

Paywall and Content Polarization

Shunyao Yan
Goethe University Frankfurt

Cite as:

Yan Shunyao (2021), Paywall and Content Polarization. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 50th, (94666)

Paper from the 50th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, May 25-28, 2021



Paywall and Content Polarization

Abstract

This paper studies how financing content by subscription through a paywall impacts the content polarization of the news media. Analyzing news articles from the 4 largest US news media for 3 years based on a novel polarization index trained from the US congress speech, this paper shows that the New York Times (NYT) polarized itself on the political dimension by 20% more after adopting a paywall (i.e., NYT leaning to the political left by 20% more). Furthermore, this paper finds suggestive evidence that the newsroom got more polarized after the paywall adoption: journalists who wrote more left-leaning news articles are more likely to get new byline assignments. We discuss the policy implication of these findings for the media market.

Keywords: *Digital Paywall; Content Differentiation; Media Bias*

Track: Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing