

Evaluating How Liberal vs. Conservative Opinion News Shows Influenced the Narrative about the COVID-19 Pandemic

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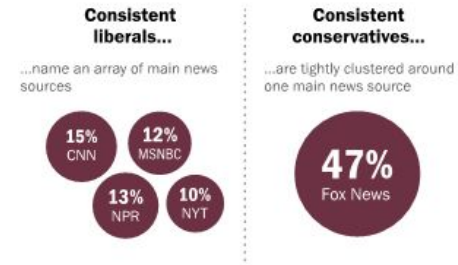
Table of Contents

1. Background
2. Basic Text Analysis: Word Frequency & Co-Occurrence Analysis
3. Topic Modeling (LDA)
4. Sentiment Analysis
5. Key Findings & Policy Implications

Background

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) needs to ensure that accurate information about the pandemic reaches the public
- Political polarization in information access can allow for the spread of misinformation and distrust on issues concerning the pandemic
- Opinion news talk shows are the most popular on cable news networks and therefore have a large influence on public opinion

Striking Differences Between Liberals and Conservatives



Source: [Pew Research Center](#)

Policy Questions

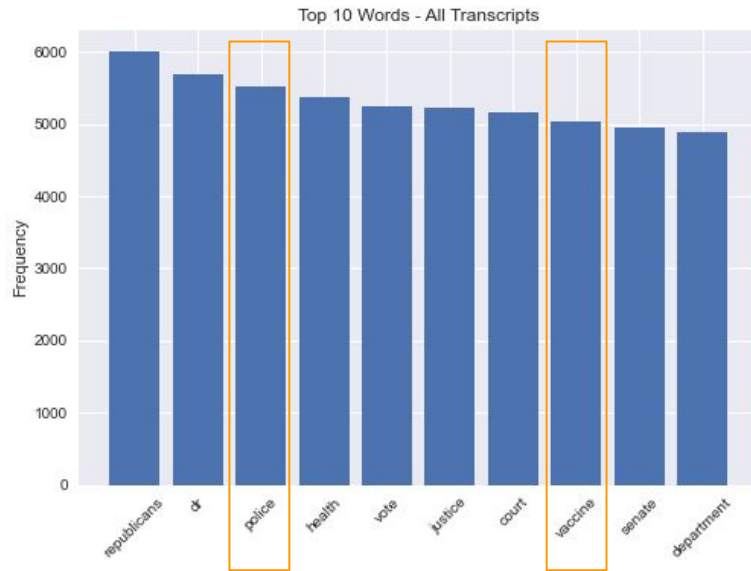
1. What are the major themes and perceptions surrounding COVID-19 policies on liberal and conservative cable news shows?
2. How can the CDC and the Federal Government adapt their COVID-19 mask mandate policies and vaccination guidelines in response to predominant sentiments expressed on cable news shows, in order to improve overall compliance with preventative measures?

Data Sources Overview

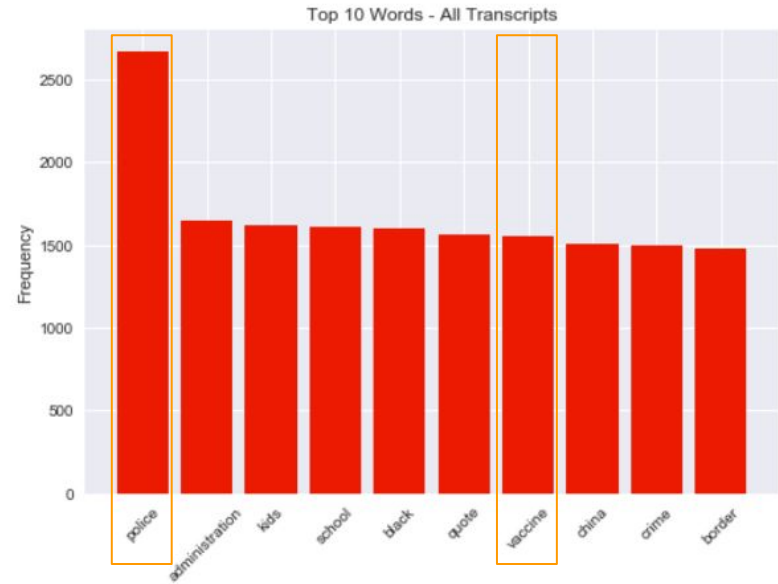
1. Liberal News Corpus (1,008 transcripts from March 2020 - March 2022)
 - a. Anderson Cooper 360 (530)
 - b. Rachel Maddow Show (478)
2. Conservative News Corpus (N = 458 transcripts from March 2020 - March 2022)
 - a. Tucker Carlson Tonight (208)
 - b. The Five (250)
3. CDC News Corpus (47 Transcripts, Media Telebriefings, and statements from Late 2019 - present)

Analysis #1: Basic Text Analysis

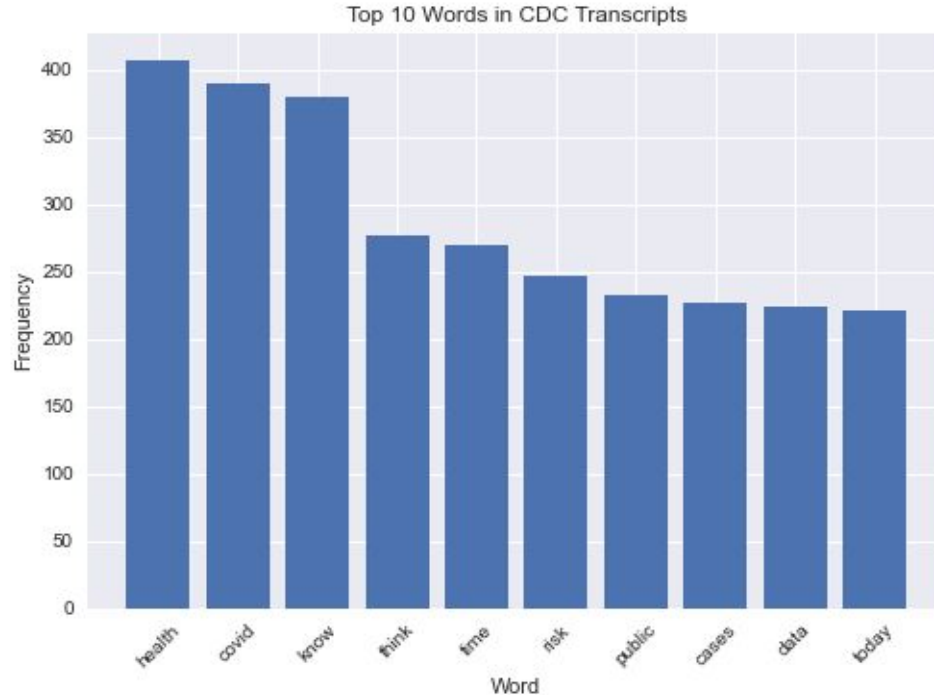
Liberal News



Conservative News



Basic Text Analysis: CDC “Neutral” News Baseline Top 10 words



Co-Occurrence Analysis - Mask Terms

Mask Terms: 'mask', 'masking', 'n95', 'kn95'

Liberal News

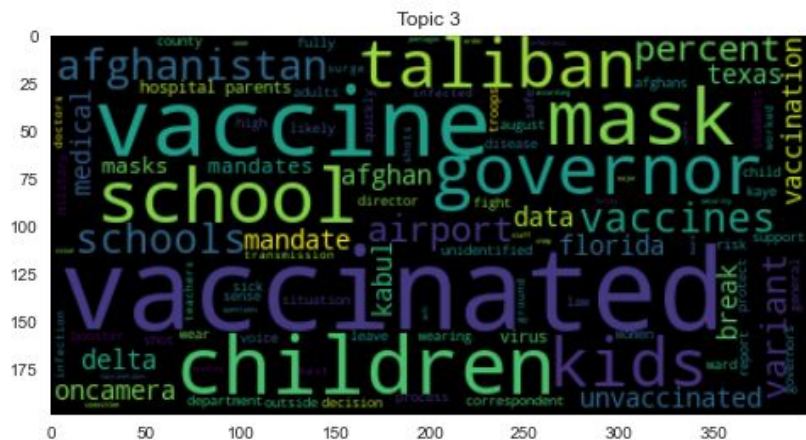
Word	Word Count	Co-Occur Count	PMI
testing	376	319	0.53065
infection	432	350	0.46415
wear	611	484	0.43166
infect	405	319	0.42346
disease	464	364	0.41764
hospitalization	355	278	0.41509
patient	432	338	0.41382
virus	582	454	0.4095
science	391	302	0.39521
surge	359	276	0.38851
positive	469	360	0.38624
distance	312	237	0.37117
coronavirus	572	434	0.36951
rate	503	380	0.36327
sick	448	334	0.34418

Conservative News

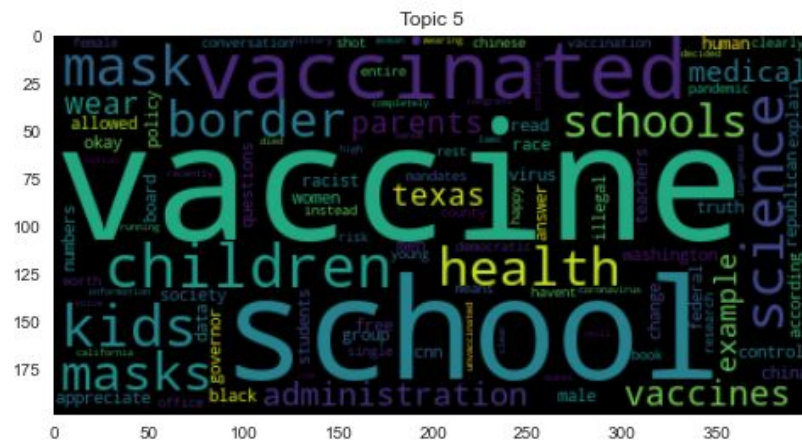
Word	Word Count	Co-Occur Count	PMI
wear	329	286	0.25775
disease	207	175	0.21755
mandate	200	169	0.21685
lockdown	148	124	0.20457
foot	170	142	0.20018
vaccine	270	225	0.19679
vaccinate	178	147	0.18376
science	250	205	0.17352
viewer	146	119	0.16482
virus	282	229	0.15948
fully	170	138	0.15896
ride	138	111	0.14572
florida	194	156	0.14531
train	162	129	0.1312
cuomo	152	121	0.13076

Topic Modeling - Vaccine Topics

Liberal News



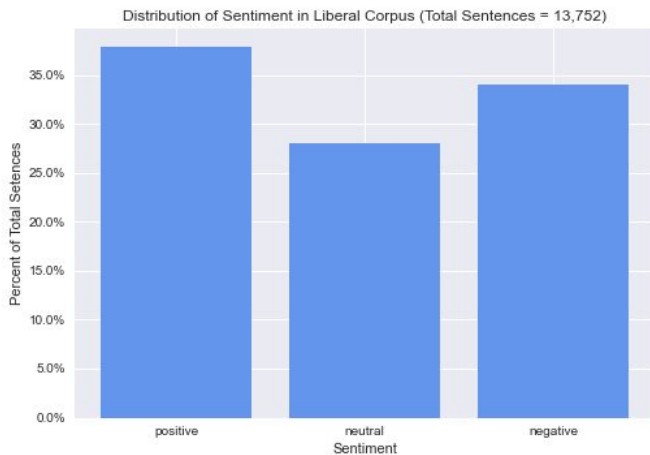
Conservative News



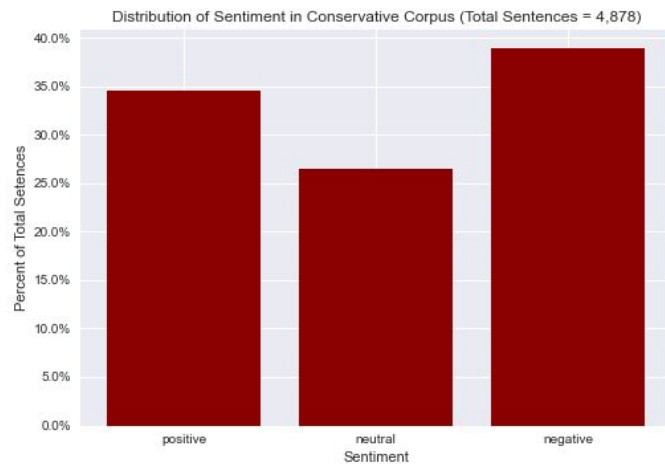
Sentiment Analysis

Liberal news networks saw a larger share of positive sentences around COVID-19, while conservative networks saw a larger share of negative sentences.

Liberal News



Conservative News



Sentiment Analysis - Top Sentences

Top 5 Positive Sentences

1. Liberal: comfvbebcovid relief
Conservative: like a virus

2. Liberal: covid relief was huge
Conservative: covid numbers his approval ratings on covid was pretty good

3. Liberal: covid relief sees a huge number in support percent
Conservative: employees positive for coronavirus

4. Liberal: he survived coronavirus
Conservative: but like its a virus

5. Liberal: hes promoted vaccines promoted masks promoted compassion for thoseliving with covid
Conservative: trillion covid relief package

Top 5 Negative Sentences

1. Liberal: is winning the war against coronavirus
Conservative: a chinese flu virus please

2. Liberal: the war against covid is far from won
Conservative: i have the freedom to kill you with my covid

3. Liberal: its truly a war with this virus
Conservative: patricia cornwall was clearly very talented but two years of insane coronavirus restrictions broke her spirit

4. Liberal: clearly covid is not terrorism but it has brought terror
Conservative: the framing of the fight against coronavirus as a war and america always wins wars was very effective

5. Liberal: health freedom rally the forced covid vaccine such a scam
Conservative: cain deny covid exist gutfeld yes deny

Policy Implications

1. COVID-19 **Liberal news network themes** and concerns:
 - a. State of the pandemic - cases, deaths, datum, science
 - b. Safety protocol information - distancing, vaccine, shot, doctor, effective, testing
2. COVID-19 **Conservative news network themes** and concerns:
 - a. Business repercussions - restaurant, company, shut, business
 - b. Personal freedom - free, force, rule
3. Federal Government and CDC policy changes to increase mask and vaccine compliance:
 - a. **Incentivize following CDC masking guidelines** with:
 - i. A policy that provides federal financial support from the Small Business Administration for businesses that follow CDC masking guidelines.
 - ii. A policy that provides federal funding from the US Department of Education to school districts that follow CDC masking guidelines.
 - b. **Incentivize following CDC vaccine guidelines** with:
 - i. A policy that rewards getting vaccinated with a small, monetary award (such as \$100).
 - ii. A policy that provides one additional child tax credit payment for each child vaccinated in a household for the year they are vaccinated.



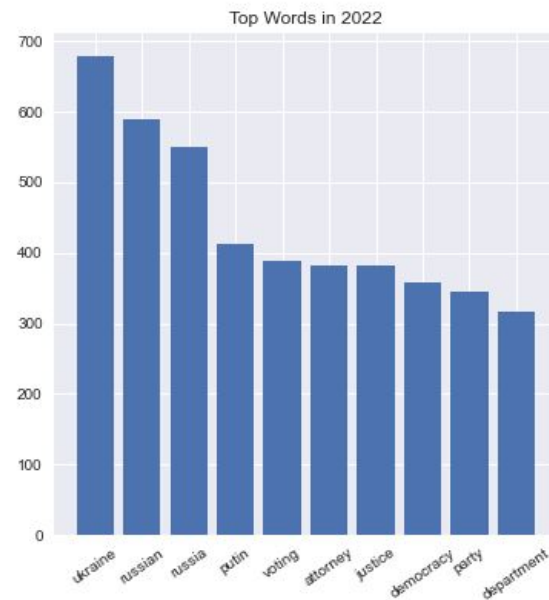
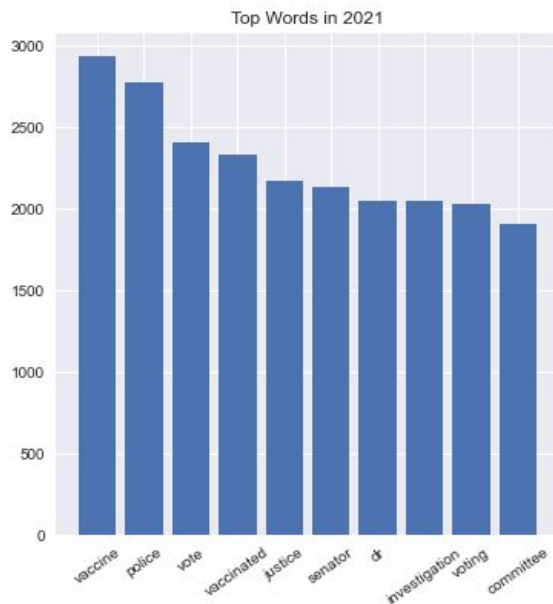
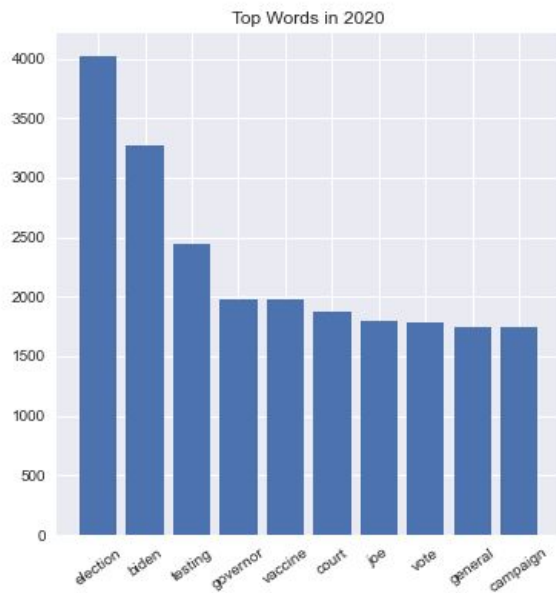
Questions?



Appendix

Change in Top Words Over Time - Liberal News

Change in Top Words Over Time - Only Transcripts That Mention Covid



Change in Top Words Over Time - Conservative News

Change in Top Words Over Time - Only Conservative Transcripts That Mention Covid

