

Polarization and Common ground:

HOW POLITICAL ISSUES INTERACT

Beliefs and attitudes on issues that initially seem unrelated in fact often interact in predictable patterns. These patterns of beliefs and attitudes in turn drive choice and behavior.

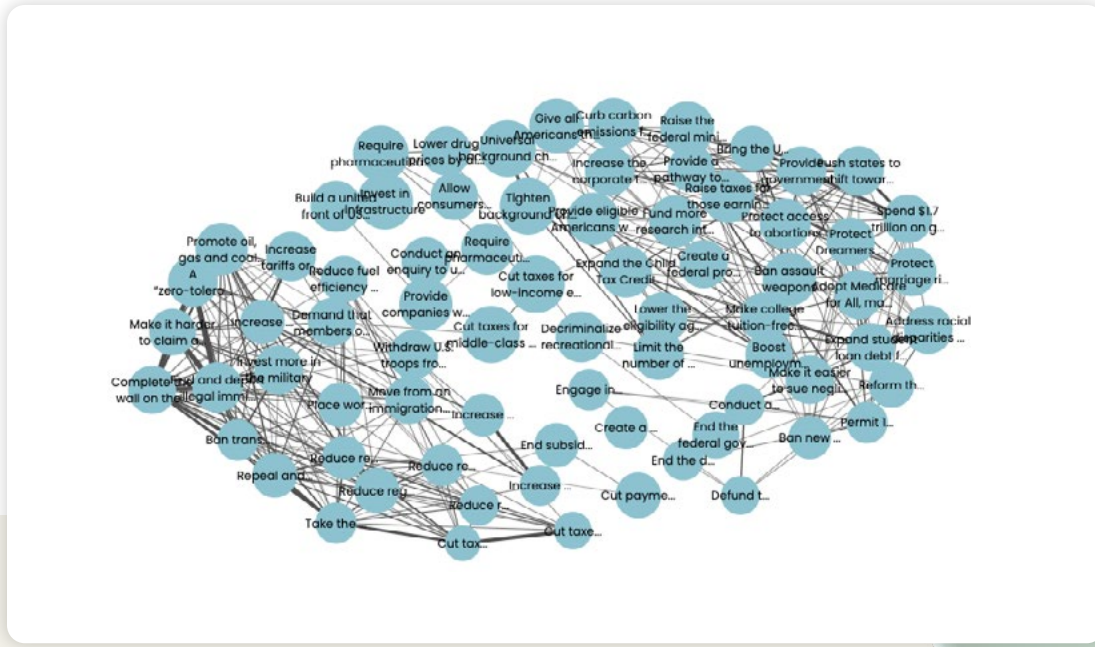
Upside is most commonly used to understand consumer attitudes and buying behavior. We wanted to demonstrate how our insights platform can be used to understand and track attitudes and behaviour outside of the consumer spectrum; in this case we chose attitudes towards political issues.



What did we do?

In March 2023 we asked 500 Americans aged 18+ representative of the population how they felt about 74 different political issues.

Upside's automated Idea Map dashboard can be used to show the strength of each idea's relationship to one another. The thickness of lines and proximity of ideas shows how closely connected they are.

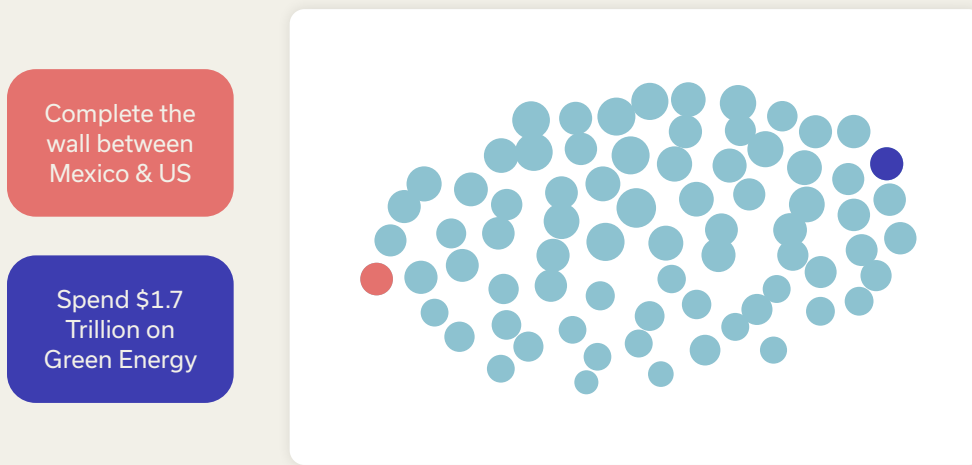


Key Insights

1. The divide between red and blue is very real

We anticipated that we would have 5-10 clusters of ideas (e.g. a cluster of policies relating to healthcare, another relating to the economy, etc.).

Instead, the 74 tested policies form two clear clusters that roughly correspond to the ideology and policies of the two main political parties in the USA.



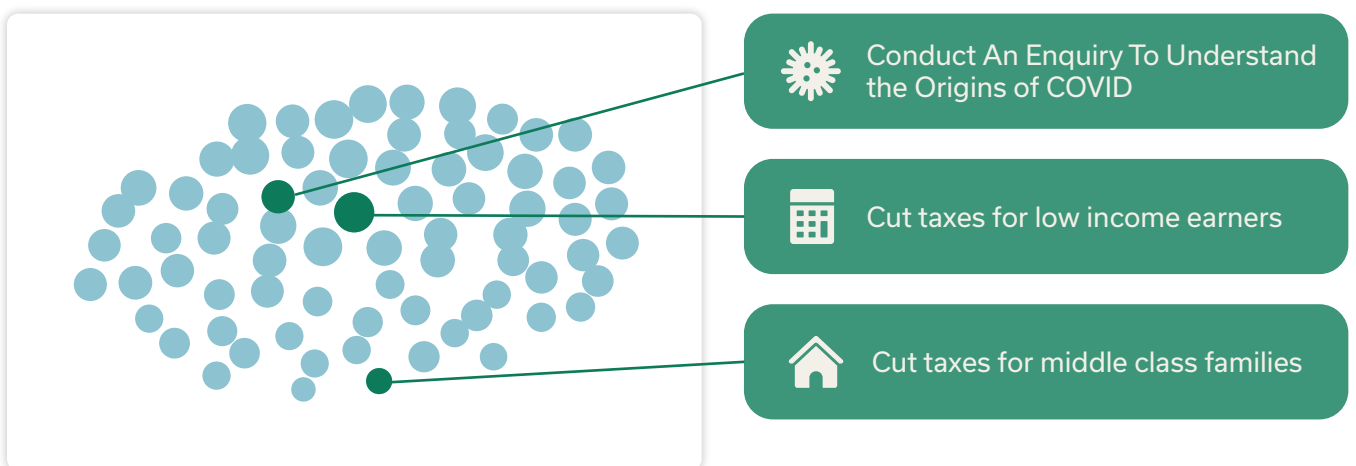
Complete the wall between Mexico & US

Spend \$1.7 Trillion on Green Energy

The two policies that most differentiate the segments are completing the US / Mexico border wall (in red) and spending \$1.7 trillion on green energy tech (in blue).

2. Issues in the middle are opportunities for common ground

There are policies that don't as clearly follow the Red / Blue split and can form common ground. Cutting taxes for low and middle-class earners, as well as conducting research to understand the origins of COVID-19 (in green) are issues that appeal to people in both political segments.



Interestingly, several gun control issues are also in the middle, indicating common ground among the population that is often not reflected in the political discourse.

Note that this does not mean that the ideas in the middle of the map are appealing to everyone. Some, like "Engage In Peace Talks With The Taliban", are in the middle because they are equally unappealing to both political segments.

Contextual Understanding

As we see here and as we inherently know to be true, our attitudes (political, social, personal) are a complex, and interrelated network. Prior to Upside, it was challenging to understand and visualize that network.

Understanding these patterns of relationships allows for powerful, coherent communication. This is true when communicating political issues or product claims or developing a brand positioning.

Upside addresses this issue, using sophisticated modeling to uncover the patterns in Idea Screen data.