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Fact Sheet: News Media and Political Attitudes in France

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

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News Media and Political Attitudes in France

Below are specific findings about news media attitudes and habits in France. The findings come from a Pew Research Center survey about news media and politics across eight Western European countries conducted from Oct. 30 to Dec. 20, 2017. The survey covered five countries in the north (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and three in the south (France, Italy and Spain).

Views of the news media in France

The sense of importance of and trust in the news media vary considerably by country. In general, adults in northern European countries – for example, Sweden and Germany – are more likely to say the news media are very important and that they trust the news media, while people in France and Italy are the least likely to say this.

France is unique in that only 28% of adults consider the news media very important to society – the lowest of the eight countries surveyed. About a third (35%) say they trust the news media, including just 4% who trust the news media *a lot*.

Minority of French adults believe the news media are very important; about a third trust the media

% of adults in France who say the news media are ____ important to the functioning of the country's society



% who trust the news media ...



Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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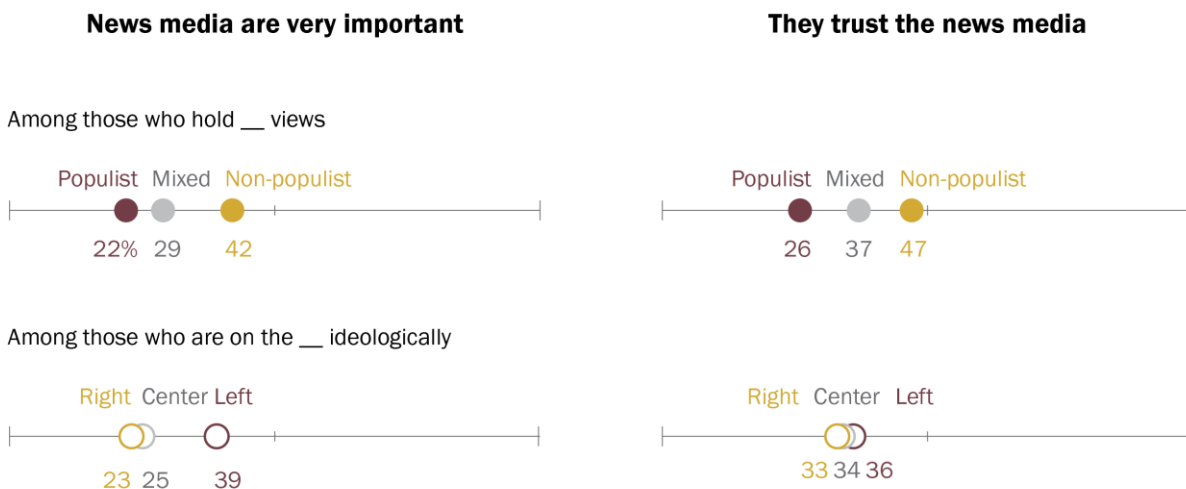
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In most of the countries surveyed, people who hold populist views are less likely to say the news media are important and to trust the news media than people who don't hold populist views. In general, the differences in these attitudes about the news media are small when comparing between people on the left and right of the ideological spectrum.

Populist divides in media attitudes are strong in France as well: 26% of people with populist views say they trust the news media, compared with 47% of those without populist views. On the question of importance, 22% of people with populist views say the news media are important to society, compared to 42% of those with non-populist views. The sense of media importance in France is also divided by left-right ideology: 39% of those on the left say the news media are important, compared to 23% of those on the right.

Divides in France between those with and without populist views in their attitudes toward the news media

% of adults in France who say ...



Note: Respondents are classified as holding populist views if they answered: "Most elected officials don't care what people like me think" and "Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials."

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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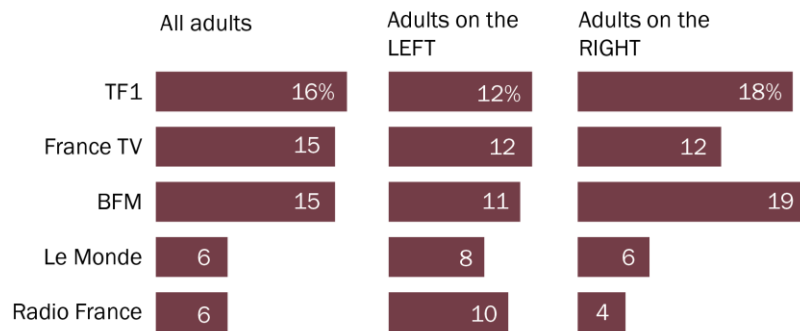
Main sources used for news in France

When it comes to the news sources people say they turn to most frequently, the divides between adults with and without populist leanings are not as strong as those seen for attitudes about the news media more generally. And in the southern countries, there tend to be larger divides in main news source preference between people on the left and right of the ideological spectrum than between those with and without populist views.

In France, those on the left and right differ in the media sources they turn to most for news. Among those on the ideological right, BFM is the most cited main news source, while people on the left most often name TF1 and France Télévisions (France TV).

Differences in main news source among the French

% of adults in France who name each outlet as their main news source



Note: Only sources named by 5% of adults or more are shown. Respondents were asked to name the outlet they turn to the most for news. For the purposes of this analysis, major channels or brands were grouped into their larger news organization. For example, in France, France 2, which is asked about specifically on a separate question, is coded as part of France Télévisions (France TV) in this analysis of main news source.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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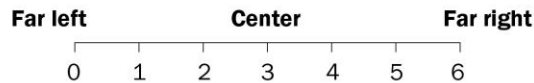
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Where users place outlets' ideologies, on the right and on the left

For many of the news outlets across the eight countries, people who use an outlet to get news tend to think the outlet is closer to their own left-right ideological position. In France, this is true for three outlets asked about: the public television channel France 2, the 24-hour TV news channel BFM and the newspaper Le Monde. For these outlets, news users on either the right or left tend to place them closer to their own ideology. Right-aligned and left-aligned news users generally agree on the placement of the TV channel TF1. Le Figaro, Libération, L'Express and Mediapart are not included in this analysis, because they did not have a large enough sample of left or right users to analyze.

Ideological placement of news outlets in France

Users of each outlet were asked to place the outlet on a left-right scale



% of users on the left and right who place the outlet at position ...

TF1

66% of adults use this outlet at least once a week

PLACEMENT BY:



Left users and right users are NOT different in their placement of this outlet

BFM

60% of adults use this outlet at least once a week



Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

France 2

65% of adults use this outlet at least once a week



Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

Le Monde

28% of adults use this outlet at least once a week



Left users and right users ARE different in their placement of this outlet

Note: Some outlets are not included, because their audience sample sizes are too small to analyze. Left and right users' outlet placements are considered different if the percentage of left and right users that place the outlet on the left (from 0 to 2), on the right (from 4 to 6), or both are significantly different. The survey asked respondents a series of questions about eight specific outlets in their country, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. Therefore the outlets listed here may differ from the main news source outlets analyzed. For example, in France the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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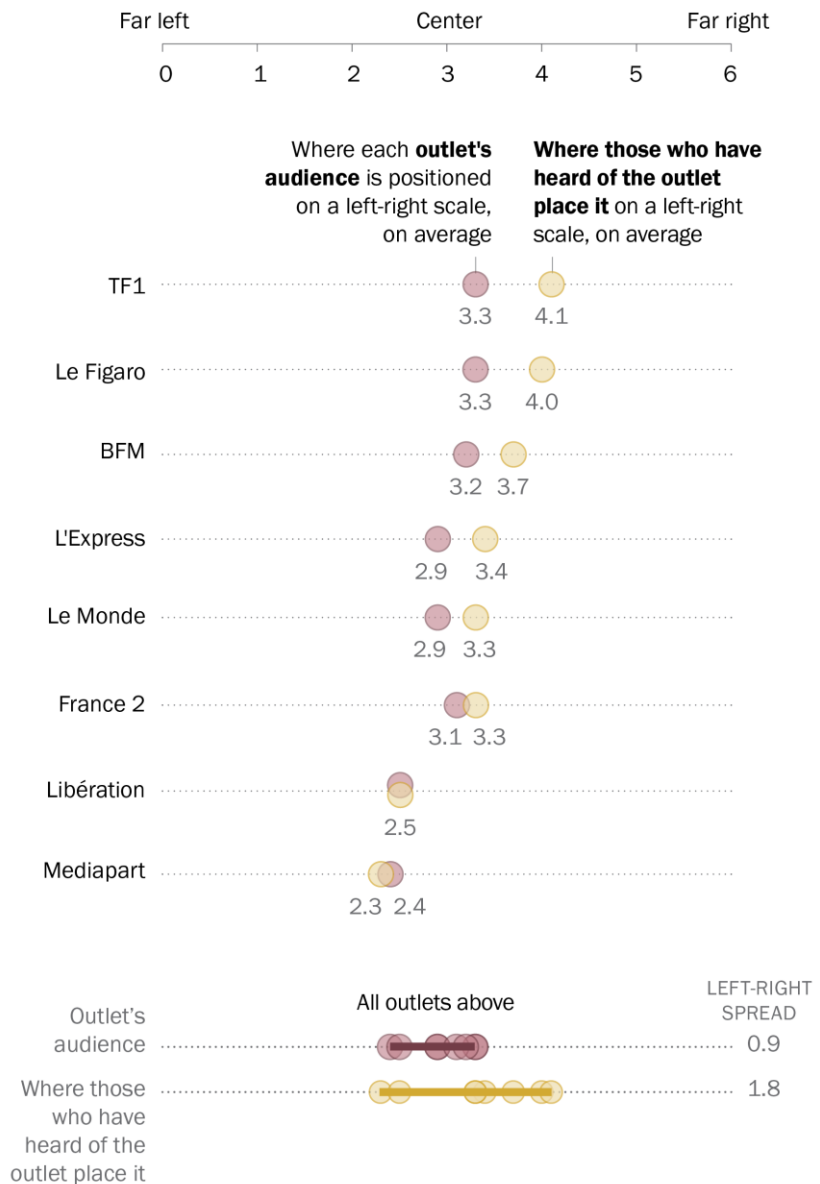
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In general, where the public places an outlet tends to differ from where the average audience actually sits ideologically. For each of the news outlets asked about in the survey, the average audience (based on self-reported usage) tends to fall near the ideological center. People who have heard of each outlet, however, tend to place the outlet either farther to the left or farther to the right than the actual ideological position of the outlet's audience.

France is no exception. For most outlets, while their news audiences are near the ideological center, people who have heard of the outlets tend to think they lean slightly more to the right. TF1, for example, has an audience that sits at about the middle of the left-right spectrum (3.3 on the 0-to-6 scale), but when asked to place the outlet on the same left-right scale, people who have heard of TF1 place it farther to the right (at 4.1).

People tend to think outlets in France are more partisan than their average audiences' ideologies

Mean placement of each outlet's audience on a 0-to-6 left-right scale compared with where those who have heard of the outlet place it on that same scale



Note: An outlet's audience is defined as respondents who say they get news regularly from that outlet. The survey asked respondents a series of questions about eight specific outlets in their country, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. Therefore the outlets listed here may differ from the main news source outlets analyzed. For example, in France the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions. Left-right spread is the difference between the outlet farthest to the left and the outlet farthest to the right.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

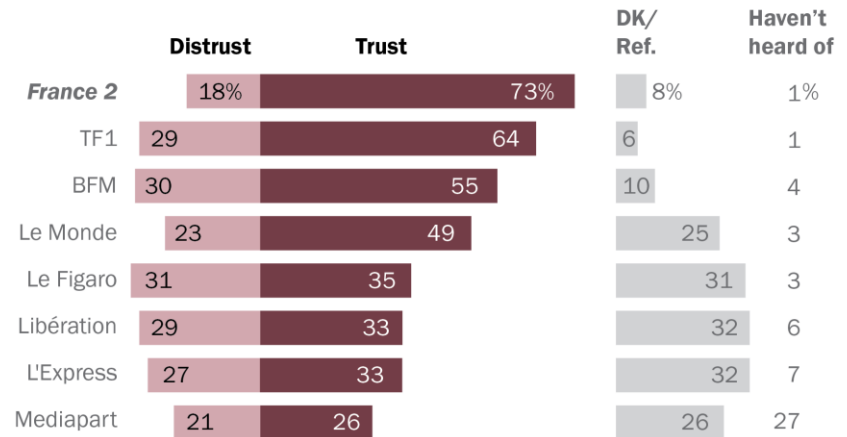
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Trust in news media outlets

In seven of the eight countries surveyed, the most trusted news outlet asked about is the public news organization in each country. This is the case in France, where a large majority of French adults (73%) say they trust the public broadcaster France 2.

In France, the public displays high levels of trust in their public news organization

% of adults in France who generally trust or distrust each news outlet



Note: People who said they had not heard of an outlet or refused to respond to the question about whether they get news from an outlet are grouped under "Haven't heard of" here. Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. In France the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions. Public broadcaster is in **bold**.

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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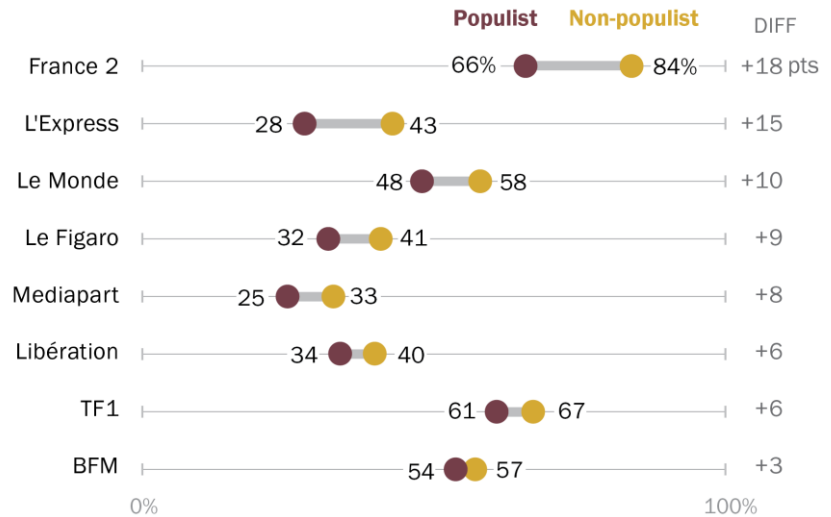
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As with trust in the news media generally, trust in specific outlets varies by populist leanings, with those who hold populist views expressing lower levels of trust than those who don't.

For example, in France, those with populist leanings are 18 percentage points less likely than those with non-populist views to say they trust the public news organization France 2. Trust is also divided along the left-right ideological spectrum in France – those who place themselves on the left of the 0-to-6 ideological scale are 25 percentage points less likely than people on the right to trust the private news broadcaster TF1.

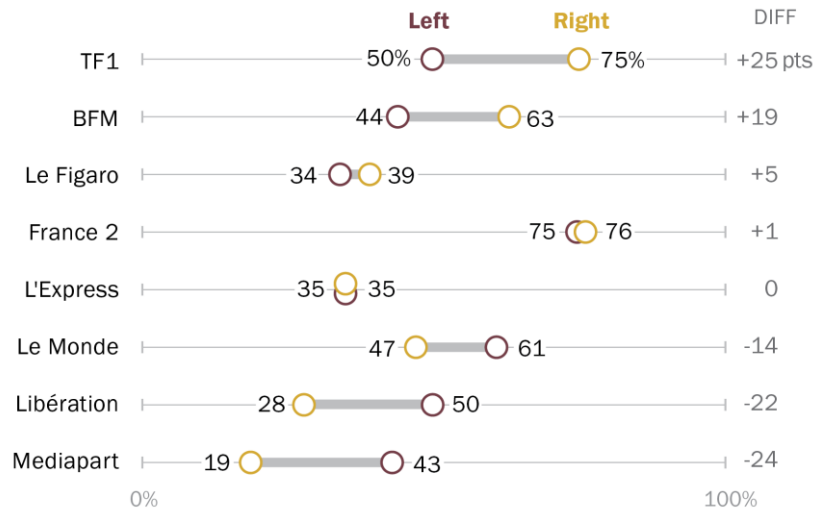
In France, those with populist views tend to trust news outlets less than those without such views

% of adults in France who hold ____ views and generally trust each news outlet



Trust is also divided along the left-right spectrum

% of adults in each ideological group who generally trust each news outlet



Note: Respondents are classified as holding populist views if they answered: "Most elected officials don't care what people like me think" and "Ordinary people would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials." Respondents were asked about eight specific outlets, which in some cases are part of a larger news organization. In France the survey asked specifically about France 2, which is part of France Télévisions.

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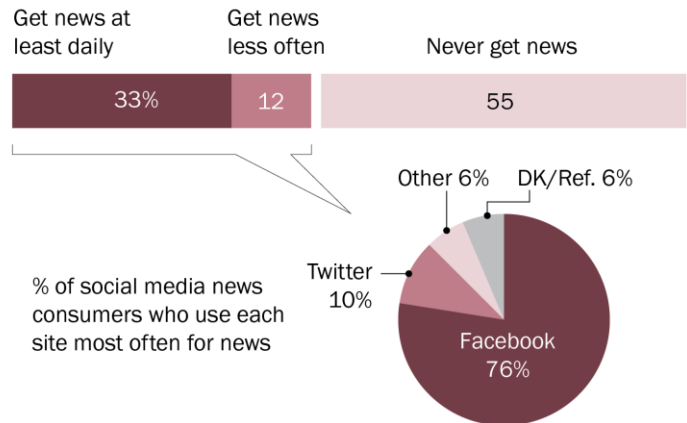
Social media usage and views

Many people in Western Europe get news through social media, with Facebook cited as the most widely used platform for news.

In France, 45% of adults get news on social media, including 33% who get news on social media *daily*. Facebook is the most common social network used for news. In France, young people (those 18 to 29 years old) are more likely to get news on social media daily than those 50 and older (69% vs. 17%).

For French adults, Facebook is the most common social media site for getting news

% of adults in France who _____ from social media



Note: "Other" includes social media sites mentioned by 5% or less of respondents across all countries studied. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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About half or more social media news consumers in each of the eight countries surveyed say they are familiar with the sources they see on social media. Still, sizeable minorities say they typically do not pay attention to the source of the news they encounter there.

Social media news consumers in France are similar to other Western Europeans – 53% are familiar with the news sources they find on social media, but roughly a third (35%) do not pay attention to the sources there.

Many French adults who get news on social media don't pay attention to sources there

% of social media news consumers in France who say most of the news they see on social media comes from news source they ...



Note: "Don't know" responses not shown. Question asked: "In general, does most of the news you see on social media come from news sources you are familiar with, sources you are not familiar with, or do you not pay attention to the sources?"

Source: Survey of eight Western European countries conducted Oct. 30-Dec. 20, 2017.

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Find out more

Read the full report online for the methodology and more on France:

<https://pewrsr.ch/WesternEuropeNewsAttitudes>.

To view this information online, as well as data on the seven other Western European countries included in the survey, visit: <https://pewrsr.ch/FranceNewsAttitudes>.