Zeidler Center
Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion

Deep Listening. Fostering Trust. Bridging Communities.

Red & Blue

A conversation series about bridging the divide

Zeidler Center Dialogue Report 3 – Fake News

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Report Word Cloud

"A large portion of the population does not know it is being manipulated. Fake news deals with an individual's education level. This all goes back to Reagan's administration, where air time was sold out to corporations instead of shared. Is it ever possible to turn that around? A lot of people get their news from Facebook with no questioning of sources, no substance, and no argument. We are losing our souls."

"Human nature is a hard obstacle to overcome, although I personally have a low human anthropology. Self-interest is being right, and when you read the news your mind is already made up way before."

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Executive Summary

The third Red & Blue Dialogue took place on July 12, 2018 at Café Hollander and was sponsored by the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion and the Millennial Action Project. The topic of the dialogue focused on fake news. Participants were asked a round of two questions by Zeidler Center trained facilitators:

1. *"Where do see or get your news and what do you like about that news source or sources?"*
2. *"Have you ever read a piece of fake news and how did you know it was fake? Why do you think there is fake news?"*

If time permitted, participants were asked to participate in Connected Conversation prompted by the following questions:

"What actions might make a difference in combatting fake news? What, if anything, can elected officials do to help?"
"How is fake news harmful and damaging for both individuals and society at large?"

During the first round, participants shared that they relied on multiple news sources because they found certain sources to be trustworthy. A few participants found news primarily on social media, because they believed that news was shared as soon it happened and liked the interactive nature social media. Some participants deferred to one or two specific outlets and felt these outlets were their "go-to" for news. Other participants only consumed news from international sources, because they believed that international news was less biased and more analytical. For participants, the primary role of news was to inform. Relationship with news was another theme in round 1. Overall, participants had a mostly negative relationship with news and felt that they distrust or disliked news outlets.

During the second round, major themes dealt with where participants found fake news, how participants defined fake news, and why fake news happens. Participants cited specific news and social media as places where they encountered fake news. Participants contemplated the definition of fake news during this round. Bias was mentioned by several participants. Other participants defined fake news as false information. The final major theme of this second round, was why fake news happened. Participants had several reasons such as profit, appeal to emotion, lack of research and skepticism, as well as and political motivation.

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During Connected Conversation, participants discussed the role of critical thinking and personal bias in fake news. Participants reported feeling worried about a certain lack of critical thinking that could facilitate the existence of fake news. Accountability was another theme in Connected Conversations. Participants discussed ways that news outlets could be held accountable or expressed a desire for greater accountability. A change in political systems was discussed among a few participants. Some participants suggested a shift away from the two-party political system while others did not wish to see any political intervention concerning news.

Overall, parting words were positive. Participants enjoyed hearing different perspectives, felt encouraged, or came out with greater awareness. Some participants viewed the discussion as a learning experience and wanted to have more discussions.

Questions about this dialogue may be directed to:
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Listening Circle Analysis

Question Round One:" *Before we talk about "fake news." let's begin by discussing our relationships with, and definitions of, news itself. Where do you see or get your news and what do you like about that news source or sources?*

1.1 Source of Information

1.1.1 Multiple Sources

Many participants reported relying on multiple outlets for news. There were several reasons why participants decided to go to a variety of news outlets. Trust and accountability were mentioned by some participants. One participant shared about the online journal AllSides the following statement:

> *"I also have a lot of trust in them because they will send apologies if the report something wrong, which suggests that they hold themselves accountable."*

Other participants echoed similar sentiments about news outlets like PBS and NPR. Several participants mentioned a desire to get to the facts. One participant shared how he/she avoids op-eds because he/she would "rather read interview based or overall factual articles."

Some participants read multiple news sources for a greater understanding of news or to fact check. One participant shared that he/she "need to get various information from various fact checks." Overall, participants wanted news from dependable sources with thoughtful, factual reporting.

1.1.2 Social Media

Social media was a common platform for several participants to find news. Some participants solely received news from social media, while other participants used a mix of social media and more traditional news sources like local news or print. Some participants reported preferring social media because news happened in real time there. One participant shared:

> *"Twitter off top [is my number one choice]. You'll learn things happen in real time. People are there to video [record] so you get it right away."*

Other participants enjoyed the public discussion aspect of news on social media. One participant said:

> *"I can hear everyone's opinion without inputting [my own] and it's easier to hear what everyone has to say."*

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Other participants were ambiguous about news on social media. A few participants used social media out of convenience and felt that social media is not the best way to consume news.

1.1.3 Specific Sources

Some participants named specific news outlets. Participants felt that these outlets were trustworthy and described them as their main outlet. One participant used two sources to find out the truth about a news story. He/she said:

> *"I like C-SPAN when listening to the President's speeches "because I can pay attention to what is said, and not some commentators' analysis of what is said."*

Another participant read the Wallstreet Journal but only in print, because it forced him/her to "read everything." Local news outlets were mentioned by a few participants. One participant felt that local news was a better option because "It's not biased" and reported news about his/her neighborhood.

1.1.4 International Sources

Several participants believed that international news sources like the BBC were less biased. Two participants primarily received their news from international news outlets. One participant stated:

> *"I think American news versus global news is very different, because global has a standard of analysis and finding the core of an issue rather than winning you over."*

Another participant said they found almost all their news from sources outside the United States, because international news was "not skewed to a U.S. bias."

1.2 Definition of News

Participants discussed the definition of news and primarily felt that news was designed to inform. One participant said, "I watch news to be informed not to feel good." Participants echoed the idea that news should inform the public about what is happening.

1.3 Relationship with News

Several participants shared that they had a negative perception of news. One participant shared "I dislike news; I find it depressing."

Distrust over alleged bias in different news outlets was another point of concern for participants. One participant distrusted the news because he/she felt each news outlet had their biases. Another participant found that news from different sources conflicted and felt that "It's just to make money".

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While several participants had a negative perception of news, one participant felt neutral towards news. The participant consumed news to find out information and sought out news that was not too emotional.

Question Round Two:*" Have you ever read a piece of fake news and how did you know it was fake? Why do you think there is fake news?*

2.1 Read Fake News & Where?

2.1.1 Specific Outlet

Several participants who encountered fake news listed specific outlets. Participants mentioned The Onion, and John Oliver. Some of the participants felt that fake news as humor was often confused for real news. One participant shared:

> *"A big problem is that fake news is sometimes just bias intended humour taken seriously – it's all about confirmation bias and preconceived notions."*

Participants felt it was important to pay attention to the details of news stories. One participant noted that if people were not constantly critically thinking then "you will buy into the fake news." Two other participants discussed news outlets they liked. Both participants said NPR was a dependable news outlet.

2.1.2 Social Media

Two participants said they encountered fake news on social media. One participant said that he/she found Facebook accounts that shared fake news. Another participant felt that the purpose of fake news was to draw attention. One participant shared the following concern:

> *"It's troubling that the older parents who don't know how to filter their news and are being manipulated into believing the news is real."*

A participant shared a similar concern in round 1 about his/her elderly mother who only watched Fox News and CNN, because he/she felt that his mother did not receive the facts. Participants who mentioned social media as place for fake news shared similar concerns as the participant whose mother only watched two outlets.

2.2 Definition of Fake News

2.2.1 Bias

Several participants defined fake news as bias. One participant differentiated between outright fake news and misleading news and shared a news story about a security guard who

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reported a suspicious person to illustrate his/her point. The participant shared the following account of the NBC news coverage of the story:

> *"NBC reported that George Martin called into the police to report a black man acting suspiciously in the subdivision where George Martin worked as a Private Security Guard. However, this participant claimed, if one listens to the actual dispatch tapes, it is clear that George Martin only called in to report someone suspicious in the subdivision, and it is only when the dispatcher asks George a specific question about race (is the person white or black), that George responds "yes, he is black". The participant then added that NBC reporters or editors spliced two segments of one tape together in a manner that led listeners to think that George Martin is a racist when it seems clear that the tapes do not reflect that conclusion."*

The participant felt that reporting like NBC's was fake news, because it aroused emotions in readers. Another participant had a different opinion about bias versus fake news. The participant preferred news that was biased over outright fake news, because he/she felt the truth would come out when proper research was conducted. Another participant criticized how news is marketed and promotes "bias that presents actual news that is fake."

2.2.2 False

Some participants defined fake news as false information. One participant shared that he/she never encountered fake news but said "Fake news are stories about UFOs and things." One participant felt that journalistic spin is what constituted fake news. A few participants mentioned specific stories they felt were blown out of proportion like a California bill about convergent therapy or a bill that allegedly pushed to ban bibles.

2.3 Reason for Fake News

2.3.1 Profit

Some participants cited profit as a reason for fake news. One participant felt the "media environment is difficult because it is driven to satisfy shareholders." Many participants argued that media for profit lead to inaccurate news. Some participants described profit as marketing or influence. One participant was part of a research project that required individuals to identity real versus fake news. The participant had a personal experience with fake news where he/she believed a celebrity had died and said, "people who 'clicked' on that announcement added to the influence of that site".

2.3.2 Appeal to Emotion

Participants discussed the role of emotion in fake news. One participant felt that fake news was used to appeal to emotion to promote division, sharing that:

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"[T]o divide and conquer; and to take our attention away from what we have in common."

Another participant felt that fake news tries to sway viewers' emotions to support a certain point of view, negative or positive. The participant also mentioned how fake news can be used as a form of revenge. Appeal to personal bias was mentioned by participants as well.

2.3.3 Skepticism & Research

Another theme was skepticism and research. Many participants felt skeptical toward news and discussed the importance of researching facts. Distrust toward news was a common reason why participants were skeptical of news. One participant encountered fake news which left a negative impression on him/her. The participant shared the following:

"I have experienced fake news I am skeptical of news that I see/read. News to the left is misleading and news to the right is misinformation."

Another participant disliked that he/she was skeptical of news but felt it was necessary to fact check. Other participants felt that research and fact-checking helped prevent fake news, as can be seen in the following quotes from the dialogue:

"Read it because it seems believable. However, check the facts."

"You have to be careful and really check the source. It sounds really inviting; really convincing."

One participant said that fake news targets certain age groups. A few participants noted that lack of analysis was another reason for fake news. Overall, participants were skeptical of news especially when something sounded too good to be true, felt it was important to research news articles, and believed lack of analysis was a contributing factor to fake news.

2.3.4 Political Motivation

A few participants felt that fake news was politically motivated to create tension between different groups of people. One participant felt there was fake news "because people want us to be divided more than we already are." Another participant shared a false account about the Sherman Park unrest:

"There were stories of white people being hunted. I was told not to go there because of this, but I went, and it came out to be a bullshit story and that it was Russian propagated. There were political motivations to target and create racial tensions in Wisconsin at that time."

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Another participant placed political motivations on news outlets and felt that news outlets were trying to manipulate viewers to build consensus around certain issues.

Connected Conversation

Connected Conversation: *What actions might make a difference in combatting fake news? What, if anything, can elected officials do to help? How is fake news harmful and damaging for both individuals and society at large?*

3.1 Bias & Lack of Critical Thinking

Many participants explored bias and lack of critical thinking in relation to fake news. Participants felt that people sought news sources that confirmed personal biases which contributed to fake news. Some participants wanted to see consumers be more critical of news sources. One participant said that self-interest is about being correct and stated, "when you read the news your mind is already made up way before." Participants alluded to the idea that bias and lack critical thinking could stem from people's inability to see beyond themselves. One participant caught himself/herself responding to comments on social media and realized that not everyone shares the same opinion. Other participants expressed what they believed to be consequences of bias and lack of critical thinking. Participants felt it caused more fake news which lead to more divisiveness and controversy.

Participants desired more open-mindedness toward news. Open discussions and acknowledging good ideas where methods participants suggested to bridge the gap between opposing groups. A few participants felt the issue was generational and believed that younger generations were less partisan and more critical of news.

3.2 Change System(s)

A change in political and economic systems was another common theme during the Connected Conversation. Several participants believed it was necessary to change political systems to help combat fake news and felt that political division was the main reason for the current news climate. One participant suggested eliminating the two-party political system and have one political party with differing schools of thought. Another participant echoed a similar idea and said that politics was a spectrum rather than a definite label. Participants wished to change political systems, because they felt that politics had turned tribalistic and competitive.

3.3 Accountability

Another theme was accountability. Participants wished to see news outlets held accountable. Profit in news was discussed among participants. Participants saw profit as one of

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the main reasons for fake news and wished to see accountability for profit-driven news. Some participants wished to see profit eliminated from news outlets or limited, because they felt it lead to less truthful reporting and more opinion-based pieces. Another participant believed that fake news would never disappear and wished to "see if areas can be regulated and funded by outside organizations." Lack of transparency, profit, emphasis on opinion pieces, and journalistic spin were all things that participants wanted to regulate. Several participants shared that they wished to see journalists and newscasters held accountable.

3.4 No Intervention

A few participants did not want to see politicians involved in news. Participants felt that political intervention would make fake news worse and did not trust politicians. One participant stated, "I don't want politicians anywhere near my news." Another participant felt that politicians were biased and did not feel that political intervention would help anything.

Parting Words

Many participants enjoyed the dialogue. Participants described the benefits of the discussion. Encouragement, greater awareness, and appreciation of different people were mentioned. Participants said things like "I'm excited and I feel good about the participation tonight." Most participants shared that they had a positive experience during the dialogue. Learning and a desire for more discussion was another theme. Several participants viewed the dialogue as a learning experience, and other participants wished to have more discussions.

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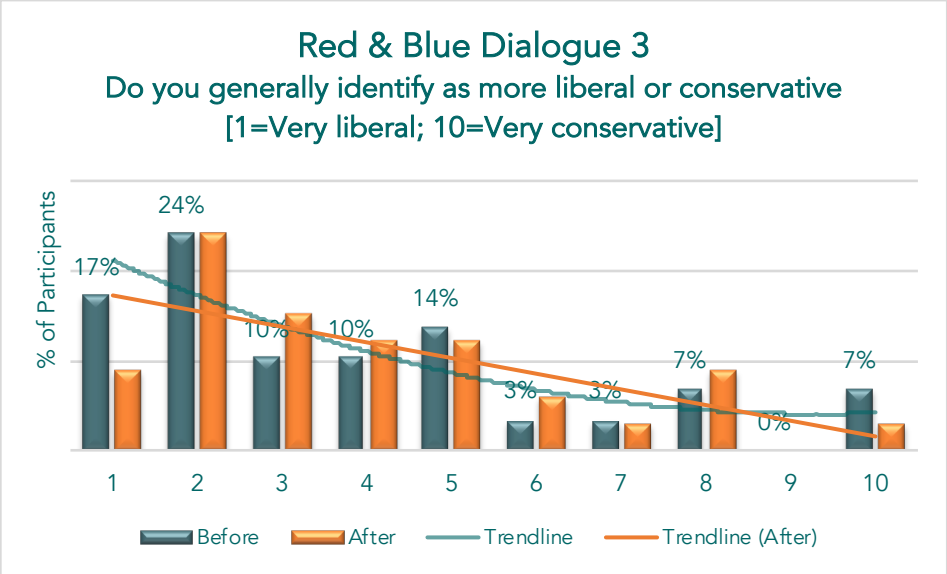
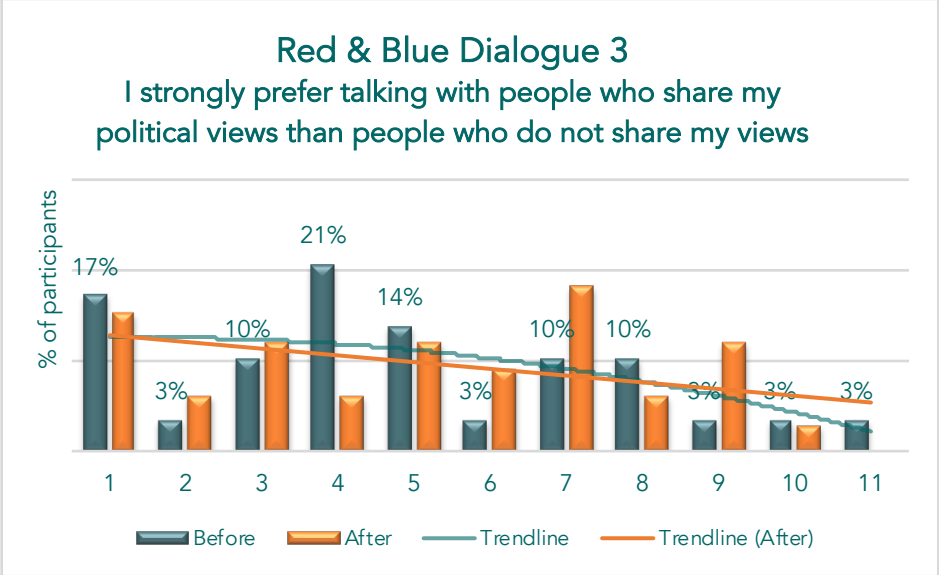
Feedback Forms





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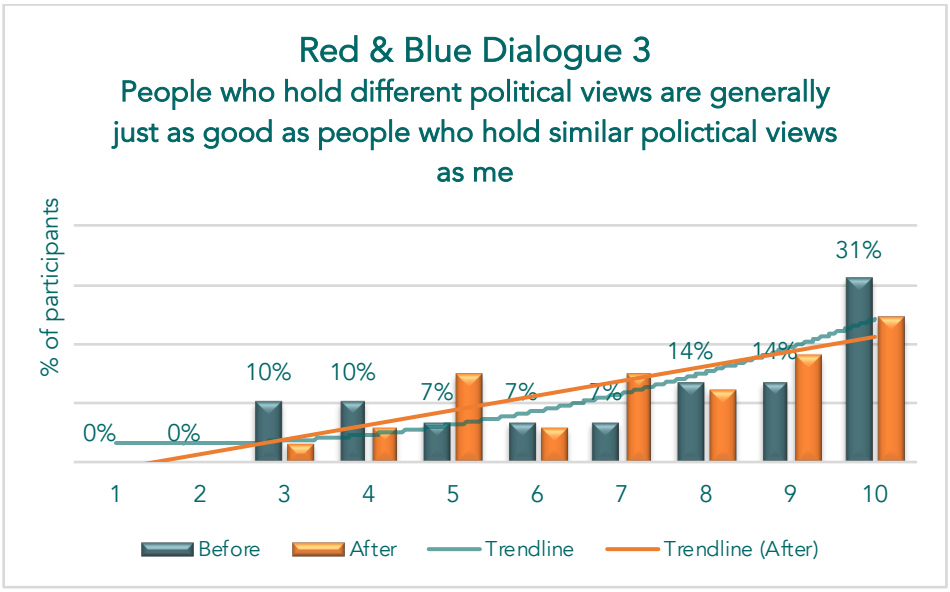

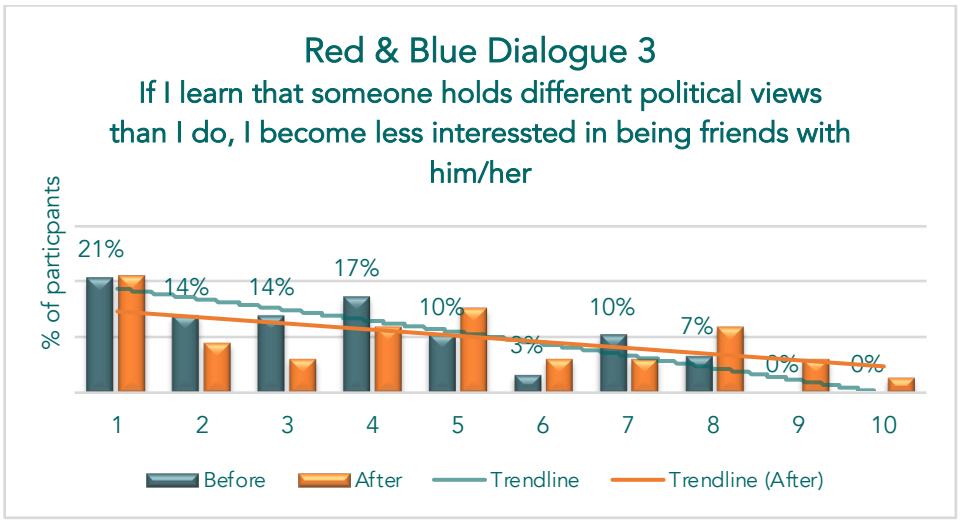

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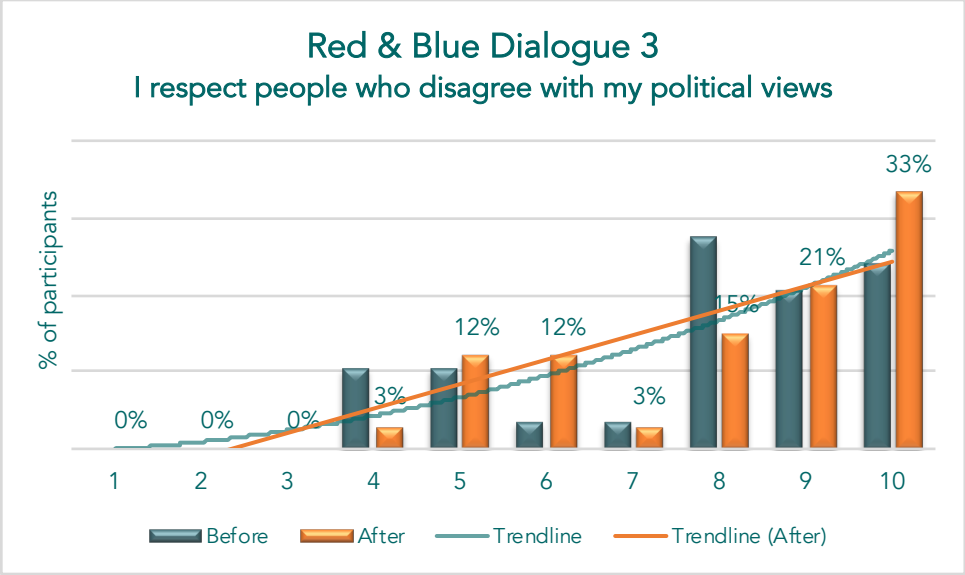

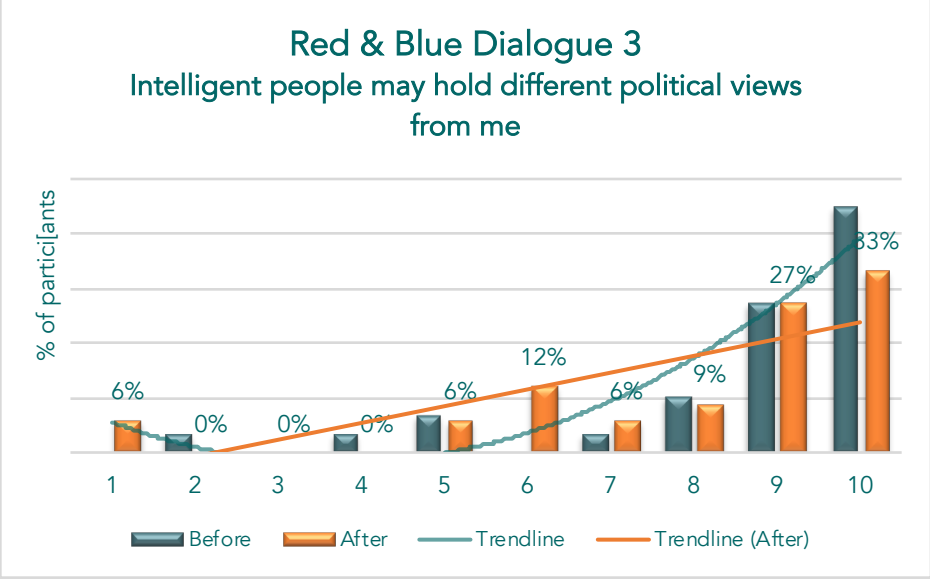

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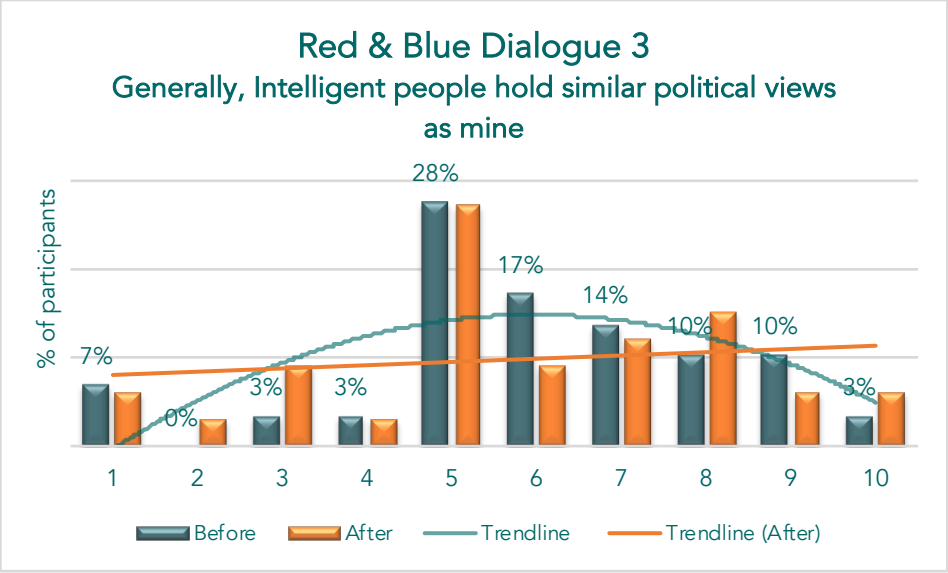

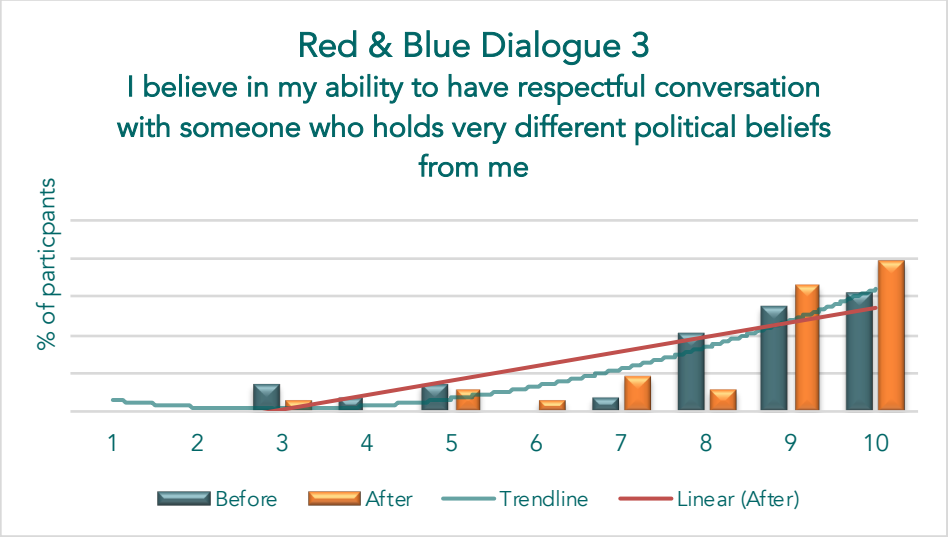

What was most satisfying, enriching, or valuable about this experience?

- Hearing everyone, feeling heard
- Learning not to trust every source you see.
- It was interesting to get new insights into varied perspectives
- Having the conversation

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- Enjoyable interesting conversation, great moderation
- The structure of the dialogue fostered equal participation and ability to hear everyone's perspective clearly and reflect upon them
- Listening to different opinions
- Getting different perspectives from different people, enjoyed the diversity at our table
- Challenging myself to be an active listener and dialogue with others in an uncomfortable situation (I'm not a confident person)
- Understanding perspectives from a variety of viewpoints & demographics
- Having open discussion
- Purposeful listening, diversity of ages, races, ethnicities
- Gathering, listening, sharing opinion
- Thinking about and defining the terms "news" and fake news, i found out things about my media habits i hadn't realized
- Building off of other people's thoughts although they might disagree with me ideologically
- Hearing the personal process of everyone's world views
- Meeting and listening to diverse people in the community
- Good info, respect of all viewpoints
- Really enjoyed listening to everyone. The facilitation helped to guide civility.
- Talking with a conservative
- Exposure to diverse opinion
- Opportunity to discuss issues with people who are willing to engage
- Having an open and respectful discussion
- The diversity of the group
- Having real discussion with others from the community
- The diversity of the circle was enlightening, particularly the younger crowd.
- Hearing perspectives of young people

What was less than satisfying, frustrating, or disappointing?

- Not enough tension:), we agreed mostly
- There was not enough time for alternate discussion
- Nothing
- Nothing
- N/A

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- It was so noisy - very difficult to listen to each other, not discussing each question afterwards was frustrating for me - didn't like waiting til the end we lost some mojo, we never really delved into fake news
- My lapse in knowledge about certain topics can be frustrating
- Felt like we ran out of time before getting into true discourse (or we were too nonconfrontational)
- Noise, people at our table get up & moving around a lot including co-facilitator, drinking alcohol
- Noisy space
- A latecomer threw off the vibe of our group and felt distracted and distracting
- Nothing really, maybe not having enough time to speak
- It was a little noisy, would have liked longer time to discuss opinions
- Nothing
- Not being able to affirm someone during the first session
- Too noisy!
- Not really anything or group was pretty similar
- The venue-hard to park, hard to hear. The food seemed to come out in waved rather than bits and pieces
- N/A
- Noise level
- The other half of the room (noise) - the patrons.
- Not having the ability to have real dialogue. Facilitator could be less strict

What advice or suggestions can you offer to people designing future Red & Blue conversation?

- I didn't realize that appetizer were not the main course so I filled up on fries thinking it was the only veg option
- Take others opinions into consideration
- More time for questions and follow-up
- Allow people to sway off topic
- Larger space
- Have better venue for conversations
- Possibly give the questions beforehand
- Possibly have more tables with less people at each to complete round robin questions faster in order to get into the open conversation
- Keep up the good work!

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- Quieter location! Several people mentioned that the questions posed tonight did not allow for deeper conversations
- More share time and networking
- Does the ZC and/or MAP want us to self-identify in the group our views or not? There were some in our group who thought we couldn't name directly.
- None
- Quieter space
- You're doing a great job
- The Zeidler Center process is very effective
- Need more politically diverse table
- The SPACE (noise, logistic) is really important
- Venue is most important to facilitate meaningful discussions. Going forward would it be possible to facilitate on an informal basis one month later with the same tables - pay on our own, but arrange a venue where people can discuss what changes if any, resulted
- Just keep it going! :)
- Format was great
- Keep an open mind
- Allow conversation to flow. It's not a true dialogue without it

What topic(s) would you like to discuss in future Red & Blue conversation?

- Immigration, abortion, police brutality, 3rd parties, corporations (eg. Amazon)
- Deportation
- The economy, local vs. Federal government
- Identity politics
- Campaigning
- Social media
- Elections
- Race relations, income gap
- Healthcare, energy, environmental policy
- Women role and pay in workplace vs. Men
- Open!
- How can we be more of an inclusive electorate/educated on the issues?
- Money in politics, privilege, state government, sexuality
- Immigration
- Equity, transportation
- Social security

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- Illegal immigration
- Healthcare, gun control, criminal justice reform, inequality
- Me too
- What civil society means
- Money in politics, environment (lead, air, water)
- Social media influence in politics
- Rural v. Urban perspective
- How do we help youth in Milwaukee?
- Segregation/why people choose to live away from black people

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Annexes

Question Round One:" *Before we talk about "fake news." let's begin by discussing our relationships with, and definitions of, news itself. Where do you see or get your news and what do you like about that news source or sources?*

1.1 Source of Information

1.1.1 Multiple Sources

- All Sides is an online journal that complies articles and compares headlines: it gives you that first glimpse and ability to see if the opposing sides are extremely different. Unfortunately, I, and most people, don't have the time to search and compare, so this will do it for me. Researching is like a full-time job. This also gives me the ability to see the headline and get a snapshot for an article without clicking on the website and endorsing it, especially if it is a site I don't support, and it gains money from my clicks. Madison 365 is another good source, and it focuses a lot on people of color, it's very valuable, and gives many different perspectives. One thing I especially enjoy is that there are errors in the articles, which to me makes them more down to earth. I also have a lot of trust in them because they will send apologies if the report something wrong, which suggests that they hold themselves accountable. Also, Yes Magazine is just very positive.
- I think American news versus global news is very different, because global has a standard of analysis and finding the core of an issue rather than winning you over. I never read the off-ed, because I already know what they are going to say about a certain topic on either side, and I don't want to be won over. I rather read interview based or overall factual articles. My primary source of news is NPR podcasts, although I quit listening to the news for a year after the 2016 election. I think NPR is tough, looks at both sides, and has a lack of for-profit. I especially like Diane Reed. I read the Huff Post for the gossip. I also get the NY Times because I value their sources and outlooks on all sides. This is the only source I read after the election
- I try to get diverse news, but it's very difficult and hard to find the "straight facts". I mainly focus on PBS and NPR, also for their not-for-profit system. Other news sources I enjoy are CNN - which gives their audience a dopamine rush through selective news, which isn't necessarily constructive, The Wallstreet Journal, and the NY Times - although they are not always interested in the leading thought leaders. What's a good nightly news cast: Vice, I think its balances, digs through the weeds, and investigative.
- My round one is social media. I also get a paper on Sunday and read it throughout the week. If I see something repeatedly [over and over again] that means I should pay attention to it. I also listen to podcasts. No, I don't think social media is a good way to get news; I am missing a lot. I think we need better local and state coverage.
- I think it's important to define what news is. I always defined it as what came from my TV. I don't like learning about local news. It's depressing. I had Facebook, but I deleted it. I watch Democracy Now, BBC (several others were mentioned, but I could not capture them all.) They are trusted sources. I listen to NPR podcasts. I like information on

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droughts and problems and how to solve those problems. I learn news through people all the time.

- A lot of my news comes from Fox, CNN and Social Network. I can't always trust it, but I can trust that it will get to me quickly.
- I like CNN and I watch John Oliver. I respect John Stewart and his platform. I receive news from various feeds. I teach in the central city, it is nice to expose others to different media sources.
- I receive news from a variety of sources (local and national). I also listen to National Public Radio (NPR) and the BBC. I believe overseas journalism is more objective about the concerns in this country. I read e mails from different perspectives about news feeds.
- I get my news from my Apple News Feed, CNN, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, etc. I like my news in long form such as storytelling type of news.
- I am a Journalist and have been a producer I get my main news from Wisconsin State Journal, New York Times and during the day I read lots of different papers such as Washington Post and Wall Street Journal. The news makes me worry about civil society.
- I like the Milwaukee Business Journal, CNN because it's 24/7, Fox, TMJ4 because NBC is owned by General Electric where I've worked for thirty years, Washington Journal, World Digital (religious news source) Face book and Twitter but not often.
- Relationship: I want to know what is going on in our community and in our nation and our world; I want to know facts. I often feel stressed by the news; still I am afraid to turn off the news because I do not want to be ignorant about what is going on. /Definition: News should report what is going on at the local, state, national, and international levels. /Source for News: I use the app "in the news" that connects me to multiple news sources; I also get some of my news from Facebook. /What I like about my news sources: The app "in the news", provides me with access to a variety of news outlets and both analysis and commentary about news. If I get too stressed about the news, I can always turn off the app and spend time doing something enjoyable.
- Relationship: I distrust most news sources, so I often feel stagnant with regard to news. I am inconsistent in paying attention to the news because there is such a huge increase in the numbers of news sources, and it is hard to know which ones to trust. Each news source raises questions because each has their own biases. I especially do not like news sources that give false or misleading news in a manner that negatively affects people whom I care about. /Definition: News Outlets should provide information and should pass a fact-check. /Source for News: My main sources of news are HBO and VICE; I also pay attention to John Oliver, who provides his take on current news. /What I like about my news sources: I like these sources because they provide points of view with which I agree. Sometimes these sources can seem sarcastic, irreverent, even; still, they seem relevant, and help me be somewhat knowledgeable about what is going on in the world so that I engage with others about the news.
- Relationship: I pay attention to the news in order to stay current with local, state, national, and international news; I prefer news sources that are not too emotional. I especially want to stay current with news about politics, the economy, and technology. /Definition: News sources should provide descriptions of events. /Source for News: I pay attention to press

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briefings, as well as news from both New York Times and Linked In. I also listen to The Daily Show;/ What I like about my news sources: Some of the sources on Linked In provide a few sentences about each of a wide variety of news items; I can click on any one of these sentences and link to any one of those stories for greater depth.

- Relationship: I get my news from channel surfing between Channel 4 (WTMJ-TV) and Channel 6 (WFOX-TV), and I also pay attention to comments about the news from classmates, friends, and my mom. /Definition: News sources exist to bring news to us, provide us information, and let us know what is happening in the world. /Source for News: Channel 4 and Channel 6, and classmates. /What I like about my news sources: I think that these sources are accurate and dependable; they use witnesses from the area, which I like
- I get my information from different news sources. I try to look at other forms of news – Wall Street Journal – and by saying this I look for one fact. I need to get various information from various fact checks. Fake news is real. It has drawn my mother, who is German, always watches Fox News, NBC and CNN, and she never really gets the real facts, so I am constantly telling her to be careful of what you hear from newscasters.

1.1.2 Social Media

- My round one is social media. I also get a paper on Sunday and read it throughout the week. If I see something over and over again that means I should pay attention to it. I also listen to podcasts. No, I don't think social media is a good way to get news; I am missing a lot. I think we need better local and state coverage.
- I get most of my news from Instagram and Twitter. I can hear everyone's opinion without inputting [my own] and it's easier to hear what everyone has to say.
- I normally get my news from Fox 6; also, Snapchat and Twitter. It's not biased. It's local, so I use it to learn what's happening to me in my neighborhood. My definition of news: information.
- Twitter off top [is my number one choice]. You'll learn things happen in real time. People are there to video [record] so you get it right away. I refer [defer is the word that ideally should have been used] to Breakfast Club. I grew up off traditional news – NBC, Nightly News with Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather. Political news was all about Sundays. News is information that is provided to you about things going on all across the world. I grew up in a house where news was on all the time.
- I get most of my news from Facebook. I feel like it's not the best and I have thought about getting it other places, but that's where I am. I guess I get a certain viewpoint because it's what I use. But what constitutes news? All news is bias. It's not a bad thing.
- A lot of my news comes from Fox, CNN and Social Network. I can't always trust it, but I can trust that it will get to me quickly.
- I see and receive most of my news from Facebook. I am reluctant to base an opinion on news contents. I also read the Wall Street Journal.
- Relationship: I dislike news; I find it depressing. /Definition: News should provide information to readers and listeners. /Source for News: I get my news from Facebook and from co-workers. /What I like about my news sources: I trust my co-workers

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- I read everything. Different categories and sources of political events, general news from the Journal-Sentinel. I try not to rely on that foolish stuff. I look at more technical sources. I don't watch TV news, really. I get most of my information from social media. I look at it from the technical aspect. I get my news directly from a source in Iraq, so I don't rely on this foolishness. I really just don't get off on one news source.
- I don't watch or listen to the news on TV. I get all of my information from Facebook, Twitter, and other social media accounts. I just follow Facebook. I just want to know the real [information] that is going on. I just care, really, about what I do. I follow lots of educational stuff. I feel that all sides are the same. I don't feel the necessity to listen to the news.

1.1.3 Specific Sources

- I get my news from all over the place, but mainly the Wallstreet Journal. I read the paper every day, because I think online news is distracting. Plus, reading it in print forces me to read everything. Although the Wallstreet leans toward my ideology, I do think it's pretty general.
- I normally get my news from Fox 6; also, Snapchat and Twitter. It's not biased. It's local, so I use it to learn what's happening to me in my neighborhood. My definition of news: information.
- My "go to" is New York Times because they are balanced and try not to be too emotional. But I subscribe to others. I try to avoid Fox and CNN. My husband showed me a media chart that shows news bias. It is really helpful.
- Growing up in a small town I was always interested in what was going on the other side and I remember 60 minutes on Sunday Night being a family ritual. I used to watch Fox News which I say is (wash, rinse and repeat), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: My wife reads it first and then I get it, 10 o'clock news on channel 12. No face book or Twitter
- Relationship: I have a background in Journalism; while at Marquette University, I worked on the student newspaper, and eventually became editor of the paper. There were no viable journalism courses, so I taught journalism theory and practice to students who worked on the student newspaper. "I like to get at the root of things, search out the truth of a story, without spin." /Definition: Good news reports make for good stories, based on facts, and even then, reporters put a spin on their stories. /Source for News: "I prefer to get my news from two sources: on-line news aggregates, and C-SPAN, which I can access on line because I do not have Cable." /What I like about my news sources: I like C-SPAN when listening to the President's speeches "because I can pay attention to what is actually said, and not some commentators' analysis of what is said." "Many news sources fail to give readers and listeners the whole story." He then recounted news reports about two mass shooters, one white and one black. He mentioned that reporters stated that President Trump called for the death penalty for the black man and did not call for the death penalty for the white shooter, and that the reporters, commentators, and analysts from most of the liberal press referred to this statement as indicative of the President's racist beliefs and actions. He then remarked that the news reporters failed to mention that the President did not call for the death penalty for the white mass shooter

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because that man was shot and killed at the scene of the mass shooting. Thus, the death penalty would not have been a possibility for this white mass shooter. He then stated that it was wrong for journalists to label the President as racist based on this sketchy and erroneous information.

1.1.4 International Sources

- I think American news versus global news is very different, because global has a standard of analysis and finding the core of an issue rather than winning you over. I never read the off-ed, because I already know what they are going to say about a certain topic on either side, and I don't want to be won over. I rather read interview based or overall factual articles. My primary source of news is NPR podcasts, although I quit listening to the news for a year after the 2016 election. I think NPR is tough, looks at both sides, and has a lack of for-profit. I especially like Diane Reed. I read the Huff Post for the gossip. I also get the NY Times because I value their sources and outlooks on all sides. This is the only source I read after the election
- 80% of my news is from places outside of the U.S. like Moscow and Germany. I like it because it's not skewed to a U.S. bias. For U.S. news I go to U.S. Washington based sources because they are close to the capital and so not as bias.
- I receive news from a variety of sources (local and national). I also listen to National Public Radio (NPR) and the BBC. I believe overseas journalism is more objective about the concerns in this country. I read e mails from different perspectives about news feeds.

1.2 Definition of News

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1.3 Relationship with News

- Relationship: I dislike news; I find it depressing. /Definition: News should provide information to readers and listeners. /Source for News: I get my news from Facebook and from co-workers. /What I like about my news sources: I trust my co-workers..

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- News from various sources can be contrary. I experience some biases to different kinds of podcasts. There are two different kinds of podcasts, and then news versus contemporary. That's what the jobs are in the news casting field. It's just to make money.
- Relationship: I pay attention to the news in order to stay current with local, state, national, and international news; I prefer news sources that are not too emotional. I especially want to stay current with news about politics, the economy, and technology. /Definition: News sources should provide descriptions of events. /Source for News: I pay attention to press briefings, as well as news from both New York Times and Linked In. I also listen to The Daily Show;/ What I like about my news sources: Some of the sources on Linked In provide a few sentences about each of a wide variety of news items; I can click on any one of these sentences and link to any one of those stories for greater depth.

Question Round Two:*" Have you ever read a piece of fake news and how did you know it was fake? Why do you think there is fake news?*

2.1 Read Fake News & Where?

2.1.1 Specific Outlet

- Why is there fake news: defensiveness, disagreeability, and conspiracy theories. I think I've encountered fake news, with intentional sources such as the Onion, Babilion, and John Oliver. The context of one fake news issue was with Collin Capernick, and he forced one side of the issue onto children, who then couldn't judge and make an opinion on their own. But it's hard to choose the right side, like in the moral dilemma of a pizza delivery guy running over a jay-walker: they are both in the wrong, but who is more wrong? Our current political system is created over media.
- The first time I saw fake news was in the Onion or the Marquette spin-off. It's everywhere on Facebook and all about ideology. A big problem is that fake news is sometimes just bias intended humor taken seriously - it's all about confirmation bias and preconceived

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notions. Other examples are Russian sabotage meddling on Facebook and the Supreme Court recently. It happens on both sides. Another problem is that people take humor as literal news, such as late-night talk shows, which is a dangerous precedent and creates a battle between journalists and comedians.

- The Onion is the first piece of fake news I've encountered. When I read it, I asked, is this real? If you're not constantly critically thinking, you will buy into the fake news. It's an information war. An example is the FBI versus the housing committee. Reports were very critical of Trump but should have been critical of everyone. Unfortunately, there is no disincentive for fake news to stop. I just want the news to be honest and to value the facts over sacred fairness. One reason the US is the only country who still has a large population against climate change is because of fake news.
- NPR – I like the sound bites. Journal-sentinel – I look for the news. I read the news in the Journal-Sentinel. I just moved into the area and I get a lot of my sources from the Christian Science arena. Podcasts give me more of a choice and more control. Also, I find some interesting news on social media. There are likes or there are dislikes, and I have a choice to agree or disagree with what I hear, or I disagree with.
- NPR is where I get my info, and other places I get my news from are articles in the Shepherd.

2.1.2 Social Media

- I hear fake news all the time on social media. Sometimes I've heard the real story and hear this happened or that happened, and it didn't happen at all. I can get your attention. I can say, "Look out the window!" and 10 people will look. News does that to get the attention they want.
- Yes, I have read "Fake News" on face book on fake accounts fed by Trump supporters such as Michelle Obama is a man and President Obama being an illegal immigrant. It's troubling that the older parents who don't know how to filter their news and are being manipulated into believing the news is real.

2.2 Definition of Fake News

2.2.1 Bias

- The Onion is the first piece of fake news I've encountered. When I read it, I asked, is this real? If you're not constantly critically thinking, you will buy into the fake news. It's an information war. An example is the FBI versus the housing committee. Reports were very critical of Trump, but should have been critical of everyone. Unfortunately, there is no disincentive for fake news to stop. I just want the news to be honest and to value the facts over sacred fairness. One reason the US is the only country who still has a large population against climate change is because of fake news.
- Yes, there are two forms of fake news: a) misleading news reports that go too far, leading to innuendo, rather than outright lies, and b) outright lying by news reporters, fabricated to tell a story from a particular perspective in order to sway listeners and/or readers. This participant then mentioned the Trevon Martin case as an example of fabrication from a real-life situation (here I will paraphrase his remarks): NBC reported that George Martin

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called in to the police to report a black man acting suspiciously in the subdivision where George Martin worked as a Private Security Guard. However, this participant claimed, if one listens to the actual dispatch tapes, it is clear that George Martin only called in to report someone suspicious in the subdivision, and it is only when the dispatcher asks George a specific question about race (is the person white or black), that George responds "yes, he is black". The participant then added that NBC reporters or editors spliced two segments of one tape together in a manner that led listeners to think that George Martin is a racist when it seems clear that the tapes do not reflect that conclusion. Fake news exists because news reporters and news editors do this intentionally in order to arouse emotions and to incite emotional responses from readers and listeners. Further, there is no self-regulation and no agency to inflict sanctions against fake news.

- I have read fake news and I have a problem with new marketing and bias that presents actual news that is fake. We need to be steadfast in researching some of the info we receive.
- I prefer the use of bias instead of fake news. Over time the truth will come out when additional research is performed. Fox news has done a disservice to actual news.

2.2.2 False

- I can't recall a specific piece of fake news, but I don't think Facebook is legit. Fake news are stories about UFOs and things. You just need to read more sources, and although I'm liberal, I try to listen with an open mind. I know its fake news if I'm getting faked out because I'm not hearing what I need - the facts, and everything is just being repeated.
- In terms of the source, I'd like to focus on someone taking facts and spinning it so there is no substance. Claims that are just not true. I blame it on both sides, but more on the Right in my opinion. An example is the California governor banning convergent therapy.
- Most importantly I feel the brand is not true sometimes because we don't like it. Propaganda, falsehoods and blurred lines, it must be fact based or we're left with blurred lines.
- Yes, I've read fake news: There was a blow up about a bill in California and the bill was interpreted to say "Ban of the sale of the Bible" I read statements from the author of the bill and that was not the intent of the bill.

2.3 Reason for Fake News

2.3.1 Profit

- Fake news is sensationalized and from a for-profit model. The problem is that people want things for free - and I'm part of that problem. One example is the Facebook account Mother Jones, which is very polarized, no nuance, "this specific group" titled, and dishonest. I tried to wage a war in the comments section by giving feedback, but I eventually had to disengage. Is the right solution to just give up? I didn't want them to get my like.
- The media environment is difficult because it is driven to satisfy shareholders. One example of fake news was when Obamacare was reported incorrectly about being shut down: the journalists didn't do their jobs, they didn't do their research. Journalists

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are sometimes like rabbits, they go after shiny objects. Coming blog versus mainstream news is also very interesting, because both can appear fake. Some correct themselves, other have no accountability.

- I like what you said because we exist in a world to have access to whether something happened or not. I remember the old Tabloids – like Esquire. My mother used to say, "Don't read it! That's crap!" It wasn't called fake news, but it was. [Take] Obama's birth records [as an example]. They get the conversation moving and then people focus on that, not the issues. It's for marketing.
- I struggle with the term because Donald Trump made it up. All media sources are left learning and against him so it's not true. We never called it fake news before Trump even though here was fake news. Corporations have created commercials toward an angle. There is a profit motive.
- Yes. I have seen examples of Facebook in regard to the Presidential election; words have been used to evoke emotions, usually negative emotions to turn someone against the President, or positive emotions to sway support for the president. Fake news exists because it is profitable. Every "click" generates a profit for advertisers and sponsors, whether the "click" is to search for truth or a "click" to refute the fake news. Fake news also attracts a base of supporters. Sometimes, fake news can be used to cause deliberate harm to another, as a form of revenge.
- Yes. I participated in a research project at my school, where we searched out various forms of news to see if we could detect what was fake news and what was not fake news. I also had a "personal experience when I saw an obituary on Facebook announcing that Bill Russell had died. I found out later that he had not died." However, people who "clicked" on that announcement added to the influence of that site. Fake news exists to get people to question their basic beliefs. We all need to think more about our choices when it comes to news sources.

2.3.2 Appeal to Emotion

- Yes. "If the president spoke it." He quickly added, "my own opinion matters." He mentioned that he has been able to search out various news sources and analyze what he reads or hears and "this has helped me learn to detect fake news." Fake news sources seek emotional reactions to what is said or printed; it seeks to pass along propaganda as truth; to divide and conquer; and to take our attention away from what we have in common.
- Yes. I have seen examples of Facebook in regard to the Presidential election; words have been used to evoke emotions, usually negative emotions to turn someone against the President, or positive emotions to sway support for the president. Fake news exists because it is profitable. Every "click" generates a profit for advertisers and sponsors, whether the "click" is to search for truth or a "click" to refute the fake news. Fake news also attracts a base of supporters. Sometimes, fake news can be used to cause deliberate harm to another, as a form of revenge.

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- 2010 blocks of news. I listened to them for a month. It was a hard time watching Fox News. Roles can be and are confusing when listening to news. The world is becoming more confusing. Fake news has become very entertaining.
- Fake news is, to me, news being interpreted in different ways. One person may say this finger [index finger] was up. Another may say it was the middle finger. Here's what's happening. No, this, not that! That's basic [That's a basic description of how I define news]. That's what I think news is.
- I still don't know how I feel about it. News that is not true doesn't inherently mean it isn't news. I do research in Turkey and read a lot of fake news. I know it's fake because of my positioning, but people with a different positioning would know this same news to be true. What is true for one person is vastly different for another.
- I struggle with the term "Fake News" it's "Fake Communication". There is news about the tariffs in the news every day, on the 10 o'clock news and newspaper articles about "My beer is going to cost me more because of the tariffs", etc. What's not in the news is what worries me more, we never read about the benefits of the tariffs.

2.3.3 Skepticism & Research

- I have experienced fake news I am skeptical of news that I see/read. News to the left is misleading and news to the right is misinformation.
- It sucks to be so skeptical about news. Fake news is manipulative and promotes propaganda. I think it is important to always check things (ie. climate change and birthisms).
- How do I know fake news? I have to be careful, and I watch the statistics. I look for experts on the topic, digging into the details, and find out what it captures and who it captures, and I look for the real details. I might be able to detect the difference.
- Read it because it seems believable. However, check the facts. Just look here in Milwaukee at how cops shot a kid. However, they leave out parts of the story. That can be very dangerous when the facts are left out when we hear about cops shooting a kid. We also hear articles about Trump. If you don't read it, it sounds believable. Listen to interviews versus the sound bites. In other words, get the whole details of what is being said in the news.
- No sources are given. Stories are one-sided. They are exaggerated, and I don't understand or think why my friends will accept anything that is said about fake news. I think fake news sucks.
- Western thinking about news is a lot of hearsay. You have to be careful and really check the source. It sounds really inviting; really convincing. Like I said, I struggle with news. I rely on people for my news. It is hard to be objective about news. No one wants to choose a side. The things that are facing our country to choose a side-- Who gets to report the news? Media is controlled by the same people.
- Yes, I found fake news for my mother is a major target. Unknown sources tend to reach out to certain age groups that it targets. When you hear about yellow journals, red flags tend to pop up. Fake news can look very professional, but when listening to fake news

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it is important to check the facts. Fake news helps me in my political field, and it is so easy to publish fake news.

- Yes. I knew that the "Birther Movement" was fake news, meant to denigrate and question the legitimacy of both the candidacy and the election of President Barack Obama. Fake News exists to prompt folks who may not know how to analyze news reports for their accuracy not to question what they see and hear.
- Yes. Some fake news is generated for entertainment value, such as news reports of a 90-year-old woman giving birth to a baby. Fake news exists because some people are not willing to spend time thinking through and analyzing real news.

2.3.4 Political Motivation

- I've read lots of fake news. A lot of times I'll go with the method of if it's too good to be true. I'll put it into Google to see if I can find it at a trusted source. Words can be twisted. There is fake news because people want us to be divided more than we already are. I can't get past it because it's already there.
- I certainly have read the Russian propagated stuff. An example was about the Sherman Park unrest. There were stories of white people being hunted. I was told not to go there because of this, but I went, and it came out to be a bullshit story and that it was Russian propagated. There were political motivations to target and create racial tensions in Wisconsin at that time.
- I believe we are being manipulated by the media and I feel stories are put out to build consensus such as Hillary/Russians I thought it was fake news

Connected Conversation

Connected Conversation: *What actions might make a difference in combatting fake news? What, if anything, can elected officials do to help? How is fake news harmful and damaging for both individuals and society at large?*

3.1 Bias & Lack of Critical Thinking

- How does education, print versus online news, and fake news versus creative writing contribute to the way we conceive fake news or news in general?
- Human nature is a hard obstacle to overcome, although I personally have a low human anthropology. Self-interest is being right, and when you read the news your mind is already made up way before.
- In accord to George Washington, more parties make for more confusion. The best solution is to make one party, where politicians have independent thoughts towards independent issues, instead of siding with their parties. We as a population need to stop leaning towards and identifying with only one side. Stop the mob mentality and feeding the creature of the party.
- Seek the truth instead of your confirmation bias. Fortunately, more and more young people are less partisan.

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- We need to reframe seeking the truth as more joyful and pleasurable instead of a responsibility. We must reframe civil discourse as fun.
- It more interesting to play in an orchestra full of every instrument instead of just trumpets.
- She relies on Twitter. That was like a YES because people are there at that moment. She can hear their opinions. To be able to hear a person's opinions is good. Everybody has opinions.
- There was no open talk about news in our parents' generation. What are we here for if not to try to solve the issues that led to the problems?
- When I read comments there's no place to argue back. I have to not be so quick to respond without thinking. I realized that I don't have to argue with someone who has a different opinion.
- I find myself reading comments on a topic for an hour or two. In writing a response I can sit and think about it for as long as I like, but once I say it, it's said. I can't take it back. There is a lot of fake news, and it might not be fake. It's just that it's one-sided. We are not as easily capable of finding out what is fake. The thing is to do your own research to find out other facets.
- I think before [in the past] we were so trustworthy. We didn't think they'd try to sway us to think about what they wanted us to think. During the civil rights era they were probably told to tell their stories in a certain way. Dr. King was a master at media because he could get people to see beyond what was presented.
- It's fascinating to see someone get passionate about a topic, especially when they are so wrong. I think it's more mind-boggling that someone can put out facts without opinions.
- Meet the press is the longest running news show in history. Rather than cherry pick people to be on the show – [his voice trailed off].
- Fake news leads to the polarizing of ideas and peoples. This is a huge problem. One example is the various reports of mass shootings, which show one side of the story or another side of the story, in a manner to sway readers and/or viewers. "Those reporting on the background stories regarding the lives of mass shooters often fail to provide the real story of their lives without bias."
- Terminology is so important. There are so many different definitions. But, I wonder, when do you cross the line of having a different perspective and being a racist for example?
- I think there is good in both parties and if elected officials acknowledged that. It would be very important. Acknowledging good ideas wherever they come from.
- It creates distrust. Fear mongering. It makes people stuck in their ways and assume the worse.
- It causes divisiveness and polarization
- It creates arguments and controversial conversation
- Global warming is a fact. Seeking more scientific truths, rights or wrongs is broadcasted about fake news.
- Rationalized and generalizing things like abortion and women's choices reduce the market to fake news. There is not a lot of NPR news to listen to. Go get the facts.
- I find that what helps is simple conversation. It helps me. I can take my own views.

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- I think a major problem with the news is that many refuse to look at the evidence objectively.
- Confirmation Bias: I think people get news from sources they like so they have a narrow set of opinions. I wonder why there is a lack of "Critical Thinking".
- I have a background in the Car business and I always enjoyed the customers that came in and announced, "I've been on line and I am savvy and aware". I was always able to get them to spend more money because of the false sense of awareness.
- I don't think it's the elected official's responsibility to help in this. I think it's about building stronger communities with better communication and creating spaces for the conversation to take place.
- I think people are becoming savvier and more aware. We're getting smarter because of more information and we have learned critical thinking. One of my go to sources is all star.com
- I really do not like the term "Fake News" but I think it is damaging when one doesn't look at the big picture and various sources such as media biaschart.com I think it's important to understand the nature of the source (Far Right, Far Left, In the middle).

3.2 Accountability

- One of the biggest reasons for fake news is the first amendment. There is no journalist accountability anymore, like doctors and lawyers. There should be checks and balances.
- In the Reagan administration, they let go of news specific jobs at radio stations and other places, allowing anyone to report the news. This was the licensing fairness doctrine of 1964. Local station didn't have to report on local news anymore either. For democracy to survive we need to have balance.
- Maliciousness is part of the fake news reports; reporters and analysts and commentators put in or take out information to help shape a story in a particular way. "This is wrong". "We need people to hold news sources accountable.
- Young people are much more socially aware today and can more easily identify fake news. We can combat fake news by making sure that the reporters and their editors attest that the story is reliable.
- When there is profit media, truth is not the goal. I like government because it offers accountability. It has a different objective than Fox News which has the objective of getting views.
- The city of Wauwatosa needs a communication director. I am insisting that we improve the news we release to the public. Who presents the news and in what lens is very important.
- I want to see the problem of fake news stopped. I want good people to be less manipulated. Comments that are false persist one at a time.
- Why don't we challenge corporations about the news?
- Make newscasters more accountable. Twitter and private organizations is a real shitty, vile production.
- I think we should demand more transparency on Facebook and how our information is used.

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- Sometimes you think of news as literal news. There are fake records. Some folks out there built a website off of bad reviews. I've found it's done for all kinds of products [intentionally creating and keeping false records]. Companies pay for fake news to sell products.
- An opinionate perspective is now probably more profit-ized than before. Now people get money for sharing their opinion whether or not it's true.
- The times are divisive. We like to hear the opinions of certain people for profit. There are algorithms to show how money is made off of opinions.
- What I get from all of this is news is more corporate than community. It's not necessarily right or wrong. Who do you trust?
- The more outrageous the thing you say, the more it can be monetized. The truth is boring.
- What the government can do is get rid of profit media and emphasize critical thought in our country's education
- Communication fails when we are not transparent. False news is different from fake news (ie. climate change, UFO's etc.). People are putting spin on things that are designed to influence policy. Money and politics influence others.
- We are never going to get rid of fake news. Capitalism and sound bites shed lights on having experts have to have debates. Interviews are important. Media biases should be excluded. I am going to try to pursue it myself and see if areas can be regulated and funded by outside organizations.

3.3 No Intervention

- Elected officials shouldn't do anything because they are all bias. How would a Republican trust a Democrat to manage their news?
- I don't think it's the elected official's responsibility to help in this. I think it's about building stronger communities with better communication and creating spaces for the conversation to take place.
- I think sometimes the fix is worse than the problem and we can't expect politicians to do this for us.
- I don't want politicians anywhere near my news.

Parting Words

- It's very beneficial to see other's ideas and points of view. It's very good to have a discussion with others that you may disagree with others on. Do I still agree? Do I not? It helps us come to a conclusion.
- There are a lot of opinions. There are more than two sides to a story, and several people give their perspective about something that happened with two people.
- There ARE more than just two sides. I had the opportunity to sit with people in my age range and not in my age range and get their opinions. I took a lot away from listening to everyone's opinion.

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- I have more curiosity about what others are thinking. By default, in the past I trusted those who brought the news to us.
- I appreciated the multiple diversities among members of the group: gender, age, race, religion, political perspective, liberal and conservative.
- People are willing to engage and encourage.
- Attitude changes.
- More mind stretching.
- I feel encouraged, I really enjoyed this session.
- I'm excited and I feel good about the participation tonight.
- I feel encouraged and I want to go read some news.
- Again, I go away thinking and wishing for this type of dialogue could be downloaded into every neighborhood and communities, so we could all get the real news.
- Encouragement
- Connection
- Similar
- Convicted (in a good way, like eye-opening)
- Inspired
- Dopamine
- The power of the individual is very important. Empowerment of the individual is vital
- Tonight, was enlightening. I appreciated our shared conversation.
- Attending this event took me out of my comfort zone; I felt welcomed, accepted, and respected. The facilitator made certain that this was a nonthreatening process for all of us.
- I enjoyed talking about issues with others in person; the process was respectful to all of us. I appreciated the active listening process.
- This discussion has been healthy I have learned a lot about fake news. I look forward to the next discussion.
- Seeking more knowledge.
- I feel hardened by useful conversation and I learned a lot.
- We can agree about things and let that be a source of communication. We have to find places to start and communicate properly. Is democracy in jeopardy?
- We need to have more discussions when we here fake news and expose inaccuracies. Fake news has contributed to the decline in the value of democracy.
- process used during the Red and Blue event did not allow people to engage in any depth of conversation, nor express disagreement with each other, either. "I enjoyed the evening, but I really did not get to know much about other participants, and "none of us really got to know who I really am, either."

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