

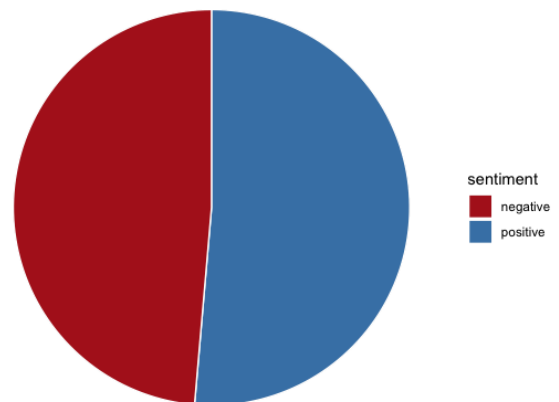
*Final Project Surv727 Report:
Sentiment Analysis of Supreme Court Confirmation Hearing NYT Articles*

GitHub Link: <https://github.com/LandonBPOLS/Surv727-Final-Project>

I was interested in the question; Has the language used in the U.S. Senate Supreme Court confirmation hearings evolved over time, and to what extent has it become more negative and contentious? I explored this question by using two types of data. I first used a dataset created by Shoshana Weissman and Anthony Marcum that contained transcripts of the supreme court confirmation hearings stretching from President Richard Nixon's tenure to President Biden's. I then web scraped New York Times Articles for each supreme court justice that was successfully confirmed from President Reagan's tenure to President Biden's. I performed sentiment analysis on both the transcripts data and the web scraped NYT articles. Lastly I display the sentiment overtime of these articles in the form of a line graph.

Below we can see the sentiment analysis of the supreme court transcript data. The raw numbers reflect more positive than negative language, however the positive and negative totals are relatively close. The closeness of the sentiment analysis is better viewed and understood below as well, in the form of a pie chart.

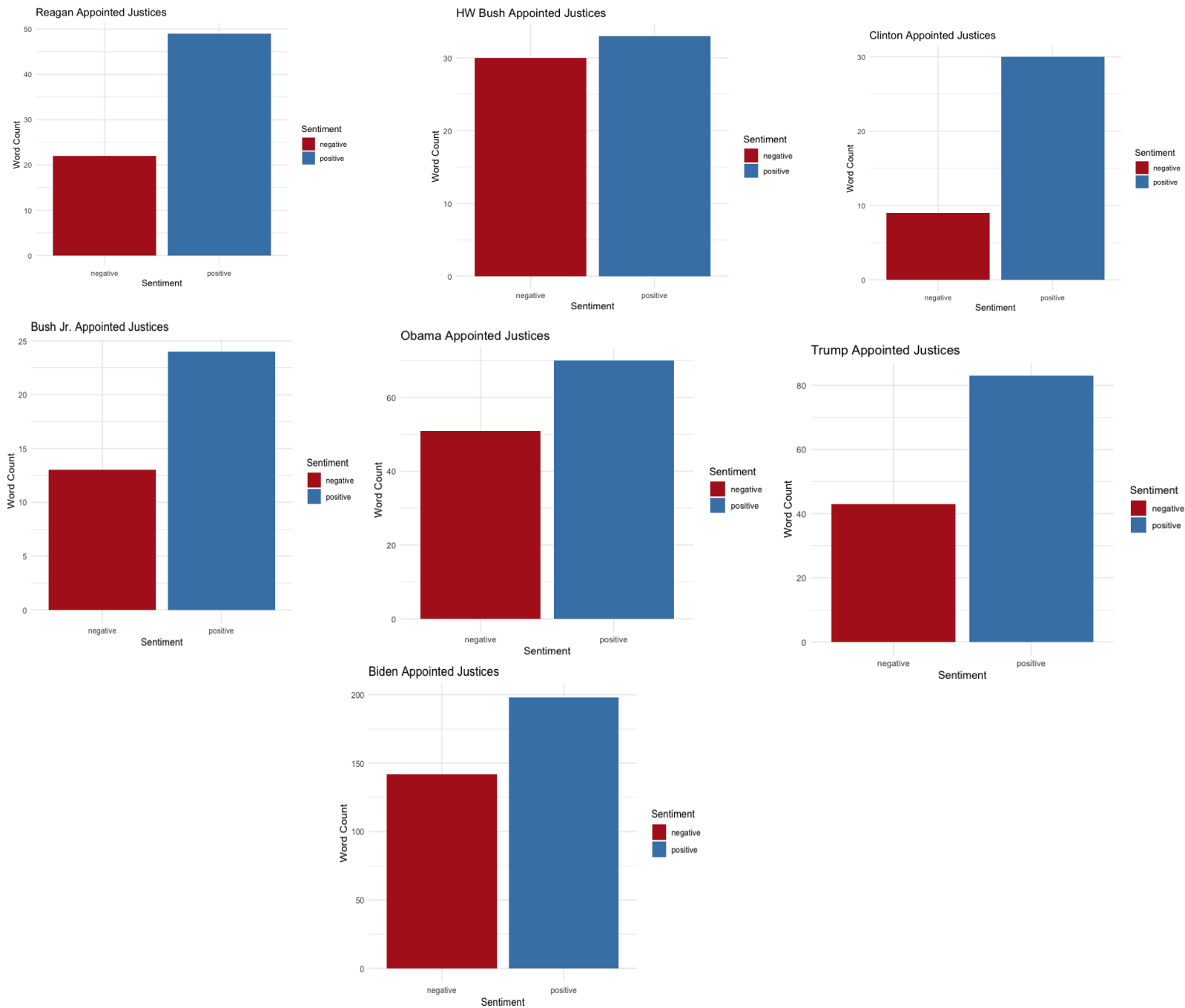
	sentiment	n
	<i><chr></i>	<i><int></i>
1	positive	<u>41672</u>
2	negative	<u>39453</u>



Now I move my focus on to the supreme court confirmation hearing New York Times articles. We can see that all of that positive language trumps the negative in every president's appointee's confirmation hearing. The closest being Geroge HW Bush, and I hypothesize that this may have something to do with the contentiousness of the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearing saga. I was also surprised by the positive levels of the articles about justices who were chosen by President Trump and President Biden.

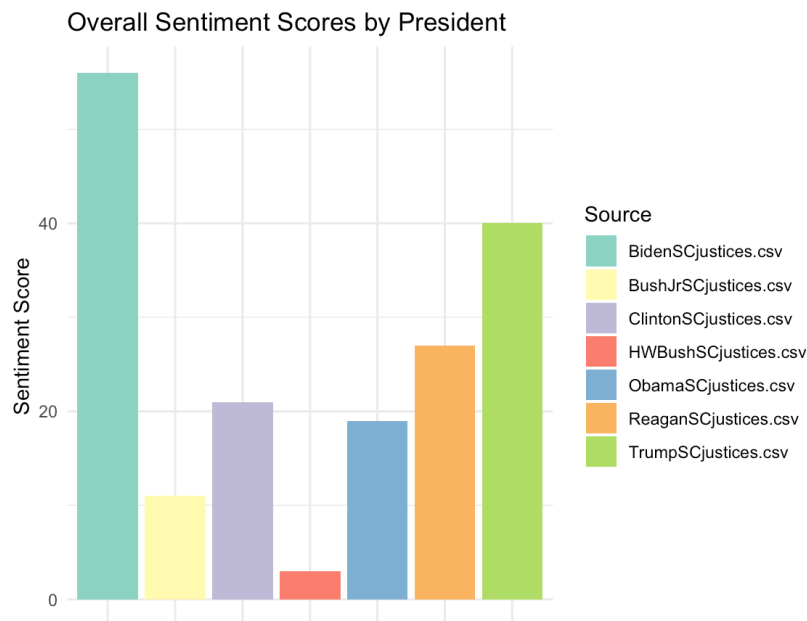
	source	negative	positive	sentiment_score
	<i><chr></i>	<i><int></i>	<i><int></i>	<i><int></i>
1	BidenSCjustices.csv	142	198	56
2	BushJrSCjustices.csv	13	24	11
3	ClintonSCjustices.csv	9	30	21
4	HWBushSCjustices.csv	30	33	3
5	ObamaSCjustices.csv	51	70	19
6	ReaganSCjustices.csv	22	49	27
7	TrumpSCjustices.csv	43	83	40

I then displayed the news articles sentiment analysis for each president's tenure from Reagan to Biden in bar chart form.



Next I wanted to look at all the overall sentiment scores for each president and compare

them side by side. It is also important to note that the amount of justices that are confirmed are not the same for each president. So this would affect the article data, for example President Trump nominated three justices to the supreme court and President Biden nominated only one.



Lastly I display the sentiment analysis overtime in the form of a line graph. From the line graph we can see that the articles do not necessarily tell a clear story. The sentiment scores go up and down from President Reagan to President George Bush. After President Bush, the sentiment score steadily rose. I find this to be very surprising because my theory was that sentiment scores steadily decrease overtime and that may reflect polarization in American politics. I thought this because polarization has increased since the 1980s with increased political competition, stronger political parties and increased income inequality. I thought that this polarization and division would seep into the confirmation processes of supreme court justices. However, this does not prove that these ideas are necessarily incorrect but it is not reflected in articles from the New York Times.

