

A photograph of a man in a light-colored jacket shouting into a megaphone at a protest. He has a raised fist. In the background, other protesters are visible, some holding wooden sticks.

Societies on the Brink: Understanding the Dynamics of Partisanship and Polarisation

Thursday 30 September 6:00 – 7:00pm

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real world **futures**

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Societies on the Brink: Understanding the Dynamics of Partisanship and Polarisation

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Acknowledgement of Country

QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning.

QUT acknowledges the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.



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On the Brink







FIGHT FOR YOUR FREE DOM & RIGHTS

FIGHT FOR YOUR FREE DOM & RIGHTS

DON'T - [X] LOCK THE PEOPLE DOWN
DO - [checkmark] LOCK CRIMINAL UP GOVERNMENT
COVID HOAX BY SATAN!

I DO NOT CONSENT
NO LOCKDOWN TRACKING DISTANCING ISOLATION UNSAFE 5G INSTALLATION MANDATORY UNTESTED VACCINES MICRO CHIPS IN INDIVIDUALS FALSE PANDEMIC FALSE UN-CONSTITUTIONAL AUSTRALIAN SHUTDOWN I DO NOT CONSENT

RESEARCH
FIND THE FED
AGREEMENT
OPERATION PAPERCLIP
BARNETT
DANGEROUS
INFILTRATION
CONCERNED NEIGHBOURS



May 25, 2021
7:06 AM AEST
Last Updated 4 months ago

United States

53% of Republicans view Trump as true U.S. president - Reuters/Ipsos

2 minute read

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Democrats, Republicans
head for showdown over
debt limit



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Polarisation and Hyperpartisanship

For too many of us it's become safer to retreat into our own bubbles, whether in our neighborhoods, or on college campuses, or places of worship, or **especially our social media feeds**, surrounded by people who look like us and share the same political outlook and never challenge our assumptions.

— farewell speech, 11 Jan. 2017



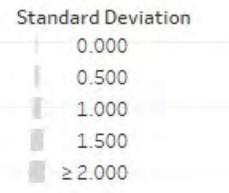
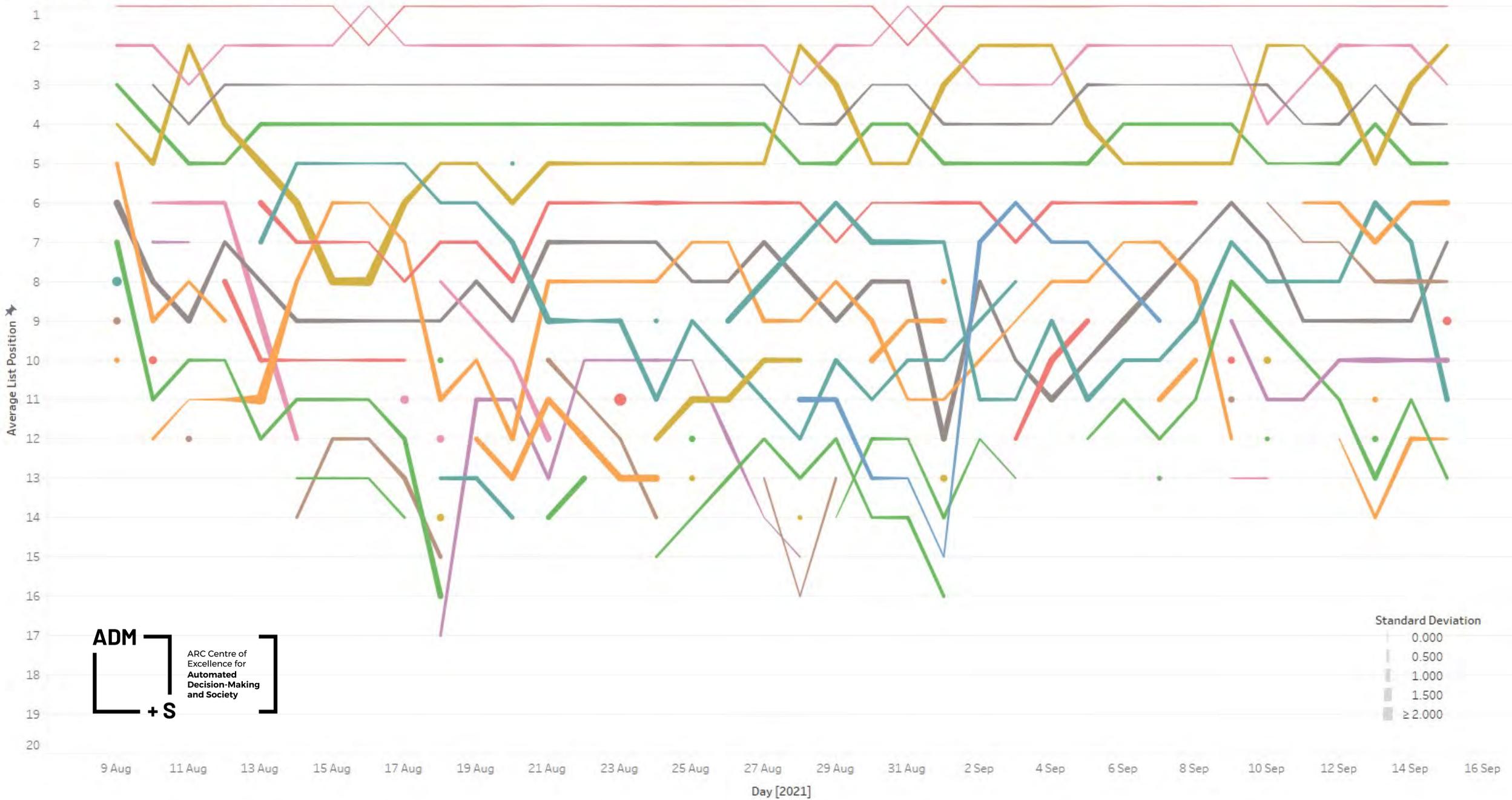


Filter bubbles? Echo chambers?

Can we simply blame our
platforms and their
algorithms?



Google Search Rankflow: Black Lives Matter



THE AUSTRALIAN SEARCH EXPERIENCE +

When you use a search engine, do you see the same results as your colleagues, friends, or family do? If not, why is that? Are search results personalised especially for you? If so, what are the criteria? Which topics do search engines suggest to you and other users?

We want to find out. With your help.

Thank you to our citizen scientist community

Since Beta testing started in March 2021



971

participants have donated



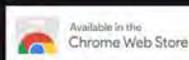
374756850

search results



INSTALLING THE BROWSER PLUGIN

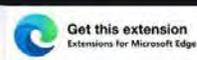
The plugin is available for Chrome and Firefox, for both desktop and laptop devices. Unfortunately, Safari browsers and mobile devices (including iPads and mobile phones) are not supported at this time. To install the plugin, select the extension store for your browser:



[Add to Google Chrome](#)



[Add to Mozilla Firefox](#)



[Add to Microsoft Edge](#)

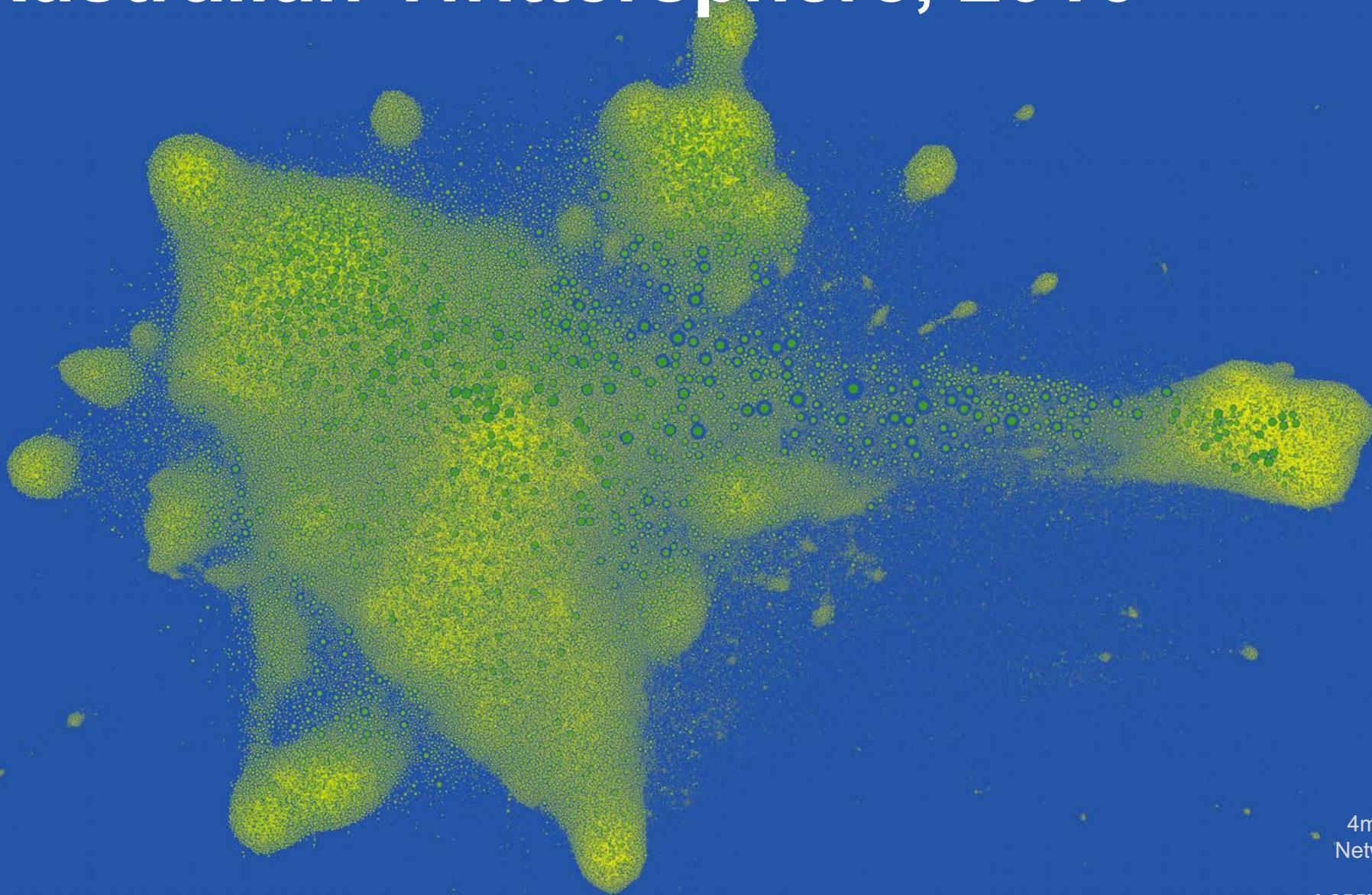
NEED EXTRA HELP?

If you need extra help – try our step by step interactive installation guide.

[Installation Guide](#)

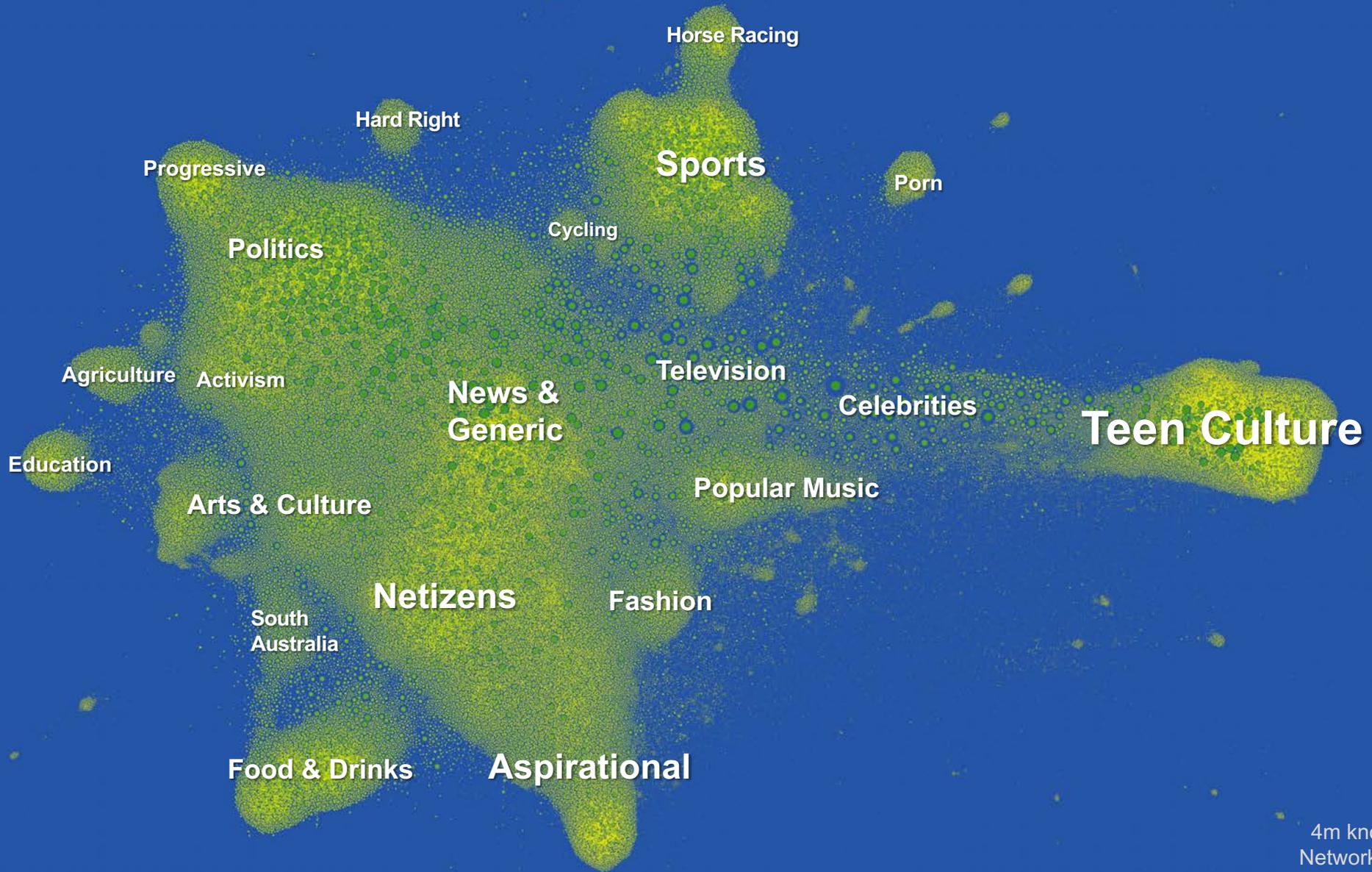
[admscentre.org.au/
searchexperience](https://admscentre.org.au/searchexperience)

The Australian Twittersphere, 2016

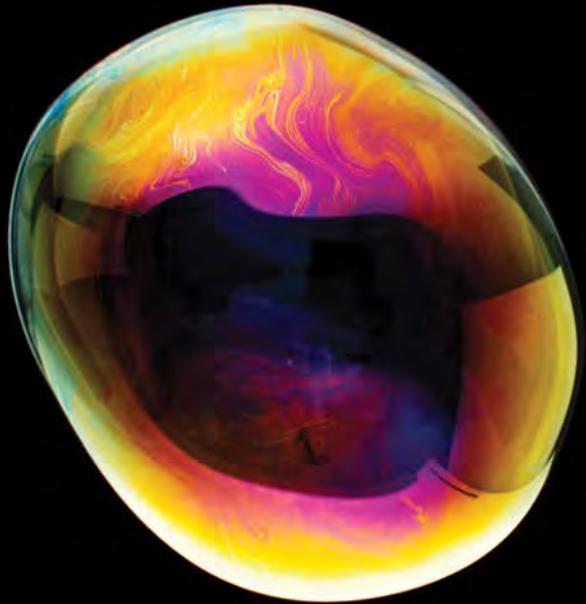


4m known Australian accounts
Network of follower connections
Filtered for degree ≥ 1000
→ 255k nodes (6.4%), 61m edges
Edges not shown in graph

(From [Bruns, Moon, Münch, and Sadkowsky, 2017.](#))



4m known Australian accounts
Network of follower connections
Filtered for degree ≥ 1000
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Edges not shown in graph



Are Filter
Bubbles Real?

Axel Bruns

☰ **VICE** Artikel Videos Tech Menschen Drogen f @ t

Tech

Deshalb ist "Filterblase" die blödeste Metapher des Internets

Gute Nachrichten: Filterblasen gibt es nicht. Das Wort, das seit Jahren durch die Medien geistert, ist ein Hirngespinnst. Ein Problem mit sozialen Medien gibt es trotzdem.

 Von [Sebastian Meineck](#)

9.3.18 f [Teilen](#) t [Twittern](#) s [Snap](#)





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Connectivity, Not Disconnection

Hyperpartisans, Hyperconnected

Ready access to information
enables spread of 'fake
news', hyperpartisanship,
and polarisation.

(But also social connection
and community support.)



Walter
@bigfudge212121



Protest Melbourne Australia



12:59 pm · 10 May 2020 · Twitter for Android

The problem with an extraterrestrial-conspiracy mailing list isn't that it's an echo chamber; it's that it thinks there's a conspiracy by extraterrestrials.

— David Weinberger, *Salon*, 21 Feb. 2004





@RELIABLESOURCES

HOW 'DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH' LEADS TO MISINFORMATION

Yael Eisenstat | Future of Democracy Fellow at The Berggruen Institute

RELIABLE SOURCES

Weaponising Media Literacy

This, but with a different
system of coordinates, also
drives conspiracy theories.



FIGHT THE FAKE

5 Fact-checking Tips from BRITANNICA

- 1 Choose your sources wisely.**

Some types of sources are better than others. Search out those that thoroughly review information before publishing it. Try to track down primary or authoritative voices, like scholarly journals or government databases, rather than second-hand reports.
- 2 Proceed with caution.**

Be skeptical of superlatives, generalizations, and anything that seems too good to be true. Consider the author's motivation. Does the source have a neutral point of view, or is there an agenda behind the information.
- 3 Trust expertise.**

When in doubt about a source, check the author's qualifications. Determine how well he or she knows the subject.
- 4 Expand your search.**

Don't settle for a single source if you can find two or more. Look for consensus, but be wary of echo chambers. Cast a wide net. In addition to simple web searches, try databases like Google Books.
- 5 Understand the context.**

Few facts exist outside of a broader narrative. Read around the fact to see how it fits into the big picture.





We live in an age of ‘fake news’. But Australian children are not learning enough about media literacy

July 6, 2020 5:50am AEST

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45

2.9k

Today we release the findings from our [new research](#) into how young Australians consume and think about news media.

Following a summer of bushfires and during the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have told us they consume news regularly. But they also say they can find it frightening and many don't ask questions about the true source of the information they are getting.

To our surprise, despite widespread concern about “[fake news](#)” and a growing body of evidence about the [reach and impact of misinformation](#), many young people are also not getting formal education about news media at school.

Authors



Tanya Notley
Senior Lecturer in Digital Media, Western Sydney University

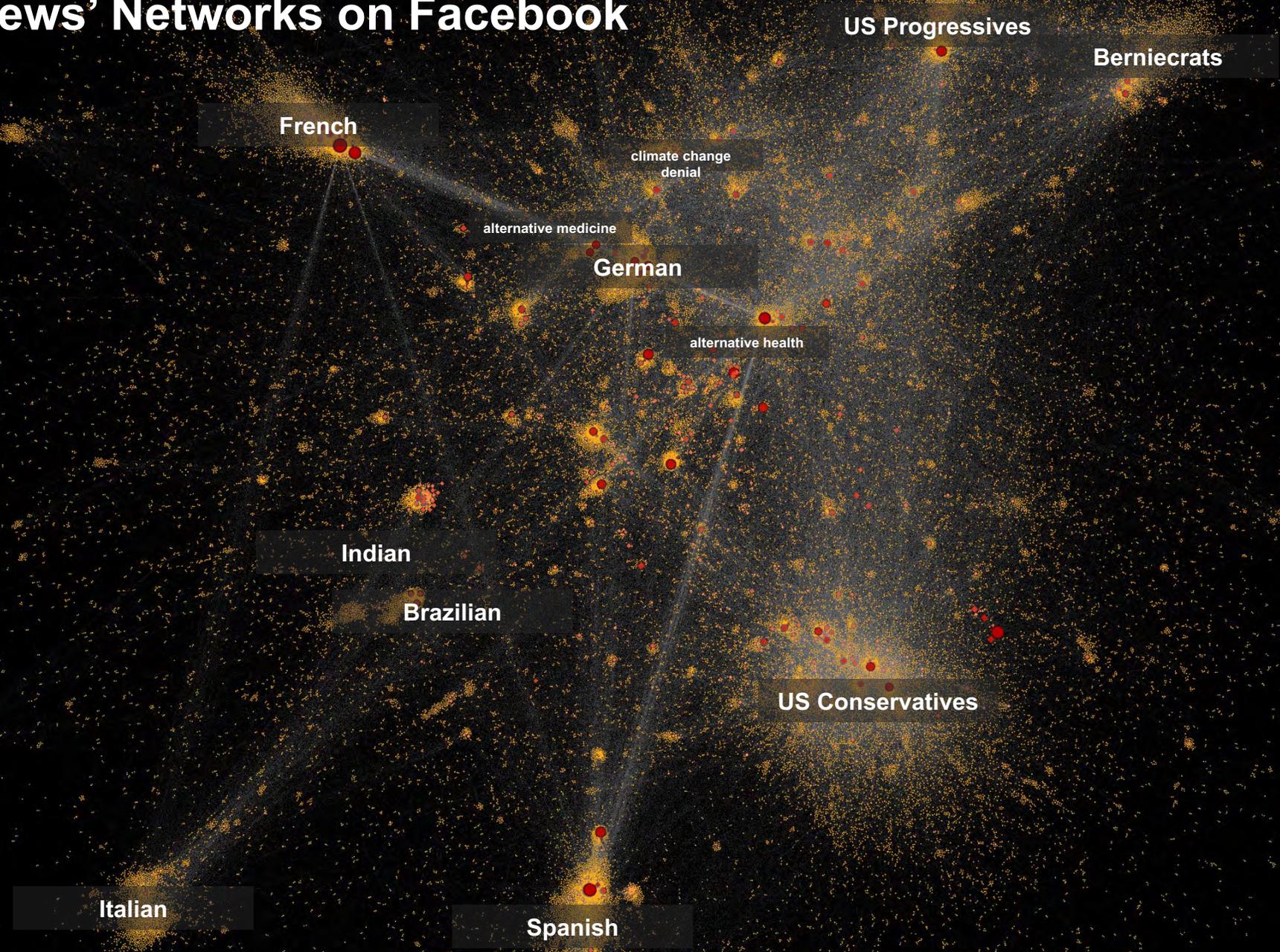


Michael Dezuanni
Associate professor, Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology

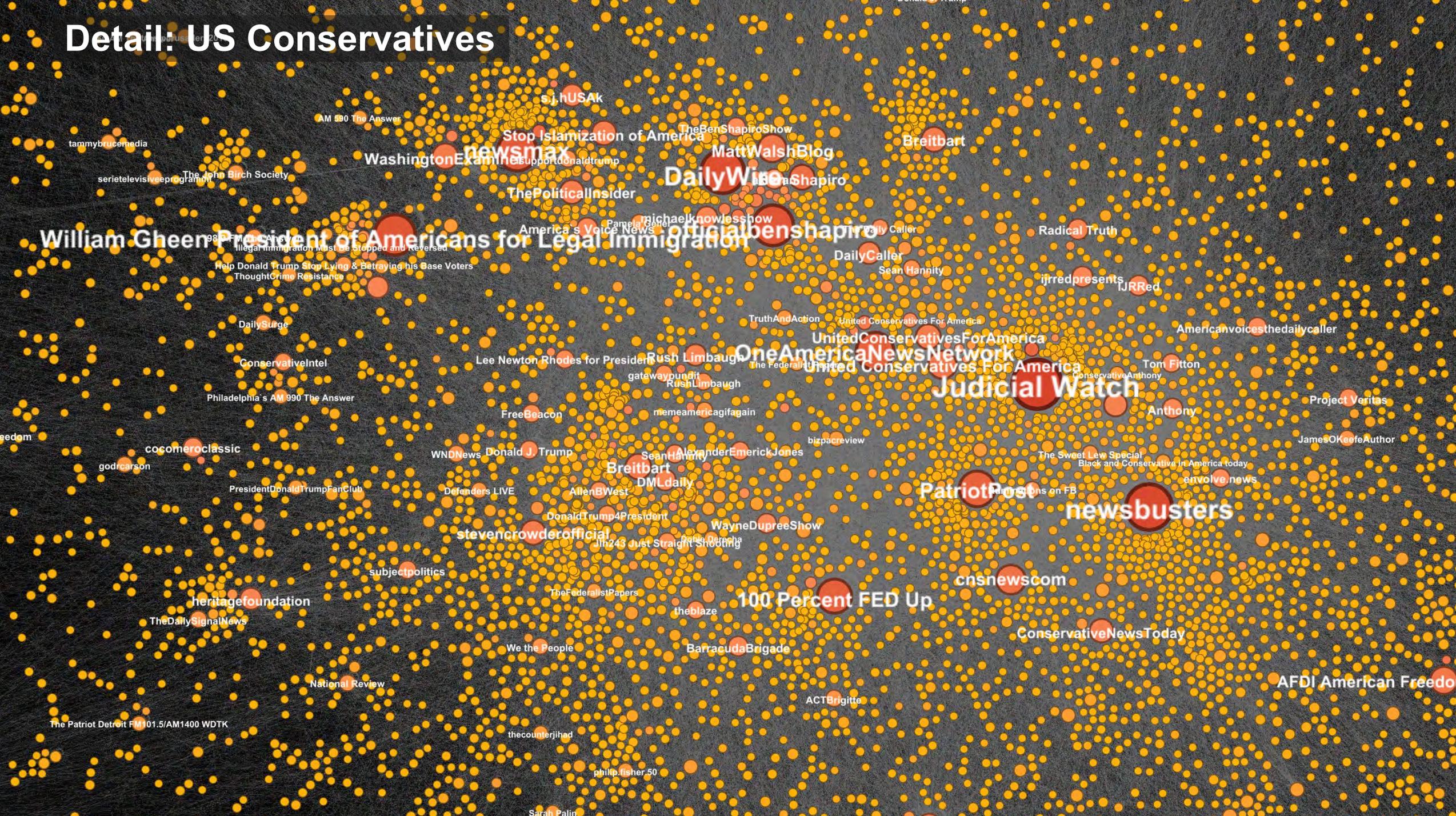
Disclosure statement

Tanya Notley receives funding from the Australian Research Council, the Museum of Australian Democracy, the National Association for Media Literacy (NAMLE) in the United States and Google Australia. She is Deputy Chair of the Australian Media Literacy Alliance. The research informing this article is an

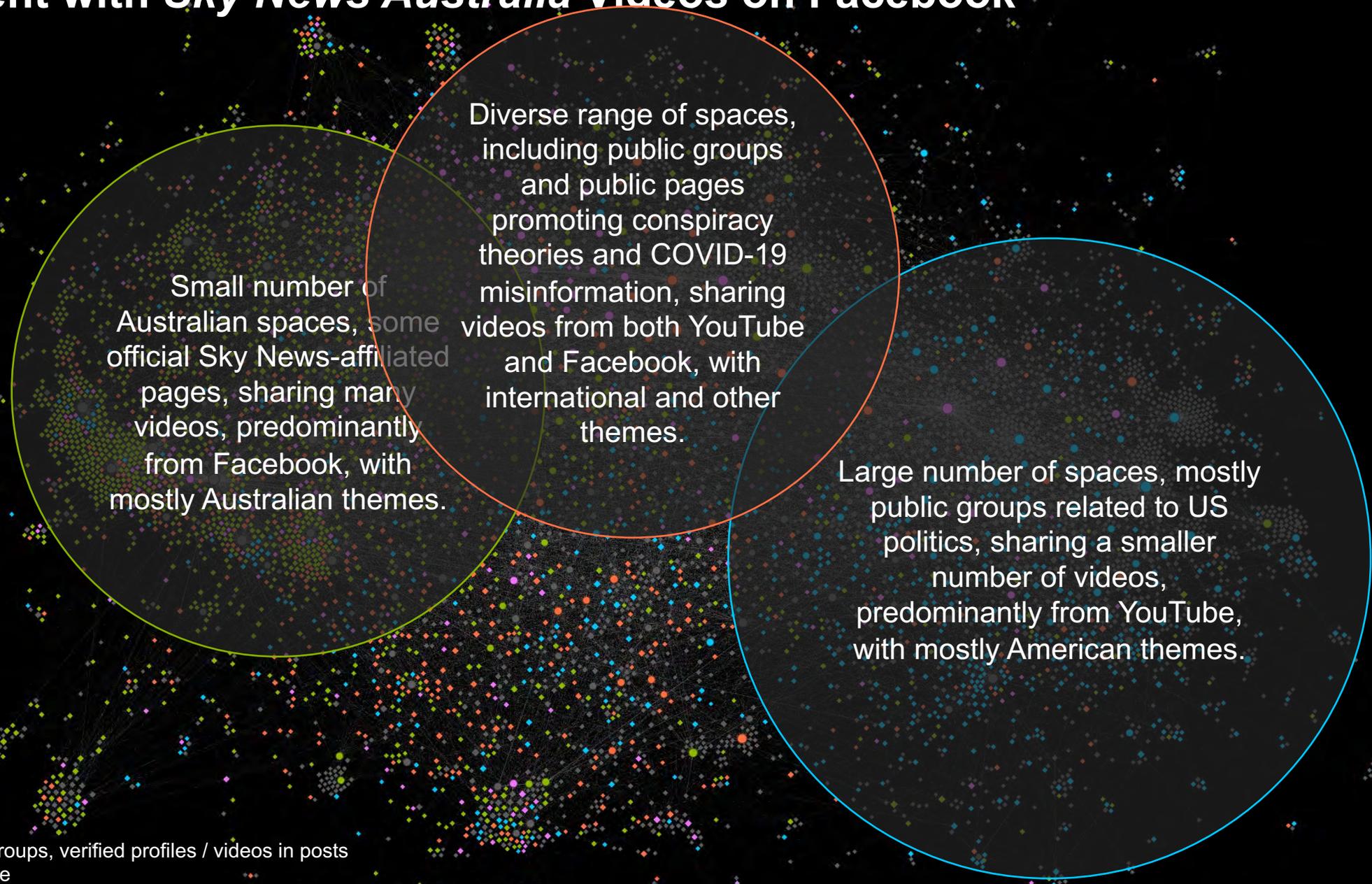
'Fake News' Networks on Facebook



Detail: US Conservatives



Engagement with *Sky News Australia* Videos on Facebook



Small number of Australian spaces, some official Sky News-affiliated pages, sharing many videos, predominantly from Facebook, with mostly Australian themes.

Diverse range of spaces, including public groups and public pages promoting conspiracy theories and COVID-19 misinformation, sharing videos from both YouTube and Facebook, with international and other themes.

Large number of spaces, mostly public groups related to US politics, sharing a smaller number of videos, predominantly from YouTube, with mostly American themes.

Nodes: public pages, groups, verified profiles / videos in posts
Size: weighted degree
Colour: Australian / United States / international / other video theme
(From Copland, Graham, and Bruns, 2021.)

STOP 5G LILLE
20 January 2020 · 🌐

<https://lesmoutonsenrages.fr/.../5g-nocide-premiere-c>



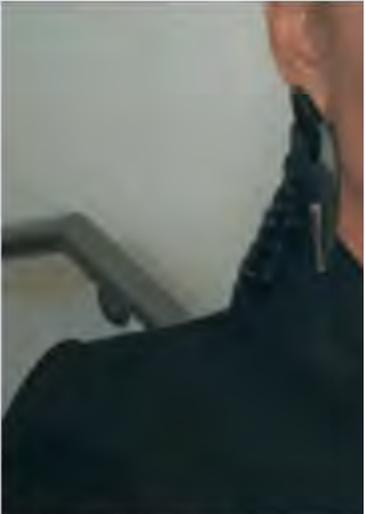
LESMOUTONSENRAGES.FR
5G-Nocide – Première c
Mutation Virale ou Bac

29 January 2020 ·

Zitat: NEWS
Ist es nicht komisch, da
Nutzung von 5G-Netze
Zentrum eines tödliche
plötzlich tot auf der St
Was ist, wenn die Tode
verursachter Zellabbau
Die Exposition gegenü
Symptome". Zitat END
https://m.facebook.cc/story_fbid=701305950

GQBuzz
16 March 2020 · 🌐

Keri Hilson has gone on Tw
by 5G network. She went o
LTE." The American singer
about the dangers of 5G int
dangerous levels of electro
contagious virus." [525 mo
<https://www.gqbuzz.com/co>



GQBUZZ.COM
Coronavirus is Caused By 5G - Keri Hilson Says And Claims That's Why It's Not Affecting 'Africa Like That' | GQBuzz.com

GiveMeSport ✓
4 April 2020 · 🌐

'It's a manmade thing. It's been put t
5G. It might be for population control – g
Isolation might be getting a bit much for.



GIVEMESPORT.COM
Amir Khan suggests 5G is behind 'population control' plot

HOME NEWS SHOWBIZ & TV SPORT COMMENT FINAN
UK WORLD POLITICS WEATHER NATURE SCIENCE ROYAL WEIRD SUN

Home > News > Weird

Coronavirus: YouTube tightens rules after David Icke 5G interview

CORONAVIRUS conspiracies have spread almost as fast as the virus, in part due to their popularity on social media. Now YouTube has banned all conspiracy theory videos- bizarrely linking coronavirus symptoms to 5G networks.

By TOM FISH
14:31, Tue, Apr 7, 2020 | UPDATED 14:55, Tue, Apr 7, 2020

SHARE

Amir Khan shares his theories about coro...



(See [Bruns, Hurcombe, Harrington, and Jude, 2021.](#))

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Latest



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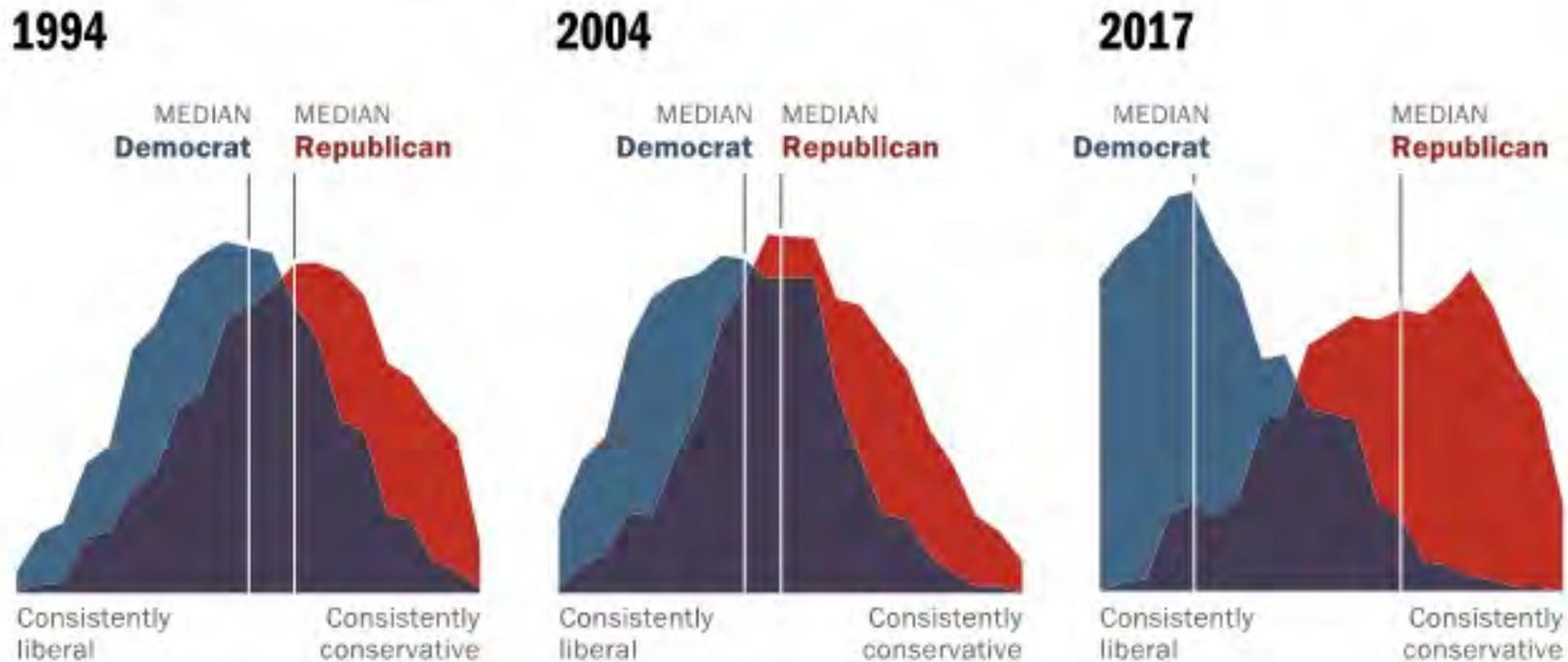


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Is It Getting Worse?

Democrats and Republicans more ideologically divided than in the past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values



Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see methodology). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents; the red area of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.



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Dimensions of Polarisation

News Coverage Polarisation



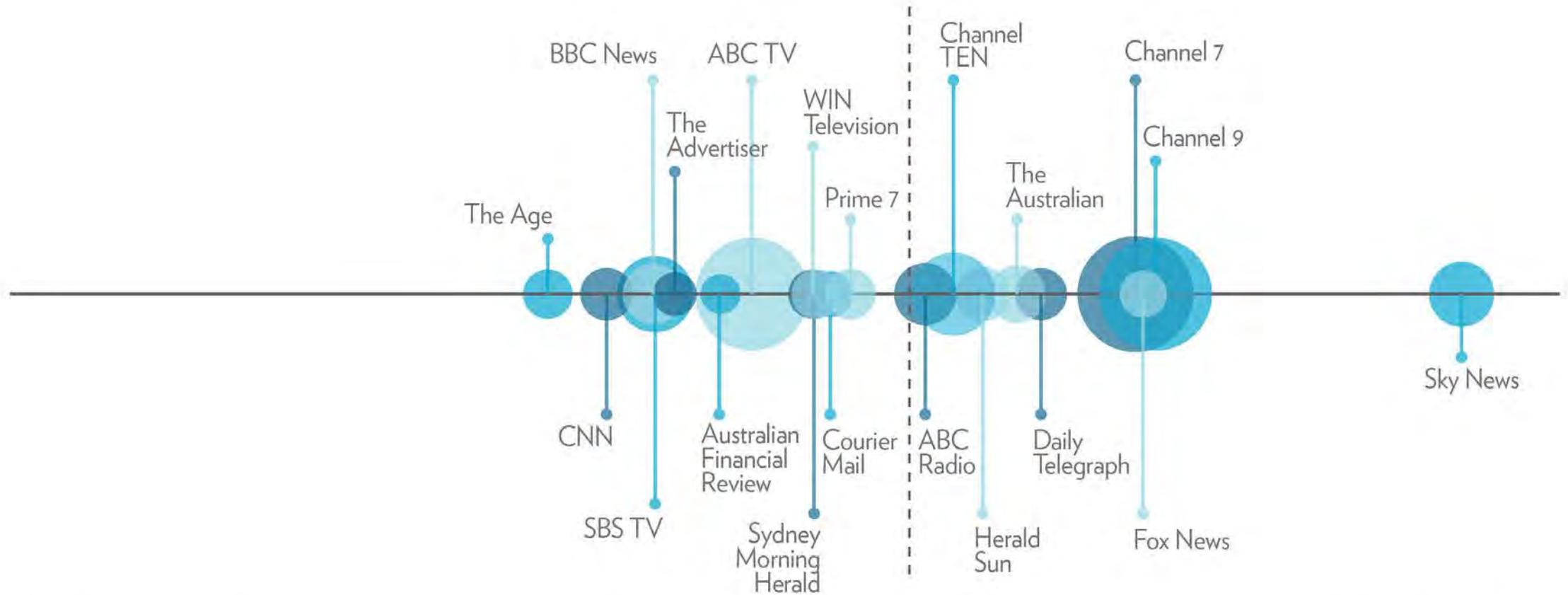
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mediabiaschart@gmail.com

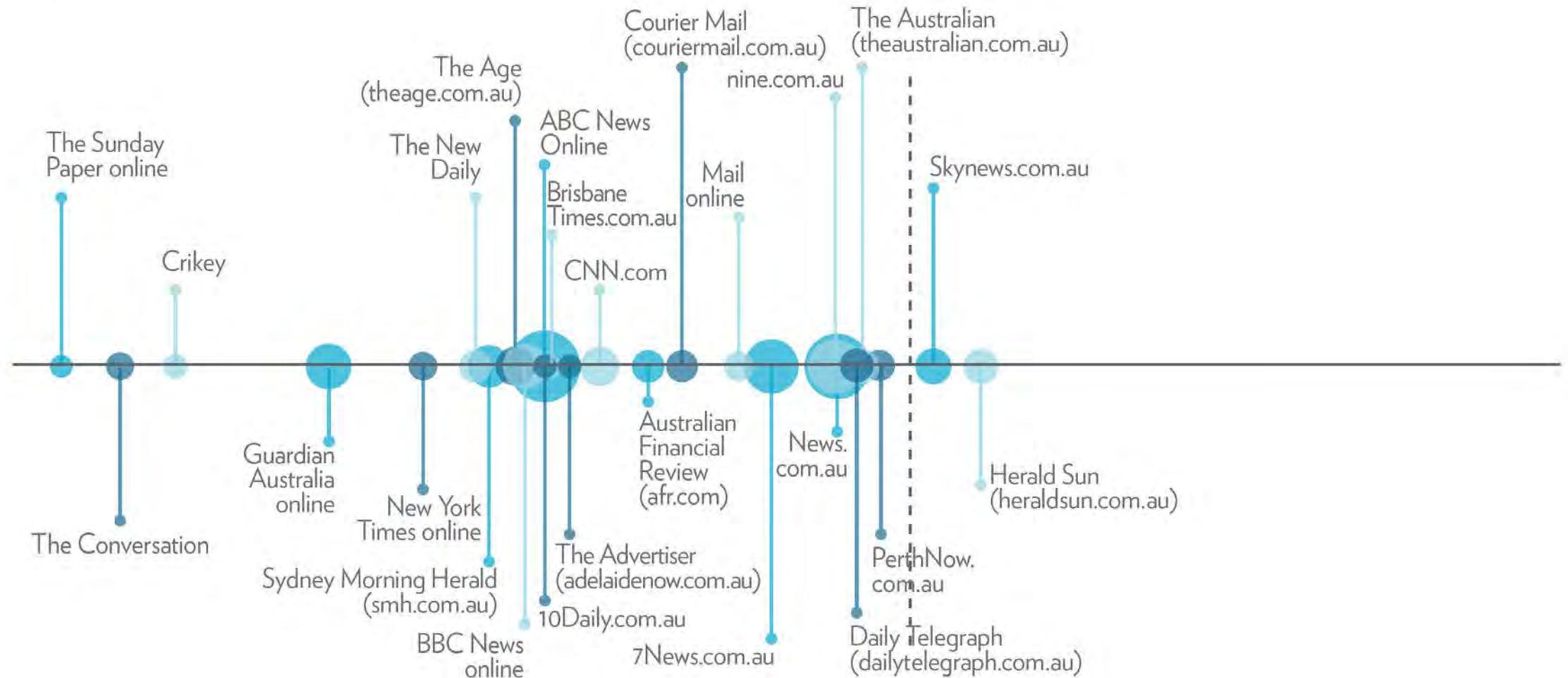
News Audience Polarisation

FIGURE 8.9: POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF AUDIENCES OF OFFLINE NEWS BRANDS



Midpoint within country (3.82). Polarisation score for each brand is the difference between the mean score out of 7 of the news consumers and the mean score of the population as a whole, expressed in multiples of the standard deviation of the mean score of the population as a whole.

FIGURE 8.10: POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF AUDIENCES OF ONLINE NEWS BRANDS



News Engagement Polarisation

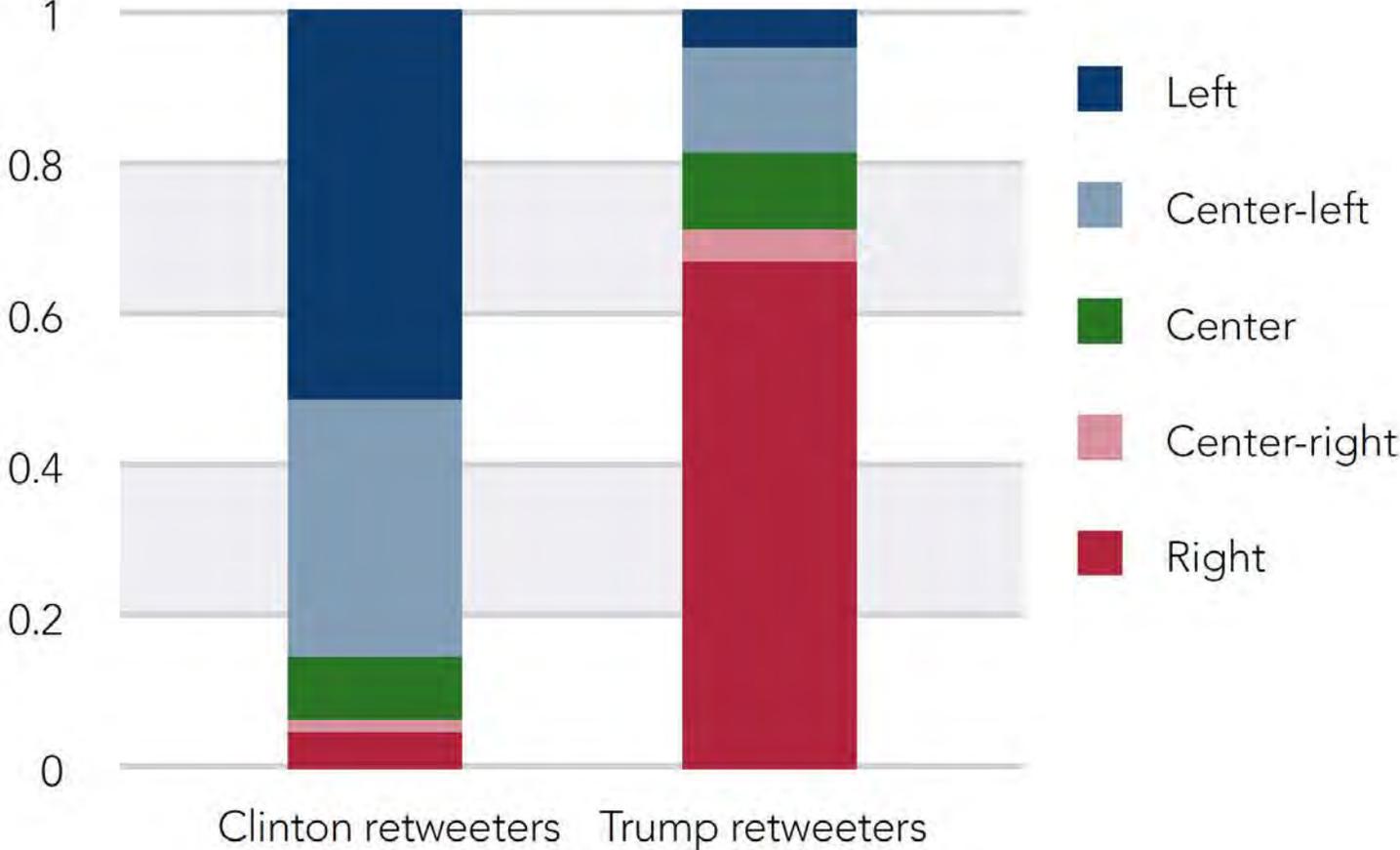
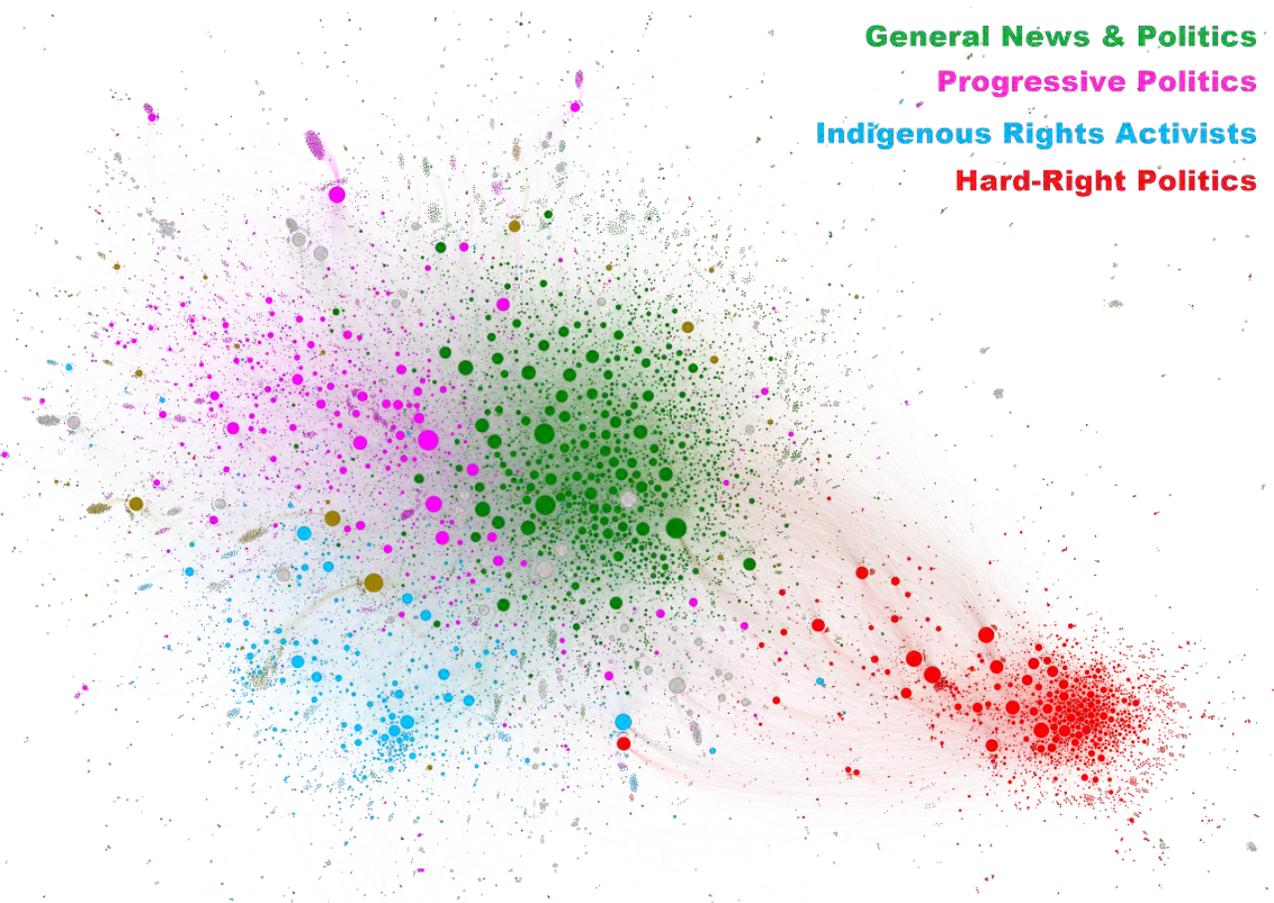
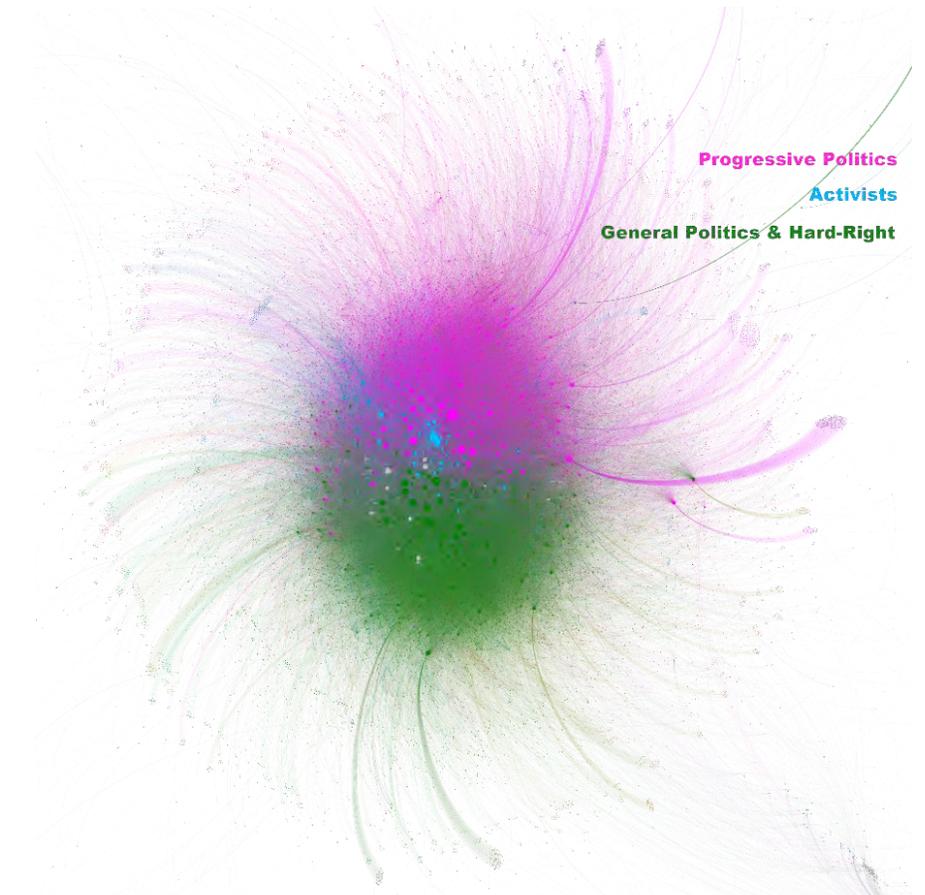


Figure 33: Proportion of stories retweeted by Clinton and Trump followers by quintile

Public (Social Media) Discourse Polarisation



Retweet network of the 18C debate



Retweet network of #RoboDebt



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Researching Polarisation and Hyperpartisanship

Multidisciplinary Approaches

- Research needs:
 -  Developing robust measures of polarisation for these different dimensions
 -  Assessing polarisation trends over time
 -  Comparing different political and media systems
 -  Distinguishing polarisation on different issues, not just left vs. right
- Research frameworks:
 -  Media and communication studies – theories of the public sphere and platform publics
 -  Computational communication studies – observation and analysis of news engagement
 -  Psychological research – motivated reasoning and the mindset of hyperpartisanship
 -  Political science – threats and benefits of polarisation in political debates



Get in Touch!

- Coming soon:
 - 4 Postdoctoral Research Fellow positions (5 years), starting early 2022
 - 4 PhD scholarships (3 years), starting early-mid 2022
 - 4 PhD scholarships (3 years), starting 2024

Thank you



Questions?



real world **future**s

#futureworking

#futurethinking

#futureliving

#QUTeX #RealWorldFutures

Acknowledgments

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Facebook data are provided courtesy of CrowdTangle.