TAKING A STAND ON NOT TAKING A STAND: MEDIA BIAS IN THE ONLINE

REPORTING OF COVID-19

By

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Abstract

This thesis was written to examine the digital communication strategies of three major news organizations when reporting on COVID-19 in the U.S. for bias. The research looked at social media posts, online article counts and themes, main websites of each organization and audio/visual broadcast segments from all three organizations posted online. This research used an advocacy approach, examining the tension between entertainment and journalism ethics by holding news organizations to journalism standards to see how they compare. Results showed that NPR and Fox News produced more online articles than MSNBC and linked to their own articles on twitter more. The audiovisual content from MSNBC and Fox News did not follow the code of ethics created by the Society of Professional Journalists. All three organizations used biased methods for providing information to the public, during a time period where public knowledge is key to managing a pandemic.

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Introduction

        The world is currently facing a pandemic that is far-reaching and having an impact on all aspects of daily life not seen before in our lifetime. COVID-19 is a potentially fatal respiratory virus that has spread to every country on earth during 2020. Within the United States, according to the Johns Hopkins coronavirus resource center as of March 4, 2021, we currently have had nearly twenty-nine million cases reported since the first diagnosis in the country in January 2020. The United States currently has the highest number of both reported cases and deaths attributed to COVID-19 compared to all other countries with reported data according to the Johns Hopkins coronavirus resource center. With a new virus that is so dangerous and contagious, residents of the United States have had a need for reliable information coming from news organizations on how to best deal with the current crisis. Concurrently, political views of Americans have become more polarized over the past twenty-five years (Kiley, 2017), with key factors being racial discrimination, government assistance, and the United States' involvement around the world (Doherty, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic combined with political division in the United States produces an ideal communicative environment for examining bias in the news.

        There has been a rise in incorrect information spread online about COVID-19 (Young et al, 2021), and the disease has become a tool within both the political system and media system to drive discourse and disagreement. This comes at a time when incorrect information spread online is still believed by its audience (Moravec et al, 2019). Within the United States, only thirty-three percent of people agree that news organizations are trustworthy (Newman et al, n.d.). This perception that news organizations are biased can come from what information is presented, how it is presented, and through what systems the information is shared. These news organizations are caught between the financial incentive to entertain and journalistic ethics for

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truthfully informing. Journalism is expected to serve as the watchdog role, meaning it should inform the public about those in power so they can take appropriate action (Francke, 1995). Some news organizations still work to fill the watchdog role, but also recognize that this may be affected by the need to create content that their audiences find appealing (Nelson and Tandoc Jr., 2018). These practices go against the core beliefs of the field of journalism.

The Society of Professional Journalists (2014) states that ethical journalists should act with and strive for integrity, and report accurate, thorough, and fair news. This isn't always the case though. There have been many cases, just in the past two decades, like Jayson Blair's plagiarism in the New York Time in 2003, to Brian Williams and the fabrication of a dangerous helicopter ride in Iraq, to the criticism of NBC by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) for inviting on air a retired army general for analysis of the Iraq War as he was being paid to be a consultant for defense services and earning income from the war (Society of Professional Journalists, 2008). This goal for journalistic integrity is key to the influence and power for the field, and is necessary to keep those in power accountable, while keeping the public informed (SPJ, 2014). The main purpose of this research is to analyze ways in which major news organizations use tools of bias in their online news communication to influence their audience members on a health topic (Shao and Hao, 2020), and to analyze the overall communication strategies from both organizations. Tools of bias can be ways in which information is presented, excluded, or interpreted for an intended interpretation from an audience. Because these organizations are self-identifying as news organizations, they can and should be held to journalistic standards.

COVID-19 was selected because it is an apolitical topic, as a pandemic does not have any inherent political bias in itself, but the coverage, resulting opinion from the public, and

management of the pandemic can. Political news coverage of public crises can directly impact government policy, as well as the actions from the general public, who may change the reality of the situation. This acceptance or denial of a health crisis can have real world impacts, and news organizations have significant influence over individuals' beliefs (Kleinnijenhuis et al, 2020).

The content from MSNBC, NPR, and Fox News was selected as they are a popular source of news information in the U.S. (Grieco, 2020). Online digital content was also selected as it has become a popular channel to collect information, with more than eighty percent of Americans reporting that they get their news from digital devices (Shearer, 2021), it is critical to understand what is being spread by major news organizations on online platforms, where information can be so easily disseminated. This new digital medium poses new challenges and opportunities for interactive communication that are vastly different from broadcast methods such as radio and television available just a generation ago. The ability to share information in a digital setting so easily (Purcell and Rainie, 2019), along with audiences gravitating towards information online that aligns with their own views (Schmidt et al, 2017), leads to a need for a critical analysis of the tension between the financial motivation of entertainment and journalism ethics, given the increased ability to tailor to audience preferences.

<u>Background</u>

Political Landscape in 2020

The political divide within the United States was evident during the year 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic was not exempt from feeling this schism. With 2020 being an election year, politics in the country were contentious, with both Democrats and Republicans seeing the other as possibly causing lasting harm on the country if their opponent won (Pew Research Center, 2020a). With such a dramatic view on the election, the pandemic occurring didn't help to create bridges to cross the divide.

The public's perception on how the country was handling the pandemic was split down political party lines. Those identifying as Republican view the response with a near eighty percent favorability, while only twenty-nine percent of those not identifying as Republican see the response as well-handled (Pew Research Center, 2020b). With a divide so clear on a major issue, it should also come as no surprise that over three quarters of Americans feel that the country is more divided than ever (Devlin and Connaughton, 2020). This divide is important to note to better understand the landscape in which news organizations are being examined, particularly for bias around the subject of COVID-19, an apolitical subject, which impacts public perception and management of response.

Digital Media and McLuhan

The term "media" is often used to describe the actual news organizations themselves, but in this research digital media will be defined as the content and delivery method from news organizations being presented to their audiences through digital channels and platforms. To further expand, the term digital media means both the content being produced by news organizations and being posted on the internet, whether it be social media or news articles posted

on their websites and viewed by wide audiences through a variety of devices. Digital media further includes visual content produced and published on their websites intentionally, or segments of broadcast media then reposted digitally. Broadcast is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as media distributed by television or radio (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase "medium is the message," meaning that the medium in which information is sent has the actual impact, while the information sent is supplementary (McLuhan, 1964). With a shift from older broadcast mediums with limited access points, to a new digital medium with greater diversity of access points, presentation of information can have more impact on audience segmentation. Information presented to look like news coming from traditional media can be perceived as more credible online, regardless of what the information is actually saying (Curry and Stroud, 2017). To understand the impact of perceiving information shared online and portrayed as credible to be true, it is important to understand how information can be shared over these new mediums now.

It is key to understand the shifts from traditional media systems such as broadcast media, to digital media in terms of McLuhan's theories. McLuhan examined the shift from older written mediums to broadcast mediums and foresaw a shift to a new global medium where information and views can be shared and becoming connected individually, but on a global scale. His term "the global village" was used as a metaphor to illustrate this: the interconnectedness of a small village, but those connections spread out and are constant on a global scale through a new medium with the increased ability to communicate interpersonally at broadcast scales. What this means is that we can share information quickly and often similar to a small community, but now with the ability to communicate around the world. Comparing this to news organizations and media, there is now a shift from the broadcast abilities of older mediums, to a new digital

medium with interpersonal capabilities and a more interactive audience around the world. This rapid dissemination of information, as well as discussion across vast differences in "the global village," can have much larger impacts than traditional media systems, over a shorter window of time. To better understand these impacts, we need to look at agenda-setting theory, framing, and digital pump-valves.

Agenda-Setting, Frames, and Pump-Valves

While McLuhan's work looks at mediums and media itself it is important to understand how those can be influenced. With the idea of looking at influence on media and the medium in mind, a guiding theory of this research is digital pump-valves (Entman and Usher, 2018). To better understand pump-valves, it is key to understanding the theories that have come before it.

Agenda-Setting Theory originated from a study conducted by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw called the Chapel Hill Study. The study showed residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina often reported that the issues the local and national news media were consistently reporting on as the most important election issue (1972). McCombs and Shaw used this study to show that news organizations have the ability to influence the perceptions of their audience on what information and topics are important which biases the objective information, but they did not examine how topics are discussed at an interpersonal level, which is where framing is appropriate to consider.

This need to examine the influence on topics on an interpersonal level leads to the concept of framing. While agenda-setting theory determines the issues discussed, the concept of framing provides the link to how topics are discussed, a different but key insight. Framing, best described by Entman, is the,"[selection of] some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem

definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described," (p. 52, 1993). In other words, to frame something is to show deliberately selected aspects of the situation to convey a certain perspective on an issue or topic. Because of this, news organizations have a great deal of influence on how issues are perceived based on what and how information is presented to audiences. This shows a key difference between agenda-setting theory and framing, where both can work together: agenda-setting theory can determine what issues are covered, and what frames are applied to determine how we think about those topics (Mateus, 2020). This leads to the theory of digital pump-valves.

The digital pump-valve theory was created by Entman and Usher created (2018) to better account for modern digital media environments and their control on the flow of information. To better understand a theoretical pump-valve, and description of a physical pump-valve is needed. A valve is used to control the flow of water through the pump. When looking at the theory, we can look at how each theoretical pump-valve controls the flow of information through the digital format. The new digital features from all institutions can either pump (strengthen), or restrict (weaken) the communication channels from the news organizations. The theory recognizes how modern tools are used to make information seem interpersonal and breaks political information communication channels into five digital pump-valves: analytics, platforms, algorithms, rogue actors, and ideological media. These pump-valves are the area where the tension between entertainment and ethical journalism is being played out. It is important to note that pump-valves can use each other. Analytics is data about audiences and their behavior and reaction due to news. This data about audience response can shape content and delivery methods. Platforms are software that is home to content created by people outside of the platform owner. Examples of this would be social media companies like Twitter and Facebook, who structure delivery and

often operate under financial models not developed to promote a code of ethics similar to the Society of Professional Journalists. Algorithms are processes for taking input from media creators and then channeling output to audiences based on a specific system of steps and rules to mimic interpersonal communication on a global scale. Rogue actors are those that are working outside of the typical media corporate structure of traditional broadcast organizations, often using new digital tools or other digital pump-valves to share their information. Examples of these would be bots or hackers. Lastly, ideological media is defined as more traditional news organizations. These are news sources that have been around since before the rise of the internet and the use of social media; MSNBC, FOX, and NPR are all examples. Ideological media is the focus of this study in relation to how they use secondary pump-valves.

As stated before, NPR, MSNBC, and Fox News fall under the digital pump-valve of ideological media. Both traditionally created content for broadcast mediums such as television and radio, but now are creating more digital media due to the rise of the internet. Both MSNBC and Fox News produce generally similar content consisting of online articles, social media posts, and broadcast media that is then edited down to a digital format and posted on their website. The primary difference between the two organizations is their intended audience. MSNBC is traditionally associated with a more left-leaning or liberal audience (Pew Research Center, 2019). MSNBC is a part of NBCUniversal LLC, a mass media organization owned by Comcast. Fox News is associated with right-leaning or conservative audiences and has a right-leaning slant (Budak et al, 2016). Fox News is a part of Fox News Media which is owned by the Fox Corporation, which was founded by Rupert Murdoch, an Australian-born media mogul. The news organization is still primarily owned by Murdoch and his family. NPR is a private and

publicly funded radio broadcasting organization that began in 1970. The organization was

created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, and has stations spread across the U.S.

Defining Media Bias

The term "media bias" has become a difficult term to define, due to the evolving media

landscape with information now being shared across new mediums. These new mediums lead to

new methods in which bias is shown, and the subjectivity of how each individual determines

what is biased. A useful beginning for identifying bias, is to define the inverse: what is not bias.

Hopmann, Van Aelst, and Legnante (2011) analyze bias in a two-party political system like the

United States, and a central component of maintaining objectivity is balance in coverage of both

parties. In some situations, the balance of coverage cannot be equal though. On certain topics,

one party or the other may take a stance that requires more coverage, and possibly more criticism

or affirmation, than the other. An interesting concept that Hopmann, Van Aelst, and Legnante

use in determining bias is examining the favorability towards the evaluation of actors (2011). If

this is expanded to also include evaluations of political parties, this favorability can be a key

identifier of bias in media. This builds into the work of Kenski, Jamieson, and Lichter, who

struggle to define this term in their own research but provides examples of what it serves best

(2017). Kenski et al states that most previous research has focused on the study of bias in relation

to political ideology and negativism within news. This research looks to use both the favorability

within coverage as well as the negativism within news together in relation to bias: bias in digital

news media as an attempt to advance a certain political ideology, and/or the focus of negative

aspects of any opposition.

The research questions for this are listed below:

RQ1: What were the overall communication strategies of both Fox News and MSNBC

during the initial spread of COVID-19 in the United States?

RQ2: What bias is shown through these communication strategies?

Methodology

I do not personally follow or typically consume any media, digital or other, from any of these organizations. As someone with a background in studying journalism and digital media, I do not follow these organizations because their reporting style does not personally appeal to me. Therefore, I do not typically consume media from larger news organizations such as these. The data streams were also selected because of my interest and background study in digital media and culture. Audio transcription and analysis was done after taking a course in linguistic anthropology and recognizing the importance of language in power and knowledge. Transcription was incorporated into the work after looking at the work of indexing (Silverstein, 2003) and the analysis of other political media members in other mediums (Shoaps, 1999).

Digital ethnographies were completed for the main webpages for all three organizations. A content analysis of online article titles from the three organizations was conducted. Then, a rhetorical and content analysis of digital broadcast news segments posted on both websites and social media was conducted. Digital ethnographies were completed for the main webpages for all three organizations. Lastly, a content review of tweets from all three organizations was done.

The reasoning for the collection of data was to look at the overall communication strategies from the organizations during the month of March 2020. The intent was to look at what was being reported on, how often was this being reported, how were they sharing this information, and what was actually being stated in their reporting. With this information collected, insight could be gathered on overall communication and if there was any bias within. Within table 1, all of the data collected is listed, with "yes" meaning that the data was available or applicable, and "no" meaning that the data was not applicable or available.

Table 1: Data streams collected

	MSNBC	NPR	FOX
COVID-19 Tweets	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coronavirus tweets	Yes	Yes	Yes
Article counts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Article title theme coding counts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Long form article style	Yes	Yes	No
Short form article style	No	No	Yes
Audio transcription	Yes	Yes	Yes
Video Analysis	Yes	No	Yes
Main webpage ethnography	Yes	Yes	Yes

The three news organizations selected were MSNBC, Fox News, and National Public

Radio (NPR). MSNBC and Fox News were selected as they fall on opposite locations on a media

bias scale according to Media Bias/Fact Check (Search and Learn, 2020). NPR was selected as a

control because, although it is slightly left-centered according to the website, it was more central

than both of the other organizations and can be used for comparison . To look at each

organization's communication strategy, research was done over multiple channels to discover the

scope of the digital communication (Wellbrock, Kure, and Buschow, 2020). To do this, articles

posted to each organization's website were counted, as well social media posts on Twitter.

Article Sampling

The sampling time period was from March 1-28, 2020 and was selected because this was

the time period when COVID-19 infection rates first began to rise in the United States (Johns

Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, 2020). The time period of higher infection rates in the United States was selected due to an expected increase in coverage, since both MSNBC and Fox News are U.S.-based organizations. This time period was divided into four seven-day periods: March 1st-7th, March 8th-14th, March 15th-21st, and March 22nd-28th. This was done to see whether there would be any change in content over time, as well as to separate data into manageable groups. Online articles were searched for in each organization's search engine, with "article" being a content-type parameter. Multiple searches were done, using either "coronavirus" or "COVID-19" as the search term. Due to the large number of articles from Fox News, the section parameters of "U.S," "Tech," "Science," "Health," and "World" in Fox News' own search engine were used to focus on reporting of the actual virus. NPR article identification was done through advanced Google searches as the NPR website would not allow enough articles to be displayed to see all of the determined time frame. The search terms were entered into the search bar, as well as narrowing the results to NPR.org. The weekly time frames were set as search parameters, and then each link was selected individually to determine if it was an article. The content displayed needed to focus on the written content to be listed as an article. This means that the content needed to have more than one to two paragraphs describing the audio content presented.

Grounded theory coding was utilized in this research. This approach means that as articles were counted, themes were determined to code for, and as more coding for themes happened, if a new theme became evident it was then coded for as well (Hernandez, 2009). Online article titles were individually analyzed and coded into four separate themes dependent on the content in their titles. Those themes were: health tools and testing, business impact, immigration, infection and mortality rates, and political discourse. These themes were

determined by examining what the five most common topics covered by online articles and media during this time. Examples of terminology and concepts associated with the health tools and testing theme are: supplies, testing kits, medical supplies, drugs, and vaccines. Examples of terminology and concepts associated with the immigration theme are: immigrant, migrant, and international travel. Examples of terminology and concepts associated with the business impact theme are: business, stimulus, price, company, and layoff. Examples of terminology and concepts associated with the infection and mortality rates theme are: infection, case, spread, infection statistics, spike, drop, epicenter, death, and case. Lastly, examples of terminology and concepts associated with political discourse will be politicians or political parties such as Trump, Pelosi, Democrat, Republican, or Senate.

Audiovisual Sampling

Audiovisual segments were selected for rhetorical analysis from leading contributors at both MSNBC and Fox News as well. News clips were selected from Rachel Maddow and Tucker Carlson as they were two of the highest rated news broadcasts during the first quarter of 2020 (Grynbaum 2020 and Joyella, 2020) . The dates of clips available was narrowed into the last two weeks of March as the reported cases started rising dramatically.

Figure 1. COVID-19 Cases by day in the U.S. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).
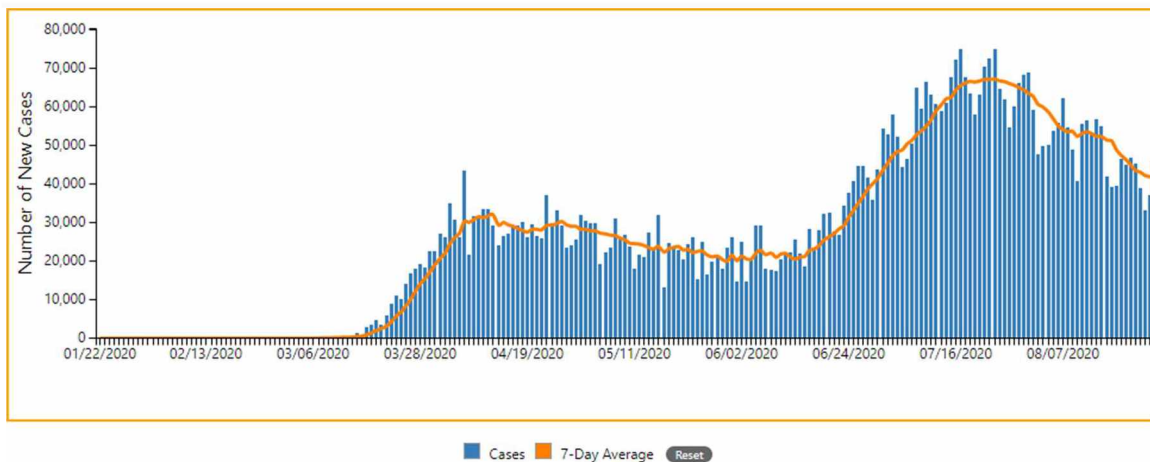
Segments were selected with similar topics, primarily focused on states' responses to the pandemic. Then, using the advanced search feature on Twitter, the term "COVID-19" was searched on each of the presenters' twitter accounts, and the clips were selected. An audio segment from NPR was selected based on the leading suggestion for a daily broadcast, *Morning Edition,* and a news segment was selected based on a similar date with the two other audiovisual clips from the other news sources. The audio of the Fox News segment was transcribed in Inqscribe. The NPR and MSNBC segments were transcribed in Google Docs, and then analyzed for rhetorical tools in language, and significance of word choice and grammatical structure. The visual production of the two audiovisual segments were analyzed by looking at language, sentence structure, and production decisions, including supplemental clip selection during the broadcast.

Tweet Sampling

Tweets were collected using a similar time period. Using Twitter's advanced search function, both "coronavirus" and "COVID-19" were searched for in tweets from each new

organizations' main twitter handle, those being @MSNBC, @NPR, and @Foxnews. Tweets were then individually counted and analyzed to see if links in the tweet were directed to an online article from the news organization. The online website tool Tally Counter Store (https://tallycounterstore.com/online-counter)was used to count articles for each website to maintain consistency. This website has a counter system with both addition and subtraction buttons, where every click of the addition button raises the number displayed on the screen by one, and every click of the subtraction button lowers the number by one. There is a symbol to then restart the count back to zero.

<u>Results</u>

        RQ1: What were the overall communication strategies of both Fox News and MSNBC

               during the initial spread of COVID-19 in the United States?

        RQ2: What bias is shown through these communication strategies?

Website Ethnographies

        Both MSNBC and Fox News have similar websites that mirror each other with their styles. MSNBC's main webpage, https://www.msnbc.com/, has a menu row across the top, with options leading to different content styles, including their live broadcast. In the top right corner, there is a magnifying glass symbol that allows visitors to search the website for specific content. Below this is another row menu with links to specific media personalities and shows to view their content. The main focus of the page is below this. A large banner with the three leading goes across the middle of the page with large images and titles for major news stories the website is highlighting at the time. Below this are smaller stories and links to other articles and video content on the website. When searching for articles, I selected the magnifying glass symbol and was brought to a search screen and was given the options for filters of content type and date to narrow in on specific content. The overall design of the webpage is to look sleek and modern, with black, blue, and white being the central color themes at the top of the page. Article length on MSNBC differs from article length on Fox News. The few articles posted by MSNBC during the sampling period followed a long-form format, with multiple sources listed and images shown, with word counts typically above of 800 words, and similar to an investigative article.

        The Fox News main webpage, https://www.foxnews.com/#, is structured similarly to MSNBC with some key differences. When the website is visited there is a similar top menu across the web page linking to different content types and subjects, with a white magnifying

glass symbol in the top right corner as well. Below this, there is a single main banner image with a title listed below it, showcasing the main news story at the time from the website. Similarly, to MSNBC, further down on the web page are links to other online articles and digital media across a range of subjects. I selected the white magnifying glass symbol when searching for online articles and was given a menu with multiple options and parameters to narrow in focus of search. The overall color scheme of the website is a dark navy blue, red, and white conveying a sense of patriotism throughout the website. As stated earlier, the article style of Fox News was different from MSNBC. The articles published by Fox News were of shorter length, typically only a few paragraphs and around 400 words, with one or two main sources and quotes, with an occasional image or video clip posted above the article.

The NPR main webpage, found at https://www.npr.org/, has an initial similar format to both of the other news organizations, but it has some important differences due to the content produced. The overall background of the website is a light gray, with content and menus having a white background. The NPR logo is located in the top left corner of the webpage, with a red button labeled "donate now" with a heart symbol located in the top right corner. Next to this button is an option to sign into an NPR account, and a link to the NPR shop. In the far-right corner on the top of the screen, there is a dark blue square with a play symbol providing the opportunity for a listener to begin listening to the NPR 24-hour program stream, the hourly news, a direct feed to what is being played live, or a playlist. Beneath this top bar is a dark gray bar, with links in white text linking to different content types such as "News", "Arts & Life", "Music", "Shows & Podcasts", and a search option.

Beneath the top bar is an area where content previews and stories are displayed. With one story taking the primary focus of the screen as the visually largest preview, as well as being

placed above all other stories, multiple smaller story previews are displayed below. After the

initial top story with multiple smaller stories listed underneath, there is an "Editor's Choice"

story, followed by a listing of stories similar to both MSNBC and Fox News. The search function

in the NPR website has a text area where a search term can be entered. Beneath this are multiple

filters to narrow in on content. There is an option to select if the search term was "heard on air,"

or to narrow in by date, with the date options being the date of the search, the past seven days,

the past thirty days, past 90 days, or the past year. There is also a drop-down menu to narrow the

search according to program type. Stories are then displayed from multiple channels with

headlines and dates listed, and the search term highlighted in yellow in either the headline or

story preview. The articles written by NPR are both long-form and short form, with similar word

counts for each category compared to the other organizations.

Article Counts and Title Themes

Fox News published more articles than MSNBC (Tables 2,3,4) . NPR was found to have

an article count in between both organizations, with more articles published than MSNBC, but

fewer than the large number consistently published by Fox News.

Table 2: Number of articles per week from each organization searching "COVID-19"

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	1	194	59
3/8-3/14	1	461	65
3/15-3/21	2	685	279
3/22-3/28	3	710	190

Table 3: Number of articles per week from each organization searching "Coronavirus"

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	1	355	71
3/8-3/14	1	825	81
3/15/3/21	2	1327	164
3/22-3/28	3	1424	208

Table 4: Number of Fox News articles each week using search terms

	Coronavirus	COVID-19
3/1-3/7	71	141
3/8-3/14	149	226
3/15/3/21	308	403
3/22-3/28	353	434

When looking at the articles published by the news organizations, it was noticed that MSNBC had long-form articles, while Fox News published short-form articles. NPR printed a combination of both long-form and short-form articles, tending to be more short-form. NPR also linked to their own organization's content in more tweets compared to the other organizations (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5: Number of tweets from each organization that link to their own articles when searching "COVID-19"

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	0	18
3/8-3/14	0	0	16
3/15-3/21	0	2	34
3/22-3/28	0	0	42

Table 6: Number of tweets from each organization that link to their own articles when searching "Coronavirus"

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	0	43
3/8-3/14	0	0	39
3/15-3/21	0	12	38
3/22-3/28	0	21	72

In terms of themes coded, MSNBC focused primarily on health testing (Table 7). Conversely, Fox News focused primarily on infection and mortality rates (Table 8). NPR was found to focus on political discourse and business impact, the former theme actually being included after seeing the large amount of content NPR was creating around it (Table 9). When infection rates within the United States were rising at the fastest rates of the month according to the Johns Hopkins coronavirus resource center, the weeks of 3/15-3/21 and 3/22-3/28, NPR created articles most aligned with themes of political discourse and business, while Fox News created articles most aligned with the theme of infection and mortality rates. NPR articles discussing political discourse and business during these weeks were primarily focused on the

actions and criticisms of the Trump administration's handling of the pandemic at the time, and

on the COVID-19 relief bill that was being created and voted on at the time.

Table 7: Article counts by theme: Health tools and testing

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	1	14	13
3/8-3/14	1	18	16
3/15-3/21	1	31	13
3/22-3/28	2	43	33

Table 8: Article counts by theme: Infection and mortality

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	43	18
3/8-3/14	0	43	18
3/15-3/21	0	91	21
3/22-3/28	0	99	34

Table 9: Article counts by theme: Political discourse

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	35	10
3/8-3/14	0	56	18
3/15-3/21	0	60	28
3/22-3/28	0	83	84

Table 10: Article counts by theme: Business Impact

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	26	19
3/8-3/14	0	25	12
3/15-3/21	1	46	27
3/22-3/28	3	43	45

Table 11: Article counts by theme: Immigration

Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	0	1	7
3/8-3/14	0	3	9
3/15-3/21	0	3	11
3/22-3/28	0	11	15

Audiovisual Analysis

Each video/audio segment provided an interesting insight into the style of reporting from each organization, or at least the journalist themselves. Both Tucker Carlson and Rachel Maddow utilize the red, white, and blue color scheme to evoke some sense of U.S. patriotism. Both Carlson and Maddow are in the center of the camera shot, posed as the central focus of the shot to be listened to. Tucker Carlson uses more video clips from officials in his video segment compared to the one used in Rachel Maddow's. Transcripts of the audio and audiovisual segments can be found in appendices B, C, and D.

Tweet Counts and Linking

Tweeting rates appear to be inverse from article publishing rates. MSNBC tweets more than Fox News, with NPR tweeting consistently, but not as often as MSNBC (Tables 12 and 13). Some interesting details to note about MSNBC's tweets is that they primarily link to video

content, and in particular, shortened clips from their personalities' broadcasts. Another

interesting detail is while they never linked to their own online article content, they did

occasionally link to articles posted on the NBC News website. In terms of Fox News' twitter,

initial results were surprising as they had not used their main twitter account from November

2018 until March 18, 2020. This provides insight into their online communication strategy

during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they clearly see value in being able to post content online to

their audience through a quick and simple channel. Also, their consistent linking to their online

article content provides area for more research. One might assume that they are simply using this

method to expose their online articles to a wider audience, but since the links redirect the reader

to the Fox News website, they may be using this as a tool to bring more audience members from

a social media platform like Twitter directly to their website. NPR was once again between both

styles of Fox News and MSNBC. NPR consistently linked to their own online articles and

content and appeared to use twitter as a tool to drive audiences to their written content. NPR

primarily linked to articles in their tweets, with very few links to audio content.

Table 12: Tweets per week from each organization when searching "COVID-19"

Tweets per week searching "COVID-19"			
Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	34	0	19
3/8-3/14	32	0	19
3/15-3/21	66	3	37
3/22-3/28	115	0	47

Table 13: Tweets per week from each organization when searching "Coronavirus"

Tweets per week searching "Coronavirus"			
Week	MSNBC	FOX	NPR
3/1-3/7	85	0	48
3/8-3/14	270	0	47
3/15-3/21	314	14	51
3/22-3/28	301	27	93

<u>Discussion</u>

When discussing these results, it is key to acknowledge my own bias on the subject matter. As mentioned previously, I do not consume media from these news organizations, one reason being I do not find their media personally appealing. As someone with a background studying journalism, with a strong emphasis on ethics and partisan reporting styles, I do not personally seek the styles of these news organizations, leading to an approach through a very critical research lens. In a best attempt to be as impartial as possible, the SPJ code of ethics will be used to compare with the data collected. This is done so that the analysis is not evaluated by own personal values, but an established code of ethics from a respected organization.

Research Question One Discussion

Results for all data sets yielded interesting and unexpected results. Expectations before coding of article counts and themes were that article counts would be similar, with possibly more online articles written by MSNBC and NPR considering that those organizations are left-leaning and would be more critical of the response to the pandemic. As proven by the data, not only was this loose expectation that they would write more articles unsupported, but it was also shown to be the complete opposite.

To evaluate the bias in these communication strategies when looking at the research questions, we can begin with the first on the overall communication strategies of the organizations. All three organizations had similar main websites that can be used to control the flow of information. These organizations are ideological media pump-valves and are using their main website to exert their control on the articles shown to their audience. This dictates the flow of information to their audience, determining what information their audience can actually consume. This determination of the information discussed is an example of agenda-setting

theory, where the organization is deciding what topics are being pushed through the platform valve of a traditional website to further control of information on platforms where increased interpersonal feedback can occur with the analytics pump-valve of audience interaction.

These ideological media pump-valves then decide how much each topic should be focused on. MSNBC consistently reported on health tools and testing, and also the business impact with all of the articles written focused on these two themes. Fox News wrote more articles than MSNBC and wrote more often about infection and mortality rates than either of the other two organizations. NPR wrote articles primarily on political discourse and the business impact. All three organizations use their website to determine what information is shared, and through the themes within their articles, determine how that information is discussed.

These organizations also used their social media to control what information is covered and how. NPR consistently linked to their online articles using their Twitter, with the highest rate out of all three organizations. Halfway through the month of March, Fox News decided to start using their main Twitter account to start tweeting about COVID-19, often linking to their own digital articles. While MSNBC didn't link to their own digital articles, they tweeted more than the other two organizations, and would link to digital media from other organizations as part of NBCUniversal. This shows these ideological media pump-valves using secondary pump-valves of platforms to spread the information that they decide to cover. This control over what is tweeted, how often it is tweeted, and this linking back to digital media from the organization is made possible through the digital medium.

These platforms also allow for audience response and feedback, as well as this interpersonal engagement that comes with the digital medium. This feedback from audiences produces the data involved in the analytics pump-valve. Again, these ideological media pump-

valves use these secondary analytics pump-valves to look at audience engagement and feedback to determine what digital media they will produce. This interactive nature between the news organizations and their audiences further emphasizes the stress of creating content that is entertaining to an audience, while also maintaining journalism ethics.

Overall, these organizations which are ideological media pump-valves, used multiple methods in determining what digital media is created, what it is created about, and the flow of information to their audience. These organizations utilize their website to determine what news is presented to their audience. This determination of news is what is described in agenda-setting theory, where news organizations can decide what topics will be discussed. These news organizations also determine how they cover a topic when they decide to write more online articles on a certain theme over another. This framing of the topic by deciding the article themes determines how the topic will be discussed. These news organizations are also ideological media pump-valves, that then use other secondary pump-valves like platforms and analytics to control how their information is spread and use audience response now available through the digital medium to decide what digital media they will create. This increases the apparent interpersonal connection and feedback strength between the audience desire and the organization's response, thus increasing the potential and actual response to fall more towards entertaining their audience rather than journalism ethics like the Society of Professional Journalists'.

Research Question Two Discussion

When answering the second research question, it is best to refer back to the SPJ code of ethics. Their statement that ethical journalists should act with and strive for integrity, and report accurate, thorough, and fair news can be used to identify bias. All three news organizations fall

short of this through audiovisual content, coverage of topics, and their overall control on the flow of information to their audience.

As an example, within appendix B, Tucker Carlson on lines 76-78 interprets the official's speech to fit the narrative that has been woven throughout the segment. He also utilizes the term "Chinese coronavirus," a term perceived by some to be racist, even acknowledging the classification himself on line 148. Carlson presents segments from state officials discussing the general public attending an event with New York City Chinatown as the background, as well as state Senator John Liu, an Asian American, explaining why the public should not have any fears to be outside. Carlson does not provide context that the speech comes from a press conference on the second of February, over a month and a half before Carlson's show, and the officials are discussing the backlash surrounding the Chinese New Year Celebration.

Within Rachel Maddow's segment, she provides her own beliefs on the subject, and takes pauses for emphasis. On line 93, Maddow uses the word "lament" to criticize the United States government's efforts to combat COVID-19, and their methods of support for health care workers at the time. Maddow also often pauses, whether intentional or unintentional, for emphasis of information in her segment; more often than the other two segment hosts. These pauses are signified by the ellipses in the transcripts. While Carlson only pauses twice himself in his broadcast, Maddow does it twenty times. This consistent use often emphasizes the drastic consequences of not only COVID-19, but the efforts made by the federal government to stop the spread of the virus. Maddow only uses one video clip from New York Governor Cuomo in her segment. Maddow then repeats impactful statements to end the video, leaving a lasting impression of the desperate measures being taken by state governments. Again, emphasizing the growing spread of COVID-19 within the United States, on the right side of the screen there is an

image of what has been often used as a COVID-19 cell, along with the quote in bold "Now, that surge has begun." On the bottom third of the screen, the graphic listed was as breaking news with the statistic that the U.S. has reached 18,000+ cases and 237 deaths. Both the statistics and the quote are not referred to during the video segment, and the statistics are not presented as breaking news verbally during the segment.

In both audiovisual segments, we see commentary about the information by the journalist. While journalists are allowed to have their own personal opinions, a lack of labeling these views as commentary, or separate from the reporting they are doing, is not upholding the ethics journalists should strive for (SPJ Code of Ethics, 2014). With no clear delineation of what is fact and what is opinion, both can be interpreted into the same message from the host and can lead to misleading information.

The NPR audio segment had the least amount of clear bias from the host. The host Noel King is interviewing Mayor Betsy Price of Fort Worth, Texas, and provides very little personal interpretation of her own within the segment. King asks questions of Price and allows the mayor to explain the current situation within the state, and explain measures being taken. King introduces a sound byte from Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick with minimal interpretation when introducing the clip or when returning from it. King lets the sources she is using, both Lieutenant Governor Patrick and Mayor Price, provide the information, with King primarily structuring this content within the audio segment.

Again, let's consider the Society of Professional Journalists and their statement that ethical journalists should act with and strive for integrity, and report accurate, thorough, and fair news. When television broadcast hosts from Fox News and MSNBC, both within the top-rated shows on their networks, include personal opinions, along with misleading presentation of and

influence on the important information they are providing, they fall short of meeting the requirement for fair and accurate news.

We also see where the topics covered by these organizations lead to biased journalism. If journalists should report accurate, thorough, and fair news, then the themes in the online articles should reflect this. When in the final week of the month, where reported cases are increasing dramatically within the country according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, and NPR reports primarily on political discourse and the business impact, they fall short of being thorough in their reporting.

Lastly, we see pump-valves using other pump-valves, with unique tools due to the medium, to decide agenda and dictate frames, that creates bias. These ideological institutions are considered news, so when information is spread by them online, it is seen as news and considered correct. The impact of this level of control that the news organizations have on the digital media being spread can be seen when compared to the SPJ code of ethics. According to the SPJ code of ethics states that ethical journalists should act with and strive for integrity, and report accurate, thorough, and fair news. With organizations determining what topics are covered and how they are covered, they are not acting with integrity. When organizations have to decide that they should be entertaining rather than ethical to maintain their audience, they cannot always report accurate, thorough, and fair news.

Conclusion

To link the standards of journalism with the theories discussed, it shows a concerning conclusion. We see that the information being reported on during this time is determined by the news organizations in specific ways for ideological purposes to entertain their audience, rather than follow journalism ethics. They have determined what themes they will discuss more often, and their hosts have shared information in a way that comes with framing in mind, presenting issues in a particular light through specific pump-valves. The news we are receiving is filtering through a system that has determined what will be covered, how it will be covered, and in a refined way who will receive it . If we are to link this with the SPJ code of ethics often mentioned so far, how can this flow of information reported be seen as thorough, accurate, and fair?

The primary purpose of this research is not to lambast popular news organizations or make a political argument. The primary purpose is to show to those who do not have the experience or knowledge to identify/recognize these reporting issues, what is happening in the content they are consuming. The goal of this research is to hold the institutions to the standards they claim to follow and furthermore, see how they are falling short of the values that journalists should strive to uphold based on the SPJ code of ethics. This comes at a time when as of February 2021, over twenty-seven million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the United States, with over five hundred thousand deaths. Correct knowledge of what is happening is not only important, but also required for the wellbeing of ourselves and others (Roozenbeek et al, 2020).

This is not restricted to COVID-19 or journalism alone though. When facing other natural disasters like disease, flooding, and other impacts of climate change, some do not adequately

respond due to numerous factors (Shao et al 2017, Shapira and Bar-Dayan, 2018). As stated earlier while people may feel split on the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for truthful information being spread on digital media is key to successfully informing the public (World Health Organization, 2018). With the bias in the information we collect from our news, combined with the impact this information has on our perception of major health crises and natural disasters, along with necessity for accurate information to best prepare for such emergencies, the need for an informed public is key to protecting the safety of everyone involved.

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Appendix A: Article Theme Codebook

Theme	Definition	Examples
Health Tools and Testing	Article titles covering the topics of supplies, testing kits, medical supplies, drugs, and vaccines.	"As Testing Quickly Ramps Up, Expect More U.S. Coronavirus Cases", NPR, March 1, 2020
Immigration	Articles titles covering the topics of immigration and international travel	"Trump Suspends All Travel From Europe For 30 Days To Combat COVID-19", NPR, March 11, 2020
Business Impact	Articles titles covering the topics of business, prices, and layoffs	"Pelosi says Dem coronavirus package could be released this week, as Schumer attacks Trump" Fox News, March 10, 2020
Infection and Mortality Rates	Article titles covering the themes of infection, cases, infection statistics, and deaths.	"Coronavirus: 100,000 More Cases Reported Worldwide In Less Than 2 Weeks" NPR, March 20, 2020
Political Discourse	Article titles related to political figures and discourse	"Trump's Gut Collides With Science On Coronavirus Messaging" NPR, March 5, 2020

Appendix B: Tucker Carlson Show "Local Leaders Failed Cities" Segment

MATERIAL: Tucker Carlson Show "Local Leaders Failed Cities" Segment

BROADCAST DATE: 3/26/20

SOURCE: Youtube link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNflR2Ia7Hc&feature=youtu.be

Participants: Tucker Carlson (host)

Transcription: Autogenerated by Youtube, edited in Inqscribe by Kyle Johnson

Segment Length: Youtube clip length is 00:05:39

1	CARLSON	so you saw what is happening in new york
2		the question is why is the outbreak
3		so especially devastating there
4		new york city is
5		the densest metro area In the country
6		that's the most obvious answer
7		probably the biggest problem
8		the city also has
9		an awful lot of people traveling
10		to and from other infected countries
11		and that's significant too
12		but it's not the whole story..
13		as this deadly virus
14		emerged from eastern china
15		and began to spread inexorably

16		across the globe clearly headed here
17		leaders in New York not only failed to shield
18		their citizens from it,
19		they took affirmative and aggressive steps
20		to increase the risk to their population.
21		why would they do that
22		well because they
23		were worried fa:r more
24		about being called racist
25		than protecting human lives
26		that's not an overstatement
27		that's not hyperbole
28		watch the city's health commissioner Cyrus Barbett
29		urge new yorkers to spend
30		as much time as possible in crowded public places
31		keep in mind that this video is
32		from february second of this year
33		that was lo:ng after the threat
34		from the chinese coronavirus
35		was obvious to anyone
36		who was paying attention
37	BARBETT	the risk to new yorkers for coronavirus is low…
38		and that our preparedness

39		as a city is very high
40		there is no: reason
41		not to take the subway
42		not to take the bus
43		not to go out to your favorite restaurant
44		and certainly Not to miss
45		the parade next sunday (voices in background)
46	CARLSON	take the subway
47		go to dinner
48		people cheer...
49		they feel good about themselves
50		future generations though
51		are F<going to>F
52		watch that video with their jaws open In disbelief
53		how can someone
54		charged with protecting public health
55		so recklessly endanger it
56		nowwatch this performance
57		from state senator john liu too
58		liu suggested that
59		people who might be concerned in any way
60		about contracting a deadly disease
61		or might be interested

62		in where it came from must be
63		and you guessed it
64		bigots
65	LIU	but there's really no need to panic
66		and to avoid activities
67		that we always do as new yorkers
68		we are hardy people
69		as an asian american
70		i've been somewhat disturbed
71		and if not outright appalled..
72		At some of the comments or gestures
73		that i have seen
74		diseases originate from anywhere
75		or from particular places in the world
76	CARLSON	in other words
77		as a member of a protected interest group
78		i'm o:rdering you
79		to ignore this threat to your family
80		on moral ground
81		go to the parade or else
82		that's what liu is saying
83		let's hope thatin the wake of this disaster
84		after john liu Has lost his job

85	and we can all think clearly again
86	people will stop talking this way in public
87	for good
88	it was always the most brutal form of social control
89	masquerading as sensitivity and caring.
90	now we know it was infecting the public with disease
91	but at the time
92	sentiments like this were universal among
93	big city public officials like these
94	state senator brain kavanaugh
95	for example decided to embark
96	on a crusade against What he called
97	misinformation.
98	a euphemism
99	as it so often... is for accurate information
100	kavnaugh encouraged people
101	to head to chinatown for a festival.
102	KAVANAUGH it's very important That we recognize
103	that this holiday And this festival
104	is of tremendous significance
105	for many communities In our state
106	and uh It is very important
107	that we ensure that We don't have misinformation

108		and many in the media Have been covering this issue
109		uhh as if it's a terrible plague that people have to avoid.
110	CARLSON	if you don't go to a crowded public place
111		immediately
112		you're a racis-
113		look at those people telling you that
114		demanding that you do that.
115		hectoring you-
116		badgering you
117		exerting moral blackmail on you to expose yourself
118		my early march coronavirus was clearly becoming
119		a major problem in The united states
120		but for elected officials In new york
121		the only problem was their constituents
122		racist worries about staying alive
123		on march second this march second
124		mayor bill deblasio tweeted this quote
125		since I'm encouraging new yorkers
126		to go on with your lives
127		plus
128		go out on the town despite coronavirus
129		I thought I would offer some suggestions
130		here's the first

131   through thursday go see the traitor

132   if the wire was a true story plus set in italy it would be this film

133   that's right

134   go to a movie theater

135   immediately

136   you must

137   a week later deblasio was still encouraging new yorkers

138   to live it up and mingle in large groups

139   on March eleventh which keep in mind

140   was barely two weeks ago

141   deBlasio was still insisting that quote

142   if you're not sick you should be going about your life

143   that very same day the NBA announced it was

144   suspending its whole season.

145   italy was already several days into a national lockdown.

146   but they mayor of one of the worlds most crowded cities

147   was telling everyone to carry on

148   as though the chinese coronavirus was just a racist myth

149   soon after that people in new york inevitably started to get sick

150   in some cases very sick and in some cases they died

151   and then suddenly deblasio is on meet the press

152   shrieking that donald trump had abandoned his city

153   it was their fault

154	all their fault
155	that line almost always works which is why DeBlasio did it.
156	the media play along
157	and move on to the next thing
158	and no one remembers what actually happened.
159	will that happen this time
160	maybe not
161	this time might be different
162	this pandemic is too horrible too many people are being hurt
163	nobody really liked identity politics anyway
164	all it did was help mediocrities like Bill DeBlasio
165	get elected to office
166	but it was disgusting and cruel And divisive
167	and now we know it can get people killed
168	maybe we can stop.

Appendix C: NPR Morning Edition "Coronavirus Guidance Across Texas Is Not

Consistent" Segment

MATERIAL: NPR Morning Edition "Coronavirus Guidance Across Texas Is Not

                                            Consistent" Segment

BROADCAST DATE: 3/26/20

SOURCE: NPR website

https://www.npr.org/transcripts/821848822

Participants: Noel King (host), Betsy Price (Mayor of Fort Worth)

Transcription: Transcribed by NPR, edited by Kyle Johnson

Segment Length: NPR audio clip length is 00:03:51

1   KING   Many people in this country are looking to

2   government officials to guide them through the chaos

3   that's been caused by the coronavirus.

4   But what if the guidance isn't the same across the state

5   Some cities are making their own decisions about

6   closing schools and businesses,

7   like Fort Worth Texas

8   This week the city's mayor Betsy Price ordered residents

9   to stay at home until April third

10   But Texas Governor Greg Abbott has not issued a similar statewide order

11   Mayor Price thanks for being with us

12   PRICE: Im glad to be here

13   Thank you for having me

14	KING	Why did you decide to make this decision for the residents of Fort Worth?
15	PRICE	You know, we had issued an order that required
16		a little less than stay at home
17		and we wanted to be sure we were getting compliance
18		But the governor on Sunday
19		said he was going to leave it to local officials to
20		try to come together and do this
21		Patchwork is clearly less than ideal
22		but we met with the mayors
23		by phone, for social distancing
24		of the top seven cities in Texas and the top six counties
25		And we all came up with a plan that's very uniform
26		there are minor tweaks to it within each city and county
27		and decided that we would issue that
28		On um Monday morning or Tuesday morning together
29		And that covers about seventy percent of the population of Texas
30		Those of us that came together
31		we felt like it was key to helping mitigate this virus
32		keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed and
33		allow our first responders to not all be
34		quarantined or isolated.
35	KING	I was going to ask you if you were concerned about mixed messages
36		but what you're telling me

37		is that you came together with these other mayors in order to
38		prevent mixed messages.
39		That was entirely the point of doing this
40		everyone together
41		even though the governor has said
42		I'm not going to do it myself.
43	PRICE	That's correct.
44		And the governor really felt like local control was the way to go on this
45		because people know their communities
46		And the good news is not only did the seven large counties do it
47		but now the small counties that surround us have
48		most of them have adopted it in one form or another
49		So it's beginning to cover
50		the metropolitan regions of Texas
51		which takes up roughly seventy percent of the population in the state
52	KING	Earlier this week Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick talked
53		in an interview about what he's willing to give up
54		in order to get Americans back to work
55		in order to get businesses back open
56		Let's listen to what he said
57	PATRICK	No one reached out to me and said as a senior citizen
58		are you willing to take a chance on your survival in exchange
59		for keeping the America that all America loves

60		for your children and grandchildren
61		And if that's the exchange
62		I'm all in
63	KING	Okay...so Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick is almost 70 years old
64		That makes him part of an at risk demographic
65		Do you think there are a lot of people in your state who agree with him
66		You've got 3.6 million senior citizens in Texas if I'm correct
67		Do people agree with these orders to shelter in place
68		Or do you have a lot of people like him say no
69		we want to get back out there
70	PRICE	I think most of them agree with the order to shelter in place
71		I mean I'm with Governor Patrick I turned 70 this year
72		very healthy and most of us are.
73		But what...whose talent would you want lost
74		And you know my children and my grandchildren last time I looked
75		would still like to have their Tootsie (KING hums)
76		and all lives are (laughter) that's my name
77		all lives regardless of age and race, are valued in Fort Worth
78		and again
79		look at what you might lose and the talent
80		We all want America where it is
81		but we may be a new normal
82	KING	Mayor Betsy Price of Fort Worth Texas, talking

83		about that state and local responses to the corona outbreak
84		in parts of Texas
85		thank you so much
86	PRICE	Thank you
87		Appreciate y'all's help

Appendix D: Rachel Maddow "States Wait For Federal Help At Their Own Peril As Coronavirus Crisis Builds" Segment

MATERIAL: Rachel Maddow "States Wait For Federal Help at Their Own Peril

As Coronavirus Crisis Builds" Segment

BROADCAST DATE: 3/20/20

SOURCE: Youtube link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_yGlB7WLY0

Participants: Rachel Maddow (host)

Transcription: Transcribed by Kyle Johnson

Segment Length: Youtube clip length is 00:04:53

1	MADDOW	italy reported: its largest single day death toll today
2		six hundred and twenty seven people died...
3		in the last twenty four hours
4		and even as italy
5		struggles and struggles and tries to keep up
6		uh china just sent a team of experts who just went through
7		their coronavirus catastrophe
8		uh to try to advise and help out with the situation in northern italy
9		the vice president of the chinese red cross
10		on that visit to northern italy
11		said that from what he can observe
12		what italy is doing to try to slow the rate of new infections
13		which are frankly the kinds of measures

14	we are just lackadaisically starting right now
15	in a few states in this country
16	the chinese officials who just went through this
17	in their own country
18	are visiting italy and they say what it italy is doing
19	is not nearly strict enough
20	to make enough of a difference
21	quote here in milan he said
22	the hardest hit area by covid nineteen
23	the lockdown measures… are very lax
24	I can see public transport is still running
25	people are still moving around
26	having gatherings in hotels and they are not wearing masks
27	quote I don't know what people here are thinking
28	we really have to stop our usual economic activities
29	and our usual human interactions
30	we have to stay at home
31	and make every effort to save human lives
32	it is worth putting e;very cost we have
33	into saving lives…
34	again that's what the head of the chinese red cross…
35	is telling northern italy
36	about how well they are doing in their nation wide lockdown effort

37	their nation wide lockdown effort in italy
38	is effectively the same kind of stay at home order
39	that only thre:e u s states have adopted
40	and those three only in the last twenty four hours…
41	so… here we go
42	um there was...
43	some more happy talk from the white house today
44	about how plentiful are national supply of ventilators is
45	says there's no problem there
46	and also how plentiful the supply of masks
47	and personal protective equipment is...
48	there's tons of that stuff…
49	there's murmuring from the white house that there will
50	maybe be some additional manufacturing of those things:
51	but we'll see…
52	let's hope so
53	(inaudible) if those things do:
54	eventually get manufactured in greater numbers
55	because the federal government decides to do something about it
56	let's hope all those things come with a time machine too
57	to turn back the clock on these last three months
58	that have been wasted while the white house was saying
59	this was a hoax...

60	I don't know if the federal government is ever
61	going to get it together…
62	but…
63	as of now
64	with the first hospitals in america reporting that they are
65	all filled up…
66	we are out of time waiting for
67	the federal government to get it together
68	the best run states
69	the clearest eyed leaders in the best run states
70	right now are just going…
71	on their own
72	they have to be now
73	and if your state isn't
74	you should not hope that
75	there will be some sort of federal response to step up to fix things
76	when things start to get dark in your state
77	over the next few weeks
78	states we have learned…
79	have to go own their own
80	yes we need a national manufacturing mandate for ventilators
81	we need that
82	we need a national manufacturing mandate

83		and an national coordination effort
84		for the distribution of protective equipment
85		for health care providers and the other crucial supplies
86		they are already running out of and rationing
87		and unsafely reusing...
88		and yeah weeks ago
89		we needed a national effort
90		to get millions of coronavirus tests in the field
91		we needed all of these things from the federal government
92		the federal government is failing at all of these things...
93		and that is lamentable and I lament it
94		but
95		it's not stopping the virus
96		right
97		it's not stopping these things from moving forward
98		it's not stopping the influx that our hospitals from starting
99		as of today...
100		so
101		lament it all you want but if you are a state official
102		the lesson is
103		go
104		go now
105	REPORTER	do you want the uh president to use the defense protection act

106		to ramp up production of medical supplies
107	CUOMO	look I am I am
108		If I had… a new york state defense uh protection act
109		I would use it jesse
110		I don't have it
111		so what I'm saying is
112		i'll pay businesses more
113		i'll I'll start a new I'll fund a new business
114		if you can make these products
115		i'm trying to make these products
116		uh if you are in this this line: of work
117		we need masks
118		if you're making clothing…
119		uh figure out if you can make masks
120		i'll fund it
121		so i'm doing everything i can
122		to increase the production
123	MADDOW	if you're making clothing…
124		figure out if you can make masks
125		for nurses
126		and new york state will pay you
127		that's where we're at
128		that's where we're at