

# **Right-Wing Digital News Infrastructures in Western Democracies**

**The use of digital media data in a comparative research project**

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WESTMONSTER THE DAILY CALLER

DEN  
KORTE

## Far-Right and Right-Wing Populist Alternative Online News Media

"Institutionalized journalism" (Wolf 2014)  $\Leftrightarrow$  blogs

Current, non-fictional and text-based content with a given periodicity

"Alternative media"

Far-right and right-wing populist views

HEM MOTSTANDSRORELSEN NORDFR  
NORD

unzens

jouu

ART

tate

CE.TV  
THE FUTURE IS THE PAST

Townhall

spiked

Alpenschau.com

- Actor-centered: user-based rather than topic-based data
- Structural:
  - Digital news architectures: **Supply and demand** of (right-wing) partisan online news content in different countries? (Mosca & Quaranta, 2016; Van Aelst et al., 2017)
  - (Actor) Networks: Do individual news sites form national and transnational **networks** and alliances of mutual recognition and support?
- Comparative: US, UK, GER, AUT, SWE, DEN
  - Context dependency (Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014)

## To cut a long story very short...

The more established right-wing actors and positions are in

- a) the legacy media landscape and
- b) the parliamentary sphere,

- the lower the supply & demand for alternative right-wing online news

- the lower the incentive for right-wing online news sites to establish transnational connections with like-minded sites (?)

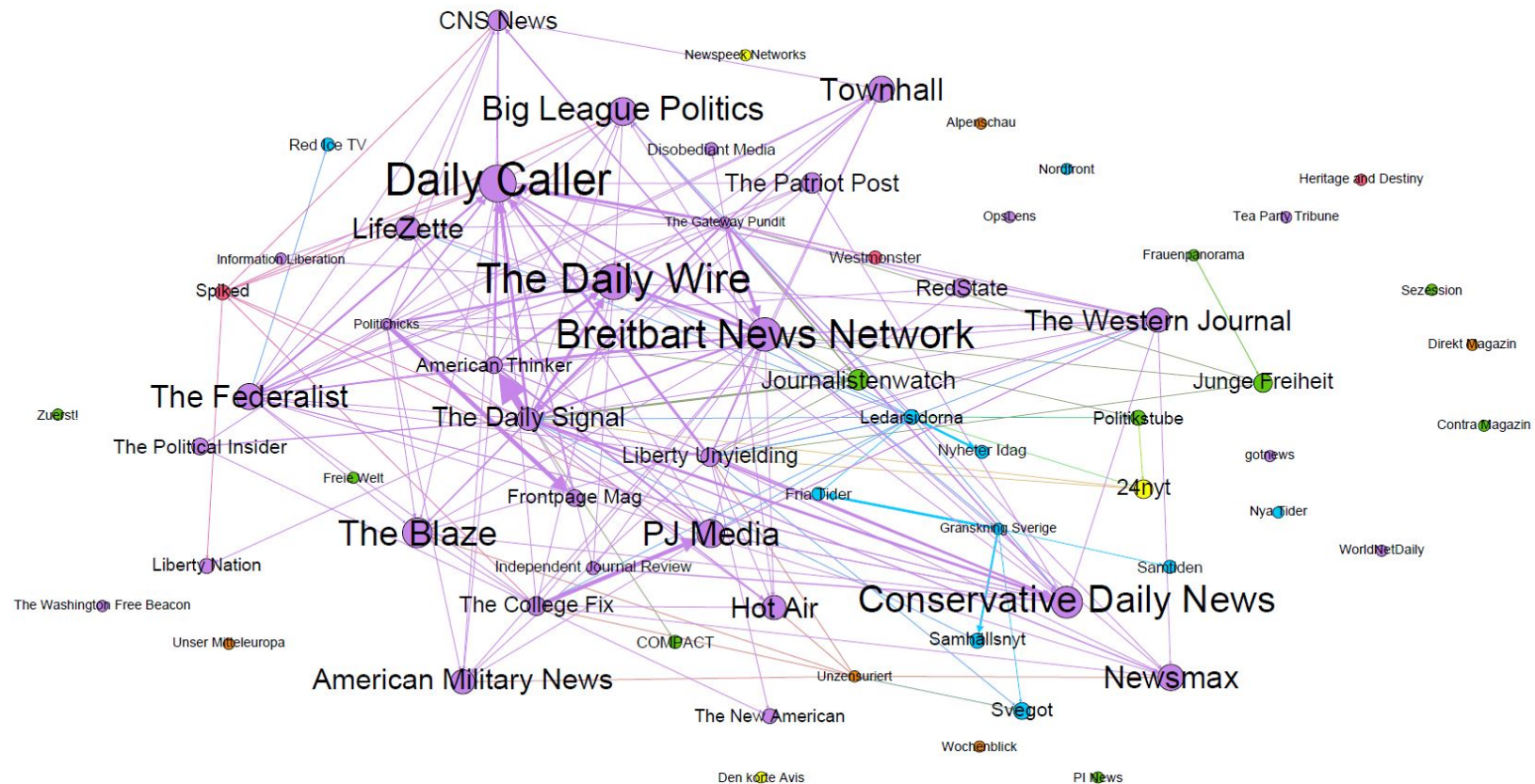
## What kind of digital media data?

| News outlet's... | Supply   | Demand  | Network Links   |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| Webpage          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff, address, financing, news categories, interactive features (standardized manual content analysis in MaxQDA)</li> <li>Number of articles (June 22-July 22) (Mediacloud)</li> </ul> | Web traffic data – web site rank (Alexa)                  | <a href="#">Hyperlinks to websites</a> (Mediacloud data)                                |
| Twitter account  | Number of tweets (June 1 to July 1, DMI-TCAT)  | Number of followers (average, June 1 to July 1, DMI-TCAT) | Mentions/re-tweets; <a href="#">hyperlinks to websites</a> (June 1 to July 1, DMI-TCAT) |
| Facebook page    |  | Number of page subscribers (2 Aug, manual coding)         | Page likes (Python programming based on FBs API)  |

## Why hyperlinks?

- Hyperlinking as strategic practise → hyperlink networks „set of web-based connections“ (Young/Leonardi, 2012, 233)
- Motivations: increase website traffic, enhance own reputation by linking to credible partners, enhance visibility of shared objectives, establish legitimacy
- Marginalized/extreme parties/groups more likely to establish links (trans)nationally

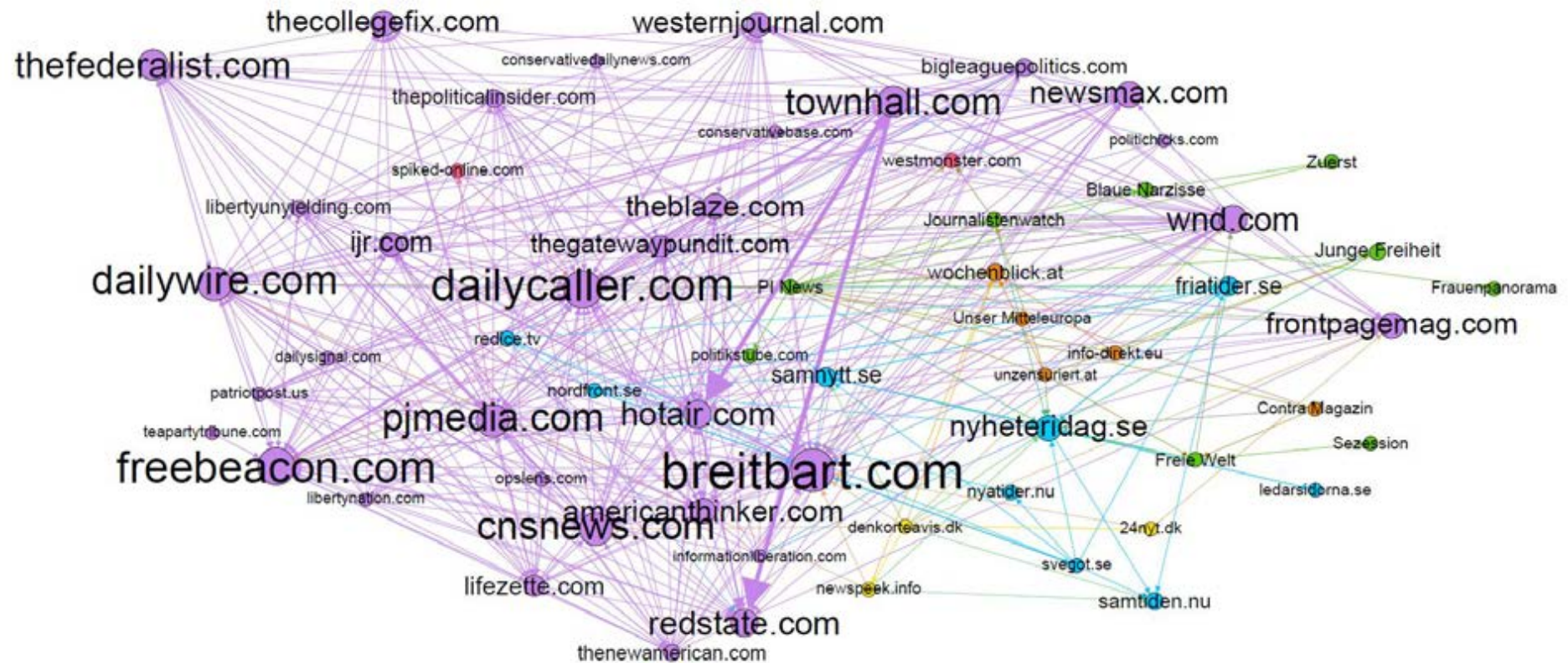
## Transnational Nationalism? Right-wing Digital News Infrastructures in Western Democracies



Network of hyperlinks in tweets (Force Atlas 2 by Gephi), n=66 right-wing news sites: US (purple), Germany (green), Sweden (blue), UK (red), Denmark (yellow), Austria (orange)



## Transnational Nationalism? Right-wing Digital News Infrastructures in Western Democracies





## What next?

...go even bigger: inclusion of indirect connections to identify  
"international integrators"

...go semantic (based on Mediacloud data)

...go smaller: qualitative study of those articles and tweets that integrate  
right-wing online news sites transnationally

## Working papers

Heft, Annett/ Mayerhöffer, Eva/Reinhardt, Susanne/ Knüpfer, Curd (2018): Beyond Breitbart. Comparing right-wing digital news infrastructures in Western Democracies.

Heft, Annett/ Knüpfer, Curd/ Mayerhöffer, Eva/Reinhardt, Susanne (2018): Transnational networking and (dis-)integration among right-wing digital news ecologies in Europe and the US.