

GEODE

THE DISCREET ACTION OF RUSSIAN CHANNELS IN WESTERN CONSPIRACY CIRCLES

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SUMMARY

Cette note de recherche prolonge l'analyse de partage de contenus entre chaînes Telegram présentée dans notre étude précédente¹. Nous montrons qu'en augmentant la profondeur d'une requête générée par l'outil d'analyse Telegram développé par GEODE, nous pouvons mieux comprendre l'intégration des chaînes pro-russes dans les comploosphères occidentales. Nous pouvons aussi affiner notre compréhension des contenus et des structures internes des différentes communautés complotistes.

ABSTRACT

This research note extends the analysis of content sharing between Telegram channels presented in our previous study². We show that by increasing the depth of a query generated by the Telegram analysis tool developed by GEODE, we can better understand the integration of pro-Russian channels into Western conspiracy sphere. We can also refine our understanding of the content and internal structures of different conspiracy communities.

OPENING REMARKS: COMPLETING THE PUZZLE OF THE TELEGRAM CONSPIRACY SPHERE

This note explores the possibility of discovering a relevant ecosystem of Telegram channels from the collection of channels that share content from our sample (depth 1), but also channels that publish messages from these channels (depth 2)³, using the tool we developed⁴. We have thus increased the query "depth" compared to our previous study. Our original corpus included the content of about a hundred conspiracy channels. The depth 1 query in the first study had identified various conspiracy and far-right communities operating on this network, structured by theme and language, and dominated by the pro-Trump American far-right community, whose content is taken up by the many linguistic communities (in French, Italian, Spanish and German) as well as by international conspiracy communities.

For this new study, we sought to understand whether increasing the query depth could add value to our understanding of content propagation on Telegram and detect new communities or important accounts. This depth 2 query leads to two main results:

On the one hand, **the spatialization of this "deeper" query confirms the results of the first study**. The main communities that we had identified remain more or less the same; they have *simply* been expanded by new chains. This new query therefore allows for a more in-depth study of the detected communities to better understand their structure and ideological influences.

¹ GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

² GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

³ We collected all the messages shared by the channels present in a list we had built manually (depth 0). We then harvested all the channels (depth 1) from which the messages shared by the depth 0 channels originated. For more details on how our collection tool works, see GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

⁴ GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

On the other hand, a **previously invisible Russian-speaking community emerges** from this depth 2 query. Some of these channels were present in the Depth 1 Graph, but the tool had not been able to establish connections between them. These pro-Russian accounts therefore appeared to be isolated or present without coherence in the graph. However, this is not necessarily the case, and the links between these Russian accounts scattered throughout the graph and this new pro-Russian community at the edge of the graph raise new questions about their role. They visibly irrigate the whole ecosystem of pro-Russian accounts with their content.

Why did we deepen our inquiry on Telegram?

As we have shown in our previous note, Telegram is a platform that lends itself very well to the analysis of conspiracy circles. The strengthening of moderation on more traditional social networks such as Facebook or Twitter makes Telegram an ideal refuge for conspiratorial and far-right groups⁵. They find a virtual absence of moderation, an encrypted messaging service and the possibility of creating discussion forums in which moderators and users can share various content. They organize themselves into communities and engage in a real dialogue within and between these different communities.

The depth 1 query in our previous note allowed us to identify these communities, but some “gray areas” remained, notably the presence of pro-Russian channels scattered in the graph, with no apparent connection between them. Several other detected communities likewise gathered numerous content that was difficult to classify into clearly identifiable streams. Finally, the spatialization of the graph, representing both tightly knit communities and strong links between different communities, also revealed “empty spaces” between some communities. We therefore wondered whether a depth 2 query would allow us to better understand these different “anomalies.” In fact, it allowed us to shed a light on some of these “gray areas,” to refine our understanding of the composition of the different communities and to fill in some of these “empty spaces,” revealing new connections between different communities.

METHODOLOGY

The Depth 2 Graph was generated following the same methodology as the Depth 1 Graph: we started from the same list of 108 previously selected Telegram channels⁶. The way the tool retrieves shared data is the same, except that instead of just retrieving republications from one channel to another, it repeats the process with the newly discovered channels. Thus, from the new channels, the collection of republications is restarted to establish a new list of channels, this time at depth 2. This results in three levels of collection:

- level 0 for the 108 input channels
- level 1 for chains discovered during the first run of the tool
- and level 2 for chains discovered by the tool from the new chains discovered at level 1.

We have thus obtained a database containing the names of the channels that have been republished, their number of subscribers, the messages themselves, as well as the number of views and republications of these messages. This new depth 2 database has 23,275 Telegram

⁵ URMAN Aleksandra, KATZ Stefan (2020): What They Do In The Shadows: Examining The Far-Right Networks On Telegram, Information, *Communication & Society*, 2020.

⁶ For a detailed description of how the Telegram tool works, see GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

channels, of which 52.4% are public channels (for which we have all the data), 8.7% are private channels (for which the collected data is limited) and 38.9% that the tool was unable to identify⁷.

COMPLETING THE CONSPIRACY PUZZLE ON TELEGRAM

The graph generated from this new data is roughly comparable to the one presented in our previous research note. **We find the same main communities, fed by new chains that do not significantly alter the structure.**

A confirmed analysis: communities that are large but identically structured

Comparing the graphs obtained from depth 1 and depth 2 queries, we see that capturing new chains **has proportionally increased the size of each of the communities** detected in our previous research note, but they remain very similar from one graph to another (Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, except for a few small communities present in the Depth 1 Graph that were merged in the Depth 2 Graph, we effectively find the same types of communities that we had identified in the previous research note. These mergers are due to the operation of the modularity algorithm that detects communities, as we will explain later.

The **pro-Trump far-right conspiracy** community remains the most important. It contains the most nodes and continues to play a role in the production of content taken up by almost all the other communities in the graph. We also find the main channels that we had detected in the Depth 1 Graph. These are mostly pro-Trump far-right American channels, some of which are affiliated with pro-Trump far-right personalities and media. In terms of content, there are many conspiracy theories, especially about the 2022 election and the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill insurrection.

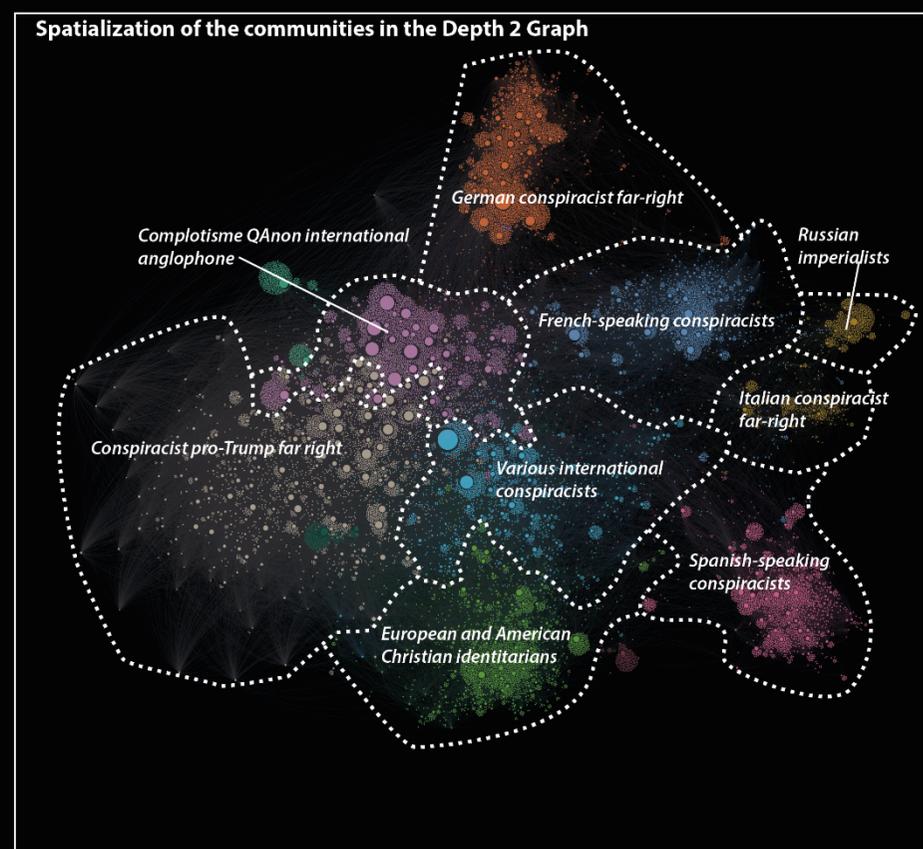
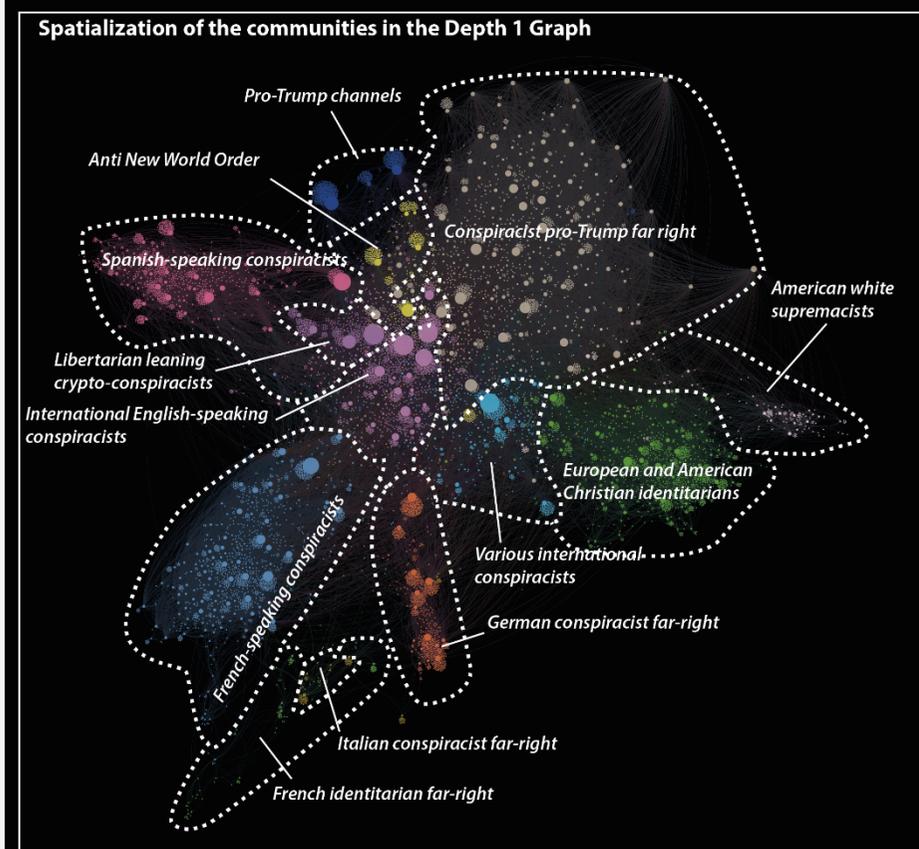
At the center of the graph, we again find two **international conspiracy communities** with a more international conspiracy vision. As in the Depth 1 Graph, **the purple community** tends to focus on purely QAnon content, mainly in English, while **the light-blue community** is more disparate. There is a mix of environmental and public health conspiracies, as well as a religious conspiracy fringe.

This community also contains many Russian-speaking channels. This confirms the good integration of Russian spheres of influence in the graph that we observed in the previous note. These two communities continue to play a role as a “transit point” for conspiracy content partly originating from the pro-Trump far-right community. They still have the nodes with the largest incoming degrees in the graph, meaning that these channels aggregate narratives that emerge from the different communities.

There is also the **American and European Christian identitarian community**. This green community brings together many channels with an identitarian, white supremacist, openly anti-Semitic and masculinist tendency. It brings together channels from various European countries, the United States and Canada, almost all of them English-speaking.

⁷ Unidentified channels are private channels for which Telegram locks down harvestable information. For more details, see the methodology in our previous post.

1. Comparison of the spatialization of the communities of the depths 1 and 2 graphs



The size of the nodes is proportional to their incoming and outgoing degrees. The incoming degree corresponds to the number of contents reposted by the chain from another chain. The outgoing degree corresponds to the number of times a content of the chain has been reposted by another chain.

The many **non-English-speaking communities (in French, Spanish, Italian, German and Russian)** are also present. As in the Depth 1 Graph, these communities are located on the periphery of the English-speaking center. All of them are home to a large majority of channels close to far right and nationalist, ultra-conservative Christians and anti-globalist movements and parties. Their publications refer to themes linked to the rejection of migration, elite conspiracy, anti-vaccine and Covid-skeptic theses, disavowing the European Union, climate skepticism and a pro-Russian reading of the War in Ukraine. Similarly, they recover some of the English content to bring credibility to their own publications, relying on the conspiracy reading keys laid out by QAnon or the Great Reset. This can be partly explained by the hegemony of English on the web, which means that all communities contain several channels broadcasting English messages or translating English messages into their language. This may also attest to the quasi-monopolistic position of the Americans in the dissemination of conspiracy narratives in Europe: they offer a conspiracy reading grid that is taken up by the different linguistic communities and readapted according to the specific problems of the concerned countries.

Finally, we also find **the same dynamics of information circulation** within and between communities as in the Depth 1 Graph. The far-right pro-Trump conspiracy community appears to be the largest producer of content, which is then taken up internally by other channels, as well as by the other communities. In the center of the graph, the two international conspiracy communities are the biggest relays of content and act in part as transit points for content between the different communities of the graph.

In conclusion, our new graph, although larger, remains comparable to the first one. Thus, for a topographical analysis of the major trends present in our database, a depth 1 query may be sufficient. This consistency also confirms that our tool, whether used at depth 1 or 2, can indeed capture a segment of the conspiracy sphere on Telegram, and be used to study its structure and main actors

Enhanced Analysis: a More Thorough Exploration of Existing Communities

Nevertheless, a depth 2 query has a real added value. Indeed, the increased number of chains and, incidentally, the greater size of the communities, allow for a more in-depth analysis of their respective internal structures.

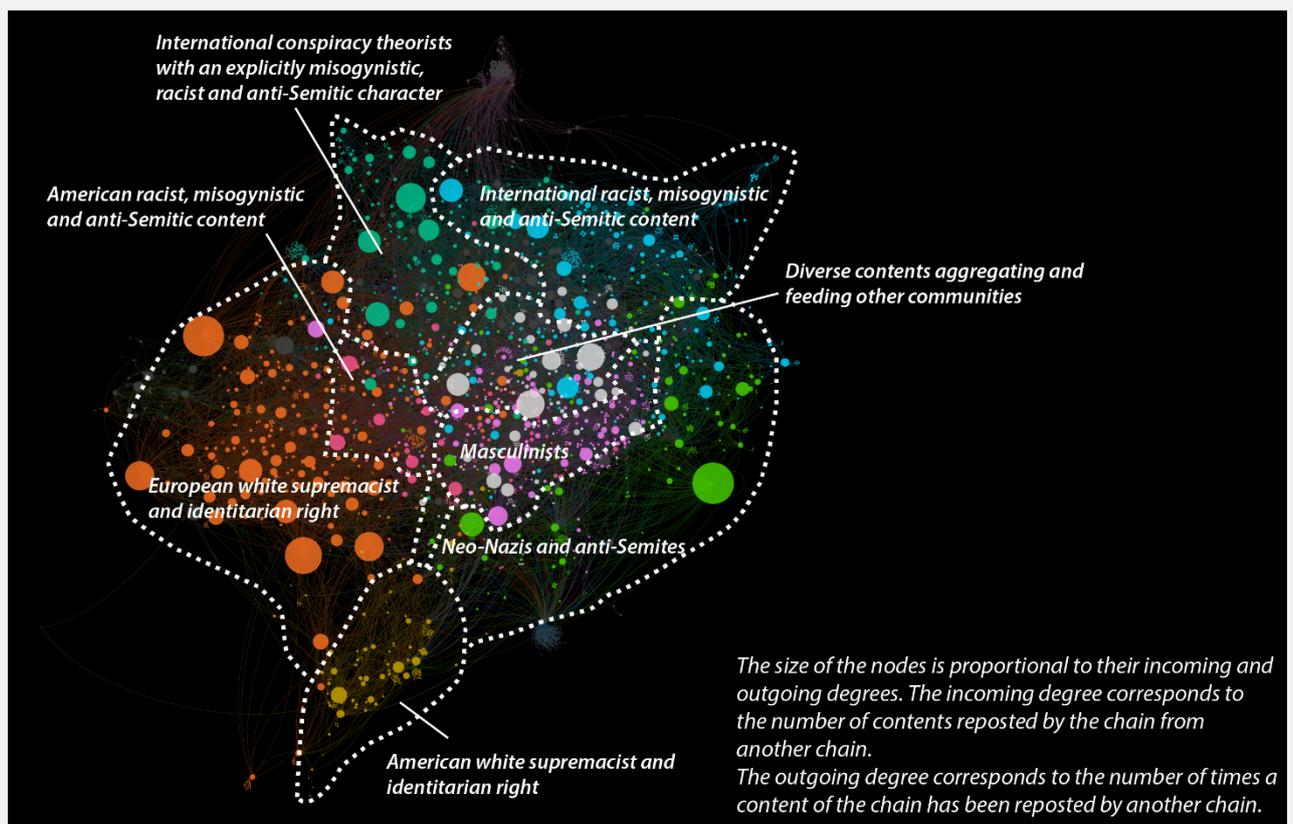
We notice that some marginal communities in the Depth 1 Graph have disappeared in the Depth 2 Graph (Figure 1). For example, the French far right is merged with the French conspiratorial community. Likewise, some specific conspiracy communities observed on the Depth 1 Graph (anti-New World Order or crypto-conspiracists) are now integrated into the international conspiracy communities.

This is mainly due to the inner working of the modularity algorithm. Indeed, the more nodes there are in the graph, the more the algorithm tends to “smooth out” certain nuances within the communities it detects, especially in the case of the two international English-speaking conspiracy communities at the center of the graph. Similarly, it tends to classify in the same community channels that do not always share the same ideological biases, thus complicating an exhaustive description of each community. Nevertheless, this tendency to “smooth nuances out” does not prevent more in-depth analyses of these broad communities. To demonstrate this, we have focused on **the American and European Christian identitarian community**.

The Case of the American and European Christian Identitarian Community

On the scale of the entire graph, this community does not seem to have a clear orientation, apart from its focus on the dissemination of hate messages based on identitarian criteria. Of course, there are many channels belonging to white supremacist American circles, Irish nationalist channels and channels glorifying a Slavic, European or Nordic culture. But there are also many channels that are difficult to classify into specific themes. Many share “inspirational” quotes and images, stories dealing with mythical narratives from various cultures, some emphasizing the Christian faith, others promoting paganism or animism. Finally, many channels seem to be mainly *trolls*, sharing content that is deliberately provocative, but difficult to classify into a clean and defined ideology or conspiracy trend.

2. Spatialization of sub-communities within the American and European Christian identitarian community



However, if we isolate this community from the rest of the graph and perform a new modularity calculation, we obtain a **new division into sub-communities** that begins to make more sense (Figure 2 above). These sub-communities share a common obsession with identitarian issues, but they are articulated around different registers.

Indeed, we find separate communities with the channels of the main personalities of the **American white supremacist and identitarian right** (in yellow) and of **European white supremacist channels** (in orange). There are also distinct communities of **openly anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi channels** (in light green) and **channels of masculinists and misogynists** (in purple).

There is also a cluster of channels that publish a lot of content that **brings together all these different strands of hate**: misogyny, anti-Semitism, and racism. The pink subcommunity mixes

these currents with an explicit focus on the United States, while the blue subcommunity does not have an explicit focus on any country or region of the world. There are also a lot of loosely defined *memes* and *trolls* aimed at provocation, but always with a racist, misogynistic and/or antisemitic tone.

There is also a dark green subcommunity that takes up these racist, misogynistic, and anti-Semitic theories, but that **integrates them into more global conspiracy theories**. This subcommunity is also a bridge for the transmission of content with the international conspiracy communities in Figure 1.

Finally, we note the presence of light gray nodes concentrated in the center of the graph. These channels propagate very diverse content, aggregating and feeding the content of other communities according to their respective biases.

In this analysis of the American and European Christian identitarian community, we find a spatial organization of channels into sub-communities. Each sub-community plays a role: it either broadcasts specific hate narratives (racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, etc.), or it aggregates this content by adapting it to a specific country or region, or it integrates it into a more general conspiracy register.

This brief analysis is, of course, not exhaustive, and other dynamics could be highlighted by further refining the qualitative and quantitative analysis of content, as well as the structure of information flow within and between each of these sub-communities and those of the global graph. By analyzing these sub-communities on an even larger scale, we could distinguish new geographical or content-based nuances. Analyzing the position of these sub-communities in relation to the other communities in the Depth 2 Graph (Figure 1) could also provide a better understanding of how conspiracy theories work in conjunction with hateful content.

THE MISSING PIECE: THE INSERTION OF RUSSIAN NETWORKS INTO THE TELEGRAM CONSPIRACY SPHERE

The most significant difference between the two graphs is the formation of **what we describe as a community of Russian imperialists**. This presence is even more interesting because it is not due to a bias generated by our starting list of channels. As we explained in the previous note, only 2 of the 108 channels we had preselected were Russian⁸. Repositioning these channels on the Depth 2 Graph indicates that by increasing the depth of the query, it is possible to detect new important phenomena in the circulation of content.

One of these phenomena is that the depth 2 query restructured Russian and pro-Russian channels around linguistic communities. The depth 1 query had allowed us to identify several channels for which we had established the following classification: *Russian-speaking pro-Russian channels* and *pro-Russian channels*.

All these channels have two things in common. First, they focus on justifying the Russian invasion of Ukraine and more generally on defending the actions of the Russian government. Secondly, these channels are scattered among the other language communities. This is particularly the case for Russian-speaking channels whose location in the graph is totally

⁸ Compared to 52 French channels, 28 French-language channels (from Switzerland, Belgium and Quebec), 16 American channels and nine European channels (in German, Spanish, Irish and Portuguese).

random. Finally, with some exceptions such as the Russian English-language channel “intelslava,” these channels have very little influence on the circulation of content since their degree was negligible compared to the most central channels in the graph.

However, by expanding the volume of strings and their connections, the depth 2 query has allowed the **emergence of a new linguistic community that we call Russian imperialists**. This community is composed of both newly harvested channels and channels already observed on the Depth 1 Graph, but without a clear location. At the same time, this new query has also **preserved many pro-Russian channels within the different linguistic communities** confirming the hypothesis that pro-Russian channels are well integrated in the whole graph.

The Emergence of a “Russian Imperialist” Community

This new Russian imperialist community brings together Russian media figures whose role is to structure and disseminate the vision of a new multipolar world order defended by Russian elites.

The Omnipresence of Journalists and Influencers Who Act for the Russian Information Security

The main channels in this community, measured in outgoing degrees⁹, **belong to communication actors dedicated to defending the information security of the Russian state**. They include, for example, those of the ANNA news agency (*Analytical Network News Agency*¹⁰), and others belonging to journalist influencers such as Andrei Medvedev, Alexander Kots and Anna Shafran. All three of them work for media outlets that are directly linked to the Russian state and defend the official line of the government.

Andrei Medvedev, a journalist and member of the Duma, has directed a documentary entitled “Project Ukraine,”¹¹ in which he claims that this country is a Western creation with an essentially anti-Russian aim. Anna Shafran, for her part, is known to be close to the leading presenter of the state television channel Rossiya-1, the controversial Vladimir Soloviev¹². She has been particularly active in spreading disinformation about the alleged fascist nature of the Ukrainian regime and in accusing opponents of Russian rule, such as Alexei Navalny, of being foreign agents and Russophobes long before they were convicted.

Alexander Kots, meanwhile, is a war correspondent for the daily Komsomolskaya Pravda¹³. He was banned in 2014 from Ukraine by the state’s secret service (SBU) after having been

⁹ The outgoing degree indicates the number of times a channel's content has been picked up by other channels. The higher the outgoing rating of a channel, the more times its content was picked up by other channels.

¹⁰ Formerly the “Abkhasian News Network Agency”, this information agency has been reported to be part of the propaganda dissemination and informational influence apparatus in some theatres of operation such as Syria and Ukraine. Allen and Moore, 2018, “Victory without Casualties: Russia’s Information Operations,” *Parameters*, 48(1). Available at http://www.index-investor.com/resources/Research-Materials/Russia/Russian_Info_Operations.pdf

¹¹ Проект “Украина” Часть-1. Фильм Андрея Медведева 12+ (2021), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QABDmseiMJM>, accessed 7 September 2022.

¹² Database of the Free Russia Forum, *Shafran Anna*, available at <https://www.spisok-putina.org/en/personas/shafran-2/>, accessed on 07 September 2022.

¹³ It should be recalled that the former press newspaper of the Communist Youth has become since the 2010s an organ relaying the geopolitical vision of Russian power. Vassie and Reichstadt, 7 May 2017, “‘Psychopath’, ‘Homosexual’ and ‘Rothschild puppet’: Emmanuel Macron as seen by Komsomolskaya Pravda”, *Conspiracy Watch*. Available at https://www.conspiracywatch.info/Psychopathe-homosexuel-et-marionnette-de-Rothschild-Emmanuel-Macron-vu-par-la-Komsomolskaia-Pravda_a1806.html, accessed on 07 September 2022.

accused of participating in interrogating Ukrainian soldiers captured by pro-Russian forces during that year's conflict in the Donbass.

All these channels were already present in the Depth 1 Graph, scattered in other communities. However, by discovering new channels and new connections between them, the depth 2 query allowed the constitution of this Russian imperialist community.

Elements of Language Defending the Russian Imperialistic Vision

The content shared within this community is almost entirely **made of op-eds praising the actions of the Russian army and Russia in Ukraine**¹⁴. They vilify the activity of Russian personalities (artists, editors, activists, journalists, etc.) portrayed as hostile to the idea of the "liberation" and "denazification" of Ukraine and to the defense of traditional values, such as so-called "LGBT"¹⁵ and "pro-Western" propagandists, or civilians who refuse to fight for Russia¹⁶.

There are also criticisms of certain aspects of the Russian bureaucracy, such as the allegedly lax migration policy. Contrary to the propaganda, this is not a unidirectional discourse strictly respecting an official state line. Some criticisms and divergences are therefore expressed, but they remain generally favorable to the action of the Russian state.

Non-Russian-Speaking pro-Russian Channels Perfectly Integrated into the Various Foreign Conspiracy Spheres

The analysis of the Depth 2 Graph has made it possible to identify more clearly **the presence of Russian and pro-Russian channels in all language communities**. Some of these channels were already visible in the Depth 1 Graph. Our second query nevertheless revealed small intra-community networks in which they operate as vectors of war propaganda, disinformation and anti-Western narratives.

Unlike the channels of the Russian imperialist community, these channels broadcast information to counter the messages broadcast by Western media in order to discredit Ukraine's position in the eyes of their audience. This is part of a growing desire **to impose an alternative vision of reality based on the multipolar paradigm of the international order defended by the Russian elites**. In this sense, the narratives emphasize the legitimacy of the denazification exercise, the Western threat carried by the United States to destroy Russian sovereignty through Ukraine, and the injustice of Western sanctions and their economic consequences for the rest of the world. This content is widely picked up by the rest of the channels in each community, thus reinforcing the link between the various anti-Western conspiratorial narratives and a fascination for the Russian power¹⁷.

The Russian channels are nested within each community without following a single logic, despite the similarity of the shared content. Thus, in the German-speaking community, the main

¹⁴ <https://t.me/pushilindenis/2573>

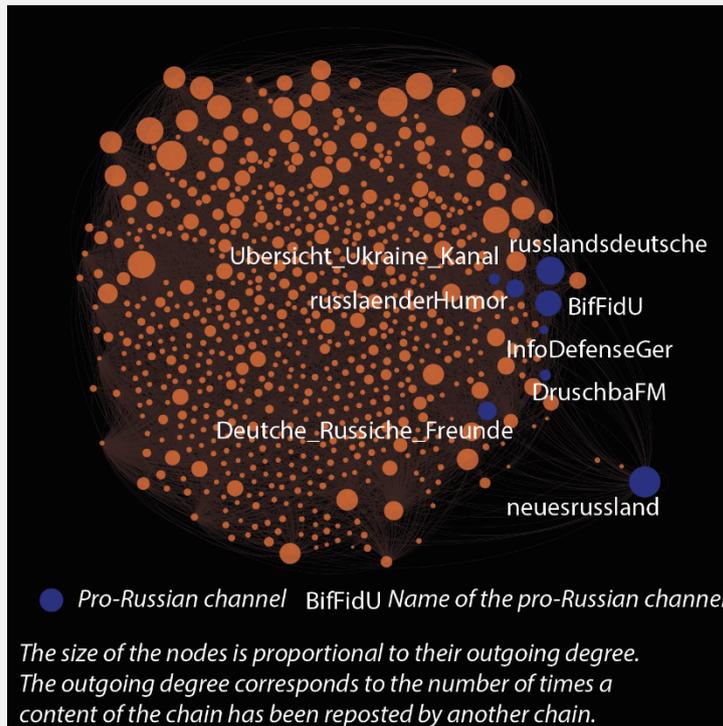
¹⁵ <https://t.me/MedvedevVesti/11038>

¹⁶ <https://t.me/vladlentatarsky/15711>

¹⁷ Le Matin, March 10, 2022, " D'antivax à pro-Poutine, les complotistes surfent sur l'actu," available at <https://www.lematin.ch/story/dantivax-a-pro-poutine-les-complotistes-surfent-sur-lactu-963139962256>. Accessed on September 7, 2022.

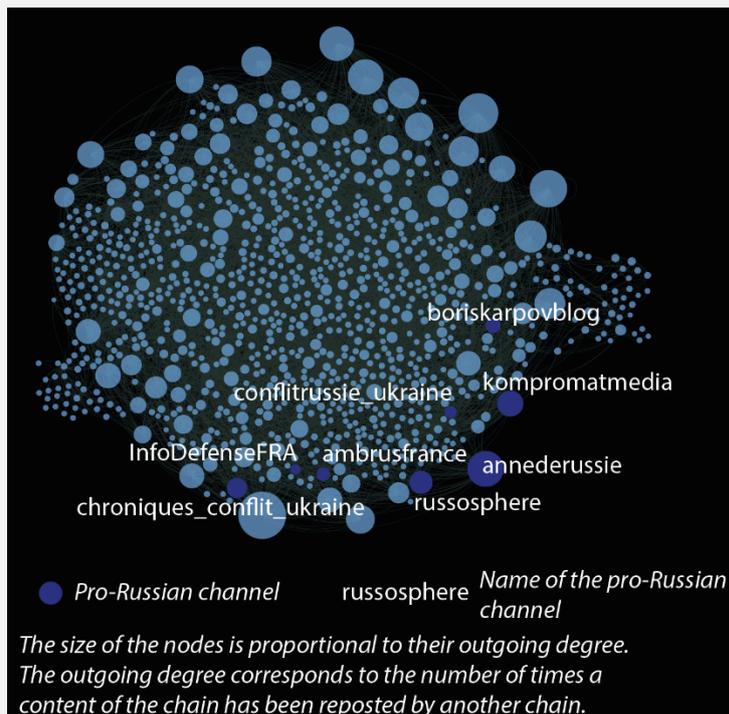
pro-Russian channels are “neuesrussland,” “russlandsdeutsche,” “BifFidU,” “DruschbaFM” and “InfoDefenseGer” (Figure 3).

3. Location of pro-Russian channels in the German-speaking community



In the case of the French-speaking community (Figure 4), there are four main Russian channels massively covered by the central channels of the community: “annederussie,” “russosphere,” “kompromatmedia,” “boriskarpovblog,” but also by smaller ones.

4. Location of pro-Russian channels in the French-speaking community

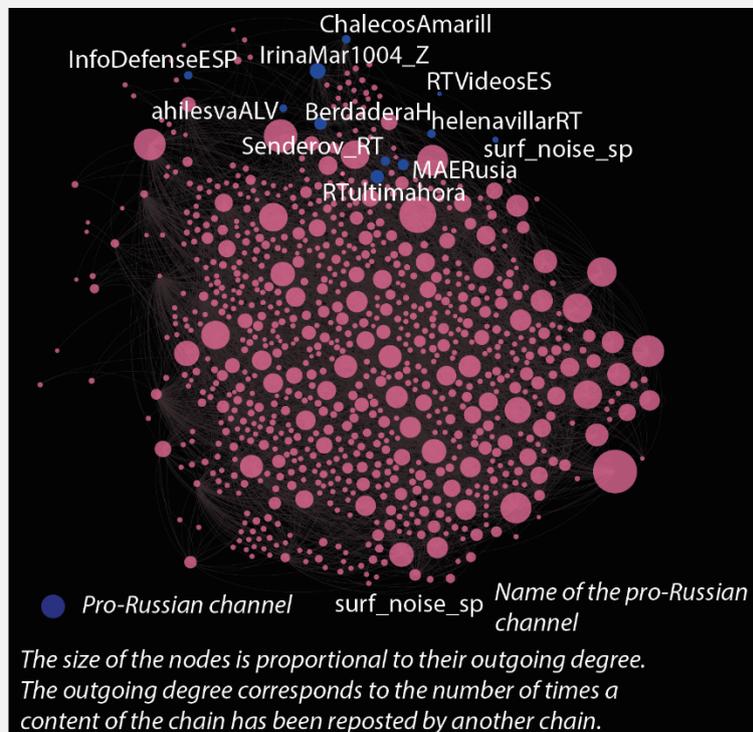


Finally, within the Italian-speaking community, we find the channel "LauraRuHK," as well as "Labandadegliidraulici," "TrudyETrue," "RossellaFidanza," and "Kaganovic." The latter channels publish pro-Russian content but also broader conspiracy theories.

In all three language communities, these channels fall within the main narrative of the far-right nationalist and conservative Christian communities in Europe.

In the case of the Spanish-speaking community, there are three main pro-Russian channels: "ChalecosAmarill," "IrinaMar1004_Z," "BerdaderaH" (Figure 5). They belong to journalists, influencers and polemicists linked to RT in Spanish, such as "ahilesvaALV" and "helenavillarRT." Their editorial line, in which pro-Russian narratives about the War in Ukraine are inserted, is, contrary to other linguist communities, connected to the anti-imperialist and Bolivarian radical left, following the logic of the informational influence strategy implemented by Russia in Latin America¹⁸.

5. Location of pro-Russian channels in the Spanish-speaking community



The Depth 2 Graph thus confirms the hypothesis we put forward in the previous report: the dissemination of pro-Russian English-language channels within the various linguistic communities attests to their integration into the U.S. and European conspiracy ecosystems.

The Interaction Between non-Russian-speaking pro-Russian Channels and the Russian Imperialist Community: a Hidden Strategy?

In parallel to this integration, the appearance of the Russian imperialist community in the Depth 2 Graph leads us to put forward the following hypothesis: this new Russian-speaking

¹⁸ Steiner and Oates, August 2019, "Reading the RT Leaves: Foreign Policy Lessons from Russian International Media Coverage of Venezuela," Kennan Cable (43). Available at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no-43-reading-the-rt-leaves-foreign-policy-lessons-russian-international>

community could be the source of the narratives taken up by the pro-Russian channels housed within the various linguistic communities. From a methodological point of view, this hypothesis is consistent with the functioning of our Telegram tool, which “goes upstream” of republished messages by harvesting the channels whose messages have been republished¹⁹. Channels appearing in “deeper” queries would therefore constitute the sources of shared content. However, our tool also captures all the messages re-shared from all the channels of different discovered depths: the new communities that appear on a “deeper” graph are therefore not necessarily connected with all the communities observed in a “shallower” graph. It is therefore necessary to analyze the spatialization of communities in relation to each other and the location of channels in the graph to understand how they are connected, as we show below. It is also necessary to analyze the filiation of messages between the different channels through which they circulate. On this last point, our team is currently developing a message-tracing tool that make this type of analysis possible. As it stands, it is therefore difficult to confirm or deny our hypothesis.

Indeed, on the one hand, the Russian imperialist community is relatively isolated from the other language communities on our graph. Its channels have few links with other language communities. This weak connection leads to the assumption that the Russian imperialist community is not a source of pro-Kremlin narratives for the rest of the communities.

On the other hand, the Depth 2 Graph has revealed important dynamics within the English-speaking conspiracy community (light blue in Figure 5): we can observe the creation of a network of Russian English-speaking channels with important links to the Russian imperialist community.

Establishing a Core pro-Russian Chain Within the International Conspiracy Community

Most of the Russian English-speaking channels observed in this community were already present in the Depth 1 Graph but scattered among different English-speaking communities. Their constitution in a coherent core in **the Depth 2 Graph shows that these channels irrigate the other channels in English, but also the other pro-Russian channels of the graph located in the other linguistic communities.**

For example, the channel “intelslava” ranks 10^e among the 23,275 nodes in the graph by its outgoing degree, making it one of the most important creators and providers of content. It presents itself as [...] Russian News aggregator [...] funded by Putin, Russian ministry of defence, FSB, GRU and SVR “²⁰. It connects different right-wing spheres in different languages through its war propaganda and disinformation content. The other Russian channels in English of this community also have an important outgoing degree. Among the most important are: ‘sputnik,’ ‘UkraineHumanRightsAbuses,’ ‘ukr_leaks_eng,’ ‘MoD Russia,’ ‘TheEternalUkrainian2,’ “EurasianChoice” and “NewResistance.”

¹⁹ For an explanation of how the Telegram tool works, see footnote 1 and GEODE, June 2022. Available at <https://www.reset.tech/resources/les-conspirationnistes-francais-sous-influence-americaine-le-cas-de-telegram/>

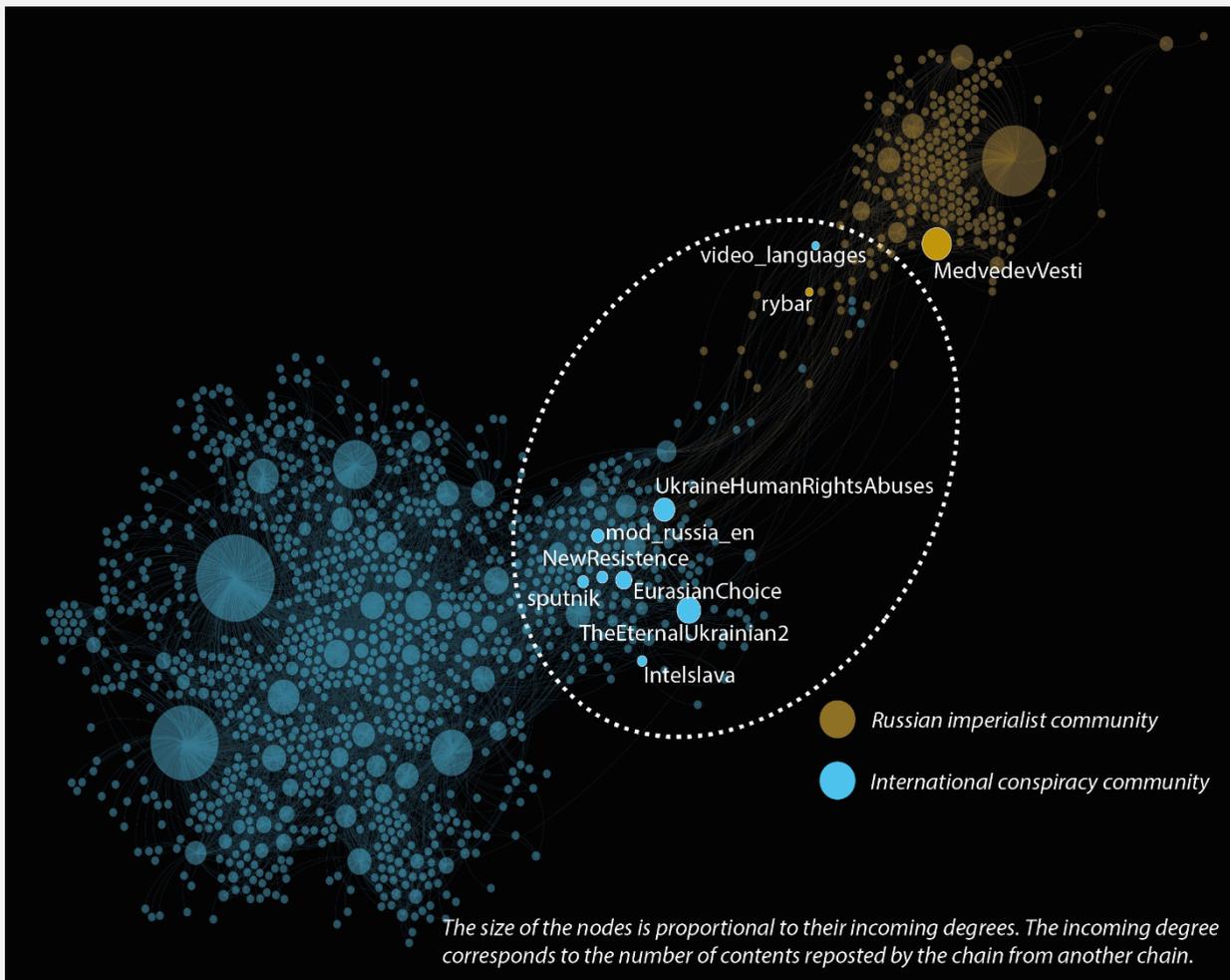
²⁰ <https://t.me/intelslava>.

Between the Russian Imperialist Community and the English-speaking Russian Channels: Connection or Continuity?

In addition to these influential channels, there are also many Russian and Russian-English channels with direct links to or from the Russian imperialist community (Figure 6).

For example, the channel “rybar” is very active in news operations in Ukraine and is followed by both Russian-speaking and foreign channels. The Polish intelligence services link rybar to Alexander Kots and Boris Rozhin (boris_rozhin), another Russian-speaking blogger with a large following whose channel also appears in this porous zone. Similarly, the channels of the former Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, the Eurasian philosopher Alexander Dugin and the channel of the Russian Embassy in London also appear as belonging to the English-speaking conspiracy community. Finally, the channel “video_languages” also appears in this zone. This is a channel which centralizes videos from the RT media with subtitles in several languages, which are then taken up by other channels supporting the Russian state. These channels **thus seem to play a role in transferring information between the international conspiracy communities and the pro-Russian imperialist community.**

6. Pro-Russian English-speaking gateways to Russian imperialist narratives in the international conspiracy community



RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

This study shows the relevance of using our Telegram tool at depth 2. Its ability to delve deeper into this social network makes it possible to bring out new phenomena and to analyze communities in greater depth, without fundamentally altering the analyses we made with the Depth 1 Graph.

The emergence of the Russian imperialist community and its unequal interactions with other pro-Russian channels in other language communities opens avenues of reflection that our tool could address:

- *The direction of the circulation of Russian imperialist content on Telegram:* By refining the analysis of the circulation of content between channels, between communities, and within communities, it would be possible to confirm that the pro-Russian English-speaking channels are indeed the “gateways” to the narratives formulated by the Russian imperialist community within the various linguistic communities.
- *Dig deeper? Dig deeper:* a query at depth 3 could find the “missing links” in the Russian informational influence apparatus. The graph at depth 2 has begun to reveal this device within the English-speaking conspiracy community, a device that is invisible in the graph at depth 1. By continuing to collect the messages shared within the other linguistic communities with the pro-Russian channels, we could possibly see new zones of porosity emerge. We can suspect that their appearance would restructure the graph in such a way that a real continuity between the linguistic communities and the Russian imperialist one would emerge. This would show more precisely what seems, at least in part, to be a conscious strategy.