

# **The Ideological Dimensions Of Viewing And Sharing Of Fake News**

By Westin Henkels



# Review Of Current Literature

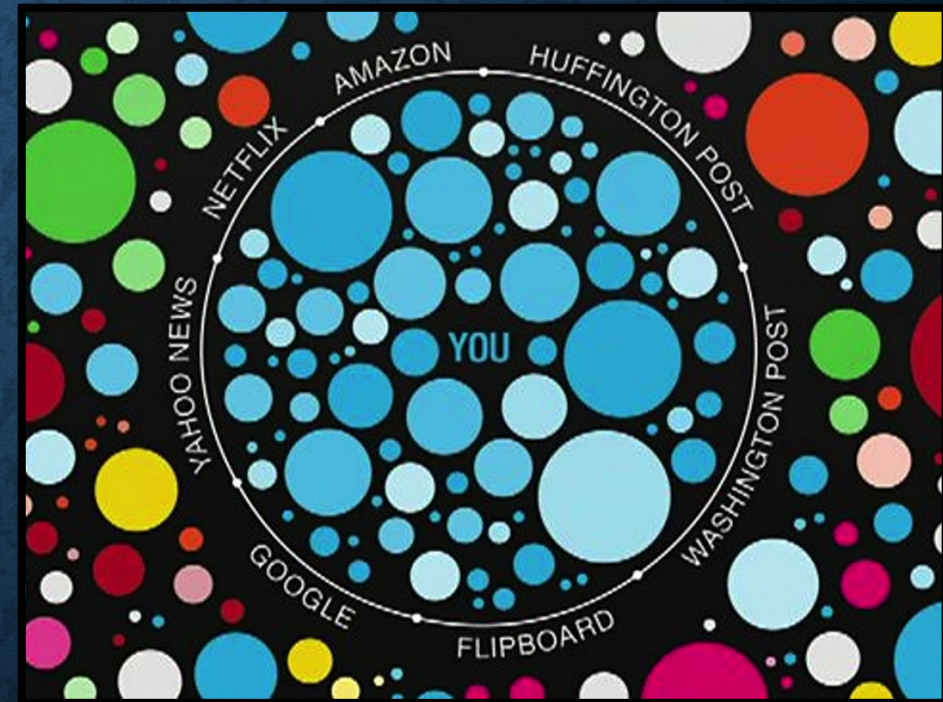


- Prior 2000's - traditional news mediums: radio, television, and newspaper
- Post 2000's – rapid change in journalism = increased use of radio, television and online media (Kiener, R., 2013)



# Two Competing Theories Arise

- Online channels might present “echo chambers” and “filter bubbles”
- Online channels might actually increase exposure to diverse perspectives
- (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; Bakshy, Messing, and Adamie, 2015; Barberá et al, 2015)



Eli Pariser, “Beware Online ‘Filter Bubbles’”



# Echo Chambers & Filter Bubbles - The Concerns

- Echo chambers & filter bubbles on Facebook and Twitter(Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017)
  - Material could be easily made and shared without fact-checking
  - Could reach more readers than Fox News, CNN, *The New York Times*





# Barberá (Et Al.) Vs. Bakshy (Et Al.)

- Two groups researched filter bubbles & echo chambers in social media
  - Barberá (et al.) examined Twitter, Bakshy (et al.) examined Facebook
    - Groups concluded that both theories were correct to some degree
- Paper by Barberá (et al.)
- Paper by Bakshy (et al.)



# MacArthur Foundation

- The MacArthur Foundation conducted a study similar to that of Barberá (et al.) and Bakshy (et al.)
  - Found “empty chambers” rather than echo chambers
    - 5% youth reported echo chambers
    - 34% reported empty chambers
  - Contradicts the echo chamber theory (Flaxman and Goel, 2016; Bakshy (et al.) 2015; Barbera (et al.) 2015)

MacArthur  
Foundation



# “Fake News” On The Rise

- Fake News – “News articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers” (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017)
- Allcott and Gentzkow rule out certain articles, including:
  - Accidental reporting mistakes, rumors, conspiracy theories, satire, false statements from politicians, and articles that are slanted or misleading.



# Fake News – The Concerns

- According to the research by Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017; and Silverman, 2016:
  - 62% of adults get news on social media
  - Popular fake news stories receive more shares on Facebook than mainstream news articles
  - Many people report believing fake news
  - The most common fake news stories in 2016 were pro-Trump
- In a study conducted by Guess (et al.) in 2018, it was shown that most fake news articles were pro-Trump, and they gave credit to an echo chamber effect



# Hypothesis

- Conservatives perpetuate fake news more than liberals
  - Guess (et al.)'s examination of Bakshy (et al.)'s behavior data that focused on who chose to visit fake news websites found that “58.9% of all visits to fake news websites came from the decile of news consumers with the most conservative information diets”
    - Facebook was one of the three sites observed to be used within the thirty seconds prior to 22.1% of the users before navigating to a fake news website
    - Conservatives were found to navigate Facebook twice as much as liberals (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018)
  - Could be explained by selective exposure



# Data Methodology

- Pew Research Center's study, conducted in 2014
  - National sample of 1,002 adults 18+ years
  - Random-digit-dialing – 500 by landline, 502 by cellphone
  - Weighted to match gender, age, education, race, and region according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 Community survey and population density
- Respondents were asked questions relating to fake news that I will use to answer my hypothesis



		Political Party			Total	
		Republican	Democrat	Independent		
How often do you come across news stories online that you think are not fully accurate?	Often	436	525	733	1694	
		53.9%	46.9%	60.7%	54.0%	
	Sometimes	216	368	294	878	
		26.7%	32.9%	24.3%	28.0%	
	Hardly ever	73	99	79	251	
		9.0%	8.8%	6.5%	8.0%	
	Never	84	128	102	314	
		10.4%	11.4%	8.4%	10.0%	
	Total		809	1120	1208	3137
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square	46.817 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000
Cramer's V	.086	.000	



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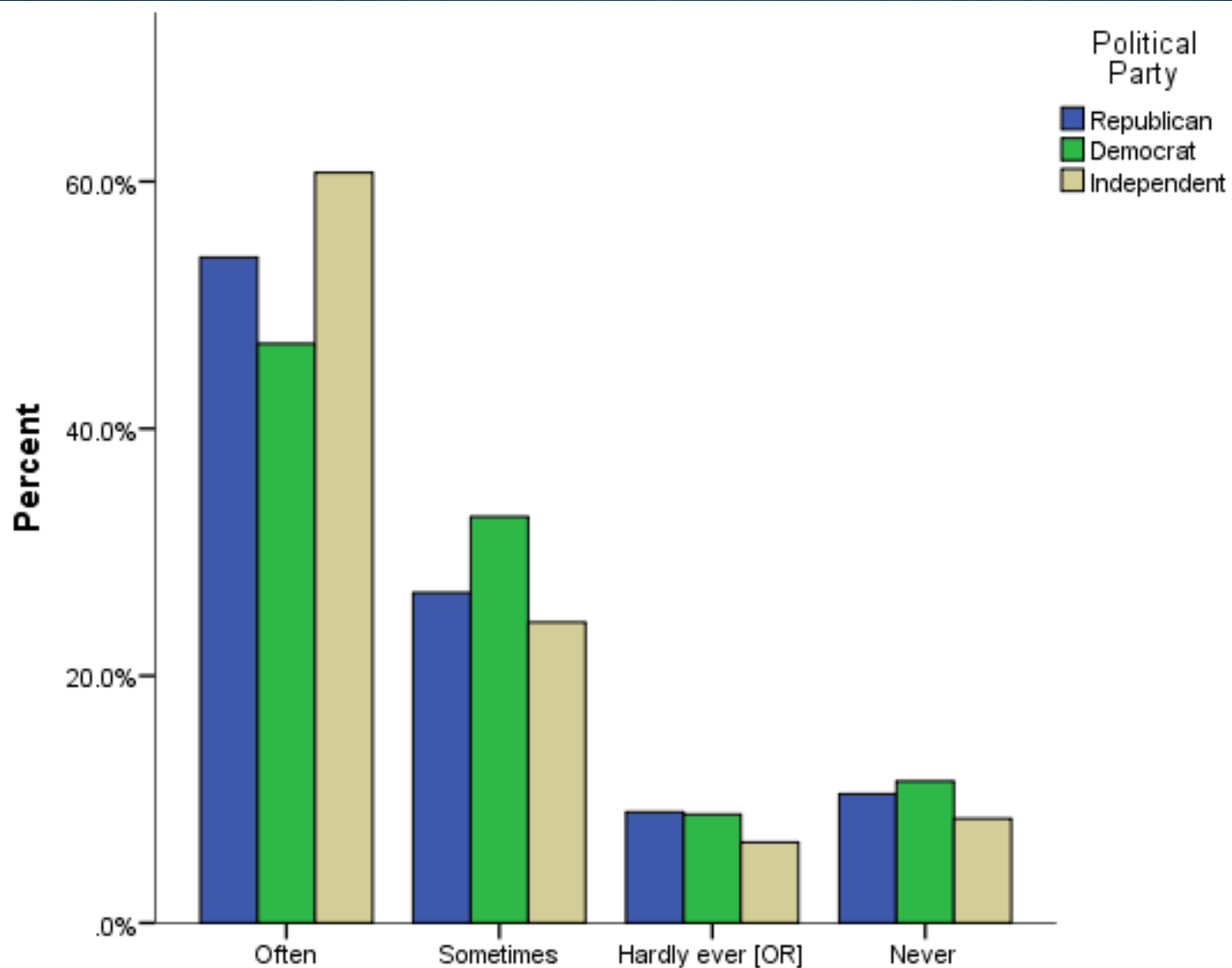
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**How often do you come across news stories online that you think are not fully accurate?**

Cases weighted by Final weight



		Political Party			Total
		Republican	Democrat	Independent	
Have you ever shared a political news story online that you later found out was made up?	Yes	133	190	200	523
		15.5%	16.7%	16.5%	16.3%
	No	726	951	1014	2691
		84.5%	83.3%	83.5%	83.7%
Total		859	1141	1214	3214
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

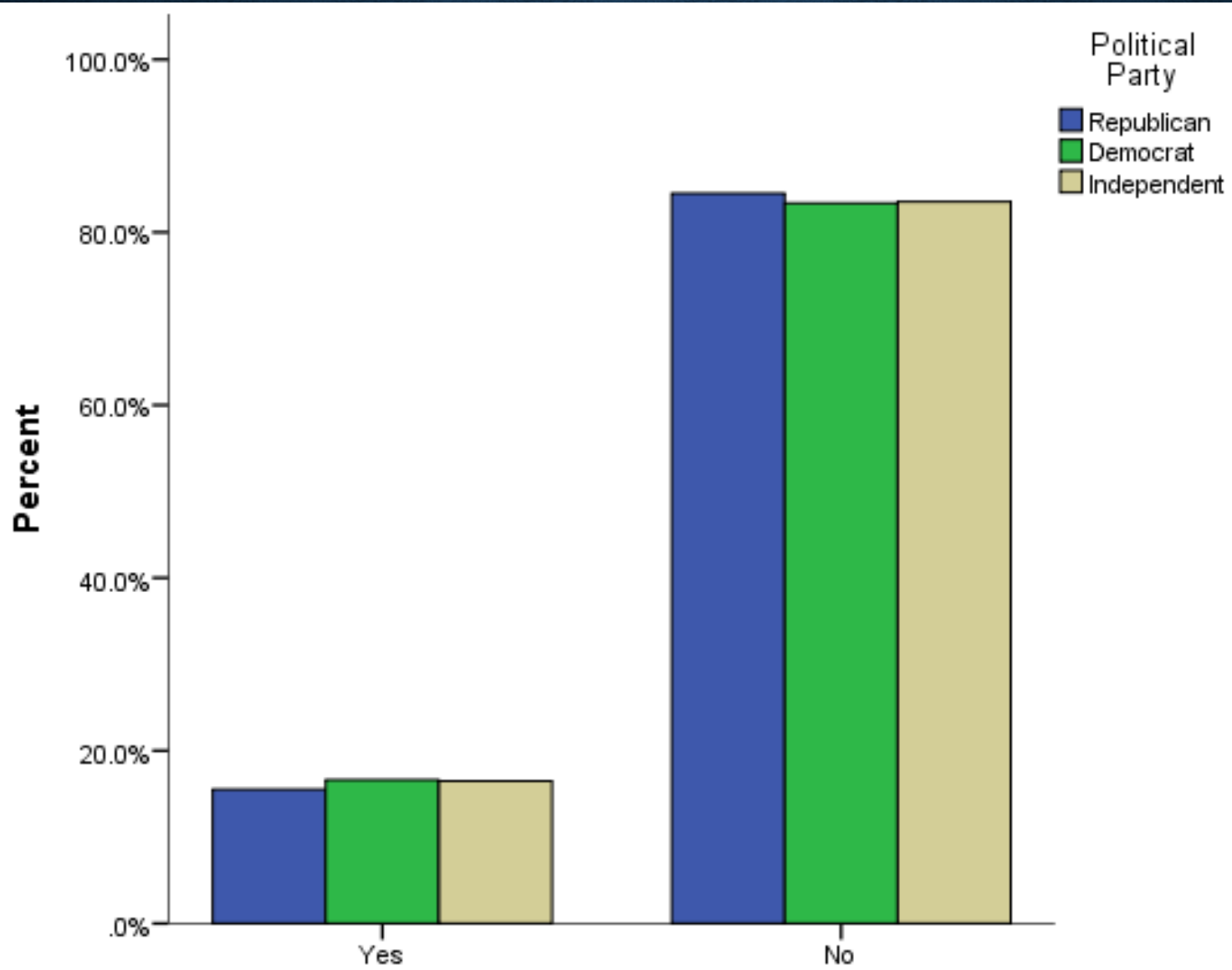
Pearson Chi-Square	.550 <sup>a</sup>	2	.760
Cramer's V	.013	.760	



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		Political Party			Total
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Have you ever shared a political news story online that you thought AT THE TIME was made up?	Yes	128	150	195	473
		14.9%	13.2%	15.8%	14.7%
	No	730	986	1038	2754
		85.1%	86.8%	84.2%	85.3%
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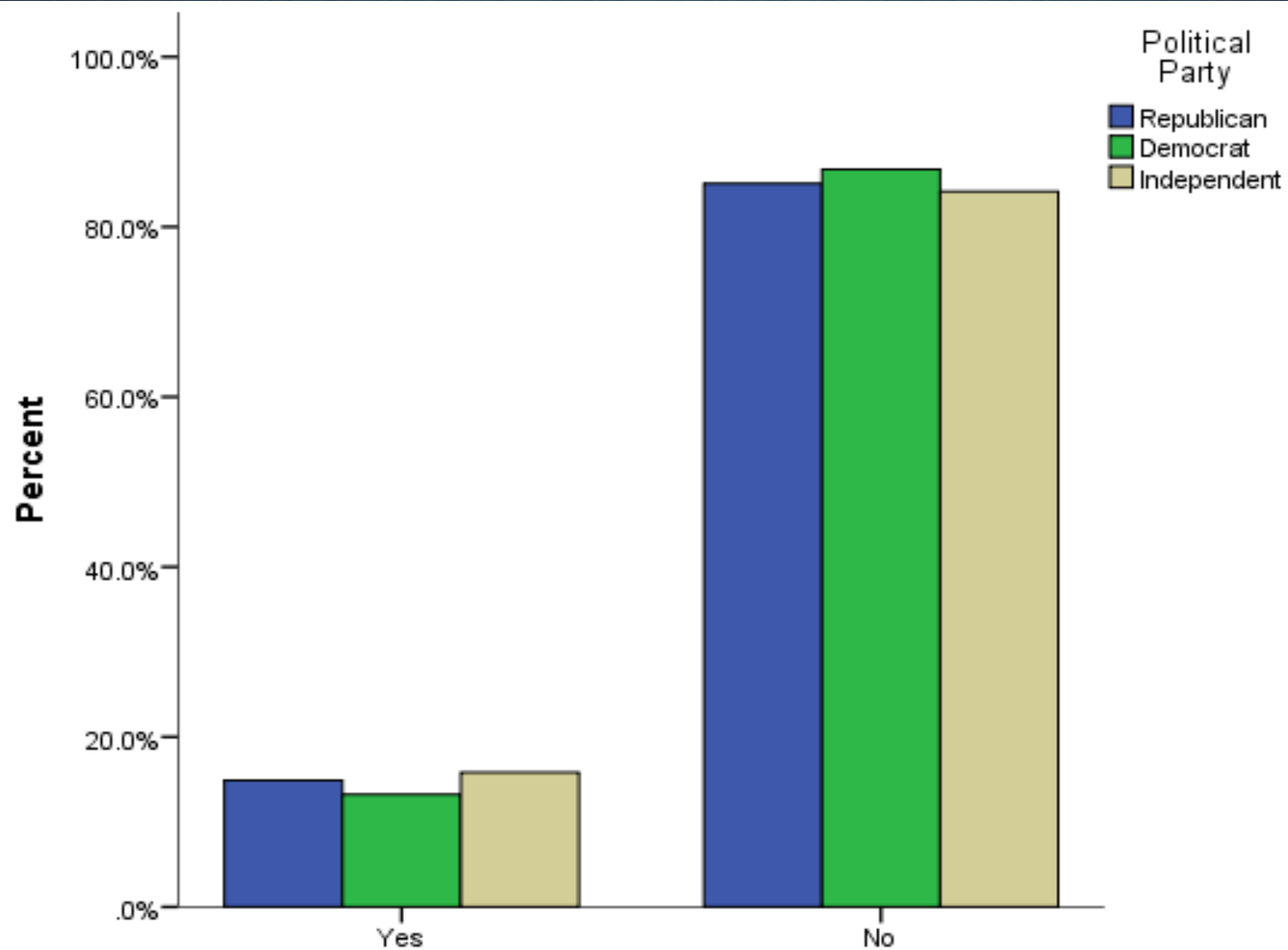
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**Have you ever shared a political news story online that you thought AT THE TIME was made up?**

Cases weighted by Final weight



# CONCLUSION

- Social media users more than less claim to see fake news
- The sharing of fake news, be it accidental or on purpose, has been shown to be insignificant when measured against political affiliation
- This survey doesn't measure how much fake news was actually shared
  - Measures how much individual users believe they share



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