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The Q-drops – a content analysis

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Introduction

The QAnon-movement, a conspiracy theory and political movement gaining fame in the storming of the Capitol in Washington D.C. in the beginning of 2021, see the messages from the source “Q” as their most important source of information. “Q” has posted short messages on different message boards (4Chan, 8Chan, 8Kun et cetera) since November 2017. The messages comment on contemporary political events and claim to foresee political development.[1] Who the person(s) behind the source, “Q” is, is not known, although speculations exist on the internet. At least we know that the person or persons making the posts seems to want us to believe that they have insight into the backstage of the political scene. [2] Conspiracy theories, and the QAnon-movement, has been investigated in the discourse of Information Literacy before. But then mostly from the perspective of the follower and his/her motives to be a part of the movement[3]. In this presentation the foundation of the QAnon-movement will be investigated: The posts or “drops” from the source “Q”. This will give us a deeper understanding what the followers of QAnon really believe in. Knowing the structure and actual content of the “Q” – posts will help us understand the QAnons. A practical result of this might be a greater possibility to understand and communicate with people invested in the movement. The 4953 posts that “Q” posted between fall 2017 and winter 2020 are presented on different websites connected to the QAnon-movement. By performing a content-analysis it would be possible to answer questions such as who is mentioned more – Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump? Or – how many times are networks of child-traffickers mentioned in the Q-posts? In this poster-presentation I will focus on references to other conspiracy theories; the Adrenochrome-conspiracy, “Truthers”, “Birthers” and False flag school-shootings. QAnon has been labeled a “big-tent-conspiracy theory” because it constantly evolves and adds new conspiracies to its belief-system.[4] Using a content-analysis we could gain knowledge regarding if these conspiracy theories are already added in the posts from “Q” or if they show up later in the process. Message spread by Qanon-followers follow a certain process in which Q-posts are discussed by followers in blogs, Youtube-channels and podcasts and mixed with a general conspiracist narrative.

Material

The content-analysis will be performed by converting all Q-posts to individual text-files. This gives us the possibility to use a analysis-tool such as GREP to perform searches in all posts without the distortion of the QAnon-websites own search systems [5] A few relevant keywords per conspiracy theory will be used to find any references to it among the vast amount of posts by “Q”. The website where the posts will be harvested from is one of the last sites were canonized Q-drops are presented, operationq.pub. Only canonized Q-drops will be used; not any of the so-called “Lost drops”.[6]

Method

Procedure

- Searches with grep. All search-results has to be investigated to assess that there are no false positive results. Q’s own reposts are ignored. This is followed by a visual search.
- Adrenochrome-Conspiracy
  - The belief that a drug, Adrenochrome, can be extracted from dead children and is used by the elite to sustain young looks.
  - Keywords: blood, children, trafficking, adrenochrome, red shoes, Marina Abramović,
    - "Truthers"
    - Different conspiracy-theories connected to the 9/11 attack.
    - Keywords: 9/11, World Trade Center, Bin Laden,
    - "Birthers"
    - The belief that Barack Obama is not an US citizen.
    - Keywords: Kenya, birth, Hussein, Obama,
- False-Flag School shootings
  - The belief that school-shootings are fake and fabricated by the elite.
  - Keywords: Sandy Hook, False flag, Gun control, school,

Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>grep keyword1 keyword2 et cetera *.txt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrenochrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False flag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Searches in the Q-drops

In the visual search links were followed and photos investigated.

- A large part of the graphic material is included in more than one post.
- Exact grep-commands, notes on visual investigation et cetera in the authors possession.

Conclusive remarks

- The Adrenochrome-conspiracy and related conspiracism (regarding trafficking of children et cetera) are most common, but still not very common, in the material in general (1-2%). The Sandy Hook-Conspiracy which is a fairly common conspiracy-theory regarding false flag school shooting is not mentioned at all in the content.
- Using computer-aided searches does not help us with dogwhistling (one example would be the “Joe 303300 divided by 2020” in Q4826). Or with pictures (like the picture of Marina Abramović in Q1205 - an artist commonly connected to the Adrenochrome-conspiracy ). General visual investigation is needed when working with multimodal content.
- A great portion of the links (to Youtube.com, Twitter.com) from the Q-drops are dead and presumely not possible to retrieve again. This will lower the possibilities to understand the Q-drops in the future.
- The process of converting the material resembles the process of migrating information used in archival practice. With further documentaion of the process packages for research could be constructed from similar material and used by other researchers.

References