy to counter the “Whales or Gas” campaign?. The main objective of this research is to identify the types of disinformation narratives that emerged around the Saguaro Project during 2024–2025, based on a qualitative analysis of YouTube videos and Facebook posts.

The specific objectives are:

- To analyze the types of narratives about natural gas that emerged during this period;
- To analyze the narratives promoted by stakeholders of the Saguaro Project during this period;
- To identify the narratives that emerged concerning the activists.

To achieve these objectives, a qualitative analysis was conducted on YouTube videos and Facebook posts published between July 2023 and September 2025. The data was organized into types of discourse and types of framing: the former to categorize explicit falsehoods as well as subtler forms of disinformation, and the latter to analyze not only what is communicated but how it is communicated and for what purpose.

Literature review

Disinformation

Disinformation refers to misleading, false, inaccurate, manipulated, or deceptive content created, presented, and deliberately disseminated by relevant actors to undermine the existence of climate change impacts and the need for urgent climate action; it implies intentionality in its creation and propagation, distorting climate realities, weakening support for climate policy and solutions (Lewandowsky, 2012; United Nations, 2021; Climate Action Against Disinformation, 2023). Disinformation operates within a broader ecosystem of information disorder, where partial truths, out-of-context content, and fabricated narratives coexist, confusing audiences (Del Fresno García, 2019).

Natural Gas vs. Fossil Gas

Natural gas is a fossil fuel that is intensively used in various sectors of the global economy, and electricity generation is one of these sectors (ICM, 2024). According to the Energy Information Administration (2024), the combustion of natural gas produces fewer carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions compared to the combustion of coal or petroleum derivatives. The extraction and transportation of gas generate methane (CH₄) leaks, a greenhouse gas 86 times more potent than CO₂ over 20 years (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2014). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), CH₄ has contributed approximately two-thirds more to global warming than CO₂, with the energy sector being one of its main sources of emissions (IPCC, 2023). This inevitably implies stopping the burning of fossil fuels. In the case of gas, the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2021) sets 2035 as the deadline for its elimination from the electricity sector.

Disinformation about natural gas can constitute a specific problem within climate disinformation, as it is framed within disinformation about the energy transition. According to Manzoni et al. (2025), one of the most common disinformation narratives about the energy transition is that fossil gas is a “transition fuel”. Fossil gas, frequently called “natural,” has historically been promoted as a transition fuel toward a cleaner energy future. Like any effective narrative, it contains a portion of truth: gas emits less carbon dioxide than coal or oil, but that is only part of the story. Thus, these narratives can deny, distort, or delay the need to abandon fossil fuels, promoting false solutions, such as natural gas, appealing to frameworks of security, sovereignty, or economic development to justify the continuation of the fossil fuel model. This narrative is repeated transversally across all coverage of the energy transition, where gas is promoted as a cleaner or necessary option to achieve a renewable energy model.

However, Manzoni et al. (2025) mention that not all promotion of fossil fuels constitutes disinformation, as it is possible to explicitly promote the expansion or continuation of their use without containing false, misleading, or manipulative claims, where the discursive normalization of the fossil fuel model, hegemonic and naturalized narratives in media discourse, legitimize the continued use of the fossil fuel model, which goes beyond disinformation.

Saguaro project

According to the Mexico Climate Initiative (2024), the Saguaro project is one of the projects being developed in Mexico and corresponds to the natural gas liquefaction plant in Puerto Libertad, Sonora, which also aims to build a pipeline connecting natural gas production in the United States with the plant and the Asian market. This plant, also known as the Mexico Pacific Limited: Saguaro Energía project, seeks to process 15 million tons per year (Mtpa) of natural gas in three liquefaction trains. The owning company is Mexico Pacific Limited, LLC.

The project has a precedent in 2006 when the construction of a natural gas regasification plant was authorized; later, in August 2024, the project received authorization to be modified and converted into a liquefaction plant (Semarnat, 2025). The project considers a partnership with CFE, which will supply 40% of the natural gas. The plant is expected to be operational by 2028, when it will begin fulfilling purchase agreements with Shell, ExxonMobil, Guangzhou, and Zhejiang Energy (Mariano, 2024).

In July 2023, the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) and the company Mexico Pacific Limited signed an agreement for the construction of a pipeline and a liquefaction plant in Puerto Libertad, Sonora. The project was announced with an investment of 13 billion dollars and the creation of 13,000 direct jobs and 20,000 indirect jobs (Mariano, 2023). According to the official accounts of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, there is a growing global demand for natural gas. It is also stated that CFE will not incur debt nor absorb all costs, but will provide 40% of the natural gas required by the plant for exports, and Mexico Pacific Limited commits to investing in social works in the 16 municipalities through which the pipeline will pass in Chihuahua and Sonora (Mariano, 2023).

The ASEA received notification of an amparo lawsuit, along with other additional lawsuits, which have halted the construction of the liquefaction plant. Until these legal processes are definitively resolved, the initial 2006 authorization remains under litigation before the Federal Judiciary and is currently sub-judice (Semarnat, 2025).

According to the Mexico Climate Initiative (2024), emissions throughout the production and use of natural gas, including its transportation both on land and at sea, and its liquefaction, show that gas production presents the most significant component of the carbon footprint, mainly due to CH₄ emissions. Liquefaction and maritime transport represent other important sources of GHG emissions. The project is significant because it

will be necessary to find alternatives that halt the expansion of fossil fuel use or promote the accelerated development of carbon-free energy sources.

MAREA (n.d.) describes in its study that the main impacts of the project would be collisions caused by the increased marine traffic, with collisions posing a risk of death for whales; the impact from dredging the seabed; noise pollution that threatens marine species and their socialization, behavior, and risk of deafness; its contribution to climate change, as the construction of fossil gas terminals and the transportation of LNG by ships will contribute to methane gas emissions, as well as leaks during production, transportation, and storage.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat) reported in March 2025 that the current administration has not issued authorization for the Saguaro project, which includes authorization for the construction, equipment, use, exploitation, or operation of a private port facility intended for the handling of liquefied natural gas in Puerto Libertad, Sonora.

Month/Year	Theme	Source
July 15, 2023	Announcement by Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the signing of the contract between CFE and Mexico Pacific Limited	Energy & Commerce Government of Mexico
November 2023	Signing of an agreement between Mexico Pacific and the State of Chihuahua for the construction of the Sierra Madre Pipeline	Government of Chihuahua
December 2023	Mexico Pacific awarded Technit E&C a contract to carry out site preparation for temporary facilities	Techint E&C

February 2024	Second work order of the project for site preparation by Techint E&C	Techint E&C
August 2024	Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE) authorizes the open season procedure for Transportadora de Gas Sierra Madre and Saguaro Energy Plant SENER reports mention the Sierra Madre Pipeline	Juárez, 2024 Government of Mexico, Ministry of Energy, 2024
January 2025	"Whales or Gas" demonstration in Mexico City	Whales or Gas
February 2025	Senate presentation of Point of Agreement in the Senate ASEA issues recommendation	Senate of the Republic, 2025
March 2025	"Whales or Gas" demonstrations in Santander	Navarro, 2025
April 2025	Point of Agreement by the Environmental Commission of Congress Amparos and lawsuits to revoke authorizations and prevent project progress	Senate of the Republic, 2025
June 2025	Loss of project momentum due to internal conflicts (changes of investors and executives, errors in obtaining permits)	Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, 2025 Clark, 2025

July 2025	Request for extension for start of operations until 2032	Oil & Gas Magazine, 2025
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Amid concerns about the environmental impacts of the project during 2023, the “Whales or Gas” campaign was consolidated, consisting of more than 30 environmental and Mexican civil society organizations that have managed to position their narrative against the Saguaro Project by communicating the project’s impacts and its effects on the marine ecosystem. This campaign has established press releases, digital campaigns, peaceful protests, calls for citizen action, and research on the impacts.

Methodology

The research focused on two social media platforms: YouTube and Facebook. These platforms were selected because, according to INEGI (2021) in its National Survey on Availability and Use of Information Technologies in Households (ENDUTIH), WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, and YouTube are the most popular social networks among Mexicans, including youth (Statistics from the International Youth Day, INEGI, August 10, 2022).

Facebook was chosen as it is the most used social network (excluding messaging apps), and YouTube was the only platform on the list that is not part of Meta’s networks. Content from July 2023 was included, taking as the starting point the announcement of the CFE and Mexico Pacific agreement for the collaboration on Saguaro Energy, and October 2025, to enable a comparison of the narratives constructed across three distinct periods:

1. Announcement of the Saguaro Project (July 2023 – September 2024)
2. “Whales or Gas” campaign (October 2024 – July 2025)
3. Impacts and delay in the Saguaro Project (August 2025 – October 2025)

In the search for YouTube videos, filtering was performed using eight keyword phrases: natural gas, transition gas, Plan Sonora, Sierra Madre pipeline, Gulf of California pipeline, Saguaro Project, Mexico Pacific Limited, and Saguaro Project; these keywords were relevant for searching content related to the project.

In the first search for Facebook posts, the same eight keywords were used to search content in the Meta Ad Library, and the search was segmented by the regions of Sonora, Chihuahua, Baja California, and Baja California Sur, as these are the states where the projects will be installed or where environmental impacts from the plant and pipelines will occur. A second content search was conducted, in which public accounts of the project partners and stakeholders were analyzed specifically. These included ExxonMobil Mexico and CFE Nacional, being the only partner accounts with advertisement content.

The information was coded according to its stance regarding the project, the mention of project partners, the main type of narrative, narratives about the activists, disinforming discourse, and type of framing.

The information was organized in Excel tables, and descriptive statistics were used for its analysis. The results were presented in tables and graphs.

Discurso desinformante

For this research, the typology of disinforming discourses was adapted based on the study by Manzoni et al. (2025), who define a typology in five categories to identify explicit falsehoods as well as more subtle strategies of narrative manipulation. The typology employed is as follows:

Type of narrative (Discourse)	Definition – Manzoni et al., 2025	Adapted definition
Delay-oriented	They seek to avoid or reduce support for energy transition policies, emphasizing supposed costs, risks, or unfeasible timelines.	They seek to avoid or reduce support for energy transition policies, emphasizing supposed costs, risks, or unfeasible timelines.
Denialist	They deny the existence of anthropogenic climate change or the need for an energy transition.	They deny the existence of anthropogenic climate change, the need for an energy transition, or the negative effects of fossil fuels and megaprojects.

Misleading	They manipulate or take data and arguments out of context to justify continued dependence on fossil fuels.	They manipulate or take data and arguments out of context to justify dependence on natural gas and fossil fuels, highlighting the positive benefits of megaprojects and associating them with other terms.
False	They spread manifestly false information about the costs, impacts, or feasibility of the energy transition.	They spread false information about the costs, impacts, or feasibility of the energy transition.
Conspiratorial	They link the energy transition to supposed global conspiracies, undermining its social and political legitimacy.	They link the energy transition, climate change, and opposition to megaprojects to global conspiracies, undermining their social and political legitimacy.

Disinformation framings

To analyze disinforming discourses, the framing model by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) was used, in order to analyze and understand not only what is said in disinformation but how it is said. The model proposes five types of framing:

Type of framing	Definition
Responsibility	A problem or issue is presented in such a way that assigns responsibility for its cause or solution to the government, an individual, or a particular group. It is used to shape public understanding of who is responsible for causing or solving key problems. However, by framing the problem or issue in terms of an event, instance, or individual rather than in terms of the broader historical context, people are encouraged to offer explanations at the individual level for social outcomes.

Economic consequences	Reports on an event, problem, or issue in terms of its economic consequences for an individual, group, institution, region, or country
Human interest	Provides a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem. It is known as a human impact frame.
Conflict	Emphasizes the conflict between individuals or institutions as a means to capture the audience's interest.
Moral judgment	Contextualizes the event, problem, or issue with religious principles or moral prescriptions. Moral frames can also be referenced indirectly, through quotes or inferences.

Four categories were defined to identify narratives about the activists.

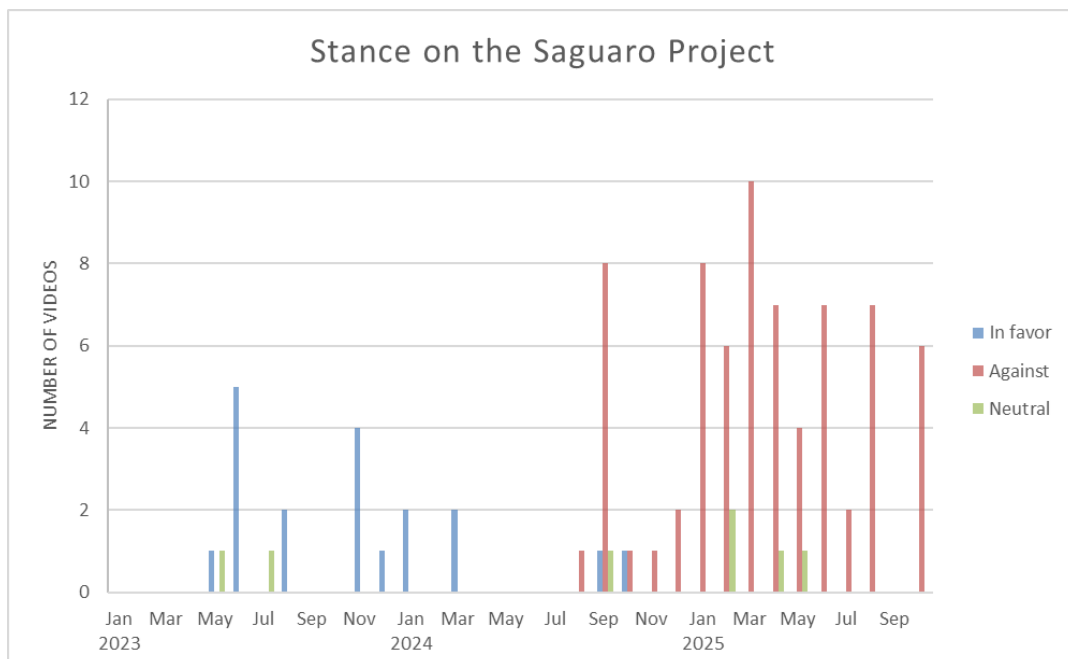
Narrative	Description
Radicalization	Presents the activists as extremist actors or as a threat to the status quo. Protest actions are associated with irrational, violent, or vandalistic behavior.
Nationalist	Links activists as opponents of national interests, the current government, and as being against "development."
Delegitimization	Seeks to minimize and weaken the credibility of activists by raising doubts about their motivations, interests, and arguments. Their actions and words can be taken out of context, with emphasis on personal characteristics rather than arguments.
Neutral	There is no explicit mention of the activists; actions are described from an informative and descriptive perspective, without judgments.

Results

1. YouTube

A total of 120 videos were analyzed. The three main narratives identified are: Project Impacts, Sustainable Energy, Transition Fuel, and Others (including development plans and benefits of natural gas).

Of the 97 videos focused on project impacts, 19 videos maintained a pro-project stance, 5 were neutral, and 73 were against. Pro-project content was dispersed during 2023 and 2024, with no content in favor appearing during the campaign against the Saguaro Project.

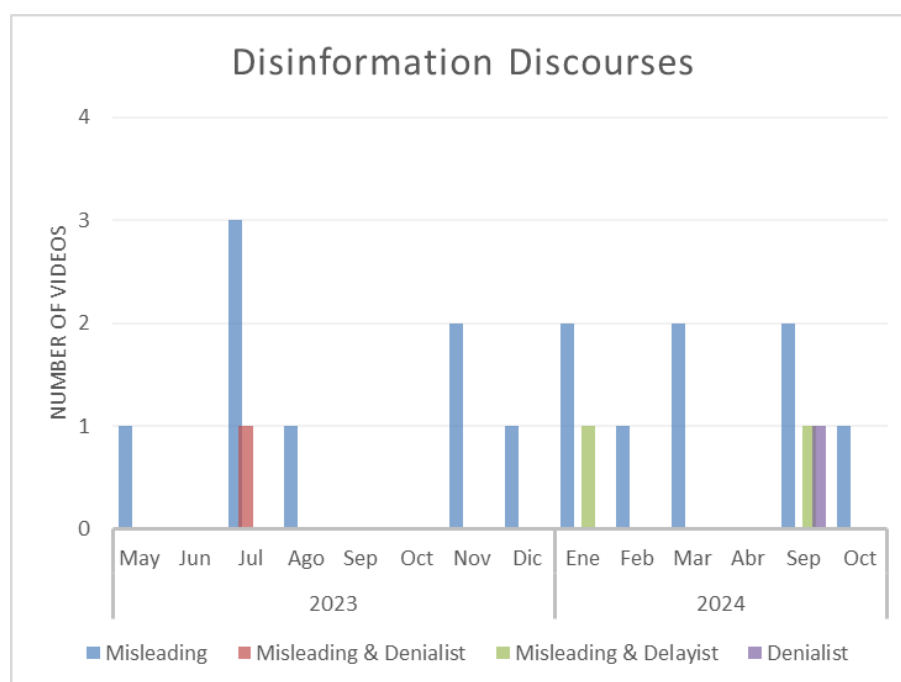


The content of videos against the Saguaro Project falls within the narrative of the negative impacts of the megaproject, including content from the “Whales or Gas” campaign. Therefore, disinforming discourses were analyzed in 47 videos.

Disinformation on YouTube

Disinforming discourses were found in 19 of the 47 videos. The main disinforming discourse identified was the misleading narrative (82%), with smaller proportions being denialist

(9%) and delay-oriented (9%). The predominant type of framing in the videos is Economic Consequences (79%) and Responsibility (21%).



The narratives within the misleading disinforming discourses were mainly associated with economic growth, clean/sustainable energy, emissions reduction, energy security, and social impact and community involvement, as well as job creation. At the same time, they repeat the same disinformation message by asserting that the project has the necessary permits, that the investment in the plant and pipelines will guarantee local gas supply, and continuously emphasize that the Saguaro Project is the most important foreign investment in Mexico's natural gas sector.

"Well, for the state of Sonora because it is indeed an impressive investment and, well, also to have the supply for us." Entre todos Digital, January 2024

"Chihuahua is one of the states with the greatest solar and wind potential in Mexico and has eight pipelines crossing its territory for national and international export. Maru Campos stated that she will continue working on the necessary public policies so that natural gas remains in Mexico and benefits the productive sectors." Índigo Energía e Industria, December 2023

Delay-oriented discourses focus on mentioning the current government's progress on energy issues and its commitment to the environment, while emphasizing that there is fossil fuel infrastructure that supplies current energy needs and the dependence on these models because investments have already been made in this infrastructure.

"...It's a matter of resource investment, it's a matter of, let's say, commitment to climate change, the environment, and the transition we need in energy matters. But we have to be very clear, this plant is built and has the capacity to switch from diesel to gas, but I cannot convert it from gas to solar panels, wind, or marine energy; I would have to build a new generation plant, and there's no way I could remove this one from the market, because I would leave a large part of the population without electricity and power generation." Rocío Abreu, Deputy, Energy Commission, Mexico, September 8, 2025, *Petróleo y Energía*.

The type of authors of these discourses are: Media (8); Content Creator (6); Government (2); Other (2); Partner (1). In most of the videos, no narrative about the activists was found; only 2 videos contained delegitimization narratives, although in one of the videos it was not directed at the activists opposing the Saguaro Project, but at another territorial defense group.

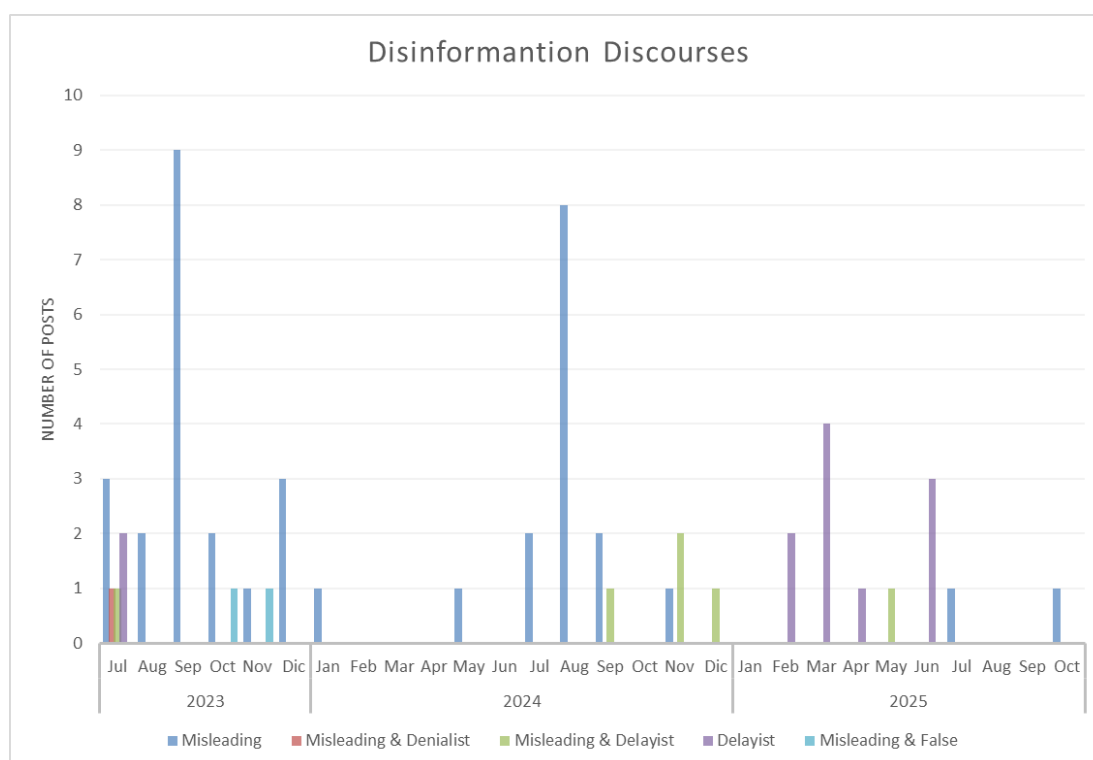
"We would have to see what impact the Saguaro Project has. No, we shouldn't panic either because of any particular group. Because we don't even have information that this pipeline will affect the coasts of the Gulf of California. But well, we will stay alert." Víctor Castro Cosío, Governor of Baja California Sur. Transcript of Meganoticias La Paz video, September 2024. Example of delegitimization narrative.

2. **Facebook**

A total of 134 Facebook posts were examined, of which 43% maintained a disinforming narrative. The main narratives were: Benefits of Natural Gas (33%), Project Impacts (24.5%), Development Plan (20%), Transition Fuel (1.5%), and Other (21%), which include technology and investment.

The predominant narratives were Misleading and Delay-oriented, with smaller proportions being False and Denialist. The most frequently observed types of framing were Economic

and Human Interest. Only 8 of the 58 posts mentioned Mexico Pacific Limited, and no other project partners were mentioned.

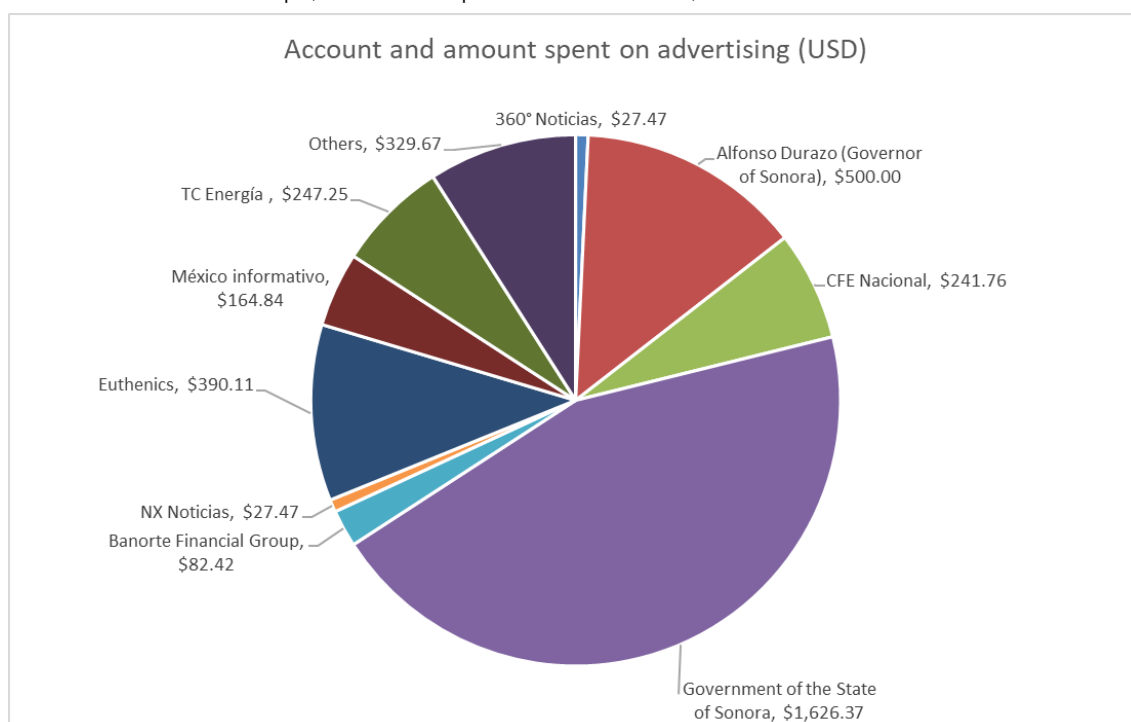


The type of authors of these discourses is divided into Government (48%) (including state governments, governors, municipal presidents, and deputies, as well as the Federal Electricity Commission); Spam Accounts¹ (24%), Content Creators (20%), and Financial Groups (6%). No narrative about the activists was found within the analyzed content. Although the study focuses on Facebook, advertising distributed on both Facebook and Instagram was also considered, as 48 of the posts were distributed on both platforms, and only 10 posts were distributed solely on Facebook. Posts exclusively on Instagram were not considered. The main type of content is Text and Video (25), Text and Image (24), and only 9 posts included a link to a website, podcast, or other type of content.

¹ Spam Accounts: Deceptive or fake profiles created to spread repetitive content. They may contain suspicious links, and the messages they distribute are often questionable in terms of veracity, lacking sources. These accounts are generally deleted after the period during which they have distributed announcements and/or content..

The users who spent the most on advertising¹ are the Government of the State of Sonora with 29,600 pesos, Alfonso Durazo, the current governor of Sonora, with 9,100 pesos, and Euthenics, a spam account, with 7,100 Mexican pesos.

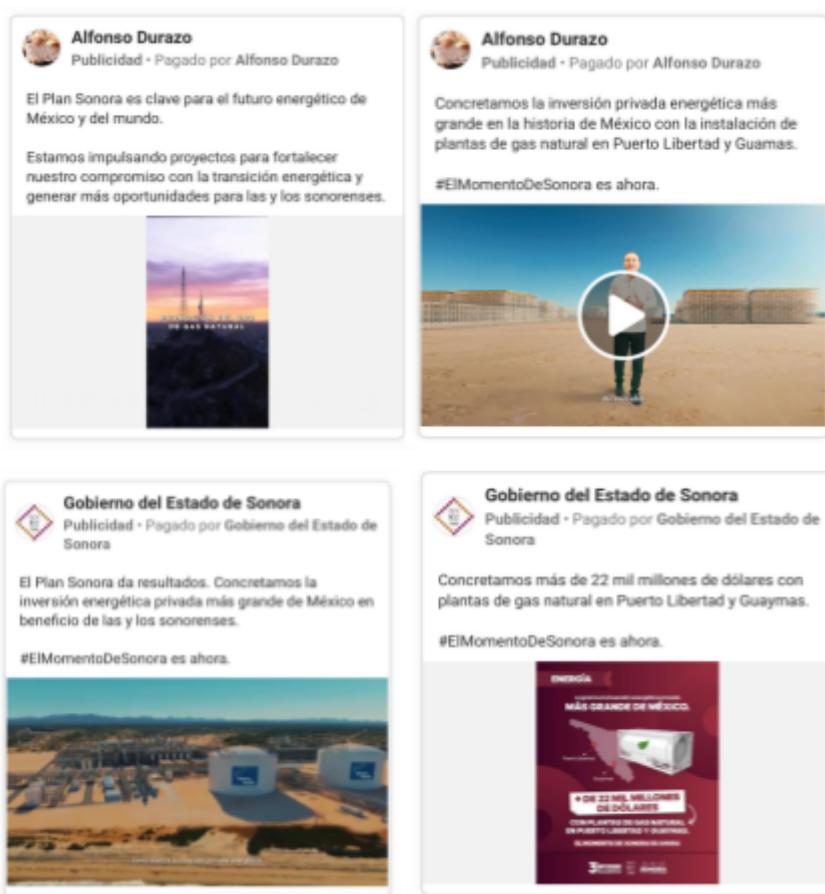
1. For the calculation of advertising expenditure, the lower amount referenced in the Meta Ad Library was used as a reference. For example, if the amount spent is listed as 500–700, 500 was taken as the reference.



Misleading narratives from the State Government

In 2023, the investment with Mexico Pacific Limited was announced, and the Economic Consequences framing was used to promote the project as a strategic action for economic growth, job creation, and the production of clean energy and energy transition. The latter occurs because the Puerto Libertad LNG plant (not mentioned as the Saguaro Project) is referenced as part of Plan Sonora, which also includes a solar plant.

As 2024 progressed, the Puerto Libertad plant continued to be promoted as an investment that is already taking place, alongside other projects such as the Guaymas LNG plant. This is done within the framework of the annual government report.

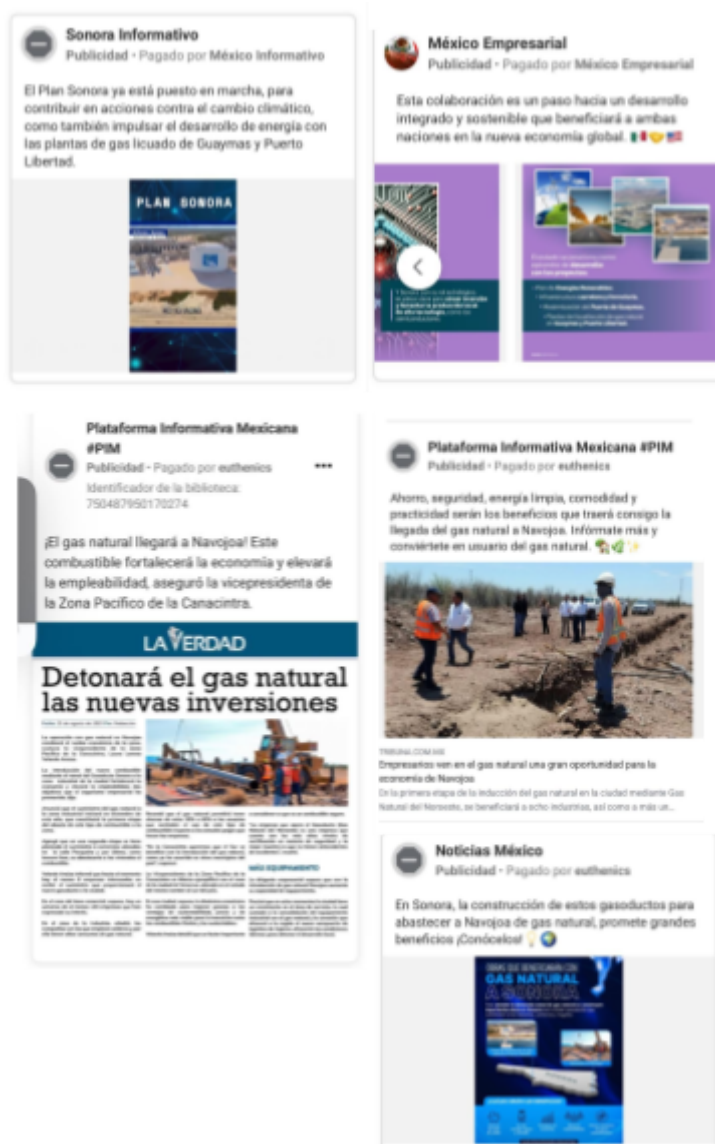


Disinformation from spam accounts

During the Project announcement period, spam accounts emerged that not only promoted the benefits of natural gas but also the economic benefits for the State and the region of the natural gas plants in Sonora. During this period, the benefits of the Puerto Libertad Plant (Saguaro Project) and the Guaymas Plant² were promoted together. It was

² Guaymas Plant: A natural gas liquefaction (LNG) project that includes a port terminal and a natural gas liquefaction plant. Its purpose is to store LNG from Texas for export to Asia. The associated company is Amigo LNG.

also found that they mentioned this investment not only as an energy transition project but also as a climate change mitigation action.



Banorte Financial Group and Nearshoring

The spread of disinformation from the financial group arises from the promotion of natural gas investments. Although not all publications from the financial group are disinformation, some only mention the benefits of nearshoring without containing disinforming narratives.



Discussion

Manzoni et al., 2025 found in their analysis of news articles from June 2023 to May 2024 that the most frequent disinformation narratives are delay-oriented and misleading, and the main authors of disinformation are industry and government, with the predominant framing being attribution of responsibility. The authors also mention that in Mexico, petroleum nationalism prevails, where Andrés Manuel López Obrador has justified fossil fuel expansion under the discourse of energy sovereignty. Similarly, this study found that the most frequent narratives are misleading, and state governments, also from MORENA, maintain the nationalist discourse focused on sovereignty and energy security.

Disinformation about the Saguaro Project persisted during the “Project Announcement” period, beginning in 2023 and continuing until mid-2024. The type of narrative employed is misleading, where data is manipulated or taken out of context to highlight the benefits of the LNG megaproject, natural gas, and pipelines, associating the project with economic growth, job creation, and emphasizing the amount of foreign investment in the project. The framing of the disinformation is through the lens of economic consequences, presenting the project in terms of its economic benefits for the states where it will be developed, primarily in Sonora due to the installation of the Puerto Libertad Plant, and how investment in the project will be reflected in the country’s economic growth.

During the “Whales or Gas” Campaign (September 2024 – September 2025), disinformation on YouTube decreased until it disappeared; no content was found that was specifically created to counter this campaign. From September 2024 onwards, content on this platform focused on narratives against the project, which may be due to the fact that even media outlets maintained coverage of this campaign, and neutral narratives about the project also emerged. No response to this campaign was identified during this period. During the impacts and delay of the Saguaro Project period (August 2025 – October 2025), disinformation content decreased. However, it is important to highlight that during this period, Facebook posts denouncing greenwashing campaigns for natural gas projects emerged. This could continue to be studied in the coming months.

Diferencias entre desinformación en YouTube y Facebook

On YouTube, the disinforming narratives mention Mexico Pacific Limited as the main investor, the participation of CFE, and even other partners or buyers, such as Shell, as well as possible associated financial institutions like Santander. In contrast, on Facebook, the disinforming narratives mostly omit mentioning the companies. Similarly, the name of the Saguaro Project is not actively mentioned; only the Puerto Libertad Plant or natural gas project/investment is referenced, and it is associated with other natural gas megaprojects in Sonora, such as the Guaymas Plant.

On YouTube, disinformation arises in media outlets from the replication of messages from the National Government announcing the Saguaro Project, and from the Local Government when announcing Mexico Pacific Limited’s investment, sometimes as an interpretation taken out of context that the gas will be for export, presenting the project as an action that will benefit local energy.

On Facebook, the main dispersion of disinformation arises from the State Government and Spam³ accounts, which distribute the message of the investment in the Puerto Libertad and Guaymas plant as a fact, despite the fact that the former, due to injunctions, has had the permits for the works suspended. These disinformation narratives, which originate from propaganda by the State Government of Sonora, are used to promote the government, its energy policies, and their perceived positive impact on the region. The Saguaro Project (announced as the Puerto Libertad Plant) is also used on social media to generate content based on government reports.

One of the strategies within the propaganda of the Saguaro Project and other natural gas projects is to mention these natural gas initiatives and their investments alongside renewable energy projects, such as photovoltaic energy projects, in order to present them as sustainable energy projects and as part of the actions toward the energy transition. As some authors have noted, not all information about fossil fuels and their megaprojects constitutes disinformation. Some sources merely replicate information about the projects without necessarily containing false information, simply reinforcing the normalization of fossil fuel narratives. However, it is recommended that the promotion and expansion of fossil fuels by the government be analyzed carefully, considering not only the framing but also the sociopolitical context in which the messages are disseminated. Even when such content does not constitute explicit disinformation, when spread within a political propaganda context, it can carry a subtler form of misleading information.

This research offers some reflections on how discourses of growth and sovereignty promoted by the government are associated with fossil fuel megaprojects and how these become state propaganda, raising the question: What can be done? Betancur (2004) notes that, although the word “propaganda” has acquired a negative or pejorative connotation due to its association with control, propaganda persists as a means of maintaining a particular balance of power in favor of the message’s sender (the propagandist). In this case, the propaganda of fossil fuels, natural gas, and megaprojects aims not only to sustain the status quo of dependence on fossil fuels but also to convey a positive image of the current government regarding its decisions in the energy sector. Fossil fuel propaganda benefits the state, and the state disseminates propaganda about fossil fuels.

Hernández (2025) mentions that post-truth can be the goal of a political group, which, by systematically altering the perception of contextual facts—shaped by emotions and beliefs rather than objective facts—aims to create and influence public opinion. In this way, we encounter the post-truth of fossil gas and energy extractivist megaprojects, where false benefits are replicated and the harms of these projects are denied by comparing them to previous infrastructure. It is also where nationalist narratives of sovereignty are reproduced. These narratives, rather than informing, seek to appeal to emotion in order to continuously maintain the narrative of dependence on fossil fuels.

Conclusion

Disinformation of the Saguaro Project is carried out through the distribution of messages that emphasize how the investment by Mexico Pacific, mentioned as the historic investment in LNG, will generate regional welfare by encouraging new jobs, promoting economic growth, reducing emissions, and minimizing environmental impact. And the benefits at the national level by mentioning that the project responds to energy demand and contributes to energy sovereignty, even though this project does not have the purpose of national energy supply, being an LNG export project, and Mexico only positions itself as an intermediary.

The narrative of fossil gas as part of the energy transition strategy prevails, continuing with the narrative that fossil gas is a transition fuel, that there is dependence on this resource for energy production in the country, while at the same time it is mentioned that gas has a lower environmental impact by producing fewer greenhouse gas emissions than the burning of fuel oil, diesel, and coal. Fossil gas as a transition fuel has allowed narratives to be replicated in which the Saguaro Project, Amigo LNG Guaymas, Sierra Madre Gas Pipelines, and other fossil gas projects in the north of the country are promoted as sustainable, clean, and safe energy projects.

Some of the limitations of this study are due to the analysis of two different platforms, which generate different types of content. While Facebook maintains short posts and videos under 2 minutes, on YouTube long videos (more than 20 minutes) were found. In addition, the Facebook analysis was limited to the posts included in Meta's Ad Library,

which limited the analysis of the posts that can be found on Facebook.

To continue with the analysis of disinformation about fossil fuel megaprojects, it is suggested to carry out a quantitative analysis, comparing instances of disinformation across the various Meta platforms, as well as including an analysis of TikTok. It is also significant to investigate how disinformation is distributed among AI assistants.

For the analysis of narratives about activists, referred to in the content analyzed in this research as Environmentalists, it is suggested to delve into the accounts of content creators on environmental topics and science dissemination, to analyze how they are perceived by others and how they interact with other accounts that reject, accuse, or contradict their position. Analyzing the comments on videos that contain content against the megaprojects may also be useful.

Recommendations

Some of the recommendations for investigating disinformation about fossil fuels or megaprojects on social media are: Conduct disinformation studies in a region or state to allow for comparative analysis between them. During this research, it is highlighted that alongside the projects in the north of the country, disinformation also emerges targeting the southeast, where other types of energy megaprojects are being carried out. Delve into the disinformation associated with the energy transition and which specific narratives are being maintained around gas as a transition fuel. Take into account that disinformation about fossil fuels is not focused on developing propaganda for a single project, whether natural gas or oil, but rather encompasses several projects developed within the framework of national and regional plans; and often these also list renewable energy projects, creating misleading narratives and sometimes without maintaining a disinformation narrative.

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