**Establishment critique from the left and the right**

**Abstract**

While in the 1990s liberal democracies seemed the uncontested winners of the new emerging world order and even an “End of History” was postulated [1], it is now widely recognized that liberal democracies are suffering under growing political tensions and crisis.

One often mentioned symptom in this context is that of political polarization. While the classic standpoint would label the poles as left and right, it is also possible to split the political spectrum into centrists, meaning people who are generally approving of the status quo and see the problem in “populism” or “extremism”, and anti-establishment movements who want to alter the status quo and blame the establishment for being “bought” or corrupt.

This approach has nothing to do with the horseshoe-theory, but wants to understand the driving force in resentment against the political status quo. We also know that in order to appeal to more people, individuals or groups seeking to push their own political agenda may label themselves as “non-partisan” or “people-centric” without being so. In this paper our focus is not on those individuals or groups and their tactics, but on the people, who follow them maybe without fully understanding and sharing their agenda.

To give an example: there is the phenomenon of so called “Obama-Trump voters”, who voted for Obama in 2008 or 2012 and then voted for the republican candidate Trump in 2016. It is assumed that roughly 13% of all Trump-voters in 2016 are “Obama-Trump voters”. This questions a common narrative (by the center-left) considering the winning of Trump a racial backlash for Obama being the first black American president [2]. Even Obama himself saw Trump as a backlash for introducing to much political change too fast.

But Obama-Trump voters are not the only phenomenon that questions the narrative of the racial backlash and white supremacists being the main force of electing Trump. While Trump was elected in 2016 by 21% of non-white voters, Trump increased his share in 2020 to 26%.

In this paper we want to understand the anti-establishment sentiment better and find similarities between left and right establishment critique in order to understand the underlying motives for people like the Obama Trump voters. We see this as a critical question for the future stability of societies in western democratic countries to find rational ways to deal with this sometimes irrational behavior.

**Technical approach**

To do this we are going to analyze the YouTube comment section of left-wing content creators and right-wing content creators. We are interested in common topics and also in the level of antagonism in the comment section. To get a broad view of anti-establishment arguments and discourse we are going to try to focus on different topics (Corona-Lockdowns, US Foreign Policy, Economy and Climate Change).

We are going to cluster the comments using the Pipeline that we used before to cluster the comments according to topics and manually assign labels to them. We will then look for similarities and differences between the comment sections of left and ring wing content creators. We can do this by visualizing the data. We will then try to compare the visualized data for videos on the same topic (for example Corona) by left wing channels and right wing channels.

In another approach we want to look at sentiment of the comments trying to guess the level of antagonism in the comment section. Therefor we want to perform a sentiment analysis and compare the different platforms to each other. We would like to get a sense how many of the commentators watch a video they disagree with. We would also like to understand the tactics of these commentators by doing a lexical analysis on their comments. It would be interesting to know if they mainly try to troll the channel or add constructive feedback. Also it would be interesting to know if they address the content of the video or just write something generic like “Today is the 16th of March and Donald Trump is the best president we ever had!!!”.

Video examples:

Corona:

The Young Turks, US COVID Cases Beginning To Climb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioUkqjiWFLI>

Fox News, Justice Alito critized COVID-19 restrictions and ‘rule by experts’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLI6rAj7jzw>

Climate Change:

The Young Turks, Climate Change Creates ‘Atmospheric River’ From US To China

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqmTtgQ\_gPA

Fox News, Why climate change has run its course

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCW5xOcF4lM

References:

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End\_of\_history

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/10/donald-trump-election-backlash-obama-presidency-white-voters