

American Polarization on Reddit

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Research Question

- The polarization of American society and politics is a frequent research topic
- Is this polarization also measurable on social platforms like Reddit?

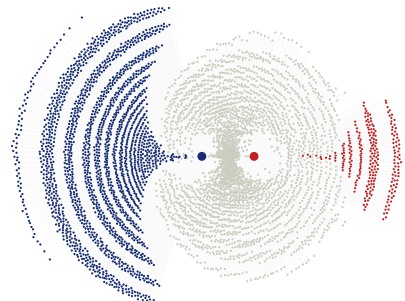
“Is there a measurable difference in polarization between Liberals and Conservatives on Reddit since Trumps candidacy?”



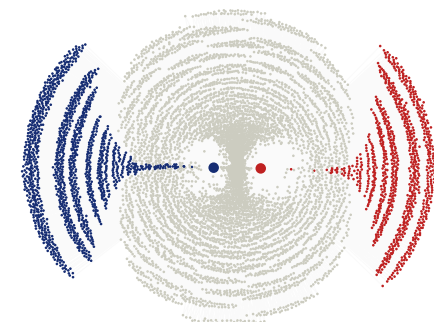
- Measured in the amount of Subreddits, Conservatives and Liberals both use

Weighted Network Graphs (amount of common authors)

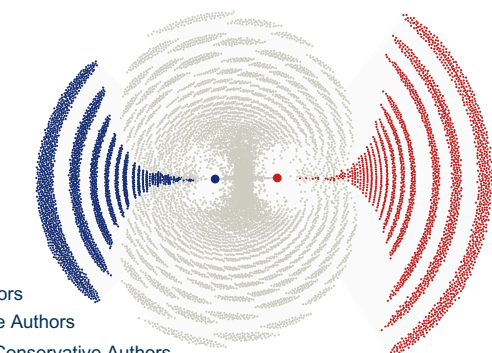
2015



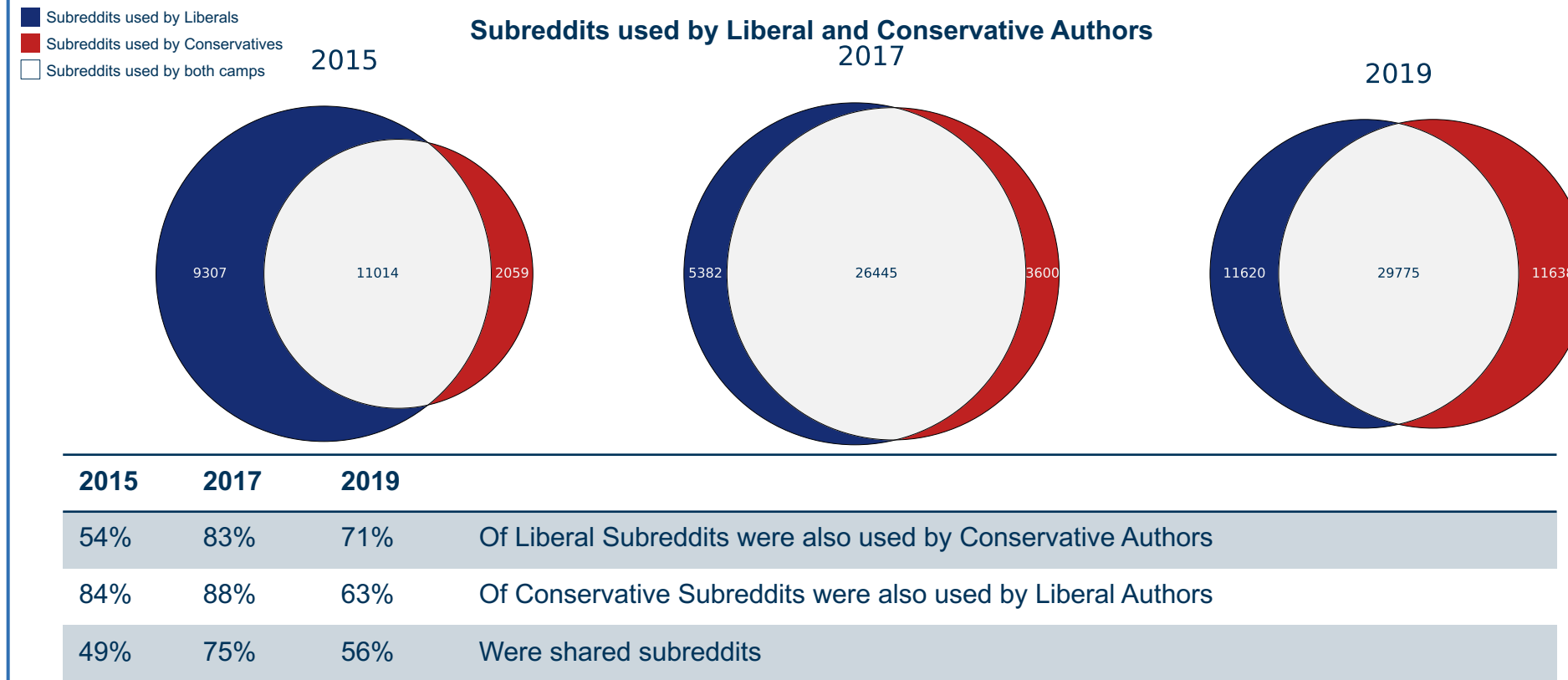
2017



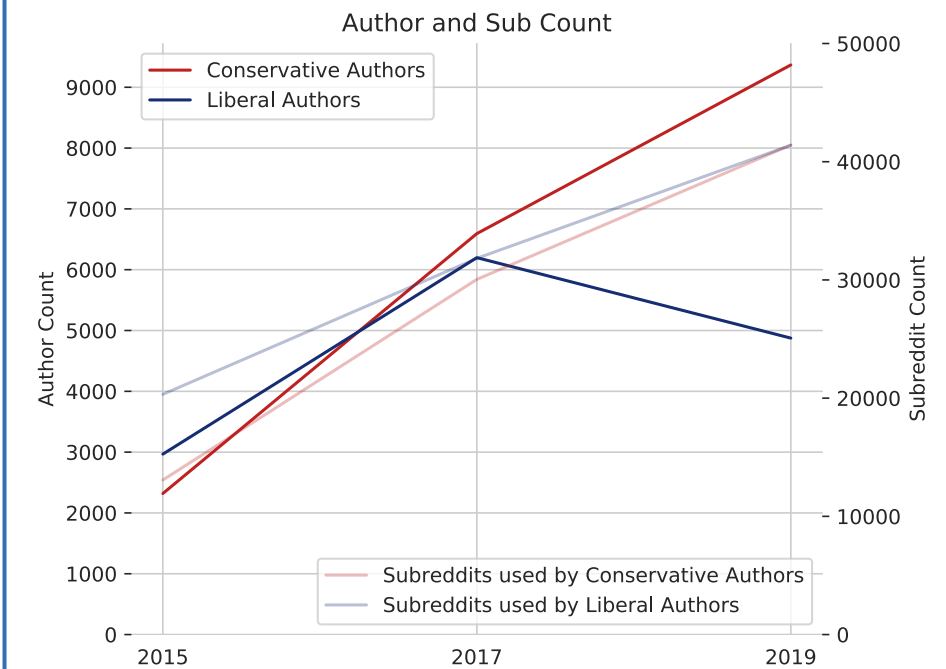
2019



■ Subreddits used by Liberal Authors
■ Subreddits used by Conservative Authors
■ Subreddits used by Liberal and Conservative Authors



Number of Authors and used Subreddits for Liberal and Conservative



Problems and Challenges

- Huge amount of data → finding technical solutions
- Choosing subreddits and assigning them to a political camp
 - Finding the relevant subreddits for a political camp
 - Keeping the relative count of Liberal and Conservative authors in the same range

Results and Findings

- No interpretable results from 2015 to 2017, because we can't say whether the difference in shared subreddits can be accounted to polarization, or simply the growth in subreddits used by conservative authors
- One could argue that we show polarization in the time period from 2017 to 2019, but the interpretation is problematic because of the challenges in choosing the subreddits

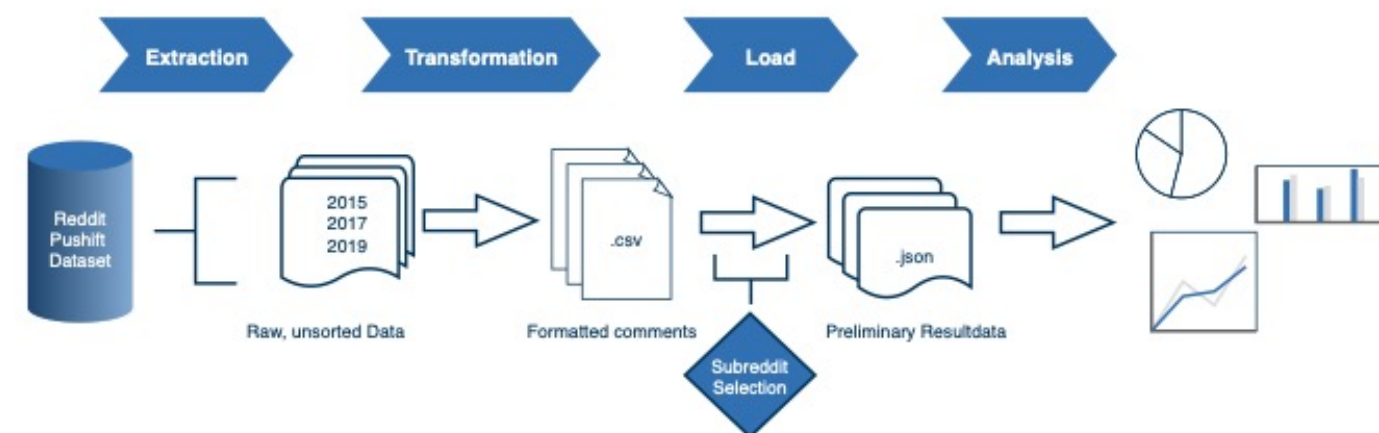
Conservative Subreddits

"Republican"
"republicans"
"conservatives"
"Conservative"

Liberal Subreddits

"socialism"
"Liberal"
"democrats"
"progressive"
"Political_Revolution"

Data



Comment Distribution by Relevant Authors

