France - Media Landscape

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Overview

In 2017, Reporters Sans Frontières only ranked France 39th in the world regarding the nature and level of press freedom, since the country “doesn't provide effective protection for the confidentiality of journalists’ sources.” To an extent this number contradicts the myth of France as “homeland of Human Rights.”

The media landscape is characterised by two dominant trends that have been increasingly hardening: the central and key role of the state and a high concentration of ownership in print press, TV, and radio markets. However French news media outlets and industries are intellectually vibrant, in particular the print magazine and online press, and contribute to the political and intellectual life.

Among the news media outlets, hard-news dailies still operate as the matrix of French journalism as well as the news media landscape. In this sense the French journalism landscape is hardly shaped by political journalism, which attracts the elite of journalism, contributes to maintain the basic division between left and right parties, and is interdependent from politics.

The consumption of non-print media is gradually rising in France (around 66 million of inhabitants). In 2014, 86.6 percent of French individuals watched TV programs daily (compared to 85.7 percent in 2004 and 89.3 percent in 2009) through all different devices (TV set, computer, tablet, mobile phones) during 3 hours and 41 minutes. On average each household is equipped with 6.5 screens (TV set, computer, mobile phone, and tablet), and 30 percent of households (6.4 million) are equipped with TV set + tablet + laptop. Every day 43.3 million people in France listen to at least one radio channel during 3h, while 80 percent of inhabitants (43.5 million) are Internet users, and 23 million spend 1h16 each day on Internet. On the contrary, the circulation of print newspapers is declining while the audience of their digital outlets raises. In 1945, the market numbered 179 outlets with an average circulation of 12.1m issues a day; in 2014, only 76 outlets were left with an overall circulation of 8.8m dailies (including national, regional and local ones).

The conditions of consumption of media in France differ within markets and sub-markets. If the digital news media can be created and operate with no substantial constraints, other markets are affected by the central role played by the State as well as the ownership concentration. The launch of a radio station or a TV channel is not free; rather it requires a formal agreement under competition and upon substantial conditions. About print newspapers and magazines, their launch is legally easier but the costs for dailies’ printing and circulation are so high that they limit it.

In 1944, in order to limit the number of newspapers closures and maintain pluralism in the political and ideological orientation of hard-news dailies, the government established a press subsidies system that allocates financial aids to newspapers and some magazines. However most of the daily national newspapers are not profitable through sole paid circulation and advertising revenues. More and more newspapers and print magazines are backed by wealthy businessmen or big companies that primarily operate outside of media markets. As an illustration, the most respected newspaper,*Le Monde*, was acquired by three associated French billionaires (Pierre Bergé, Xavier Niel and Matthieu Pigasse) in 2010.

Yet the French media outlets follow the more general trend of empowering (more) autonomy from politics, most news radio channels, TV channels, and more particularly news magazines and newspapers, still express a political orientation if not a partisanship backing or sponsor. Actually most news media can be identified according to a positioning mapping drawn with a horizontal axis ranging from far left to far right that exemplifies ideologies and competition of political opinions. This configuration is rooted in the social history of news media that quite shows how much each news outlet has been created to express and promote a political or ideological opinion, if not to officially support or back a political leader or a party.

Professional identity and journalism as a profession are still unresolved issues. Regarding the criteria defined by sociology to characterise what is a profession, some journalists and researchers argue that French journalism is an incomplete profession. As an illustration, even though journalists are supposed to agree and respect*la Charte d’éthique professionnelle des journalistes* (Charter of professional duties and ethics for journalists), French journalism is not ruled by an Order of Journalists that could for instance condemn failing professional practices; also, the entry into the profession doesn’t require a formal graduation from a listed journalism school or university, etc. The ethics of journalism remains a hot issue especially when it comes to the discussion on the growing concentration of news media ownership in the hands of an evermore limited number of billionaires or private holdings, as well as the worldwide debate on fake news and post-truth reality that is significant in France.

Media markets are strongly interdependent with the central state and public bodies, especially since after the Second World War. Even though the French media landscape is affected by a background trend of economic liberalisation and privatisation of media and related bodies ownership, the State still acts as owner, shareholder as well as regulator and sponsor in the different media markets.

The state owns the biggest national TV broadcasting company (*France TV*) and radio broadcasting group (*Radio France*) and even recently launched a 24h breaking news TV channel (*franceinfo*). State-owned bodies also regulate the economics of TV and radio broadcasting markets: the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (High Council for Audiovisual - CSA) supervises the attribution of radio and TV frequencies.

The government still endures a huge press subsidies scheme that is both one of the most extensive and criticised subsidy systems. Created by the end of the Second World War, this system is characterised by a pile of grants built up over decades. Evidently, the newspapers' business model has come to automatically include these subsidies to such an extent that a cut or drastic reduction would trigger closures. Finally, French subsidies remain not effective at all since subsidies have done little to fulfil their original mission, namely to preserve a vivid, vibrant, and pluralistic press. The system is said to even worsen market failure effects by granting subsidies to print news outlets that do not need to be supported and concentrating subsidies to only a few newspapers.

Media

Print

The current configuration of daily print press as a result of the Liberation era (1944-1947), still imprints the current newspapers' market through policies of State and joint bodies that regulate the market and limit free competition. Despite a highly state-funded system of subsidies and grants as well as anti-concentration laws dedicated to sustain the pluralism and vitality of dailies, a strong, institutionalised configuration that is also change-resistant remains in place and finally contributes to the decline of print press numbers. The law of 23 October, 1984 (modified by the law of 28 November, 1986) puts a restriction to concentration: A single person or firm can control many general nationwide or regional/local news dailies in the limit of 15 percent of the overall circulation of the market. If the owner operates on both the markets, national and regional/local, it can't exceed the limit of 10 percent of overall circulation in each market. However the national dailies' market is in dire straits and, according to Professor Toussaint-Desmoulins (2002, p 97), it suffers from "several factors whose negative effects cumulate: 1) a fall of circulation and readership; 2) weak and irregular advertising revenues; 3) badly controlled production and distribution costs; 4) a high selling price; and 5) increased dependency on state subsidies."

The 2010 decade can be seen as another major turn in the national daily newspapers ownership: Many national dailies have been purchased by French businessmen moguls or holdings. A trio of French wealthy entrepreneurs (Pierre Bergé – died in 2017, Xavier Niel, and Matthieu Pigasse) acquired the flagship of French press *Le Monde* in 2010 and thus deprived the journalists of the power to run the newspaper as they used to do from its inception in 1944. Another wealthy businessman involved in the telecom industry (Patrick Drahi) became the main shareholder of *Liberation* in 2015. *Le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France* was sold by the end of 2015 by the Amaury family group to LVMH Médias that already held *Les Echos* (managed by Bernard Arnault who, in person, also holds 22.8 percent of *L'Opinion*). *Le Figaro* is controlled by the weapons and aerospace equipment group Dassault since 2004. Only the communist daily *L'Humanité,* the new-launched conservative daily *L'Opinion,* and the far-right newspaper *Présent* don't belong to holdings or conglomerates, as well as the sports daily *L'Equipe* that is held by Amaury, a family-owned publishing company. The catholic daily *La Croix* is the flagship paper of Bayard, a catholic media and publishing group.

The press covers three major segments of newspapers in France:

- The national daily press of general and political news (*la presse quotidienne nationale* abbreviated as *PQN*), which remains a substantial segment of the industry even though it was heavily and firstly hit by the newspaper crisis. The PQN segment includes the daily news and opinion press which has practically disappeared, with the remaining newspapers adopting a more neutral tone and limiting political commentaries to editorial articles and op-ed pages.
- Regional daily newspapers (*la presse quotidienne régionale* abbreviated as *PQR*), published in the morning and circulated throughout the 22 metropolitan regions and the 96 metropolitan departments (as well in overseas ones), which are in a much healthier state than the *PQN*.
- The periodical press (*la presse magazine*), including five major general weekly news magazines (*Marianne, L'Obs, L'Express, Le Point, Valeurs Actuelles*) as well as other press products of specialistic nature, can be grouped as a category which is spurred by a financial boom and editorial variety and has succeeded in offsetting the national dailies' poor economic performance and the regionals' tendency towards concentration of ownership.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, in 2015, 4,124 press outlets have been issued in France, divided in 99 dailies (national, regional and local), 558 weeklies, 1,157 monthlies and 2,206 quarterlies with an overall circulation of 3.9bn copies with 4.8bn printed copies (18 percent of returns, a huge number that doesn't decrease).

The daily print newspapers' market is thus characterised by two combining trends: The constant declining of advertising revenues (due to digital migration) and readership, that leads to a regular increase of the selling price per copy and downsizing of the newsrooms (through numerous layoffs and an increase in the recruiting of freelance journalists).

The turnover of press in France is declining year after year since its peak in 2007 – the year of the vibrant and competitive election for the Presidency of the Republic that boosted news media audience: €10.8bn. In 2016, this turnover reached €7.07bn: -35 percent in less than 10 years. This 2017 turnover is split in copy selling (€4.8bn, 68 percent, with a quite equal split between kiosk selling and subscription) and advertising revenues (commercial and classifieds: €2.2bn, 32 percent).

Not surprisingly the overall circulation of print press has been declining year after year, whereas digital subscriptions and PDF-version reading are booming: +6.2 percent for all digital devices and +53.1 percent in 2015-2016 for PDF. In 2016 kiosk sales of dailies reached 174 m copies with a turnover of €312m (-6.6 percent compared to 2015; -1.4 percent in 2015; -3.8 percent in 2014). Kiosk sales have been continually declining for three decades: from 46.6 percent in 1985 to 30.54 percent in 2016, compared to the overall subscription that switched from 17.51 percent in 1985 to 36.73 percent in 2016.

According to the *ACPM*, the official body that controls the circulation and audience of print press, the paid circulation (including digital subscriptions, in France and abroad) of the print national dailies shows the following numbers in 2017: *Le Figaro* (general news, right-of-centre-Liberal conservatism) sells 307,807 copies a day, *Le Monde* (general news, centre-Social Liberal) has an average circulation of 284,738 copies, *L'Equipe* (sports) is the 3rd daily with 234,931 copies, *Les Echos* (economics and financial news, right-of-centre) sells 128,376, *Aujourd'hui en France* (right-of-centre) has a circulation of 120,180 copies, *La Croix* (general news, right-of-centre catholic) sells 89,537, *Libération* (general news, left-Social Democrat) has a circulation of 75,275 copies, *L'Humanité* (general news, communist) sells 33,851 copies, *L'Opinion* (general news, right-

Liberal) claims a daily circulation of 20,000 copies, and finally *Présent* (opinion news, far-right) has a very limited circulation with 2,500 copies (in 2011). In addition two free general news dailies operate nationwide: *20 Minutes* (equally owned by two regional press groups, Rossel and SIPA-Ouest France) circulates 910,000 copies a day within the 11 biggest urban areas and *CNews* (former *Direct Matin*) circulates 895,000 daily copies within 10 of the biggest urban areas.

As for regional dailies, the anti-concentration law (see above) has never limited nor blocked the processes of concentration. Since 1944 nearly each of the 22 French metropolitan regions has been dominated by one single regional independent newspaper (with one edition dedicated to each county). For two decades this market has been driven by a huge ownership reconfiguration through mergers and acquisitions in favour of most profitable regional press groups: EBRA (owned by the bank Crédit Mutuel) covers the north-east of France, *La Dépêche* and *Sud-Ouest* share the South West market, *Ouest-France* rules the West region in competition with *Le Télégramme de Brest* – the West being the only region where competition exists, group La Voix (owned by the Belgian media holding, Rossel) dominates the North and Centre-France controls the centre of France.

On the contrary the market of magazine press is flourishing and vibrant – the most dynamic with the highest number of outlets in the world. In 2015, 3,358 magazine press outlets have been issued in France and represent 53 percent of the overall turnover of print press. In the second semester of 2016 and first semester of 2017, its circulation reached 1.4bn copies (-2.2 percent compared to 2015-2016). The turnover of kiosk sales in 2016 was €854m (-5 percent); the more dynamic segments are kids (+34.3 percent), family and health (+33.4 percent), and business/shopping (+19.1 percent).

This market is characterised by a highly concentrated ownership structure; most outlets belong to three substantial publishing groups: Lagardère, Prisma Presse and Mondadori. Lagardère Active – the media branch of the French international holding – is an historical media-industry actor that operates worldwide as well. It particularly covers four segments: general news (*Paris Match*, *Journal du Dimanche*), TV, women (*Elle*), and kids press. Prisma Presse is the French branch of the German group Gruner+Jahr that mainly covers four segments: popular women (*Femme Actuelle*, *Prima*), celebrity (*Gala*, *Voici*), business (*Capital*, *l'Essentiel du Management*), and TV press. Finally Mondadori France is a branch of the Italian media group held by Fininvest, the financial holding of Silvio Berlusconi that mainly operates in four segments: TV, women and fashion (*Grazia*, *Biba, Modes et Travaux*), celebrity (*Closer*), and motoring press.

Radio

In terms of economics and business the radio broadcasting landscape can be defined through two variables: the nature of ownership (state-owned, commercial and community) and the scope of audience (national vs. regional/local).

The consumption of radio stations remains high. According to *Médiamétrie*, between November and December 2017, 79.4 percent of teenagers and adults in France have been listening to at least one radio station each week-day: 68.9 percent of this audience goes to commercial stations, 26.3 percent goes to state-owned stations, 1.5 percent goes to community stations and 3.3 percent goes to others (foreigner and other type of radio stations). Regarding the nature of programs during the week-day, 41.9 percent of the audience goes to general programs (news and entertainment), 31.5 percent to music radios, 14 percent to local programs, and 9.3 percent to thematic programs (cultural programs, breaking news, classical music). On average French teenagers and adults listen to radio 2h52 a week-day and most of them listen more than one radio station a day according to the daytime.

At a national level two private radio broadcasters historically compete to reach the best audience: *NRJ* and *RTL*. Launched in 1981, *NRJ* (NRJ group) is the leading music radio station for young people (teenagers and young adults) and the most listened radio station (10.5 percent of *audience cumulée* (*AC*), eg the percentage of people over 13 years of age who declare to have listened to radio at least once in the previous day). RTL, a French commercial radio network owned by the Luxembourgish RTL group, is the leading national commercial and news station that offers news, talk, and entertainment programs. *RTL* is the second most listened radio station in France (12.1 percent of *AC*).

State-owned radio broadcasts belong to the group Radio France: nationwide stations cover general news (*France Inter*), 24-hour breaking news (*France Info*), culture (*France Culture*), classic music (*France Musique*), jazz music (*FIP*), pop music, and youth (*Mouv*), and the *France Bleu* network that runs local stations covering local news; in addition, Paris-based *Radio France International* (*RFI*) covers international news through its worldwide correspondents in 13 different languages.

At a local level the radio broadcasting landscape offers the local France Bleu stations and a wide range of associative or community and commercial radio stations that mainly broadcast music programs (FM stations).

Compared to TV and press, the radio broadcasting landscape is less concentrated at a local level but quite concentrated at a national level, apart from the public sector that is only covered by Radio France, the State-owned radio stations group (turnover: €652.8m in 2016). However most commercial radio channels belong to media or non-media groups that also own other media outlets (TV, newspapers, magazines, and online media): RTL group runs *RTL*, and two music commercial channels. Lagardère Active operates three radio channels: *Europe1*, and two music commercial radios. NextRadioTV owns *RMC* and the business news-focused *BFM Business*; the group founded and directed by Alain Weill has been included in the holding founded by Patrick Drahi, SFR Media.

Television

The first TV channel in France was launched in 1931. During the following decades the TV market gradually grew through the increasing number of TV set in households and number of TV channels. In 1949 only 297 households had a TV set and the TV market was limited to a single TV channel run by the government. In 1965, 40 percent of French people had a TV set to watch two State-owned channels. The first major turn took place in 1975 when the State monopole on TV was broken and allowed the creation of the third State-owned channel. A second major turn appeared in the 1980's decade when private channels were established (*Canal+, M6, La Cinq*) and a public one, ARTE (1992) in association with the German State. The television landscape in France has significantly changed in the last decade and is less and less concentrated. Until the beginning of the 2000's decade French households could access less than 10 national TV channels free of charge. The digital terrestrial television (*Télévision Numérique Terrestre,* TNT) has been launched in March 2005: this system started offering 14 TV channels including five new ones. In 2015 TNT offered 25 free national channels and nine pay channels, plus up to four local free channels.

The different channels cover three traditional business model categories: public (financed by public taxes, such as all the channels of France TV group), private for free (predominantly financed by the advertising and commercials) and private pay-TV (*Canal+* that offers free programs along a majority of them that require a subscription, and all the TV channels included in subscription television packages via satellite).

The TV market is concentrated around four major actors. As of 2018 the State-owned group, France Television alone (turnover: €3bn in 2016) runs 5 channels (*France 2, France 3, France 4, France 5, France Ô*) that all are available for free and financed by public taxes. The group is also a shareholder of other 7 TV channels. Three other main actors are private. *TF1*, the largest European private TV channel, is the main TV channel of group Bouygues (in addition to 8 others channels including *TMC, TFX, LCI, Histoire*), an international large industrial holding primarily operating in construction, real estate development, and subsidiary in telecoms and media (turnover of TF1 group: €2.1bn in 2017). RTL group is a leading European entertainment company that runs M6 Group in France (turnover: €1.279bn billion in 2016) whose TV flagship is *M6* (in addition to 9 other channels including *W9, 6ter, Paris Première*). Canal+ group (turnover: €5.250bn in 2016) includes four TV channels (*Canal+, C8, CStar, CNews*) and its holding company, Vivendi, has been led since June 2014 by Vincent Bolloré.

Finally, in 2017, the French have spent an average of 3 hours and 42 minutes watching TV each day, compared to an average of 1 hour and 23 minutes a day browsing Internet. In 2017, *TF1* (private), was still the leader with an audience share of 20 percent. *France 2* (the 1st channel of the State-owned group, France Televisions, in terms of audience) has attracted 13 percent, whereas *M6* draws 9.5 percent and *France 3* (a mix of regional news and entertainment programs) is the 4th TV channel (9.1 percent). The first breaking news channel is *BFM TV*, the leading TV channel of News Participation, a private media conglomerate run by Patrick Drahi, which attracts 2.7 percent of audience each day.

Digital Media

Quite all print dailies and magazines have launched their website and app. They operate under two main business models: paid or free access to the news content. However the majority of news dailies and weeklies have implemented the paid model (with a limited free access).

Even if newspapers or news magazines are still launched from time to time, the high costs for printing and delivering outlets (more or less 50 percent of the average budget) shift away publishers and editors from print to digital devices. Some print outlets have closed but are still alive online. But most online news websites are launched from scratch. One prominent case is the investigation news website *Mediapart*, which was launched in 2008 by editors and journalists (led by Edwy Plenel) who left the most legitimate print dailies (such as *Le Monde, Libération*) to innovate in journalism and create an online outlet based on a for-subscription business model. In 2016 *Mediapart* had 130,000 subscriptions, €11m turnover with €1.9m margins (16 percent of the turnover).

In recent years the French media landscape is witnessing a burgeoning movement that contributes to create alternative news media. Most call themselves *"media de réinformation"* (re-information media) as they offer an alternative view of news opposite to mainstream media. Most of them belong to the far sides of political game. They mainly operate through websites; however some launch online radio stations or TV channels through crowdsourcing calls. Half of the 30 first political sites listed by Alexa can be labelled far-right. As an illustration, on the left or far-left side, a team of individuals who are connected to far-left political leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon has launched in January 2018 an online TV called *Le Media* (Lemediatv.fr) in order to widely promote his ideas. It broadcasts news programs through its website and YouTube channel. On the far-right side many websites have been launched with the aim of highlighting news produced by mainstream press agencies – like AFP – but neglected by mainstream media as well as for acting as press agency and accordingly collecting crowdsourced news and disseminating them on Internet. According to Alexa data, in October 2016, this family of thought is exemplified by the following three most visited sites: Egaliteetreconciliation.fr (run by Alain Soral) is ranked 273th (8.1 million/month), Fdesouche.com is 487th (4.5 million/month), Lesmoutonsenrages.fr is 1400th (2.3 million/month).

According to Médiamétrie/Net Ratings data, in October 2017, 51.9 million people (82.9 percent of 2 years and more people) accessed Internet once a month. Among them 42.2 million connected to Internet each single day, 30.3 million of them via mobile phone. Most of web users access Internet through many devices: 34 percent of them use two devices each day. They equally surf on Internet via mobile phone or computer. Not surprisingly Google and Facebook are the two most accessed sites with respectively 34.3 million and 28.1 million UU (unique users via IP address) each single day. As a worldwide search engine Google is the 1st source of news search on Internet.

The first media group is ranked 4th: the Figaro CCM Benchmark group with 5.7 million unique users a day. This high ranking is induced by websites – developed by CCM benchmark – that don't deliver hard news but rather soft news (mainly entertainment and services content: weather, job classifieds, legal news, etc.). The flagship news-oriented website Lefigaro.fr attracted an average of 2.2 million UU/day that is nearly 40 percent of the overall group audience. It's followed by Prisma Media that attracts 5.4 million UU/day and Webedia 3.9 million UU/day via websites dedicated to video games, movies news, fashion and cosmetics, travel, etc.

According to APCM data, as to digital audience of newspapers in January 2018, Lefigaro.fr appears to be the most general news provider (118m overall visits) via its website (55m) as well through web mobile (63.5m). It's followed by Lemonde.fr that attracted 98.3m overall visits with an equal split between website and mobile site. Lequipe.fr is ranked 5th with more than 91m accesses to its site in January 2018.

In the first semester of 2017, according to the *Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes Publicitaires* (*IREP*), advertising revenues from overall websites have increased (+9.8 percent) unlike traditional media (print press and even radio or TV) that dramatically face a continuing loss of their advertising revenues (-4.9 percent). As a consequence the overall revenues of all French media are quite stable with an amount of €5.122bn.

Social Networks

The *Baromètre du numérique* survey issued by the *ARCEP* reveals that, at mid-2017, 81 percent of the French owned a computer, 73 percent a smartphone and 44 percent a tablet with respectively a daily use of 53 percent, 68 percent and 21 percent. Around 88 percent of overall France inhabitants have access to Internet, but 100 percent of the 12-39 years old. Smartphones are the most used device to log onto the Internet (42 percent), followed by a computer (38 percent) and a tablet (7 percent). According to a study by Eurostat, 59 percent of the French – or 67 percent of Internet users – are connected to social media, a figure that is relatively low considering the recognised high technological quality of Internet access in France. A Eurostat study shows that the French are the Europeans who use the least social media (only 49 percent of women web users and 44 percent of men).

According to *Médiamétrie* data for 2017, four social networks belong to the top 50 most viewed websites on desktop, whereas six belong to the most accessed websites on mobile. Not surprisingly Facebook is the most accessed social media on desktop (27.4 million of UU/month, 8.4 million of UU/day) as well as on mobile (31.2 million of UU/month), followed by YouTube on desktop (25 million of UU/month, 4.4 million of UU/day) and on mobile (26 million of UU/month). Following is Pinterest on desktop (6.9 million UU/month, 500.00 of UU/day), while Twitter is 4th on desktop (600,000 UU/day) and the 3rd most popular social media on mobile (13.6 million of UU/month). Instagram (11.9 million of UU/month), Snapchat (10.1 million of UU/month) and LinkedIn (9 million of UU/month) are the other most accessed on mobile.

According to a study delivered by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the *Union des Entreprises de Conseil et d'Achat Media* (*UDECAM*) on behalf of the *Syndicat des Régies Internet* (*SRI*), digital outlets receive since 2016 the biggest part of advertising expenditures in France and TV channels are henceforth the second category of media to attract advertising. This new trend is hugely due to social networks and media that attracted about €1.810bn (+9 percent) in the first semester 2017 and reached 33 percent of the overall advertising budgets.

Digital advertising is usually split in three formats. The search or search engine optimisation (SEO) tends to optimise the online visibility of a website or a web page in a web search engine's unpaid results. The display includes all formats, devices and ways to advertise. The third category includes e-mailing, (price) comparison websites, affiliate networks. In terms of format, SEO remains the most used and amounts to 55 percent of overall digital advertising; mobile phones are the main trigger of it. The second most-used format is the display in which the video format (35 percent) is the most growing format;

traditional formats of display amount to 51 percent of the overall display. Third OPS (online ad operations) represent the remaining 10 percent. The increasing amount of display budgets (€288m) largely comes from social networks and shows +45.9 percent compared to 2016.

Opinion Makers

There is no official or legitimate body that may undeniably list the most influential blogs or opinions makers. Accordingly it requires identifying these blogs and their runners among the Alexa list of most visited websites.

In this list it appears that the TV and radio anchorman and producer Jean-Marc Morandini is a prominent opinion maker in media and communication; his eponymous website – launched as a personal blog in 2005 – is ranked 6th most visited French-speaking blog. It's directly followed by *Presse-citron* that covers social media, Internet and high-tech news, a personal blog launched by Eric Dupin in 2005 that turned into a professional website run by a newsroom. Another influential blog focused on geek culture and Internet is *Korben*, run by Manuel Dorne, ranked 9th.

Regarding to political, social or religious content, the biggest online community is run by Alain Soral, via his website *Egalité et Réconciliation* (*E&R*) ranked 10th most visited blog and 273rd most visited website. Like his friend Dieudonné M'bala M'bala who runs the site Dieudosphere.com, Soral is considered to be one of the most influential opinion makers and leaders for the youths and people who reject elite and mainstream media and politics discourses. Their opponents blame them for being anti-Semitic and disseminating Plot theories. The first religious blog, ranked 16th, is *Al Kanz*, a blog run by Fateh Kimouche since 2006 that covers news on Muslim economy and promotes the halal products.

In commerce and brand communication many influencers develop their own YouTube channel as well as create accounts on other social media (mainly Instagram, twitter or Facebook) in order to promote brands and products, mainly for fashion, beauty or food; they are called "youtubeurs." We estimate that only 10 percent of them have turned their initial hobby into a rewarding job.

Sources

Newspapers

- **20 minutes**
- **Aujourd'hui en France**
- **Le Figaro**
- **Le Monde**
- **L'Equipe**
- **Les Echos**
- **L'Humanité**
- **Libération**
- **L'Opinion**
- **Présent**

Publishers

- **Dassault Média**
- **Groupe Amaury**
- **Groupe Artémis**

- Groupe Bayard
- Lagardère Active
- LVMH Média
- Mondadori France
- Prisma Media
- SFR Média
- Syndicat Les Régies Internet (SRI)
- Union des Entreprises de Conseil et d'Achat Media (UDECAM)

Radio

- BFM Business
- Europe 1
- FIP
- France Bleu
- France Culture
- France Inter
- France Musique
- France TV Info
- Mouv
- NRJ
- RFI
- RMC
- RTL

Televisions

- 6ter
- ARTE
- C8
- Canal Plus
- Chaîne Histoire
- CNews
- CStar
- France 2
- France 3
- France 4
- France 5
- France Ô
- LCI
- M6
- Paris Première
- TF1
- TFX
- TMC

- **W9**

Digital media

- **Alexa**
- **Institut de Recherche et d'Etudes Publicitaires** (IREP)
- **Le baromètre du numérique**

Opinion makers

- **Al Kanz**
- **Dieudosphère**
- **Egalité et Réconciliation**
- **Jean-Marc Morandini**
- **Korben**
- **Presse citron**

Organisations

Trade Unions

Many unions compete to represent and defend interests and rights of journalists and more globally the journalism profession. Interestingly most of them are linked or affiliated to politically-oriented global unions that act and contribute to the national politics: the SNJ-CGT (linked to the far left union CGT), the USJ-CFDT (tied to the center-moderate union CFDT), SGJ-FO (part of the left union *FO*), *Sud Médias* (linked to the leftist and anti-globalisation union Sud), *Journalistes* CFTC (affiliated to the Christian Social union CFTC) or SPEP (part of the managers and executives union CFE-CGC). But the *Syndicat National des Journalistes* (National Union of Journalists - SNJ) which is not formally tied to any political organisation is the first journalists' union since 1946 according to professional elections. In addition another union plays a powerful role within the French press landscape: the *Syndicat général du livre et de la communication écrite* (General Union of books and written communication - SGLCE-CGT, also called the Livre CGT). This union of printing and circulation workers is strongly tied to communist ideas and organisations. It has the monopole in the printing firms for national daily newspapers and thus frequently blocks the printing or the delivering of print newspapers all over the country when it goes on strike.

Publishers also are represented through numerous unions that powerfully operate as lobbying actor towards government, Parliament and State bodies in order to preserve their business interests. These unions quite cover each sub-media market: the *Syndicat des Editeurs de la Presse Magazine* (Union of Press Magazine Publishers - SEPM) federates the publishers of the magazine press market that is extremely vibrant, the *Syndicat de la Presse Quotidienne Nationale* (Union of National Daily Print - SPQN) groups publishers of national dailies, the *Union de la Presse en Région* (Union of Regional Press - ex SPQR et SPQD) unifies publishers of regional dailies, the *Syndicat de la Presse Hebdomadaire Régionale* (Union of Weekly Regional Press - SPHR) operates for the regional weeklies newspapers, the *Fédération Nationale de la Presse d'Information Spécialisée* (National Federation of Specialised Information Press - FNPS) gathers seven other unions of specialist and trade press, the *Syndicat de la presse indépendante d'information en ligne* (Union of the Independent Online Information - SPIIL) dedicated to online press, etc.

Journalist Associations

French media and journalism profession are distinctive for the absence of a regulatory body such as a professional order. That basically means a journalist can’t be formally condemned by his peers in case of professional misconduct such as ethics violation, etc. This lack of a professional regulatory body contributes to feed a never-ending debate that resurfaces from time to time on the need to establish a regulatory body for French Journalism. However the strong resistance expressed by elite of journalists on this topic (see below) may even abort this project for a very long time.

Some other established professional bodies contribute to partially regulate the journalism profession. The *Commission de la Carte d’Identité des Journalistes Professionnels* (Commission for the Identity Cards of Professional Journalists - CCIJP) is the committee that is in charge for delivering and regulating ID cards to professional journalists (see below). In addition the *Commission Paritaire Nationale de l’Emploi des journalistes* (National Joint Council of Journalism Employment - CPNEJ), monitors the degrees and trainings in journalism delivered by university and schools of journalism in order to highlight and legitimate the most acclaimed diplomas by journalism representatives. The CPNEJ distinguishes only 14 degrees in journalism that are thus so-called *reconnus par la profession* (see below). This self-assigned power to discriminate between 14 diplomas and others strongly affects the economy of journalism education; these 14 trainings attract most of applicants and are able to enlist the best academic profiles.

News Agencies

France counts around 200 news agencies whose huge majority is small scaled and specialised in delivering a niche of news editorials or photos (sports, fashion, ecology, etc.) to their clients (public bodies such as state, ministries, administration or private firms, association) in a plurality of formats (editorial, figures, maps, photos, videos, etc.). Nearly half of them are part of the *Fédération Française des Agences de Presse* (French Federation of Press Agents - FFAP), a union that represents, promotes, and defends the national interests of their members. As an example RelaxNews was launched in 1998 in Paris and delivers leisure and lifestyle news content to media and companies; it has been acquired in 2015 by the French worldwide advertising company Publicis. Sparknews was created in 2012 to promote and deliver positive news and solution journalism.

The *Agence France Presse* (France Press Agency - AFP) is the successor of the news branch of the French Havas agency, the first news agency created in the world, in 1832. The AFP is one of the three leading worldwide news agencies (with AP and Reuters). Its 1957 legal status requires the AFP a complete neutrality and even objectivity in selecting, writing, and delivering news to their clients. It *de facto* operates as a monopolistic agent on the French market since the attention of hard news journalists is primarily focused on the AFP wire; consequently AFP journalists remain the main triggers and providers of basic news delivered by mainstream news media. In addition AFP is subject to criticism because of its enduring strong ties with state and politics. Nominations of management and newsroom executives as well as its politically oriented policy are regularly a topic. As an illustration in 2010 the European Commission criticised AFP for nearly 40 percent of its turnover came from subscription by State bodies but was reported as a disguised financial subsidy.

Audience measurement organisations

Organisations in charge of media audience measurement in France share a common identity. They are joint bodies, eg they are created and run by representatives of two main actors that rule the business of media and advertising, media outlets, and media agencies.

As an archetypal joint body, *Médiamétrie* is the dominant organisation for audience measurement of media markets. *Médiamétrie* shareholders basically include media agencies (35 percent), TV channels (35 percent), and radio stations (27 percent). This capital distribution attracts criticism towards audience measurement: How to ensure the objectivity and scientific reliability of an audience that is created by firms that are both its provider and its client? Anyway the different audience measurements offered by *Médiamétrie* regulate the interested media markets.

National TV audience is based on a panel of families that accept to connect their different devices to a *Médiamat* box. The *Médiamat* is a panel of households equipped with one or more TV sets in their main residence. It has been constructed to represent both the socio-demographic characteristics of households in metropolitan France and also the characteristics of the TV offer available: terrestrial digital offer, cable and satellite and broadband. The *Médiamat* panel is made up of nearly 4,300 households, around 10,500 individuals aged 4 and over. TV audience is thus delivered each single day to clients.

The radio audience is measured through a representative sample of 126,000 individuals who live in metropolitan France, aged 13 and over, from those who responded to the 126,000 radio survey. The individuals who agree to take part in the radio panel, each receive a listening record per week and a listening habits questionnaire, as well as the equipment they need to fill in and send the forms. The 126,000-sample radio survey is issued quarterly.

Médiamétrie//NetRatings, a merge of Nielsen Online and *Médiamétrie*, is the standard tool to measure the audience of Internet and online news media for marketing and advertising purposes. The survey is carried out by phone every month with 1,000 individuals aged 11 and over, including 13 percent mobile-only users. The field study is carried out over 11 months in the year. The study is used to define the Médiamétrie//NetRatings Panel.

The *Alliance pour les Chiffres de la Presse et des Médias* (Alliance for Data on Press and Media - ACPM) is in charge of measuring the audience and the circulation of print press. In addition it certifies the audience of websites, apps and digital radios. The ACPM is a joint body composed by media outlets, media agencies and largest advertisers (partly through the *Union des Annonceurs* (French Union of Advertisers - UDA).

Sources

Trade unions

- **Fédération Nationale de la presse d'Information Spécialisée** (FNPS)
- **Syndicat de la Presse Hebdomadaire Régionale** (SPHR)
- **Syndicat de la presse indépendante d'information en ligne** (SPIIL)
- **Syndicat de la Presse Quotidienne Nationale** (SPQN)
- **Syndicat des Editeurs de la Presse Magazine** (SEPM)

- **Syndicat National des Journalistes** (SNJ)
- **Union de la Presse en Région** (ex-SPQR et SPQD)
- **Union des Annonceurs** (UDA)

Journalists associations

- **Commission de la Carte d'Identité des Journalistes Professionnels** (CCIJP)
- **Commission Paritaire Nationale de l'Emploi des Journalistes** (CPNEJ)

News agencies

- **Agence France Presse** (AFP)
- **Fédération Française des Agences de Presse** (FFAP)
- **RelaxNews**
- **Sparknews**

Audience measurement organisations

- **Alliance pour les Chiffres de la Presse et des Médias** (ACPM)
- **Médiamétrie**

Policies

Media legislation

The French press is regulated by a complex body of legislation, whose roots may be found in Article XI of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. The declaration opens by affirming “the natural and imprescriptible rights of man” to “liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression.” Article 11 states: “The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.” However, it was not until the law of 29 July, 1881 that the principle of a free press was included in the French Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of opinion and according the right to publish and disseminate information freely without prior restraint through any state authority.

The extremely liberal law of 1881 was overturned by the three major legislative push phases, formulating a steady but myriad growth policy of commercial regulation. Among the laws enacted in these years, the set of 1944-1947 ordinances strongly affect the press market.

The rules of ordinance of 22 and 26 August, 1944 set the economic, financial, and moral standard of the new press industry which intend to protect press from financial and economic pressures and to promote the diversity of opinion. In particular, these ordinances strictly forbade monopolies and press companies integration and mergers (eg a single person is not allowed to own more than one newspaper). However this ban of monopolies has been slightly eased yet it has been violated on various occasions. As an illustration members of parliament never strictly contradicted the quasi monopoly that characterises the regional press or more recently acted to limit the growing movement of concentration in press and more globally in media markets. That illustrates the longstanding and strong overlap between politics and the elite journalists that deeply shape the French media system.

The rules of law of 2 April, 1947 (called the *Loi Bichet*) first legalised the freedom of press distribution and put it under the monitoring of a cooperative: Presstalis (former NMPP), 100 percent owned by press publishers' cooperatives. Presstalis distributed most national newspapers and nearly 80 percent of magazines and multimedia products. This cooperative system gives every publisher and press outlet an equal nationwide access to newsstands. Yet it faces strong criticism because of its high level of printing and circulation costs (nearly 50 percent of turnover for many outlets) and strikes.

The *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (High Council for Audiovisual - CSA) was instituted under the law of 17 January, 1989 with the charge of guaranteeing (TV and radio) broadcasting communication freedom in France. It is the successor to the *Haute Autorité de la communication audiovisuelle* (High Authority for Audiovisual Communication - 1982-1986), and to the *Commission nationale de la communication et des libertés* (National Commission for Communication and Freedoms - 1986-1989). The scope of the CSA's responsibilities under the law of 30 September 1986, amended numerous times, is wide-ranging: allocating frequencies to operators as well as ensuring plurality in opinions expressed, organising radio and television electoral campaigns, rigorous news treatment, ensuring human dignity is upheld, protecting consumers, ensuring on-air defence and showcasing of French language and culture, rendering television programmes accessible to hearing or visually impaired persons, ensuring media reflection of the diversity in French society, supporting health protection public policies, etc.

Regarding online press, a law of 12 June, 2009 created the status of online publisher that aims at including their online organisations delivering news in a professional framework, with respect of duties and rights of press and professional journalism.

Accountability systems

French media – and more particularly journalism – accountability systems are very weak. The journalistic profession has no oversight body; as already mentioned French journalists are not regulated by a professional order. Over the past two centuries French journalists and media people consistently expressed a reluctance to be regulated, oversought, as well as made accountable for their professional misconduct or negligence regarding ethics and good practices. The main reason pertains to the sociology of the of journalism elite. Most of elite journalists are politically oriented and often give predominance of opinion versus facts in dealing with news, as well as they are strongly tied to mainly political and economic leaders and organisations. This configuration creates many conflicts of interests – between the required independence of journalism and ties with politics and business – which this elite is reluctant to admit and be accountable for. Actually the body that contributes to make the accountability of journalists effective, through the decisions of the judiciary, is the *17ème Chambre correctionnelle du TGI de Paris* (a section of the High Court of Paris) that is in charge of court cases for press and journalism, enforcement the law of 29 July 1881. This court judges the most controversial cases about journalism misconducts or negligence that could hurt a citizen or an organisation, such as defamation, violation of press freedom, press offences, etc.

Regulatory authorities

Like many markets or professional fields, media markets operate under many regulatory authorities and laws with the aim of limiting liberal economy and free competition. These laws aim at not only regulating business and economy but also professional ethics or practices. Market structure of press, radio, and TV is historically characterised by the pivotal role of the central state and its linked organisations. As an illustration the *Direction Générale des Médias et des Industries Culturelles* (General Directorate of Media and Cultural Industry - DGMIC), an arm of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, is partly dedicated to monitor the allowance of numerous and substantial public subsidies to newspapers and magazines; as well the launch of a radio or TV broadcast is subject to prior approval from the CSA (see above) that manages and regulates the radio and TV spectrum.

The print press market is strongly regulated by various bodies and laws. As an illustration printing and circulation are managed by joint bodies, in contradiction with free competition. Journalism profession works under no professional Order; however the *Commission Paritaire Nationale de l'Emploi des journalistes* (National Committee for Parity in Employment - CPNEJ) powerfully regulates the market of journalism education (see below), while the *Commission de la Carte d'Identité des Journalistes Professionnels* (Commission on the Card of Professional Journalists - CCIJP) is a joint body that delivers the professional card (see below).

Regarding TV and radio markets, the law of 17 January 1989 created an independent public authority, the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (Superior Audiovisual Council - CSA) with the charge of guaranteeing broadcasting communication freedom in France. The CSA is the only institution in charge of regulating TV and radio content for the public's sake. It consists of a nine-member appointed board: two members are selected by the president of the Republic; three others by the speaker of the Senate; and an additional three by the speaker of the National Assembly. The scope of its responsibilities under the law of 30 September, 1986, amended numerous times, is wide-ranging: ensuring plurality in opinions expressed, organising radio and television electoral campaigns, rigorous news treatment, allocating frequencies to operators, ensuring human dignity is upheld, protecting consumers. The CSA has significant responsibilities in managing the radio-electric frequency spectrum. It is charged with planning hertzian spectrum bands to be used by radio stations, issuing licences to use the frequencies, and planning and allocating broadcasting channels to digital terrestrial television operators. Under the law of 5 March, 2009, the CSA is also in charge of regulating on-demand audiovisual media services, video on-demand and catch-up TV. Starting in 2002, the *CSA* has organised the digital terrestrial television (DTT) switch-over. As much as 97 percent of France's inhabitants can now receive a large selection of quality channels: 19 national free-to-air channels, ten pay-per-view channels, and approximately 50 local channels.

According to a report issued in mid 2017 by the *Autorité de Régulation des Communications Electroniques et des Postes* (Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communication - ARCEP), democratic institutions concluded that independent state intervention was needed to ensure that no power, be it economic or political, is in a position to control or curb users' (consumers, businesses, associations, etc.) ability to communicate. The ARCEP, a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation, is the architect and guardian of communications networks in France. As a network architect, it creates the conditions for a plural and decentralised network organisation. It guarantees the market is open to new players and to all forms of innovation, and works to ensure the sector's competitiveness through pro-investment competition. As network guardian, it also enforces the principles that are essential to guaranteeing users' ability to communicate. It ensures users' freedom of choice and access to clear and accurate information, and protects against possible net neutrality violations.

Sources

Laws, Regulations and Institutions

- **Autorité de régulation des communications électroniques et des postes** (ARCEP)
- **Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel** (CSA)
- **Direction Générale des Médias et des Industries Culturelles** (DGMIC)
- **Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication / Chiffres-statistiques**

Education

Universities and schools

Training in journalism is offered to undergraduate and graduate students as well as to executive or experienced individuals in numerous and various public universities and private schools. A focus on post bachelor students training shows a booming market of degrees in journalism while job offers in journalism remain very low. Accessing the journalistic profession doesn't require any formal training or degree. Most of people working as journalists in France are moreover not graduated in journalism. In 2017, only 19 percent of the 35,047 registered journalists are graduated from a journalism school or were trained in journalism. Yet the new incomers are more and more highly educated (at master level), with a degree in journalism.

In order to optimise the opportunities to access a position as journalist in France it is better to access one of the fourteen labelled curricula. Since 1956 some journalism schools and degrees are subject to a label that legitimates their quality and compliance to a curriculum model. At the time of writing, fourteen curricula are labelled *reconnues par la profession* and are members of *Commission Paritaire Nationale de l'Emploi des journalistes* (National Council of Journalism Employment CPNEJ), a think tank on journalism education and a lobbying organisation.

These 14 schools or universities deliver journalism training, ranging from a DUT (two-year degree in Marketing Techniques Degree) to master. However the trend is to align these degrees on a five- year master level. At the time of writing, 12 of the 14 labelled degrees are masters (including the degree delivered by the IUT of Tours: the new cohort for the master will be hosted in September 2018, replacing the DUT and bachelor in journalism); the only trainings in journalism provided by the IUT of Lannion and Cannes-Nice are still bac+2 level degrees. The main advantages to enter one of these 14 programs are to surely getting the most valuable interns as well as finding easily a job. All of them are checked by the French Ministry of Research and Higher Education. Five of them are located in Paris, the nine others in province (Lille, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nice-Cannes, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Tours and Lannion in Brittany). The first has been launched in 1924 at the *Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille* (Lille Graduate School of Journalism).

The 14 labelled degrees in journalism are the following:

- Diplôme de l'ESJ – Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme (ESJ Lille) de Lille.
- Master professionnel de journalisme – Institut Français de Presse (IFP), Université Paris II-Panthéon Assas.
- Diplôme du CFJ – Centre de Formation des Journalistes (CFJ) de Paris.
- Master de journalisme – Ecole des hautes études en sciences de l'information et de la communication (CELSA), Université Paris IV-Sorbonne.
- Master de journalisme – Centre Universitaire d'Enseignement du Journalisme (CUEJ), Université de Strasbourg.
- Master de journalisme – Institut de journalisme Bordeaux Aquitaine (IJBA), Université de Bordeaux Montaigne.
- Master de journalisme – Institut Pratique du Journalisme (IPJ), Université Paris Dauphine

- Master de journalisme – Ecole publique de journalisme de Tours (EPJT), Université de Tours.
- Master de journalisme – Ecole de Journalisme et de Communication d'Aix-Marseille (EJCAM), Université d'Aix-Marseille.
- Master de journalisme – Ecole de Journalisme de Grenoble (EJdG), Université Grenoble Alpes et Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Grenoble.
- Diplôme de l’EJT – Ecole de Journalisme de Toulouse (EJT).
- Master de journalisme – Ecole de journalisme de Sciences Po Paris.
- DUT Info-Com, option Journalisme – Institut Universitaire de Technologie de Lannion (IUT Lannion), Université Rennes I.
- DUT Info-Com, option Journalisme – Ecole de journalisme de Cannes (EDC), IUT Nice Côte d’Azur, Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis.

Professional development

The French legal system makes a difference between two kinds of journalists: the so-called “professional journalists” or “registered journalists” who can prove that more than half of their revenues are coming from journalism works to obtain *la carte de presse* (Press card), a professional card – subject to renewal each year; the others – who can’t prove such a situation – don’t hold this card. The card can be delivered and yearly renewed by the CCIJP. This card – attesting to formal membership to the journalistic profession – offers many financial advantages and is granted by a commission equally composed by elected representatives of journalistic and media outlets executives.

Professional journalists are not required to attend any professional or executive training classes in order to update their hands-on practices or acquire new knowledge. French journalists don’t usually apply for executive education by their own, however a public system of vocational education is supposed to enable it. As an illustration news media organisations actually need more qualified journalists in management or in new technologies to support the newsroom organisational change; yet news media executives and journalists are reluctant to apply for training in such topics.

According to the *Observatoire des métiers de la presse* (Center for Press Occupations), in 2016, journalists holding the *carte de presse* are more men (53.3 percent) than women (46.7 percent) even though French journalism is becoming a feminised profession. They primarily work for print press (58.2 percent), then for TV channels (16.4 percent), radio stations (9.5 percent), news agencies (9.1 percent) and others (6.8 percent). Up to 73.1 percent of professional journalists are under tenure and full-time employees (with an average salary of €3,549), 3.2 percent have a limited-term position (average salary: €1896) and 18.7 percent are freelance (average salary: €1969). The average age is 44.5 years. On the contrary journalists without the professional card are more part-time and/or freelance.

Sources

- Celsa
- Centre de Formation des Journalistes (CFJ Paris)
- Centre Universitaire d’Enseignement du Journalisme (CUEJ)
- Ecole de Journalisme de Cannes
- Ecole de Journalisme de Grenoble (EJdG)
- Ecole de Journalisme de Sciences Po Paris
- Ecole de Journalisme de Toulouse (EJT)
- Ecole de Journalisme et de Communication d'Aix-Marseille (EJCAM)
- Ecole publique de journalisme de Tours (EPJT)

- **Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille** (ESJ Lille)
- **Institut de journalisme Bordeaux Aquitaine** (IJBA)
- **Institut Français de Presse** (IFP)
- **Institut Pratique du Journalisme** (IPJ)
- **Institut Universitaire de Technologie de Lannion**

Conclusions

Conclusion

The French media landscape is basically run by two substantial drivers. First, print, TV, and radio markets have always been interdependent with politics and public administration. The elite of journalists and most media outlets maintain – more or less strong – ties with politics, and vice versa. Second, all news media markets are affected by a double-sided trend, that is not proper to France: A growing concentration of ownership in mainstream media as well as a process of standardisation that not only affects the editorial content of news but also the professional practices and profile and identity of journalists.

In reaction, more and more citizens forsake mainstream news media to get news to the benefit of new (alternative) online media – websites or social media – that offer distinctive editorial content and orientation. Some of these alternative media are strongly rejected by mainstream journalists and news media institutions because they are run by maverick journalists or individuals whose professional life is outside the mainstream occupation and their news approach shows an alternative view to the mainstream one. This struggle is particularly exemplified by the current debate on fake news and alternative or post-truth reality. Mainstream media people or intellectuals use to delegitimise alternative media in claiming they create and/or disseminate false news with the aim at challenging the legitimacy of institutionalised media elite or undermining the democratic systems.

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