POLARIZATION AND TOXICITY

DURING THE LATEST
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

THE IDEA

- Now more than ever, YouTube is seen as not only a platform where to share and watch videos, but where exchanges between users can be had
- Political discussions and conversations can be seen flourishing under specialized news outlet's videos
- Threads under videos from these news outlets, belonging to the entire political ideology spectrum, can offer us a view on how users belonging to different political leanings interact with each other

THE QUESTION:

- By analyzing such YouTube conversations, can we gain insight regarding the commenters' habits? And is it possible to study the relationship between the toxicity of a thread and its polarization?

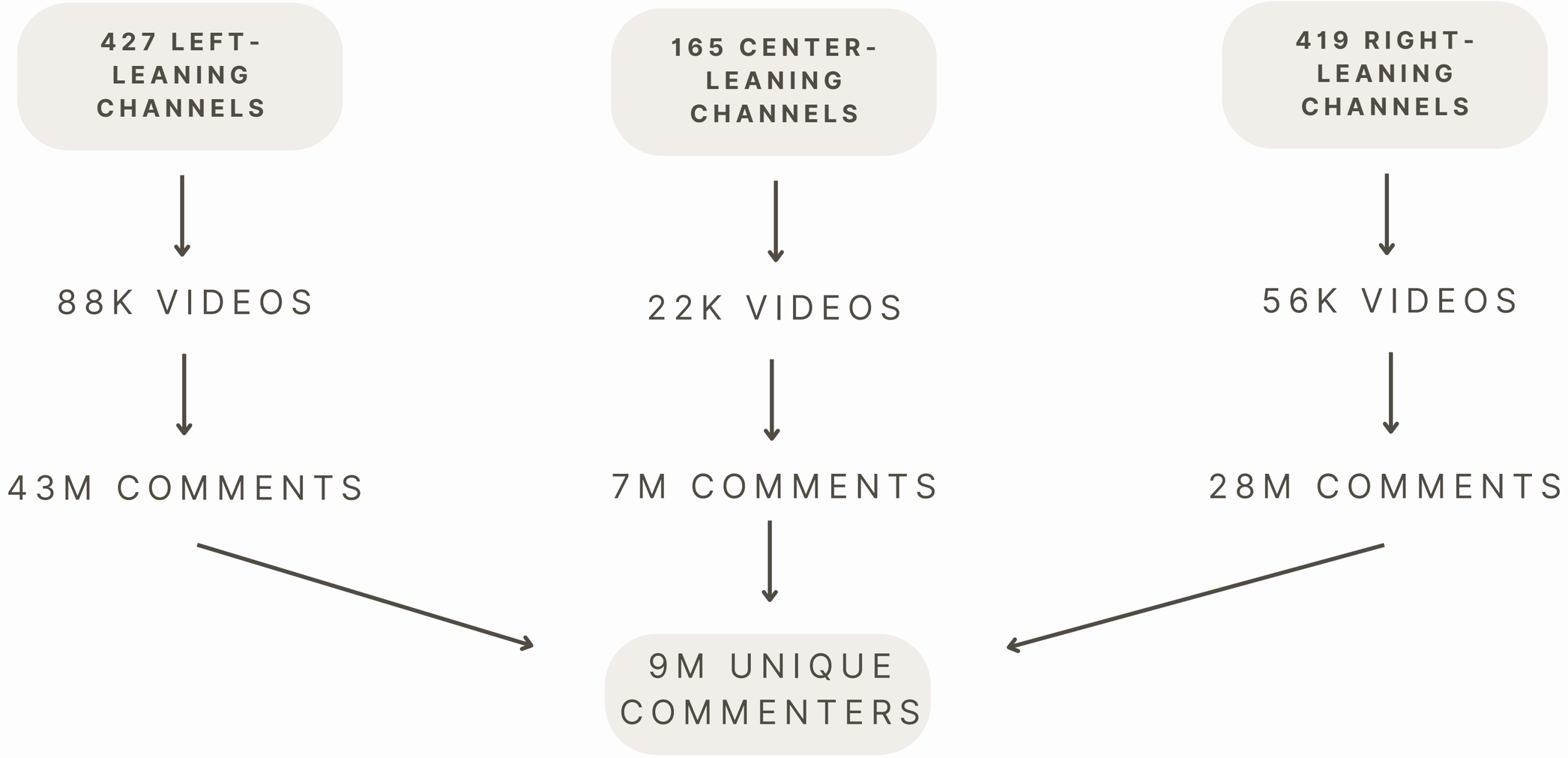
WHICH COMMENTS?

- Comments under national, local and independent news channels' videos, together with organizations' channels videos, during the latest US Presidential Elections of 2020, which could be considered as fertile ground for political debates

GETTING THE DATA:

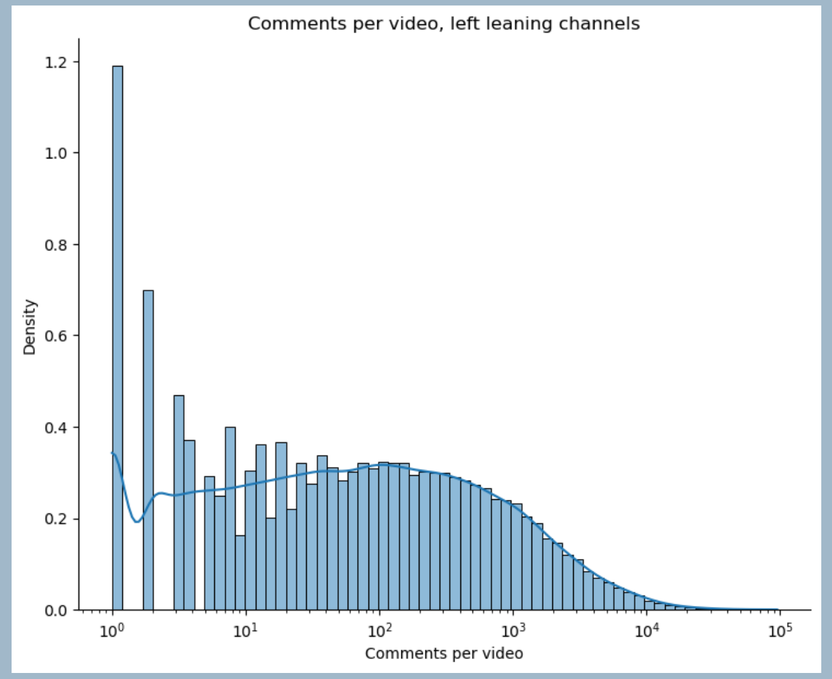
- Considered almost 1300 channels, classified either as left, right or center leaning
- A total 230 thousands videos uploaded between January and August 2020
- Full scrape of each video (root comments + replies)

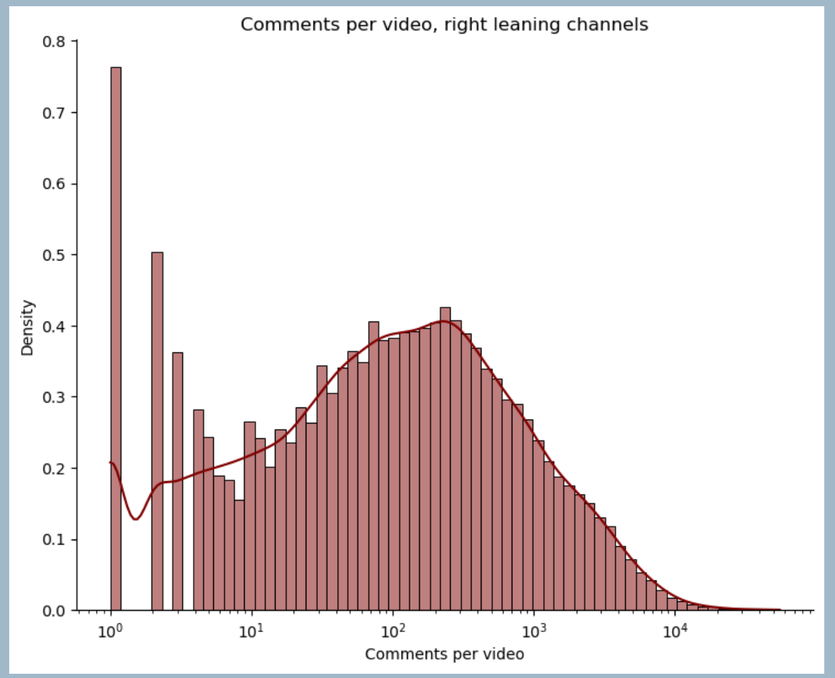
RESULTING DATASET:



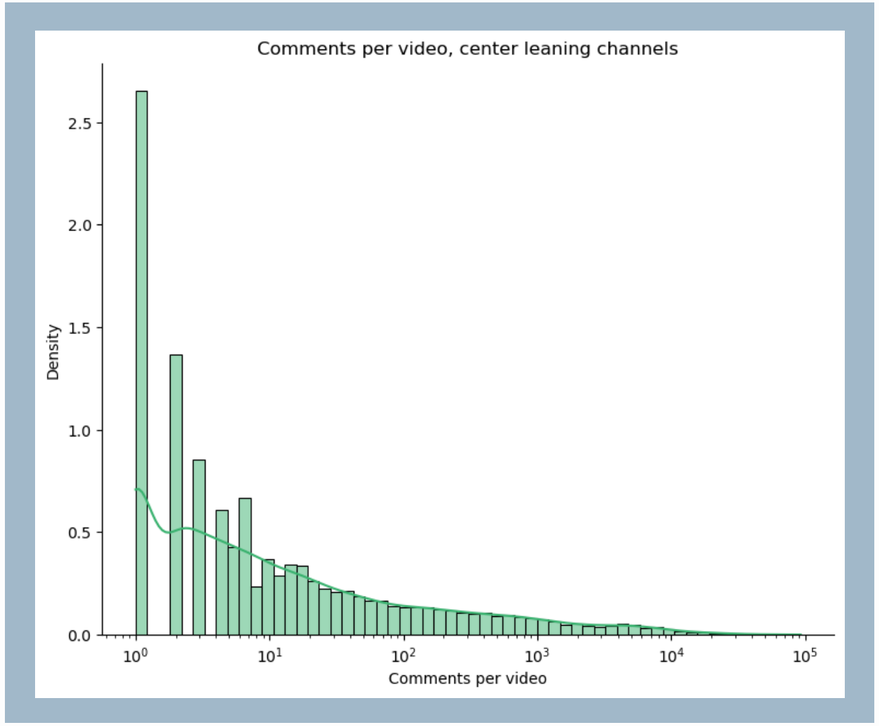
COMMENTS PER VIDEO:

- While the left-leaning channels have more videos (and thus more total comments), the videos coming from right-leaning channels have on average more comments per video
- The median of the comments per video distributions are particulary different, being 48 for the left-leaning videos, and 91 for the right-leaning videos



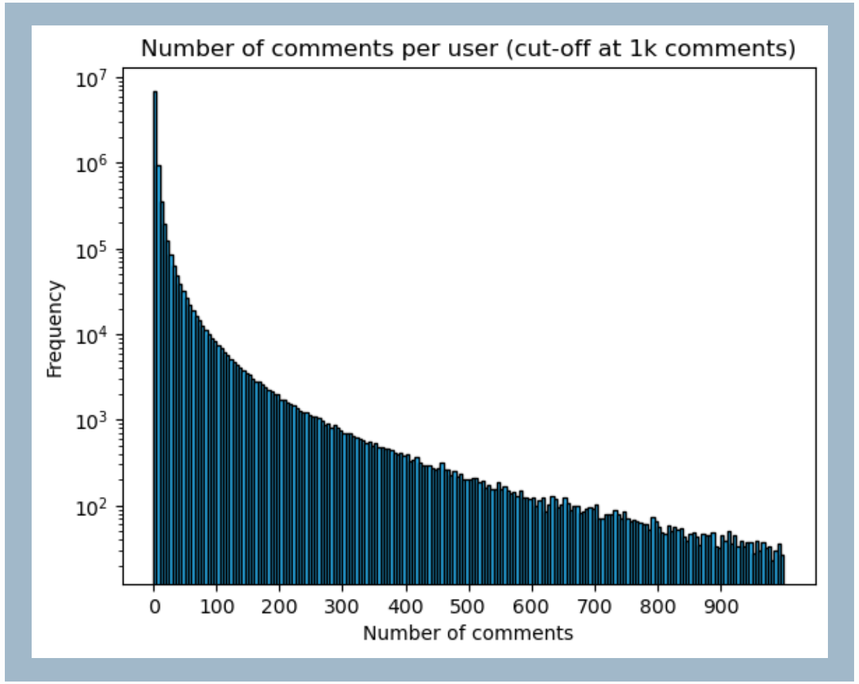


- The videos coming from center-leaning channels are generally less commented, with an average of 332 comments per video, compared to 493 for the left-leaning videos and 500 for the right-leaning videos



COMMENTS PER USER:

- 48% of the 9+ million users only have a single comment throughout every video



- "Active" users (those with at least 5 comments) are 24% of the total