

Anti-Vax Framings and Metaphors: What Makes an Anti-Vaxxer?

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Anti-vaxxers

In 2019, The World Health Organization named vaccine hesitancy as one of the top ten global health threats (WHO, 2019).

BUT: no unified category “Anti-vaxxer”; actually a network of specific subgroups that are precariously held together by a singular shared belief that each subgroup has different motivations for holding.

E.g., anti-government groups, minority groups, natural health groups, conspiracy theorists (all have different reasons for being anti-vax)

How can we develop public health messaging that accounts for these vast differences within subgroups of anti-vaxxers?

Data Sources

- Naturalnews.com (alternate domains: trump.news, extinction.news, mind.control.news, and veggie.news)
- Humansbefree.com
- Thefreethoughtproject.com
- Nurtritruth.org
- Nationalfile.com

Commonalities

What do these different anti-vax subgroups generally share beyond their anti-vax disposition?

DISTRUST OF THE SYSTEM; system-trusters are passive/controlled by an evil system

Hence, metaphors such as:

VACCINATED CITIZENS ARE SHEEP (results in blends like sheeple)

“And just like that, here come the tips for the scamdemic-paranoid, fake-news-believing **populace of ‘vaccinated’ sheeple**”

VACCINATED CITIZENS ARE GOVERNMENT SLAVES

“It could be that this was just another staged “shock and awe” incident to normalize the idea of **permanent indentured servitude to the plandemic**”

VACCINATED CITIZENS ARE ZOMBIES

“How many “booster” shots will it take before these **vaccine zombies**’ headaches turn them into drooling vegetables while the vascular damage overworks their heart to the point of failure?”

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES ARE A CRIME SYNDICATE

“What about the **medically-violent doctor gangs that push** toxic Covid “vaccines” on the populace?”

“In partnership with **drug-dealing kingpin** Pfizer”

VACCINE INITIATIVE IS A HOLOCAUST

“We are witnessing the **vaccine holocaust** accelerate by the day as governments become **genocidal terrorists**”

“These **deadly Covid jabs are a slow-walk into the gas chambers**, and the propaganda pushing them is relentless”

Differences

Where do these different anti-vax subgroups differ?

Examples

- Parents who believe that vaccines cause autism
- Far-right conservatives who see vaccination as impeding upon freedom
- Holistic/natural health enthusiasts
- People who have historically had poor experiences with health and government institutions (minority groups and the economically disadvantaged)
- Conspiracy theorists (whose theories vary greatly; e.g., thinking that vaccines are actually injected digital chips – causing mental control, allowing government tracking, editing genes, or allowing a “Kill Switch” to detonate later)

Summarized Ideological Patterns:

A: COVID is real (though maybe less harmful than the government asserts) but the government has used it to justify control.

B: COVID is real, and the government manufactured it to justify control.

C: COVID is not real; it was made up to justify the government control.

Metaphors

Metaphors differ depending on frames.

VACCINES ARE MYSTERY COCKTAILS

“For the Novavax trial, the corporate behemoth will experimentally inject 640 healthy volunteers between the ages of 50 and 70 with the **mystery cocktail**”

VACCINE INITIATIVE IS A HOLOCAUST

“The **vaccine holocaust** is now beginning to produce mass casualties around the world”

VACCINE INITIATIVE IS A PANDEMIC

“It’s abundantly obvious that the **vaccine is the pandemic**”

MASKS ARE FACE DIAPERS

“The masks never worked because the microscopic virus particles escape and enter everyone’s **face diaper** anyway”

MASKS ARE MUZZLES

“Mask tyrant Randi Weingarten removes **muzzle** during public school conference because people had a ‘hard time hearing’ her speak”

Is there an “anti-vax” Prototype?

No single “best example” subgroup, sharing a particular collection of these frames.

E.g. “Natural health” vs. “far-right” vs. “minority with history of medical system abuse.”

Numerically, vaccine resisters skew right rather than left politically, but that’s not true of them all, and reasons vary within the politically right-leaning anti-vax groups.

No “prototype” subgroup – just a skeletal shared frame, elaborated in different ways by different subgroups.

Skeletal shared frame: DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT/HEALTH SYSTEM

Contested categories with skeletal shared frames

Schwartz 1992 on Feminism: shared skeletal frame of HISTORIC SYSTEMIC INEQUITY TOWARDS WOMEN.
No single “best example” subgroup .

Crucial major differences in filling out the frame:

Especially: Importance of innate difference between women/men

- (1) If ability differences are minimal, then just change the system to treat men and women identically with regards to work, opportunity, etc.
- (2) If there are major innate differences, then change the system to VALUE women’s innate abilities.

Thus, CONTRADICTIONARY remedies for gender–inequity are consistent with shared recognition of the inequity.

Added framings involved in EcoFeminism: women’s innate tendencies favor ecological balance.

SO: “Feminism” is not a unified model of gender or a unified prescription for social change – except that social change should bring women more equity.

Similarly, a **shared skeletal frame for ANTI-VAX** would be filled out differently depending on what beliefs and ideas each subgroup has.

*The more difficult task then becomes trying to match different social/political groups to the metaphors that they use in order to accurately associate their beliefs to their language and thus tailor nuanced public health messaging to the different subgroups.

So, Who Uses What Metaphors?

- Cacophony of metaphors in online anti-vax discourse
- Cannot assume all of these metaphors are associated with one (“prototypical”) anti-vaxxer

Metaphors used by a wide range of anti-vaxxers:

MASKS ARE FACE DIAPERS/MUZZLES

“Since the novel Chinese infection ‘will always be with us,’...some people will probably choose to **affix a hijab-like face diaper over their nose and mouth for the rest of their miserable muzzled lives**”

VACCINATED CITIZENS ARE SHEEP (results in blends like sheeple)

“And just like that, here come the tips for the scamdemic-paranoid, fake-news-believing **populace of ‘vaccinated’ sheeple**”

Metaphors more specific to subgroups:

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS A WEAPON

“**Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19) “pandemic” is a weapon** that was hatched by communist China as part of its “stealth war” against the United States.”

VACCINE INITIATIVE IS A HOLOCAUST

“The **vaccine holocaust** is now beginning to produce mass casualties around the world”

COVID-19 IS A GHOST (NON-EXISTENT) VIRUS

“How does tyrannizing people keep them “safe” against a **phantom virus**?”

BELIEVING IN (GOV IDEAS ABOUT) COVID-19 IS BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF HYPNOSIS

“we can fight this mass psychosis by continuing to counter the narrative which is driving it, thereby **shaking others out of their hypnosis** by repeatedly exposing them to actual reality.”

THE VACCINE INITIATIVE IS A MURDERER

“**global vaccine initiative is eventually murdering** about 3 million new people”

Misinformation Education

What about those who mistrust authoritative communication on the basis that it is authoritative (and turn to alternative sources of information)?

...the problem seems to extend beyond the scope of metaphor (especially in the more skeptical and conspiratorial subgroups)

Education about misinformation – probably at an early age – is needed.

- Combats misinformation by giving people critical tools at an early age
- Citizens learn to treat alternative sources of information with the same scrutiny and skepticism as with authoritative sources
- Citizens feel more empowered which allows for the feeling of individual freedom to prevail

What Else Can Be Done?

Metaphors and frames that emphasize individual freedom and choice/autonomy – this would address the core skeletal shared concern (DISTRUST OF SYSTEM) – less likely they are to think compliance makes them “sheeple”

Realistic public health dialogue – DON'T assume you are trying to convince a SINGLE set of people. (Tailor each message to the specific subgroup you are addressing).

This skeletal frame serves as a foundation upon which we can build

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Thank you!