



France
PR Country Landscape 2010

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Preface..... | 5 |
| I. History of the media: Precursors to Public Relations | 5 |
| Pre-World War I..... | 5 |
| World War I | 7 |
| World War II | 7 |
| Post-World War II | 8 |
| II. Development of the Public Relations Function | 10 |
| 1950's: The "All-State" | 10 |
| 1960's: Private Enterprise Affirms Itself | 11 |
| 1970's: The Triumph of Liberalism..... | 13 |
| 1980's & 1990's: The Competition for Communication | 14 |
| III. Influences on the Practice of Public Relations | 15 |
| Political and Legal Environment..... | 15 |
| Social Environment..... | 16 |
| Competitive Environment..... | 19 |
| Economic Environment..... | 19 |
| Technological Environment | 20 |
| IV. cultural idiosyncracies affecting Public Relations..... | 21 |
| Individualism versus collectivism | 21 |
| Orientation to Time | 21 |
| Trust Issues..... | 21 |
| Work Ethic..... | 22 |
| V. Effectively Communicating with French COstituencies | 23 |
| Important Message Elements | 23 |
| Indirect versus Direct Messages..... | 23 |
| Word-of-Mouth | 23 |
| Channels and Credibility..... | 23 |
| Messages and Credibility..... | 23 |
| Effective Communication Strategies and Tactics | 24 |
| VI. current state of Public Relations | 24 |
| Terminology..... | 24 |
| Specialties in Public Relations..... | 24 |
| The Communications Workforce..... | 25 |
| Public Relations Models/Approaches | 25 |
| Media Relations..... | 26 |
| Working with Non-Profit Organizations | 26 |
| Public Relations at the Business Level | 27 |
| Client Contracts..... | 27 |
| Internal Communications Departments in Companies | 27 |
| Increasing the Legitimacy of the Profession | 28 |
| Competition with the Advertising Industry | 29 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Vii. public relations agencies and consultancies | 30 |
| Syntec RP Member Agencies | 31 |
| VIII. Professional Organizations | 32 |
| IX. Organization of public relations education..... | 32 |
| Guide to Careers in Communication and Media | 36 |
| Masters Degree in Information and Communication Sciences | 37 |
| Schools of Business and Management..... | 38 |
| Specialized Master's Programs | 38 |
| Specialized Schools | 38 |
| Institutes of Political Studies | 39 |
| Public Relations Research..... | 39 |
| X. Media in France | 40 |
| Media Independence | 40 |
| Media Policies | 40 |
| Regulatory Authorities | 41 |
| Accountability Systems..... | 41 |
| Print Media | 42 |
| Audiovisual Media | 43 |
| Online Media | 44 |
| News Agencies..... | 44 |
| Mass Media Organizations | 44 |
| Media Resources | 45 |
| Xi. Think Tanks and Research organizations | 47 |
| xii. Country profile | 49 |
| xiii. Refernces cited and consulted | 54 |

PREFACE

It may be hard to overstate the importance of a comprehensive body of knowledge to public relations practice. [...] In order for professionals to engage in strategic public relations management in a global setting, it is essential that they have the benefit of such a body of knowledge. (Sriramesh, 2009, p. xxxiii)

There is a need to globalize the fundamentals of public relations so they may be communicated among continents, especially in this complex emergent media landscape. A comprehensive body of knowledge helps public relations practitioners predict the outcomes of their strategies and techniques vis-à-vis the organization's environment rather than trying to practice based on anecdotal evidence when they are required to operate in an unfamiliar region (Sriramesh, 2009). Globalization has undoubtedly contributed to the demand for an understanding of how public relations is practiced globally.

The [Global Alliance of Public Relations and Communication Management](#) is an organization dedicated to enhancing and unifying the public relations profession around the world (Molleda, 2009). The Global Alliance builds on the cooperative efforts of national and regional public relations associations to tackle common problems with a global perspective. The Global Alliance initiated a project that aims to provide an outlined, online guide on country-specific information that shapes the landscape for practicing public relations in that part of the world. The objective is that the "landscapes" are useful and updateable as soon as new resources and data become available.

A guide on the public relations landscape of France has not yet been developed so the aim of this paper is to develop a comprehensive assessment of the public relations landscape in France by first exploring the history of the media in France to identify the initial appearance of public relations activities. Building from this foundation, this paper will follow the evolution of the public relations function and profession, providing for a better understanding of how public relations is practiced in France. The principal goal of this paper is to help integrate understanding of public relations from this European Union member country, despite that much of the published world on public relations in France is not in English, thus limiting its global reach.

I. HISTORY OF THE MEDIA- PRECURSORS TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

PRE-WORLD WAR I

Various sources (Calin & Iacobescu, 2002) showed that the first signs of public relations in France appeared at the end of World War I, were developed during World War II and really became established at the end of the war, in the wake of the [Marshall Plan](#) (Carayol, 2004). However, the widely held view that propaganda was an invention of the First World War is inaccurate (Adams, 1927). Public relations activities can be traced back to the 16th century, when governments obtained favorable public opinion through image cultivation (Kunczik, 2009).

Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), the leading minister who asserted absolutism in France, had a press office that used pamphlets to fight France's foreign opponents, especially the Habsburgs (Kunczik, 2009). *La reputation* was the political keyword for the cardinal, a master in public relations (Kunczik, 2009). Richelieu also established a press department and had a minister for "Information and Propaganda" (Kunczik, 2009). From the beginning of his career, Richelieu hired

writers to produce leaflets that justified his policies and attacked his political opponents. The most important instrument of his press policy was *Gazette*, a weekly (Kunczik, 2009). In 1635, Richelieu established the Académie Française to which leading literati were appointed. Its main task was to standardize the French language and influence long-term public opinion. Richelieu also distributed publications, biased appropriately to suit his purpose, in foreign countries. Without a doubt, Richelieu was a master of public relations for France's reputation and can be regarded as a pioneer in public relations for nations (Kunczik, 2009).

Public relations activities for France reached a high point during the reign of [Louis XIV](#), who reigned for 54 years (1661-1715), and was a master of image construction (Kunczik, 2009). His personality, life, and body were put on state and Louis le Grand was created. He used publicity to defend France, against hostile public opinion in Europe (Kunczik, 2009). Burke (1992) examined the parallels between modern publicity agents and the "glory enterprise" of Louis XIV. According to Burke, Louis XIV was a master of impression management and aimed his image projection at both the domestic and foreign public. France had practical reasons for image cultivation in, for example, the Ottoman Empire because both had a common enemy in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, but the main target of Louis XIV's image policy were the other courts of Europe (Burke, 1992).

Burke (1992) labeled Louis XIV's image policy as "theatre state" and described the life of the king as a grand spectacle. Statecraft became stagecraft. Burke concluded that the main difference between modern image shaping and Louis' image building is technological. Louis was presented by means of print, statues, and medals, whereas twentieth-century rulers have relied on photography, cinema, radio, and television. Burke (1992) wrote, "[l]ong before the cinema, the theatre affected perceptions of politics" (p. 199).

Following the mastery of image cultivation by Louis XIV, in 1792 the [National Assembly of France](#) created the first propaganda ministry. It was part of the Ministry of the Interior and it was called the Bureau d'Esprit, or "Bureau of the Spirit" (Bates, 2006). It subsidized editors and sent agents to various parts of the country to win public support for the [French Revolution](#) (Bates, 2006). It is now generally recognized that official propaganda on a mass scale had its inception during the French Revolution (Dowd, 1951). In that era, for the first time, modern news media systematically and uninterruptedly bombarded the general public, and numerous organized pressure groups were formed to attain specific ends through the manipulation of public opinion (Dowd, 1951).

Successive revolutionary governments tried consciously and continuously, with all the means at their disposal, to mold public opinion and to direct it into channels favorable to their policies and interests (Dowd, 1951). Political leaders emphasized forms of propaganda, which were likely to appeal to and be effective with the masses (Dowd, 1951). Therefore, art and music became significant propaganda techniques during the Revolution (Dowd, 1951). The employment of the fine arts for the purpose of influencing public opinion in favor of the national government resembled the efforts put forth during the reign of Louis XIV, when the [Bourbon Monarchy](#) consciously used them as a means of arousing feelings favorable to the regime (Dowd, 1951). These techniques were successful considering that there is a great deal of support for the arts in France. French culture has always been respected and has provided the country with a vitality, which sustains tradition in the absence of other things.

WORLD WAR I

The birth of *professional* international image cultivation in France took place during [World War I](#) through the development of propaganda campaigns (Kunczik, 1998). World War I dramatized the power and triumphs of propaganda. And both fascism and communism in the postwar years were the centers of intense revolutionary propaganda.

During the conflict the French government instituted a system of ferocious censorship to boost national morale (Kuhn, 1995). However, successful this policy may have been in the short term in mobilizing popular support for the war, the brainwashing propaganda campaign appeared to alienate a large section of the newspaper readership. These propaganda campaigns, developed by the government represent the first signs of professional strategic communication intended to shape or manipulate public opinion, one of the main goals of public relations in its early stages.

WORLD WAR II

By the end of the [Second World War](#) the population came to terms with the psychological shock of military defeat, the [Third Republic](#) was terminated and the country was divided into two. The German army occupied the North and held newspapers under its control with the help of collaborative journalists (Adams, 2000). [The Vichy regime](#) in the South kept close watch on the news media with its own censors: its editorial instructions left journalists with little freedom of expression (Adams, 2000).

Propaganda efforts were countered by Resistance groups scattered throughout the nation, who published and distributed secret newspapers in an attempt to offset the influence of the pro-Vichy and pro-Nazi press (Kuhn, 1995). This "[underground press](#)" was a vital means of spreading the ideals of the [Resistance](#), mobilizing support for its activities, and maintaining a sense of solidarity (Kuhn, 1995). The launch of a clandestine newspaper was a major gesture of defiance against the authorities, and those who took this initiative ran a great risk of discovery and punishment (Kuhn, 1995). Kedward (1985) described the decision to set up a clandestine newspaper as a significant act of political engagement:

[...] the commitment, which this involved, was a decisive step in moving from attitudes to action, and the process of distribution necessitated new contacts and wider liaisons. The ripples of revolt began to spread. Producing a newspaper was a well-established political reflex in France, and should not be seen as an avoidance of more effective action. [...] It was now a means of creating and sustaining new groups of activists, and having to do it secretly meant that increasing numbers of recruits were rapidly introduced to the problems and risks of clandestine activity. (p. 52)

In using the news media as a means of political participation to influence public opinion, the efforts of the underground press are drastically similar to the modern public relations function, as these efforts attempted to shift attitudes to actions, a typical goal of public relations campaigns. These activities parallel the modern-day public relations practitioner's efforts to establish networks and to build mutually beneficial relationships. Without the public relations-like efforts of the underground press, the ideals of the Resistance would have remained concealed, and therefore publics in support of these ideals would have remained immobilized. However, the first publishers of underground sheets were journalists by chance. They were amateurs whose personal hostility to the Vichy regime motivated them to venture into journalism even though they were ignorant of its techniques (Adams, 2000).

Underground press people (like their comrades in the larger Resistance) came from all political horizons, from the left and the right, and from all social classes (Adams, 2000). Political party militants, labor unionists, academics, members of the professions, students, writers, clergymen, lawyers, and army officers switched to journalism—and were surprised to discover how easy it was to express their indignation and enthusiasm in short columns, or to comment upon events that they heard about on the radio or in the regular papers (Adams, 2000). Although lacking journalistic goals, the underground press became well organized and highly professional in its operations (Kuhn, 1995).

This shift towards professionalism represents a step towards the development of public relations as a social institution. However, some scholars argued public relations might emerge as a distinct social institution only after, in addition to creating publicity, it takes on duties mediating between the public and the institution (Vos, 2008). It may be contended then that the group of journalists who participated in the underground press collaborated in their efforts to manage the ongoing relationship between the public and the Resistance—shaping the public's view of the Resistance and the Resistance's view of the public. Additionally, the underground press went on to form a national federation (CNR, the [Conseil National de la Résistance](#)) at the end of 1943 (Bilger & Lebedel, 1991) and in agreement with the Resistance organizations and the [Provisional Government](#), the federation helped shape the content of legislation on the press after the [Liberation](#) (Kuhn, 1995). Thus, the news media system, which emerged in France in the immediate postwar years, was to a large extent determined by the wartime experience and owed much to the ideas of the Resistance (Kuhn, 1995).

POST-WORLD WAR II

The wartime experience sensitized civilian and military populations to issues of propaganda, information, and intelligence. While Britain cultivated notions of media independence and truthful information there was an extensive internal and external propaganda effort including black propaganda. Black propaganda was considered justifiable in the circumstances and somewhat romanticized as were other aspects of SOE's work such as dropping agents into France. The head of SOE 'F' Section was Colonel Maurice Buckmaster (whose code name was 'Colonel Britain') who had worked for Ford prior to the war first in Britain as Personal Assistant to Lord Parry (who was instrumental in setting up the free enterprise propaganda organization Aims of Industry) and then in Spain and France where he helped set up new operations for Ford. Post-war he became Director of Public Relations at Ford and subsequently went free-lance representing the French champagne industry. He became a Fellow of the IPR in 1954 and was President 1955-56. The career of such a man clearly suggests the overlap between public relations and propaganda (L'Etang, 1998).

The development of public relations in France has been impacted not only by wartime experience, but has also been heavily influenced by the pluralistic society in which the media functions and the dominant role of the state in matters concerning the news media.

Traces of public relations activities can continue to be identified throughout the history of the news media in France, the most palpable being the state's role as a *primary definer* concerning matters of the press. In a political culture and system where the state had a major and dominating role, it is expected that it also played a key role in matters concerning the press (Kuhn, 1995). The state also acted as an enabler, a regulator, and a censor. As an *enabler* to the press, the state provided funding through a system of financial aid. As *regulator* of the press, the state controlled the legislative process and lays down the framework within which the French press operates (Kuhn,

1995). Censorship has traditionally been one of the main roles played by the French state in its relationship with the press (Kuhn, 1995), for most of the 19th century the state employed a range of mechanisms to seek to ensure a compliant press (Kuhn, 1995). However, most importantly for the study of the history of public relations in France, was the role of the state as a *primary definer*.

Whereas censorship is an overt exercise of naked power, *primary definition* is a more subtle form of media management and manipulation. It covers low-level activities such as the issuing of news releases about official events and the use of public relations techniques and efforts. It also includes different types of misinformation and disinformation, from leaks and planted stories to propaganda (Kuhn, 1995). The concept of primary definition can be explained with reference to two features of developed news media systems: first, the routinization of the news production process in an age of sophisticated mass communication technology and highly bureaucratic media organizations; and second, the legitimacy which is conferred on certain individuals, groups, or institutions as authoritative sources of information because of their social status, technical experience, economic power, or political position (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978).

Primary definers possess some form of authority and are usually essential purveyors of information if the news media is to have what it regards as a complete account of events (Hall et al., 1978). They enjoy a privileged insider position. It is not just the mechanics of news collection or their superior resources that make official sources prominent in this process; it is their status, wealth, and power (Hall et al., 1978). The possession of any one of these legitimizes their views in the eyes of the media and makes their views an integral component of the press version of reality (Kuhn, 1995). These official sources enjoy good formal links with the media, for example through the use of full-time press officers. They also usually benefit from strong informal links with editors and journalists on the political/media network. As a result, the news media generally perceives these “official sources” as a regular and reliable source of news copy. This position allows them to shape the media agenda and issue coverage (Kuhn, 1995).

It should be noted that the French state’s role as primary definer has a long history, stretching back to the Revolution and before (Cobban, 1968). In the early 1830s state management of the press was institutionalized through the establishment of [Havas](#) as an international news agency. Exercising a quasi-monopoly on the supply of information in France, especially in the realm of foreign affairs, Havas was used by the state to control the quantity, range, and quality of news provided to newspapers and their readers (Kuhn, 1995). At the end of the Second World War the state set up [Agence France-Presse](#) (AFP) as the major French news agency to take over the information-gathering functions of the pre-war Havas agency. The AFP soon became the nerve center of the French news media system, with all major French newspapers largely dependent on its services for information provision. AFP has also achieved a prominent position in the global news flow. According to Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett (2004), “[w]hile there is a proliferation of broadcast and electronic media, some with their own news-gathering resources, there are few organizations. [...] which command anything like the scale of human resource dedicated to worldwide news gathering and distribution as is committed by Reuters, AP or [...] AFP” (pp. 46-47).

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTION

Governments used to be rarely involved or interested in business and business matters. However, as technologies and ideas exchanged between the government and people increased, the state’s role has significantly increased. The state recognized that business plays a role in every aspect of

daily life: social, financial, technical, cultural, and political. And essentially, strategic communication (i.e., advertising, marketing, public relations) has made involvement in business inescapable.

This development can be illustrated through the evolution of the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, which now has an exclusive business section. Previously, information about businesses was confined to the economy pages found in the back of the newspaper, which focused primarily on the political economy. Often this section was absent in the daily paper altogether and sometimes could only be found in a separate weekly section. Now, business finds its way into all sections of *Le Monde*: international affairs, politics, society, entertainment, and culture sections.

Not only has the role and influence of business intensified in France, but also when it comes to matters of authority, business leaders are close to government leaders in credibility. Public relations is the manifestation of this relationship, between business and society. Clarifying the role of public relations and determining the future shape of the public relations function cannot be done without an understanding of the relationship between business and society.

1950s: THE “ALL-STATE”

In the decade after the Second World War there was little expression of independent business. The economy was nationalized, and the urgency of reconstruction made it necessary for the government to control everything: prices, salaries, jobs, trade regulations, and even the news media (Beaudoin, 2001). Following years of state initiated wartime propaganda and censorship; public opinion was more concerned with matters of the press (accuracy, transparency, credibility, and propaganda) than over business (Beaudoin, 2001).

At this time, companies could pretty much get away with whatever they wanted. Negotiations were not between social partners, but between people in the state. Shareholders were not made public and management did not have to report much to the government. Although, there was a hint of the upcoming regulatory changes in 1946 when policies to protect employees were created, such policies took long to produce effects. Even in this highly state-regulated environment, public relations was born (Beaudoin, 2001).

As a profession, public relations was introduced with the U.S.-sponsored Marshall Plan. At that time, U.S.-based multinational corporations, especially those in the petroleum industry, started to establish subsidiaries in France and they, naturally, had a public relations function within their organization (Carayol, 2004). The U.S. model of public relations had a strong regard for public opinion and the concerns of business. This model had quite an impact on the business mindset in France, as it soon became obvious the value of interacting with the public and creating a favorable public opinion. Public relations practitioners soon acknowledged they would need to communicate with government officials, engineers,¹ and journalists.

By the mid 1950s, the professional associations became active. On January 7, 1955 the *Association Professionnelle des Relations Publiques*, founded in 1952, merged with *La Maison de Verre* (Carayol, 2004). The new association then renamed itself *Association Française des Relations Publiques* (AFREP, ‘French Association of Public Relations’). On May 1, 1955 the

¹ In French Society engineers are viewed differently. Nearly everyone in upper class society is encouraged to go on to engineering school. So the idea that public relations professionals need to correspond directly with engineers possibly implies that they need to correspond with the upper-class/elites in business.

International Public Relations Association (IPRA) was founded, grouping together professionals from several European countries. The *Union Nationale des Attachés de Presse* (UNAP, 'National Union of Press Officers') was created by André Hurtrel in 1956 as the "first association of professional communicators" (Carayol, 2004, p.138). In 1959, Lucien Matrat initiated the *Le Centre Européen des Relations Publiques* (CERP, 'Center for European Public Relations').² Practitioners from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands founded the organization.

1960s: PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AFFIRMS ITSELF

Western Europe is a unique meeting place and was, therefore, a place of confrontation between **Marxist** ideals (the communist vote at that time represents 25% of electorate vote in France) and consumerism, which was the result of capitalistic endeavors and liberation from war-time restrictions. The concept of *globalization* emerged in this decade, but was unfamiliar to business in France. However, France's unfamiliarity with the concept did not stop foreign investment, principally from the United States. The United States' direct investment contributed to a higher standard of life in Europe and was welcomed by the French successive governments, although at a time when **Gaullist** policies stressed France's national independence (Beaudoin, 2001).

U.S. investors came into contact with ideological debates that they were not prepared for. Recognizing this as an obstacle for the expansion of enterprises, the business sector began to try to improve public opinion about making profits. They attempted to present it as something that would benefit everyone and not just the privileged few; because at this time the image of profit was that it "went into the bosses' pocket" (Beaudoin, 2001).

In fact, the public relations function was working toward developing education programs for the general population about profits, economics, and business, in order to facilitate the movement toward internationalization of the capitalistic-economic model. The public relations function was working on and improving opinions through this educational campaign. This project was implemented at the time of a double social evolution, in which the basic education level was quickly rising so that the knowledge that was once reserved for a few business people became accessible to everyone. Additionally, this level of rising education was accompanied by an increased demand in knowledge about the business world. Professionals, especially executives, were becoming more and more interested in business, especially the common practice in their specialized industries, as these practices pertained to the international and local economy. And at this time specialist magazines began to appear, dedicated to exclusively covering business and the economic affairs (Beaudoin, 2001).

In the ideological melting pot of the 1960s, also appeared opposition movements to this new society that was organizing around business and consumerism. Businesses were learning a lot

² One of the most important achievements of the organization in those years was approval of Code of Athens (called also Code of Ethics) in 1965, which unites public relations practitioners worldwide to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the moral principles of its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The author Lucien Matrat, gave public relations genuine status and rules by creating the Code of Athens, which served as a kind of deontological bible. The document is still used as a reference, even though the public authorities or legal bodies do not officially recognize the professional rules that it propagates. The Code of Athens is a Charter which reaffirms "its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" and that having regard to the very nature of the profession. All members of the International Public Relations Association agree to abide by this International Code of Ethics. According to Boiry (1989) "[the code] brought an ethical dimension to the profession born in the United States." The Syndicat national des conseils en relations publiques (SNCRP, 'National Public Relations Consultancy Syndicate') was created by George Serrel in 1960 (Carayol, 2004) and later adopted the principles of Matrat's Code of Athens. SNCRP was dedicated to establishing a public relations profession in France that respected the rules and customs as defined by a code of ethics (Codes d'Ethique, Code d'Athènes, Code de Lisbonne le Code Professionnel Français des Relations Publiques).

from coming into contact with those who disagreed. For instance, the oil and gas sector and the nationalization of underground – including all the campaigns that accompanied this movement – painted a picture of the large petroleum industries as instruments of Anglo-American imperialism. This conjunction of events led to the development of new areas of intervention of a public relations sector in Europe, most often under the need of U.S. enterprises to confront the effects of negative public opinion (Beaudoin, 2001).

It was during this decade that the first business-initiated teaching programs were created. The programs targeted elementary and secondary schools and were utilized primarily by the oil and gas industry to explain its business and function. They organized visits to refineries and circulated information about careers in the industry (Beaudoin, 2001). This model was quickly taken up by other business sectors, such as public utilities (i.e., water, gas, and electricity).

From this period, the concept of crisis communication also developed in light of the ongoing ideological conflict between business and society. Public relations professionals organized themselves like “firemen” because they were merely “putting out the fire” (Beaudoin, 2001, p. 8).

The first consumer relations programs were initiated at this time as well, but were not easy to get going. Public relations professionals had to deal with a skeptical, somewhat hostile population that was, in most cases, coming to them from a position of refusal. As things did open up, many businesses saw that they could improve their image by beefing up their marketing and began modifying their business practices (Beaudoin, 2001). The public relations profession was suddenly aware, following these evolutions in consumerism, of their new responsibilities: relations with the news media and internal information *and* continued education programs for the consumer (Beaudoin, 2001). They also came to soon realize that crisis communication could enrich the function of public relations rather than serve as its basic purpose (Beaudoin, 2001). Thus public relations became a proactive function rather than just reactive practice.

Finally, in the 1960s, business found satisfaction in a new means with which it was able to express itself: magazines, dedicated exclusively to the business sector. Public relations professionals saw this as a great way to communicate with the consumer in order to help them understand and appreciate the business. However, the corollary to this was an increased demand of public opinion with regards to the capacity of the business to communicate and to answer to the new expectations of the consumer society (Beaudoin, 2001).

1970s: THE TRIUMPH OF LIBERALISM

During these years there was a great increase in liberalism, which had profound effects on the relations between business, government, and society. May 1968 signaled a major change, as there were many student revolutions, protesting both the [Vietnam War](#) and the Charles de Gaulle regime (Beaudoin, 2001). The voicing of opinions by new groups made its first appearance and public opinion began to be expressed through non-institutional ways (Beaudoin, 2001). Also, associations began to form, and the role of minorities in society came into question. In response, new government departments sprang up to deal with questions of diversity.

Embracing a vision of the liberal economy and society, the French State opened up social communication with the deregulation of prices, wages, and salaries; the public relations function opened up in public administration;³ and the French State revised its method of public speech

³ At this time, at least 40% of France worked for government institutions

writing to allow for more personal, and less scripted, communications with the public (Beaudoin, 2001).

In the area that was left open by the French State, the business world had the opportunity to demonstrate its role in society, and thus improving its reputation (Beaudoin, 2001). Business did this through large, public exhibitions, which were organized by private sponsors that were often U.S. business companies well versed in these practices. The French State conversely began to advance the growing concern for public opinion in business by requiring yearly social reporting, rather than just the standard financial reports at the end of every year (Beaudoin, 2001).

Soon, business began to implement the U.S. model of lobbying as a professional exercise (Beaudoin, 2001). The evolution of this function was slow and faced many obstacles in its attempt to replace the existing, traditional networks that had been created years ago when the business and government elites shared the same social origins, families and schools (Beaudoin, 2001).

Through all these twists and turns, public relations was evolving and improving. Adjustments to the practice, driven by the public sector, reveal that the profession was conducting market studies to better its performance. Also, the fields of public relations in France kept increasing and the traditional role of “Director of Information” was replaced with “Director of Communication”, “Public Relations”, “Internal Relations”, and “External Relations.” This illustrates how the role of organizing information changed and became a job of communicating with the public – a public, which at the time, was demanding dialogue (Beaudoin, 2001). Consumers publicly questioned all sectors of business and the role of “spokesperson” became increasingly important, as did the internal communications function. The business community took this opportunity to engage in dialogue in the public sphere, face up to its critics and improve its image. The heads of business were on the front line and the public relations function played a great role in keeping executives charismatic and communicative (Beaudoin, 2001).

At this time, media relations also became important, in the face of the growing interest of the news media, reinforcing the role of business in society. The economic success of business magazines sparked a demand for other media interested in focusing exclusively on the business sector. The public relations function guided the ambiguous interest of the media throughout this development (Beaudoin, 2001).

Then the **Seveso** disaster, an industrial accident that occurred in 1976, in a small chemical manufacturing plant in Italy, gave rise to standardized industrial safety regulations spanning the whole European Economic Community, including France. According to a report by the **European Commission**⁴, following the accident, the Seveso Directive was established with the aim of preventing major accidents, which involve dangerous substances and limiting their consequences for man and the environment. “Seveso establishments” are subject to continuous inspection by competent authorities, not only of their technical risk prevention measures, but also for the public information programs which are mandatory for them to inform the neighboring populations and train them for potential hazards. This impacted the practice of public relations in its relationship to industrial management, public authorities, citizens’ organizations and local media. It also reinforced the importance of the public relations function in times of crisis, as it established the need for timely and accurate updates of disasters for all parties involved (Beaudoin, 2001). The **Bhopal** catastrophe, eight years after Seveso, only stressed the new relationship of Western public

4 IMPEL Network. (1998). Interrelationship between IPPC, EIA, SEVESO directives and EMAS regulation. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-studies-and-reports/impel-full-text.pdf>

opinions to industrial hazards.

The movements of the 1970s gave the business community the desire to speak and have a greater place in society. The business world soon realized that there were many more avenues of communication in every day life (Beaudoin, 2001).

1980s AND 1990s: THE COMPETITION FOR COMMUNICATION

Starting in the 1980s, the communication paradigm supplanted that of public relations, ending in the "Communication Director model" (Walter, 1995). This transition took place under the influence of several factors: the emergence of the concept of corporate image, the development of management requirements and institutional advertising, and that of consultancy agencies in "overall communications" (Carayol, 2004). From then on, communications officers who relied on good knowledge of new information and communication technology to legitimize their work managed all aspects of the company's image and its commercial communications as well as its information policy (Carayol, 2004). The "corporate image" syndrome resulted in the growth of the public relations function among French companies, although still only the bigger ones (Beaudoin, 1999). Public relations agencies, primarily small in size, mushroomed. Most were, subsequently, taken over by either large U.K. or U.S. public relations firms or advertising agencies, with relative success. Few large French public relations agencies remained independent (Beaudoin, 1999).

Even into the 1990s, the public relations profession in France was still a small profession. The estimate is that there are 15,000 professionals at all levels of responsibilities employed in companies, government, or other organizations, of which approximately 10% are employed in agencies or as individual practitioners (Beaudoin, 1999). The profession included many well-trained executives, lured to the attractiveness of the communication function, and the availability of good public relations courses up to the highest levels of university degrees (Beaudoin, 1999).

As the words 'public relations' do not always enjoy the highest regard, many practitioners called themselves "Communications Directors", even if they do not have among their responsibilities all aspects of a company's communication program, and especially not product promotion and advertising (Beaudoin, 1999).

Although media relations accounts for an important part of the professionals' jobs, the period saw a strong development of financial public relations, lobbying, community relations (including sponsorships), and crisis management (Beaudoin, 1999). The market for public relations agencies grew in the 15 to 20 percent range each year between the late '80s and early '90s. The European Community opened up new opportunities for business in all parts of Europe in the early '90s, but especially for public relations practitioners. Jean-Pierre Piotet, president of [Eurocom](#), noted the need to constantly lobby leadership, bureaucrats and parliamentarians on an almost endless agenda of matters (Josephs & Josephs, 1993). Companies must take into account government and ministers' staffs, both House of Parliament, the administrations and elected bodies of the 22 regions, numerous *departments* and municipalities, plus the [European Union](#), which makes more and more decisions with a national impact in France (Beaudoin, n.d.). This helps to explain why public relations practitioners are increasingly called upon for lobbying.

The economic recession in 1993 resulted in a slight decrease in market volume and caused a number of agencies to disappear because their financial structure was not strong enough. As is the case in advertising, the market-leading public relations agencies are French owned, either independent, or members of large French advertising agencies (Beaudoin, 1999).

In addition to understanding the roots of the public relations industry – the history of media, the power of the state, the impact of war and propaganda, the influence of U.S. public relations, and the key figures in the professional development of the industry—there are additional influences that impact the way the profession is practiced in France. Understanding the environmental influences discussed below –political and legal, social, competitive, economic, and technical – help public relations professionals predict the outcomes of their strategies and techniques vis-à-vis the organization’s environment rather than trying to practice based on anecdotal evidence when they are required to operate in France (Sriramesh, 2009).

III. INFLUENCES ON THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

POLITICAL AND LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

The impact of legislative and regulatory measures on corporate communications is growing, especially in areas such as finance, environmental protection, and employment. France has traditionally been a highly centralized country. Most political decisions are taken in Paris, and most initiatives are generated by government agencies rather than by Parliament. In 1982, a series of bills was passed aimed at decentralizing a number of government responsibilities (e.g. in environment protection, education, and social affairs) (Beaudoin, 1999).

Today, companies must take into account not only government, (central administrations /civil servants) and ministers’ staffs (political personnel) who play a key role), but also both Houses of Parliament, and the administrations and elected bodies of regions (of which there are 22), departments (100), and municipalities (36,000). This does not include the European Union level, which makes more and more decisions with a national impact (Beaudoin, 1999).

A thriving political environment, coupled with an interventionist public sector and strong proximity to the European Union means that public affairs plays a key role. A spate of new legislative initiatives by Sarkozy has only increased the importance of public affairs (Sudhaman, 2010)

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

France is a highly organized country. There is not one interest group that does not have its own association of some sort. Not all are equally representative of the full population concerned by their interest, but all exist, have their networks and their media (Beaudoin, 2001). French interest groups have undergone many transformations as a result of changes at the European level. The launch of [the Single Market](#) and the [Economic and Monetary Union](#) have led to the increased role of private economic actors in France and elsewhere. At the same time, the development of supranational and non-European governance structures, such as the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), the

[United Nations](#) or the [Basel Committee](#) has put into jeopardy a number of characteristics of the so-called ‘French system of interest representation’, generally described as statist. At the domestic level, regulatory reform and the creation of independent agencies have upset the historical relationship between public and private spheres. Public–private relationships have become more distant and formal. One observes an evolution from informal relations, based on personal contacts and ‘old-boy networks’, to the creation of consultancies and public relations firms, while existing associations and groups are being restructured. A first assumption to test is that an Anglo-Saxon ‘type’ of lobbying is slowly taking roots in France. Another form of transformation concerns the

evolution of the *rapport de force*⁵ between groups and public actors on the one hand, and among groups on the other. Finally, we are witnessing an increasing professionalization of interest representation within most organizations (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

In France, as in other European countries, we observe firstly an increasing specialization within interest groups. The so-called 'expertification' of public policies, that is, the ever greater role of experts and expertise, has led to two parallel movements: a demand stemming from public actors vis-à-vis interest groups for more detailed and technical knowledge and the proactive transformation of interest groups towards higher specialization (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

Three examples illustrate this differentiation. In the agricultural sector, until 1981, public actors have granted the *Federation nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles* (FNSEA) a de facto monopoly in the representation of farmers' interests in national negotiations or commissions. With product offices established in 1982–1983 by Edith Cresson this *cogestion* was divided into sectors and products. The offices were substituted to interprofessional committees that existed for the management of agricultural subfields and markets. The new offices now meet under the authority of the state, and consist not only of producers but also industrialists, cooperatives and private traders (Coulomb, 1990). Another example concerns the creation of international and European services in enterprises in charge of the supervision of political processes going on at these two levels. Most of the big firms have established, from the mid-1980s onwards, offices in Brussels, which stay in very close contact with their headquarters at the national level. In the nuclear sector, for instance, a majority of the French nuclear industry and electricity producers have opened their Brussels offices in the 1980s. Lastly, under the pressure of economic internationalization, the French professional organizations internationalize and Europeanize their organizational structures. Although most possess services dealing with international questions since their establishment, one observes a clear increase of their number in the 1980s. This is due at the same time to the accession of national organizations to European and international federations and confederations, and also to the establishment of new structures at the national level – this process is very similar to that observed in the case of large firms (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

These transformations in organizational structures show how important knowledge, know-how and expertise have become for interest groups. Being recognized as an expert becomes essential in order to be an actor in French politics. Expertise thus becomes an increasingly common action repertoire in France where the mobilization of numbers is not sufficient any more. Interest groups possessing necessary expertise therefore have more influence on policy-making processes than those who still count on their privileged relationship with public actors (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

As abovementioned, another form of transformation concerns the evolution of the *rapport de force* between groups and public actors on the one hand, and among groups on the other. There has been a profound reshuffling in government–interest group relations. We observe an increased fragmentation of interest representation, which leads to the emergence of new actors and a loss of influence for old ones. Generally speaking, in a context of increasing interdependence between national and supra- or transnational policy processes, resources have to be re-evaluated. This has been most prevalent in collective wage bargaining and agricultural trade unions (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

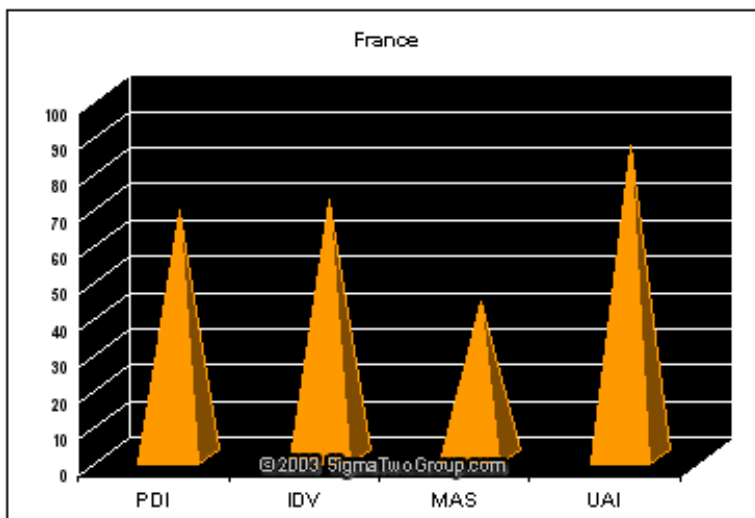
Another major change is the emergence of new types of interest groups as a result of societal

⁵ the ideological struggle of capitalism versus Marxism

change. The new forms of mobilization include: associations, new social movements and major firms. This may be a response to the transformation of the 'capitalist' economy and the emergence of new types of political participation, and also less recent social, cultural or economic actors exploring new ways of political participation (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004). The arrival of new groups disturbs the longstanding relations between established interest groups and the state. New groups are, frequently, in direct contact with the international level, but also stay linked with the national level. Their increased flexibility to react when confronted with international and European challenges is an important advantage (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004).

A final innovation in this area, and perhaps the most relevant to the public relations function in France concerns the development of professional lobbying and the professionalization of lobbying. A labor market for lobbying is slowly emerging. Specific resources and knowhow in this area are increasingly valuable, independent of sector-specific knowledge. The other significant change concerns the emergence of public affairs firms in France (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004). In Paris, there are more than 50 public affairs firms, lobby firms, specialized law firms, public relations firms and others, which offer lobby services (Grossman & Saurugger, 2004). The large majority of these firms were created in the 1990s, after the [Single European Act](#) and often explicitly in order to offer EU-related knowledge to clients.

France is a hierarchical country. According to the cultural dimensions of [Hofstede](#), France scores 68 points on the Power Distance Index (PDI), 24% higher than the world average.



Higher power distance societies are more centralized with tall, hierarchical organization structure featuring a high proportion of supervisors who give orders at the lower levels. PDI refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power be distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that the followers as much as the leaders endorse a society's level of inequality. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that 'all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others'. In each sector, there are opinion leaders or so-called "notables" who will become an opponent if they are not treated as such (Beaudoin, 1999). This is true in politics, but also in trades, medicine, journalism, etc.

Individualism (IDV) focuses on the degree the society reinforces individual or collective, achievement and interpersonal relationships. Individualistic cultures like USA (highest score = 1st rank) and France (10th rank) are more self-centered and emphasize mostly on their individual goals. People from individualistic cultures tend to think only of themselves as individuals and as "I" distinctive from other people.

Masculinity (MAS) versus its opposite, femininity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders, which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. In France, where feminine values are more important, people tend to value a good working relationship with their supervisors; working with people who cooperate well with one another, living in an area desirable to themselves and to their families, and having the security that they will be able to work for their company as long as they want.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance emotions are displayed in the way that everything different is dangerous. They resist in changes and worry about future. Cultures with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance are open for new things and changes. They don't have feelings of uncertainty about future. To prevent uncertainty societies set up laws and rules like companies do. Duties and rights (internal and external) are controlled by authorities. Some cultures need to have strong uncertainty avoidance like France. In France many strict regulations are used and tasks are heavily centralized in companies. For meetings it is important to consider that. There will be a much higher demand for details when creating a contract. This is to avoid any circumstances, which could cause any kind of uncertainty for French business people. Organizing is therefore rather inflexible concerning changes, which occur in business life.

France is Paris and the provinces (Beaudoin, 1999). There is a rivalry between Paris, with 8 million inhabitants in its urban area (out of 63 million nationally), Lyon and Marseille with around one million each, and the provinces in general who tend to resent whatever is "parachuted from Paris." There is also rivalry between the provinces, each having its local chauvinism. Local sensitivities should always be respected. There are only 4,000 municipalities with more than 2,000 inhabitants in France. Although not all are farmers, who now account for less than 5% of the population compared to 25% only 40 years ago, the rural culture is not far away. Culture has deep roots.

COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Strong "liberal" competition is a relatively recent phenomenon in the French economy. French companies were mostly established and protected by the government, which would in many areas fix the prices for goods, be it bread, petrol, drugs, and many others. The practice of fixing prices was mostly eliminated, except, for example, for drugs, under the influence of liberal ideologies and European regulations on free competition between the mid-'70s and mid-'80s. French companies have now learned to be competitive (Beaudoin, 1999). The most acute area of competition is in mass retailing of consumer goods: a war is on between the super – and hypermarket chains, and between them and their suppliers. In industrial goods sectors, competition is also growing, but buyers tend to remain true to long-established suppliers, which makes it difficult for newcomers to break into the market. A government body established in the ministry of the economy, the *Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes* (DGCCRF), plays a key role in watching competitive practices and ensuring that market mechanisms are not

hampered (Beaudoin, 1999). Once strong, the influence of consumers' organizations has decreased dramatically since the late 1980s. Only a small number (two or three) of them today exert real influence, but then very strong.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Financial markets are well organized and controlled – both by government bodies and by trade organizations. Stock markets in particular look after the stability of market operations as a key tool in developing the role of the *Paris Bourse* in international transactions. An intricate array of national, regional and local (not to mention European) bodies exist to help investors. Key criteria watched in granting government support are job creation, research, export, and technology transfers. Beyond this, being accepted is a key in succeeding in France. Increasingly, investors recognize the role of public relations in contributing, very early on, to the smooth operation of any introduction of a new player in an area, whether it be within the financial community (listing on the Bourse), an industrial branch (market entry), a market (distribution and prescribers), or a local community (Beaudoin, 1999).

The bulk of communications budgets in French companies go to advertising or advertorials, with about 35 percent allotted to public relations (Josephs & Josephs, 1993). Although there is evidence that this is now changing, there is still more budget given to advertising and more willingness to use it than to seek public relations support, especially when it comes to building brands. However, major corporations do understand the use and value of public relations for other efforts such as corporate image, stakeholder relationships, crisis management and lobbying (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Two organizations, IREP (the Institute for Advertising Research) and the UDA (the Advertisers Union), conduct frequent and large investigations to analyze the communications market in France.

INVESTMENT: The latest figures report a total investment of 32.7 billion Euros made by French companies in their media and external media communications in 2007. The latest UDA study stressed: "In a generally sluggish context in 2007, these investments increased only slightly compared to 2006 (+0.6 percent). They now account for 1.77 percent of national GDP."

Studies analyzing communications market trends and the distribution of investments in different media are regularly conducted by the IREP Institute. These studies show the importance of this economic sector and, from the viewpoint of public relations, its relative health regarding investment, with a slight increase of 3.4 percent over the last year. The Internet sector, experiencing a 36 percent investment increase, is holding up the communications market while investment in radio and classic direct marketing (not via the web) has decreased (Carayol, 2010).

EMPLOYMENT IN THE SECTOR: According to the UDA, more than 68,000 companies (consulting, media and service providers) are working either part-time or solely on communications or advertising. These companies employ nearly 370,000 people (Carayol, 2010).

TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

France is a world leader in a number of key technologies: aeronautics, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, software, but also, of course, in cheese, wine, fashion, and fragrances. As a result, you will find highly qualified researchers and engineers, as well as journalists, in all areas of technology. They resent any vulgarization of scientific information (Beaudoin, 1999).

Public relations tools are evolving. New technologies have recently emerged that require agencies to think about the relevance of these new potential tools: for instance, the recent expansion of corporate blogs and other significant communities (Debrant, 2007).

Specialized agencies have emerged with web-based public relations strategies: buzz marketing, viral marketing, blogging, etc. The Internet user has become a true target as influential bloggers have become true prescribers. It is surely a rising phenomenon, but still very controversial and not fully used by agencies (Debrant, 2007).

So far blogs have not penetrated the mass market and brand blogs frequently suffer a true lack of content. The fact is that public relations agencies are starting to face the challenging issue of addressing bloggers and integrating brand blogs in more traditional public relations strategies. It certainly has become the core business of a few emerging agencies, but it is still too early to say whether it will be the future of public relations in France (Debrant, 2007).

IV. CULTURAL IDIOSYNCRACIES AFFECTING PUBLIC RELATIONS

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM

Individualism is essentially an American trait and may not be welcome abroad. United States' businesses value self-determination, achievement, future orientation, optimism, curiosity, problem solving and doing more than is expected (Ihator, 2000). In France, such traits may be seen as self-serving. The well being of one's family, the community or the region is stressed over that of the individual (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

One European director of a large global firm points out that the U.S. is a truly capitalist system. France is moving towards capitalism, but social issues are still very important. Therefore, a company focusing only on the bottom line at the expense of social issues will soon be the target of public criticism or attacks from various stakeholders. Perhaps reflecting this attitude, French firms are more secretive than American firms with financial figures (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

ORIENTATION TO TIME

Time has a different meaning in high-context cultures like France. Time is not seen as a valuable commodity, nor does it dominate a person's activities. Instead, the flow of social interactions determines the rate of progress. Social harmony takes precedence over time control in communication. Many activities, both social and business, may be scheduled at the same time, with no priority placed on work. The creation and maintenance of a relationship is viewed as more important than deadlines or meeting times. Work, family and social lives are all viewed as one (Ihator, 2000).

A director-general of Edelman-France related that the nominal two-hour lunch is a favorite marketing device in France, even though it often takes several such lunches to get to the point (Josephs & Josephs, 1993). Meals in general are not hurried; a Sunday dinner with friends and associates may begin shortly after noon and last until dark. Most meals are served in courses, often including a cheese course and an aperitif. This is very different than the atypical, hurried American business lunch (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

TRUST ISSUES

In general, communication in France is more conceptual and less pragmatic. Most media are not trusted, although, radio newscasts rate higher than others. The French people pride themselves in making up their own minds rather than believing what they are told. Questioning and defiance are common, often resulting in strikes and demonstrations. There seems to be no more resistance to change than in the United States (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

In Europe, trust in business has dropped and is only about three-fourths as strong as in the United States. Opinion leaders in both regions exhibit highest levels of trust in the company they work for, particularly in the United States (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

In both regions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the [Sierra Club](#) and [Greenpeace](#), are now the most trusted institutions. For Europe, the high trust in NGOs is followed closely by trust in business and the media, with trust in government lowest of all. Opinion leaders in Europe find third-party authorities most trustworthy, especially academics and doctors (Edelman, 2003).

In general, public-private partnerships are not trusted, though there are examples of this changing. The [French Ministry of Education](#) recently launched a public campaign to allow students to get a laptop for 1€. They were supported by the interactive technology (IT) industry in France and partnered with corporations such as [Dell](#), [Hewlett-Packard](#), [Microsoft](#), [Intel](#), [IBM](#), and various banks (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Certain major American brands are significantly less trusted in Europe. One example is France's strong negative reaction in 1999 when Coca-Cola from the Antwerp facilities was found to be contaminated. In the United States and Europe, trust in brands varies significantly by industry sector; consumer goods sectors are most trusted while the retail financial sector is least credible (Edelman, 2003).

There exists in France an overall sentiment of "disenchantment" toward communications practices. Professionals in this sector are often accused of creating a superficial society that is only concerned with appearances and consumption (Debord, 1967; Baudrillard, 1972). The professions within communications are also suspected of skewing the democratic process. Actors in the major national media claim they want to serve as watchdogs so as to not be subject to manipulation "from economic or political lobbying." Furthermore, very critical speeches on the functions of propaganda and "spin doctors" are regularly published (Carayol, 2010).

WORK ETHIC

There are differences, however, in the approach to work. In France, people come in late, go out for lunch, leave work late and stop during the day to go and talk to their colleagues. This is not seen as a waste of time, but as a way to take a break so that their mind can then start thinking again more clearly. In Paris in particular, however, this practice is beginning to erode. You now see more and more people eating a salad or a sandwich in front of their computer for lunchtime, but they still invite clients to a leisurely lunch to strengthen the relationship. The French will take more time because they need to discuss things, to process thoughts and to exchange with colleagues. They have a more intellectual or academic way of working (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

V. EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH FRENCH CONSTITUENCIES

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ELEMENTS

Each form of communication has its style. Cultural and graphic references are diverse and impact the style of each public and type of message. From comic strips (a Franco-Belgian specialty) to financial ads, France shows a diversity of styles - perhaps greater than are to be found in "Anglo-Saxon" environments.

The French like to play on words, but, in a professional environment, they appreciate clarity. The print media is influenced by the use of headlines and photographs: copy is brief, with headlines and pictures. The French appreciate good speakers, not theatrical but not boring, even for technical presentations. Visual aids are now expected in all circumstances (Beaudoin, 1999).

INDIRECT VERSUS DIRECT MESSAGES

A poetic people, the French like metaphors, provided that they are first told what it is about. Seduction is less and less a stand-alone exercise: facts first. And everybody will have an opinion on the facts.

WORD-OF-MOUTH

France is a country where the most research has been carried out on the phenomenon of rumors (Beaudoin, 1999). The French tend to believe those who they know and trust more than any media, but this is not a national characteristic and the same is true in many other countries (Beaudoin, 1999). Word-of-mouth is particularly effective and useful among specific interest groups.

CHANNELS AND CREDIBILITY

Depending on which public you are addressing, and with which message, the channel chosen must be the one that has the closest, and most credible, link to the message: it must be identified by the audience as reliable for the specific type of message. Apart from this, there is no general rule (Beaudoin, 1999).

Doctors continue to be included among the most reliable sources of information for the French, as opposed to television journalists. Across the country, regional daily newspapers continue to enjoy a high credibility. They are also the only sector of dailies, which are still profitable (Beaudoin, 1999).

MESSAGES AND CREDIBILITY

Science and technology are seen as adding credibility to any message. Promises are no longer taken for granted. Recent research shows that the French like innovation, and can distinguish between what is new and that which is innovative. Respecting the environment and being good for one's health are also increasingly useful messages, not unlike what is seen in other developed countries. Yet, the French are not very militant in either area (Beaudoin, 1999).

In all cases, messages must convey the impression that the sender has understood his audience and speaks the same language. In one word: messages must be formed to help integrate them into a given community (Beaudoin, 1999).

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Combine credible channels and integrated messages, and you have the answer. Which means that you must first gain an in-depth understanding of your publics. French people like to be listened to before being addressed, and opinion-leaders like to be recognized as experts (Beaudoin, 1999).

Consistent with Ithor's theory, location of the source of the message or activity becomes part of the communication in France. It is well acknowledged that Paris is playing a key if not pivotal role in the French public relations market. It is important that the public relations function be conducted in Paris; it would not be as influential as it was the same activity from another town in France. In Europe, the "capital" city always plays a "leader" role. Likewise, the Europeans picture the United States through Washington. In Europe, the place from where an issue is addressed is part of the message. For example, a public relations event has to be organized in a place that is as representative as possible to the nature of the event. In a press release, the choice of the place is critical. In the United States, the location of the release is only related to what happened there (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

In general, communication strategies tend to be bright and full of fresh ideas and innovative concepts, but are difficult to move to action. They often are not pragmatic (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

VI. CURRENT STATE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN FRANCE

TERMINOLOGY

French dictionaries offer different definitions of the term public relations (Couchan & Flahault, 2007). *The Larousse* defines it as "professional activities, which are intended to inform about and to promote the achievements of a collectivity." *Le Robert* gives the following definition, "a set of methods and techniques used by groups (companies, trade unions, political parties, States) and especially, by interest groups, to create a climate of trust with their employees (...) and with the public at large, in order to support their activity and help them grow." Finally, *Le Littré* gives the following definition, "set of professional activities which are intended to inform about and promote a company."

Syntec RP, the authoritative union in the field of public relations, offers the most comprehensive definition: "Public relations is a set of customized methods for communicating with different audiences, with the aim of promoting sustained awareness or reputation for an institution, a company, a brand, a product, an idea or a personality" (Syntec RP, 2007).

The term "RP" in French commonly refers to "relations presse" (Couchan & Flahault, 2007).

SPECIALTIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

The public relations market in France is actually fairly large, but varies among types of businesses and from one location to another. More recently companies in France are seeking out public

relations firms. Recently, strong growth has been experienced in the areas of financial communications, lobbying, community relations and crisis management. France is a world leader in aeronautics, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, software, cheese, wine, fashion and perfume, so it is logical to conclude that the public relations function serving these industries will continue to grow and thrive in the future. For the most part that prediction has held true with one exception: the practice has not yet evolved to hiring outside firms in the fashion and beauty products industries (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

There are a number of firms in Paris that specialize in various public relations activities that are growing in demand. These include publishing, special events, fundraising, speechwriting, trade shows and press conferences. The French public relations market is weaker than in the U.S., but is evolving positively in terms of its image and its prospects for business (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKFORCE

A study of 300 people working for agencies, companies or public authorities was conducted by the UJJEJ (Business Journalists Union) in 2006.

GENDER: Women represent 48 percent of employees in agencies, 67 percent in businesses and 70 percent in local authorities. The proportion of women in agencies has remained unchanged for several years, while their numbers in businesses and local government have been growing.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: Nearly 50 percent of the public relations population has ten years or more experience as well as a graduate (Masters) degree. Only 13 percent of this population holds a Bachelor degree or lower. In regard to the institution in which the degree was obtained, 50 percent of degrees are from public universities and 40 percent from private schools. The subjects studied include communications and/or journalism (42 percent), management and commerce (25 percent), political science (15 percent), and various subjects within the fields of human sciences or humanities (15 percent). The continuous development of specific training in communications in French universities since the mid-1980s has been fruitful, with a significant amount of professionals trained in information and communication sciences (Carayol, 2010).

PUBLIC RELATIONS MODELS/APPROACHES

The idea of integrated marketing communication has been popular since the 1990s. After that, professionals had *360°*, or "*holistic communications*," to which Publicis still refers. These approaches have been attempts at drawing the business into integrated advertising groups. Yet, professionals continue to witness the specificities of public relations as covering a broader field than marketing, and therefore escaping marketing-driven methods. Today some public relations programs resort to techniques, which are derived from advertising, marketing or other disciplines in the field of communications. The relationships of companies and brands to people require, beyond the "consumer insight" to which marketing refers for marketing purposes, "citizen insight" which tells of all constituencies' (publics, stakeholders or however you would qualify them) perceptions and behaviors, in all forms which society would take, including the form of markets. France is not a country for "models" (Beaudoin, n.d).

MEDIA RELATIONS

The relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists in France appears to be similar to that in the United States. There is a friendly tension stemming from different goals, along with some defensiveness, but in general the relationships are cooperative. However, journalists in France often freelance to do media training and write brochures. In doing so, they compete for the same work done by many public relations professionals (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Alternately, some say there is no relationship between French journalists and public relations professionals. Journalists want to be in touch with top management because they know that the person to provide information, not the public relations person. Journalists prefer to go directly to the source, which means the chairman and/or company president. Otherwise, it is perceived as a waste of time for them. This observation implies that the use of public relations professionals as spokespersons for companies is less than common. France does not have systems where journalists place their requests for speakers or interviews (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

French journalists expect the public relations professional to be both a resource and a gateway. Trust between the two is built up over time through regular contacts and the provision of valuable information. Many times, this means that clients have to be taught to develop meaningful and legitimate news stories. French journalists will not be bought, hate being pushed around and just want news (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

In the United States, there is very little crossover between the news and editorial side of a newspaper and its advertising department. When pressure is brought to bear upon the public relations representative of a company to purchase advertising space, it is considered to be unethical. Still, exceptions do exist, especially in the trade journals.

In France, however, and in Germany and Italy as well, it is a common practice to link coverage with advertising buys. The public relations manager of a large global manufacturing company recently commented, "I've often been involved in editorial meetings in Europe where they would approach me after the presentation and say, 'I would be glad to cover your story if you will buy advertising space.' At first, I would think they were at the wrong meeting" (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

WORKING WITH NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

A major difference in the practice of public relations can be found in non-profit organizations. Even though charitable giving has increased lately with campaign for orphan diseases (a telethon), cancer and AIDS research, French people do not have a propensity for donating money to charitable causes. Taxes are higher, and such causes are expected to be supported through the government. As a result, public relations activities in non-profit organizations involve little actual fundraising and development work (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

PUBLIC RELATIONS AT THE BUSINESS LEVEL

The role of public relations is less understood in France than in the United States, for "historical and cultural reasons." The frequent perception is that public relations is limited to press relations and is not readily linked with activities in financial communications, change communications, crisis preparedness and management. Alain-Serge Deloitte of Deloitte and Associates voiced a similar opinion, stating, "Neither people, media or opinion leaders fully understand what it is we do or our role in contemporary life" (Josephs & Josephs, 1993).

The public relations function is not mandatory for business in France. It is, instead, governed by the priority the chairman of a company places on the function, rather than by the management team's view of it as a tool. The level of professionalism seen in written press releases is missing in France as well (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Interestingly, the work culture of French public relations firms does not differ dramatically in substance from that of the United States. American management theory and practices pervade French business. Because of tough market competition, public relations firms must deliver more to be successful. A typical chairman will not pay for a press release, because he will think that someone on his staff can do the job cheaper (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

A major difference in the level of public relations practiced appears to be in the expectations of the client. Public relations practices are changing as clients have become more and more demanding and hard to please. The concept of return on investment in public relations is now a real concern for companies, which are expecting (as for all other investments) some kind of a 'guaranteed' result often illustrated by ROI (Debrant, 2007).

It looks like some agencies are taking bad risks in answering this demand by putting in place some dangerous results-based evaluations systems: this could eventually take agencies away from their core business, morale and standards. Consequently, public relations trade associations, for instance the Syntec RP in France, are carefully watching this trend and carry out common reflections to maintain a professional code of ethics and define the smarter position to adopt in facing this ongoing issue (Debrant, 2007).

CLIENT SERVICE CONTRACTS

In France, it is seen as a matter of honor to fulfill the intent of the client/service contract as well as the letter of the contract. Clients expect consulting firms to go beyond what is agreed upon when additional services will advance their goal. While the expectations between firms and clients in the United States appear well defined with clear goals for outcomes, in France expectations are "still to be revealed." This can become a serious problem for the French firms working on a set budget (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS IN COMPANIES

According to the latest study by the UJJEF (2006) conducted with 300 communications professionals (directors of communications or heads of agencies) from large corporate structures (containing 1000 employees or more), the size of a communications department varies with the type of organization within which it lies. A total of 65 percent of businesses have a communications department of fewer than ten people (and 41 percent of those have fewer than five). Within local government offices, 57 percent of communications departments contain fewer than ten people (with 22 percent containing fewer than five). Communications departments consisting of more than 15 people are present in 22 percent of companies and in 35 percent of local government offices.

The public sector has extensively expanded its communications activities by recruiting personnel who are often more qualified than those in the private sector. The percentage of women working in communications is also, as seen earlier, higher in the public sector than that in the private. The 2007 annual UDA survey also shows that nearly two-thirds of workers in communications departments have executive titles and report directly to the CEO.

In the same way, the public relations business seems to be more attractive for large communication players: many advertising businesses have noticed the increasing influence of public relations. As an example, Euro RSCG and TBWA, the advertising ‘big guys’, are now marketing their public relations expertise more aggressively by promoting distinctive brands (Euro RSCG C&O, TBWA/PR) for their public relations services, which used to be mixed in their corporate services portfolio.

Some practitioners expect the French market for public relations services to be flat for another two years, but it should grow after that. Others project a growth in public relations practice in France over the next five years, both in size and in function. On the other hand, some maintain that companies need to get into the habit of communicating more of the day-to-day business of the company to the public. This thinking parallels the movement in the U.S. for more transparency among businesses, corporations, non-profits and government agencies (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

INCREASING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE PROFESSION

According to the SYNTEC study, conducted by the LH2 firm in 2005-2006, communications agencies are involved in sectors that reach these audiences:

- customers and commercial issues;
- employees and social issues;
- shareholders, investors and financial stakes;
- governments and local regulatory issues;
- public service movements and consumerist society issues;
- distributors, partners and operational issues;
- media and issues regarding “reputation” and image awareness; and
- advisers and issues of “credibility.”

The organization’s approach is an attempt to legitimize professional territory and the social impact of the practices of communication professionals. The professionalization of communications professions continues, assuming a rhetoric that is increasingly oriented toward social needs (Carayol, 2010).

The trade organization (SYNTEC) points out that, “the impact of communications on business activity and the business environment is neither directly nor systematically linked to the amount of investment made in the latter, but to the relevance of the investment.” It emphasizes the societal issues involved in communications practices as well as their importance in terms of business.

In so doing, the trade association is reinforcing the analysis which sees the public relations sector more as a “labour intensive” sector than as a “capital intensive” sector where activity is simply measured by the exchange of capital and purchasing services as done to some extent in the advertising sector (Falconi, 2006). The meaning and added social values of communications practices are questioned in the SYNTEC study. For the first time the societal issues involved in communication practices are stressed and promoted (Carayol, 2010).

COMPETING WITH THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY

Advertising is commonly used to increase brand awareness. Despite the fact that public relations is more effective in reputation management and is less expensive, companies still look more readily

to advertising. France has a strong advertising culture that has been around for years; large advertising agencies have “educated” French managers to believe in the power of advertising. Managers tend to rely on their own networks and conduct their own “public relations,” which is often undermined by the lack of a structured approach and poor training in how to address specific audiences (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Advertising in France is aggressive and provocative. Many ads would be censored from prime time in the United States. The French public expects creativity in an advertisement – what they call the “French flair” – while the commercial aspect of the message is subtle. Advertisements are expected to entertain an audience. French advertising messages are less direct, almost as if the business of selling products and services is an afterthought (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

Very few companies in France truly understand the role of public relations compared to advertising, and if they do, they tend to reduce it to media relations. It is expected that the organization must be of a certain size or publicly traded to need the public relations function. It is doubtful that the French would agree that public relations could be more effective, less expensive and even a more appropriate type of communication for a particular audience (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

By law, French news media and public channels are not use to Anglo-Saxon words when French equivalents are available. Most advertising and public relations firms follow the ban in public communication, even though it is not strictly enforced. Apparently, it has very little effect on the actual practice of public relations. Instead of shying away from the English language, there is a strong focus among children and young adults n learning to speak English. It is seen as the “language of business,” and proficiency in English is accepted as a prerequisite for success at work (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

VII. PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCIES AND CONSULTANCIES

Although major United States public relations firms have a presence in France ([Burson-Marsteller](#), for example, has had a presence in France for some 30 years), the market-leading public relations firms tend to be French-owned independent firms or part of French-owned advertising agencies. Large firms can employ 100-140 people, but many public relations agencies in Paris are small firms with two to ten professional staff (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005). Specifically, a 2008 study by ANAE (Association of Event Communications Agencies) of agencies specializing in “events” found that the average size of this type of specialized agency is approximately 11 employees, and its economic activity is geared toward:

- projects within companies (79 percent)
- public organizations (10 percent)
- charitable associations (6 percent); and
- other organizations (7 percent)

At the public relations business level, there is a trend for agencies to reach a critical size. Following the recent mergers of Trait d'union/Clipping and Trimedia Communications France/Euro Tandem, many agencies feel they need to get bigger so as to be more competitive. Skills in various industry sectors are enlarged as the number of consultants increases and hence margins and market shares (Debrant, 2007).

Agency activity is led out of the capital city Paris. The three biggest public relations agencies are understood to be Havas-owned [Euro RSCG](#), [Publicis Consultants](#), and [TBWA Corporate](#), the public relations arm of [Omnicom](#)-owned advertising agency TBWA (Sudhaman, 2010).

Publicis Consultants Worldwide is a fast-growing network of agencies that provide strategic communications and counsel to companies, brands and institutions. Between wholly owned agencies, subsidiaries, and partners, Publicis Consultants Worldwide offers a service network of 63 agencies in 33 countries. The network's 1,350 collaborators support their clients by defining their identity, developing their image & defending their reputation, and deepening their relationship with all their stakeholders in response to evolving communications needs and demands. Utilizing the benefits of local market knowledge together with the backing of an extended global network, Publicis Consultants Worldwide offers clients state-of-the-art holistic communications services. Publicis Consultants Worldwide is part of Publicis Groupe, the world's fourth largest communications group.

The merger of Publicis Consultants with sister agency [MS&L](#) has created the world's third-biggest public relations consultancy by revenues, led by [Publicis Groupe](#) senior executive Oliver Fleurot and MS&L president Fabrice Fries (Sudhaman, 2010). MS&LGroup was created at the end of 2009, when Publicis Groupe brought together two global public relations companies and 13 specialist firms, MS&LGroup overnight became one of the world's top five PR networks. At MS&LGroup, more than 2,500 people in 83 offices share best practices and knowledge in traditional and emerging communication channels. Offering a broad range of public relations disciplines, all of the member agencies are part of one family, with a single global management team. Key members in France include: [Carré Noir](#), [Net Intelligenz](#), and [Publicis Events](#).

SYNTEC Conseil en Relations Publiques (SYNTEC RP) is the leading trade association for the French public relations consultancy industry. SYNTEC RP represents more than 35 members and regroups various types of structures from small-specialized agencies to large structures within international consultancy networks.

SYNTEC RP MEMBER AGENCIES

[ADOCOM](#)

[ALTERIS ENVIRONNEMENT](#)

[AREVACOM](#)

[AROMATES](#)

[AUVRAY & ASSOCIES](#)

[BACH & PARTENAIRES](#)

[BORACAY](#)

[BURSON-MARSTELLER](#)

[BV CONSEIL Presse & Relations Publiques](#)

[CAPITAL IMAGE](#)

COHN & WOLFE

EDELMAN

EURO RSCG C&O

FHCOM

FLEISHMAN-HILLARD

FLORENCE GILLIER COMMUNICATION

GREENWICH

HILL & KNOWLTON

I&E CONSULTANTS

IRMA COMMUNICATION

LE PUBLIC SYSTEME

LOWE STRATEUS

MS&L

PORTER NOVELLI

PROFILE PR

PUBLICIS CONSULTANTS

RUDER.FINN FRANCE

SELF IMAGE

TBWA\CORPORATE

TEXT 100 FRANCE

THOMAS MARKO & ASSOCIES

VFC Relations Publiques

WAGGENER EDSTROM

WEBER SHANDWICK

WELLCOM

ZMIROV COMMUNICATION

VIII. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

France has a number of professional organizations that could become more involved in professional development. To make this effective, however, a greater percentage of practitioners need to become members of these organizations, perhaps encouraged through employment practices.

SYNTEC CONSEIL EN RELATIONS PUBLIQUES

SYNTEC Conseil en Relations Publiques is the leading trade association for the French PR consultancy industry. It exists in order to promote, defend and raise standards in Public Relations. The mission is also to position its members as PR specialists and to guarantee their professionalism. In addition, the Association strictly monitors its members' observance of a code of ethics. The company represents more than 35 members who, between them, represent around half of the French PR industry's fee income. SYNTEC regroups various types of structures from small-specialized agencies to large structures within international consultancy networks. All SYNTEC's members are bound by the Professional Code of Ethics and the common desire to: promote the value of PR and the need for high standards, tackle industry issues through our committees and special interest groups, and commission PR industry surveys.

<http://www.syntec-rp.com>

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANCY ORGANIZATION (ICCO)

The International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO) is the voice of public relations consultancies around the world. The ICCO membership comprises national trade associations in twenty-eight countries across the globe: from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas and Australia. Collectively, these associations represent some 1,400 PR firms. ICCO provides a forum for senior management of the world's best PR consultancies to meet and address issues of mutual interest and concern. Members work together to raise standards of quality, address ethical issues, harmonize professional PR consultancy practice, and share knowledge. Through the online directory, ICCO also acts as a matchmaker between consultancies in different countries. Members have an opportunity to meet in person twice a year at meetings of the Board, at the bi-annual ICCO Global Summit and at any number of ICCO regional summits and other sponsored events.

www.iccopr.com

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION (IPRA)

The concept of establishing an international public relations association first took concrete shape in November 1949 during a meeting in London between two Dutch and four British public relations practitioners. As they discussed their respective activities, the idea emerged of organizing public relations professionals into a transnational society with the objective of raising standards of public relations practice in the various countries and improving the quality and efficiency of practitioners. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) was formally established in London on May 1 1955, with the adoption of a Constitution and the appointment of the first IPRA Council. IPRA is

dedicated to providing both intellectual leadership in the practice of international public relations and making available to its members the services that will help them meet their professional responsibilities and to succeed in their careers, ultimately enabling the Association to increase membership, grow financially and create a virtuous circle of success.

www.ipra.org

EUROPEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONFEDERATION (CERP)

The European Public Relations Confederation represents about 22000 PR practitioners, consultants, in house specialists, teachers, researchers and students in Europe. Its main objective is to represent the European PR profession and to establish contacts, exchanges, and co-operative links between PR associations and their members worldwide. In 2006 CERP became closely linked to the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA) - www.globalalliancepr.org - positioning itself as its 'European wing'.

www.cerp.org

ENTREPRISES & MÉDIAS

Founded in 1985, Business & Media currently has more than 100 communications directors of companies or institutions. The main objective is to serve as a meeting place for communications directors to exchange their experiences and best practices, and to pool their expertise in order to improve the quality of relations with businesses and various stakeholders.

www.entreprises-medias.org

UNION DES JOURNAUX ET JOURNALISTES D'ENTREPRISE DE FRANCE (UJJEF)

The UJJEF - Business Communication and is the hub of reflection, training and exchange of all professionals in business communication. With over 1400 members, the UJJEF - Business Communication is present in Paris and also in Lille, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon and Nantes. Its objectives: federate communications professionals in business, agency or independent; offer them a place of reflection, services and trade; contribute to their continuing education; assist in the creation, development and improvement of the tools of business communication; to share its tools and promote their business by participating in their teaching in schools, institutes and universities; monitor trends and developments in communication and be a resource center and documentation on these subjects; to define and evolve the standards and practices of the inter; and to represent it before the public authorities.

www.ujjef.com

SYNDICAT NATIONAL DES ATTACHÉS DE PRESSE (SYNAP)

Created in 1960, SYNAP, the National Union of Press Attaches Professionals and Consultants Public Relations, has over 200 members working in 22 sectors of activity.

Its members are: press attachés confirmed, independent, in agency or employees, or public relations consultants; trainees under two years of experience; and students.

These professionals are careful to respect the customs and rules of the profession defined by the Codes of Ethics, Code of Athens, and Ethics, Code of Professional Code Lisbon on French Public Relations adopted by the international public relations and by ministerial decree of October 1964 establishing these occupations.

www.synap.org

ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DE COMMUNICATION INTERNE (AFCI)

At the AFCI, we believe that the performance of an organization is deeply related to the quality of relations established within it, with its partners and stakeholders.

Founded in 1989, the French Association of Internal Communications (AFCI), brings together over 400 members, communication professionals in public and private companies, consultants and academics.

The AFCI has three missions: (1) professionalizing- intended to enable everyone to examine their practices and broaden their scope, (2) exchange- providing a forum for exchange of practices between communicators working in different contexts and shared values, and (3) shine- sharing with its clients a vision of professional internal communication and its values, their goal is to explore possibilities and to push the boundaries.

www.afci.asso.fr

ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DES CONSEILS EN LOBBYING (AFCL)

Founded in 1991, the French Association of Councils in Lobbying and Public Affairs brings together the leading group of counsels practicing in France for at least two years. The main objectives of the AFCL include: collect and represent professionals from French public authorities and institutions of the European Union; explain the functioning and social utility of the profession in the universities and colleges, with training centers and in the media; and promote to businesses the ability, professionalism and ethics of members of the AFCL.

www.afcl.net

ASSOCIATION POUR LES RELATIONS AVEC LES POUVOIRS PUBLICS (ARPP)

Founded in 1985, the Association of Professional Relations Officers with Public Authorities, brings together the key public and private actors of economic life. It serves as a representative body of the profession to all public authorities, associations, corporations, and professionals.

www.arpp.net

ASSOCIATION DES CONSEILS EN AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES (AFCAP)

www.affairespubliques.com

ASSOCIATION COMMUNICATION PUBLIQUE

For professionals exercising in the public sector or interested in it.

www.communication-publique.conseil-etat.fr

UNION DES ANNONCEURS (UDA)

The Union of Advertisers (UDA), an association governed by the law of 1901, was founded in 1916. It is, in France, the representative organization of advertisers, businesses, communities or organizations that use different communication techniques to promote their reputation, their image, their products or services.

www.uda.fr

ASSOCIATION DES AGENCES CONSEILS EN COMMUNICATION (AACC)

Founded in 1972, the AACC is the Professional Union of Communication Agencies, Boards, comprising nearly 200 consulting agencies in Advertising, Marketing Services, Interactive Communication, Communication: Editorial, Corporate, Event, Production and Communication Advertising Health. All these agencies meet the selection criteria and agree to abide by all professional rules. The label of the AACC is one of credibility recognized by the entire market.

www.aacc.fr

ASSOCIATION NATIONALE DES AGENCES EVÉNEMENTIELLES (ANAE)

The association of event communication agencies (ANAé) - a nonprofit organization founded in 1981 is the principal trade association of French expert, specialist agencies in event communications, tourism, business and professional organizations.

The ANAé brings together 70 agencies in France and more than 1,500 full-time employees who produce 7500 events each year (2008 figures). From consulting, creation, design and coordination, implementation, agencies in ANAé manage over 800 million Euros budgeted by companies, institutions or governments for event communications.

www.anae.org

IX. ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

GUIDE TO CAREERS IN COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA:

<http://www.sciencescom.org/guide/metiers-communication.php>

According to Campus France, with 4,000 communications firms and 10,000 jobs in France alone, public relations is a fact of modern life. Professional communications services are indispensable in many sectors” the arts, sports, advocacy, and politics, as well as in business – where they are differentiated between internal and external communications. Communication specialists are responsible for creating and controlling images and perceptions. Journalists and communicators often share a common curriculum at the outset of their higher education but diverge gradually as they advance.

Graduates in communications need to have a network of contacts and connections, which they must form very early on. Their indispensable attributes – some innate, some learned – include broad education, knowledge of communication techniques, editing and writing ability, and a good command of English. Programs differ widely; some are very costly.

Communications and public relations specialists often train as journalists or in less-specialized fields: political science, business administration, human resources, literature, or the humanities. They are expected to be skilled in writing, speech or public speaking, English (the language of business) and in making social connections. Those that do best also are able to quickly understand the big picture in a situation. Public relations is taught in business schools and in communication departments at universities.

IUTs (university-based institutions of technology), universities, business schools, and specialized schools of communications offer numerous programs. All practice selective admissions.

BTS (*brevet de technicien supérieur*, a two-year technical certificate offered at secondary schools) in business communication, with specializations in internal, external, commercial, and strategic communications.

DUT (*diplôme universitaire de technologie*, a two-year technical diploma offered by universities) in information and communication) often known as “info-com”): academic course coupled with practical training (numerous internships). Many options are possible, from journalism to advertising, opening the way to a wide range of careers and opportunities for further study.

The universities also offer various programs leading to a DEUST (a two-year technical degree) in information, communication, culture and multimedia. Some areas of specialization are: audio-visual communication, documentations, and information sciences.

Licence in information and communication (a three-year undergraduate program): general education, including history, economics, sociology, theories of communication (concepts, writing, information processing), and practical case studies. Students are advised to continue on for additional specialized training.

IUP (university-affiliated professional institutes, admission to programs after two years of postsecondary study). Curriculum leads to *diplôme d'ingénieur maître* (masters engineer) in three years. Two orientations are possible:

- Information and communication consulting and planning

- New management technologies or management information systems

MASTERS DEGREES IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

All two-year general master's degrees include some instruction in media; those designed for future programmers focus exclusively on the technical aspects of media.

Research master's programs pave the way to a doctoral program and a career in research (in a company or nonprofit organization) or higher education. Individuals holding a *licence* in a related field are automatically eligible to enter the first year of the master's program, but they must earn the right to continue on for the second year.

- **CELSA** Paris Sorbonne (University of Paris), is France's best-known school of communication. Highly selective admissions to undergraduate and master's programs in:
 - Corporate and organizational communication
 - Marketing, advertising and communication
 - Human resources and communication
 - Communication, media and media coverage
 - Magistère degree in communication

A research curriculum in information and communication sciences leads to the doctorate.

SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

- **Advancia** (Paris)
- **CERAM** Euro-American Institute of Technology in Sophia Antipolis (near Nice)

Four-year curriculum leading to a bachelor in communication

- **ISEG** executive program (offered at seven schools in France)

Five-year program with the possibility of specializing in advertising and communication beginning in the fourth year.

SPECIALIZED MASTER'S PROGRAMS (*mastères spécialisés*)

At schools of business (1-year programs for graduates of business programs):

- **ESCP-EUROPE**, Paris: Marketing and communication, media, strategy and management of information systems
- **ESC Rouen**: Corporate communication
- **ESC Lille**: Communication strategy and management
- **ESC Toulouse**: Marketing, management, and communication
- **ESC Dijon-Bourgogne**: International financial communication
- **IDRAC**: Communication and commercial development
- **INSEEC**: Communication and advertising, marketing, communication and commercial strategy.

SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS

- **EFAP** (French school for press attachés): four-year program leading to degree in communications, certified by the French government as equivalent to a *licence* or *maîtrise*.
- **IICP** (international institute of communications of Paris): three-year program in public relations, journalism, or marketing/advertising.

- **IRCOM** (institute of public relations and communication): admission to one-year program for individuals holding three-year undergraduate degree; level-2 communication specialist.
- **ISCOM Paris** (school of communication and advertising): undergraduate and graduates programs in journalistic, audiovisual and multimedia communication and in global business communications. Applicants are admitted after two or three years of postsecondary study.
- **ISCPA** (media institute), Lyon and Paris: journalism, production, and communication. Communication track: a professionally oriented program at the *licence* level focusing on communication through the media and beyond the media.
- **ISTC Lille** (institute of communication strategies and techniques): applicants are admitted after two or three years of postsecondary study.
- **Sciences Com Nantes** (school of communication and media): communication (through brands and social networks), journalism, and new media. Selective admissions by examination of applicants who have completed two years of postsecondary study.
- **Sup de Com** (school of communication) in Lyon, Montpellier, and Nantes.

INSTITUTES OF POLITICAL STUDIES

France's IEPs (institutes of political studies) offer master's degrees in communication or journalism that are well regarded in professional circles:

- **Paris**: new media, international dimensions, firms
- **Lyon**: research, corporate communications, institutional culture
- **Aix-en-Provence**: organizational communication at the international level
- **Lille**: corporate institutional and financial communications
- **Bordeaux**: public and political communication, public affairs, and interest representation
- Political communications may also be studied at **ISMAPP** (institute of public and political management)

PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

In France, there is a lack of professional trade publications on the public relations industry. Some organizations (see below) serve as sources for information in France.

THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

www.instituteforpr.com

THE USC ANNEBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION

www.annenbergschool.usc.edu/sprc

THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (CIPR)

<http://www.cipr.co.uk/>

MAGAZINE DE LA COMMUNICATION CRISE & SENSIBLE

www.communication-sensible.com

X. MEDIA IN FRANCE

MEDIA INDEPENDENCE

France is an exception to government control of the media. Even though the French government has historically financially supported Agence France Presses, the ownership and operation are separated (Ihator, 2000).

While in the United States, the goal of news reporting is to write without bias or opinion (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005). In European journalism, however, it is acceptable for a reporter to write the news subjectively and comment editorially on the subject. In such high-context societies, news reports are meant to be colorful, inspirational and insightful. They may contain metaphors, vagueness, exaggerations and ambiguous ideas to create a certain effect. Credibility may relate more to emotional appeal than to facts (Ihator, 2000).

French journalists are cautious about working closely with companies and are less trusting than their American counterparts of news releases, which are often seen as promotional. There is less public concern over journalism bias, however, and policies restricting the acceptance of gifts by journalists are not as strict as in the United States. The president of a small Paris agency states that some French journalists simply do not trust public relations practitioners, especially if they have good news from their company (Pritchard, Ahles & Bardin, 2005).

MEDIA POLICIES

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: Freedom of expression is protected for every kind of press by an important law of 1881, by a law of 1982 in the audiovisual field, and by a great number of rules in France. The association [Reporters sans Frontières](#) (Reporters without Borders) fights for press freedom and denounces the violations of the human rights all over the world.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: Freedom of information and the accountability of public servants is a constitutional right, according to the [Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen](#). The implementing freedom of information legislation is the [Loi n°78-753 du 17 juillet 1978 portant diverses mesures d'amélioration des relations entre l'administration et le public et diverses dispositions d'ordre administratif, social et fiscal](#) (Act No. 78-753 of July 17, 1978. On various measures for improved relations between the Civil Service and the public and on various arrangements of administrative, social and fiscal nature). It sets as a general rule that citizens can demand a copy of any administrative document (in paper, digitized or other form).

ALLOCATION OF LICENSES AND FREQUENCIES: The [Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel](#) (CSA), which is an important regulation board, created in 1989, delivers the emission authorizations and distributes the hertzian frequencies.

LICENSE FEES FOR PBS (PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM): There is not, in France, any license fee system, but the television channels and the radios must respect a number of specifications, which are authorized by CSA for a certain period of time. There are regional regulation entities called, "[Comités Techniques Radiophoniques](#)" (CTR, *Technical Radio Committees*) with an advisory capacity with the CSA.

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

In 1978, a National Commission for Computing and Freedom, called **CNIL**, protects personal freedom in data uses. This independent administrative authority specializes in controlling personal data files and in laying down regulations covering consumer protection and health data. CNIL is also in charge of conflicts over personal data.

The **Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel** (CSA, *the Higher Audiovisual Council*) an independent administrative authority, was established in 1989, and controls audiovisual activities. This authority, in particular, appoints chairmen of public sector television and radio channels, allocates frequencies and television and radio franchises, negotiates a contract with the private sector channels and makes sure the rules of the broadcasting field are observed, particularly about the respect of programs obligations, pluralism of opinions, protection of authors' rights and deontological matters. It surveys the respect of national legislation, as well as the respect of time allocated to each political party in the media during electoral periods.

As for the **Conseil Constitutionnel**, its members are chosen by the head of State, by the speaker of the Senate and by the speaker of National Assembly. The Conseil Constitutionnel is the highest constitutional authority in France. It was established by the Constitution of the Fifth Republic in 1958, and its duty is to ensure that the principles and rules of the constitution are upheld.

In press matters, professional syndicates look after regulation. Press circulation is controlled by the **Office de Justification de la Diffusion** (OJD) and by the **Conseil Supérieur des Messageries de Presse**. Last, there is a regulatory authority in electronic communications and post office affairs, called **Autorité de régulation des communications électroniques et des postes** (ARCEP).

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Journalists have had to abide by a code of conduct for quite a long time; **Syndicat National des Journalists** (SNJ) adopted one in 1918. Since 1990, the chairmen of newspapers and audiovisual companies have prepared and imposed new codes on their journalists, mostly to avoid legal proceedings, and sometimes for ethical considerations. Most remarkable of these have been enacted by regional Western paper, "**Ouest-France**", which has inspired many other codes of this kind. Additionally, the "Clause de Conscience" (*Individual Conscience Clause*), established in 1935, protects the independence of journalists (particularly protecting rights that enable a journalist to leave a newspaper whose owner has changed).

The **Autorité de Régulation Professionnelle de la Publicité** (ARPP, previously named BVP, *Advertisement Control Board*) oversees advertisers, while the Higher Audiovisual Council regulates all television advertisements.

PRINT MEDIA

The French read few daily newspapers (the largest daily circulation is less than 800,000 copies), more weeklies, a mass of trade magazines, and are said to be poor readers in general. Yet, the print media are most effective when targeted using factors other than just circulation numbers. Public relations media planning tends to be a focusing discipline rather than a pure tool for wide

visibility. The print media industry is undergoing a major restructuring, partly with British and German print groups gaining entry into the market. One point to note: the strength of youth publications in France (Beaudoin, 1999).

Regarding national newspapers, there are 10 daily papers, 26 weekly papers, 22 monthly papers and 17 quarterly papers (75 in total) published in France. Their yearly circulation of daily papers is 611 million copies with a circulation of 449 million (70.13%), 898 million Euros, 409 million of which are advertisement receipts. Regarding magazines; 111 millions copies and a circulation of 89 millions, turnover: 280 millions Euros, 113 of which are advertisement receipts.

National daily newspapers circulation is 1.18 million copies and daily newspaper readership is 8.25 million, signaling a low number of buyers (140 per thousand). A regular diminution of daily national papers can be observed. Popular national press has collapsed during the last 35 years. “[France-Soir](#)”, for instance, which regularly sold over 1 million copies in 1961, is now running into severe financial problem (circulation is about 50,000 a day in 2005).

A regular decline of daily regional newspapers can also be observed, although they are still in good health and their circulation is on the increase. Magazine reading increased until 2002 (1200 per thousand people), but has been decreasing since then. The professional and technical press is still strong.

As in other countries, the number of [freesheets](#) is increasing strong in France. Their general circulation is 291 million copies, with a turnover of 55.7 million Euros. There are, in France, three freesheets networks. First one, [Métro](#), belongs to the Swedish Metro press group and one of the main shareholders is [TF1](#) French Television Company. The second one, [20 minutes](#), is owned, among other ones, by the Norwegian press group [Shibsted](#) and by the French regional press group, Ouest France. Third, there are a number of freesheets edited mostly in towns, which belong to a set of press groups: [Socpresse](#) (Hersant group), [Hachette group](#), and [Sud-Ouest group](#). This third network includes [France 5](#), which is a public educational national TV channel, and [Arte](#), a joint Franco-German cultural channel.

The number of papers have strongly increased (217 new titles, a 5 percent increase in 2004), but that has little impact upon general turnover. From 1990 – 2005, general circulation has been declining 15 percent, receipts 14 percent, and turnover 30 percent.

AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

Radio audiences are increasing in numbers, as are the number of radio programs. In the field of radio, the end of the State monopoly, on July 29, 1982, the number of radio stations has increased, resulting in a more pluralistic and decentralized broadcasting system. Besides public radio stations ([Radio France](#) and the [France Bleu](#) network of local stations), there are great generalist national private stations and a number of thematic stations, mostly musical.

There are today about 1,200 radio stations in France, including more than 600 associative radio stations. 81 percent of French people, 15 and older, listen to the radio, for about 3 hours a day (60 percent at home, 20 percent in car, and 18 percent at work).

Television is well watched, with six national channels, but cable television has failed to become popular. Television is for impact, not credibility: polls show that the French trust television journalism less and less. French television has considerably increased over the last years,

particularly owing to the end of State monopoly⁶ in broadcasting channels and to the multiplication of thematic or local channels in cable or satellite networks.

Despite the growing number and variety of television programs, audience shares are still concentrated by hertzian channels (89 percent of audience), including 42.3 percent for public channels and 46.8 percent for private channels.

The public sector television group **France Télévisions** was established by a law of August 1, 2000. This holding company, which includes the three national public television program companies (France 2, France 3, La Cinquième), defines these channels' strategy, coordinates their program policies, and leads their development strategies. The law also defines the public missions of public channels. France Télévisions must sign a contract (aims and means) every three or five years.

Public television is mainly financed by audiovisual license fee, paid by the public and business sector. It is 116 Euros for a television in metropolitan French. More than 76 percent of the public audiovisual sector is financed by the State including the license fee. It is also financed by advertisement. In order for France 2 and France 3's programs to be more independent, the law of August 1, 2000 also reduced advertisement time and the receipts diminution has been entirely compensated by budget of the State.

Owing to the new ways of receiving radio and television (satellite, cable, the Internet, digital TV service), new programs have appeared, particularly in local television, and new services, particularly interactive ones.

ONLINE MEDIA

Internet penetration is very variable according to social classes: in 2004, 58.2 percent of managers used the Internet, and 86.3 percent usage was found among high executives, intellectuals and cultural professions. 85 percent of home Internet users have broadcast band (usually **ADSL**).

Almost all French newspapers have on-line editions, which have a long experience of on-line usage through **Minitel**, a French feature in electronic communication. Minitel is a national teletex network with terminals in some 5 million homes. It has become a standard tool for information access.

Some on-line papers have built record services (e.g. SOVT data bank of *Le Monde* about Soviet Union history). Radios and television channels offer the same services and programs: daily news (usually free), thematic files and records, chats and blogs, and various services depending on the papers.

Skyrock group, which is well known for its free blogs, is a top Internet site. As is *Le Monde*, the first online newspaper.

⁶ Related laws include: "Loi Fillioux" of July, 29 1982 on the independence of the communication media, law of September 30, 1986 regarding the freedom of communication and "Loi Tasca" of 1989 on the development of public television stations.

NEWS AGENCIES

The Agence France Presse (AFP), a national press agency, is one of the greatest news agencies in the world (with [Associated Press](#) and [Reuters](#)). It was founded in 1944, but its contemporary status has been fixed by a law of January 10, 1957, which defines it as an independent worldwide news agency.

Nowadays, the AFP faces increasing needs of modernization and strategy renewal. It is ruled by civil law, but is not a private company, since, although it does not have any shareholders, or capital, it depends only on its business resources. AFP's turnover (250 million Euros in 2003) is as follows: State (40 percent), press and foreign sales (about 35 percent), photo sales (10 percent). There are 2,200 full-time employees who work in 165 countries, in 6 languages. There are daily 3 million words, 800 photographs and 50 infographies published. About 2,000 mass media are AFP's customers.

MASS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATIONS (JOURNALISTS, PRODUCERS, EDITORS, ETC): The most important journalist trade unions each have their own paper. [SNJ](#) (*Syndicat National des Journalistes*, independent) publishes [Le journaliste](#), the *Union syndicale des journalistes* ([CFDT](#)) publishes [Journalistes CFDT](#), and the [Syndicat général des journalistes](#) (independent) publishes [La Morasse](#). There are, of course, a number of other trade unions and associations.

EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS (PUBLISHERS, TV OWNERS, ETC): The most important ones are *Fédération Nationale de la Presse Française* (FNPF), the association of audiovisual public sector employers, and the national union of press agencies.

ADVERTISING ASSOCIATIONS: The main one is [Information Presse et Communication](#), which is an association of people who work in communication and public relations services, the national trade union of press attachés, and the national union of companies papers and journalists. There are national and regional associations for every communication job.

MEDIA RESOURCES

NEWSPAPERS

Le Monde: [_http://www.lemonde.fr/](http://www.lemonde.fr/)

Le Figaro: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/>

Liberation: <http://www.liberation.fr/>

Les Echos: <http://www.lesechos.fr/>

Courrier International: <http://www.courrierinternational.com/>

La Croix: <http://www.la-croix.com/>

L'Humanité: <http://www.humanite.fr/>

Ouest-France: <http://www.ouest-france.fr/>

Le Parisien: <http://www.leparisien.com/home/index.htm/>

La Tribune: <http://www.latribune.fr/>

Le Monde diplomatique (English version): <http://mondediplo.com/>

AUDIO/VISUAL MEDIA TELEVISION

France 2: <http://www.france2.fr/>

France 3: <http://www.france3.fr/>

France 4: <http://www.france4.fr/home.php>

France 5: <http://www.france5.fr/>

La Cinquième: <http://www.lacinquieme.fr/>

La Chaîne Info: <http://tf1.lci.fr/>

France 24: <http://www.france24.com/france24Public/fr/nouvelles/monde.html>

TV5 Monde: http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/programmes/accueil_continent.php

M6: <http://www.m6.fr/>

Canal +: <http://www.canalplus.fr/>

RADIO

Radio France: <http://www.radiofrance.fr/>

France Inter: <http://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/accueil/>

Radio France: <http://www.radiofrance.fr/chaines/france-bleu/>

France Bleu: <http://www.radiofrance.fr/chaines/france-bleu/>

Radio Française International (RFI): <http://www.rfi.fr/>

Radio Française International RSS Feeds: <http://www.rfi.fr/communfr/dynamiques/FluxRSS.aspx>

NRJ: <http://www.nrj.fr/>

Europe 1: <http://www.europe1.fr/>

MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

Agence France Press (AFP): <http://www.afp.fr/francais/home/>

Syndicat National des Journalistes (SNJ): <http://www.snj.fr/>

Union Syndicale des Journalistes (CFDT): <http://www.usj-cfdt.fr/>

Fédération Nationale de la Presse d'Information Spécialisée (FNPS): <http://www.fnps.fr/>

Information, Presse et Communication: <http://www.infopressecom.org/>

Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel: <http://www.csa.fr/index.php>

Reporters sans frontières: <http://www.rsf.org/>

BLOGS/CIVIL MEDIA

<http://www.pointblog.com/>

<http://www.loiclemeur.com/>

<http://europeens.blogs.liberation.fr/>

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/blogs/0,39-0,48-0,0.html>

MEDIA CONGLOMERATES

Lagardère

Vivendi

XI. THINK TANKS AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS

Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens, ATTAC

Centre d'analyse et de prevision (Analysis and Forecasting Center)

Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales

Center for International Prospective Studies

Center for Research in Economics and Statistics

Cercle de l'Oratoire

Club de l'Horloge

Collegium International

Conférence Olivaint

European Council on Foreign Relations

European Human Rights Center

European Union Institute for Security Studies

Fondation pour le droit continental (Civil Law Initiative)

Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, FRS (Foundation for Strategic Research)

Gracques

Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (Research and Study Group for European Civilization)

Impulsion Concorde

Institut Choiseul for International Politics and Geoeconomics

Institut du Bosphore

Institut français des relations internationales (French Institute of International Relations)

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies)

Institut Thomas More

International Institute of Public Finance

Notre Europe

Reporters Without Borders

Country Profile

LOCATION: Western Europe, bordering the Bay of Biscay and English Channel, between Belgium and Spain, southeast of the UK; bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Italy and Spain.

AREA

547,030 sq km

545,630 sq km land area

1,400 sq km water area

≈ slightly less than the size of Texas

BORDERS: Andorra, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Spain, Switzerland

MAP: [Cia World Factbook](#)

TIME ZONES: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

INTERNET DOMAIN: .fr

INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODE: +33

POPULATION: 64,057,792 (July 2010 est)

AGE STRUCTURE

0-14 years: 18.6% (male 6,160,071/female 5,866,997)

15-64 years: 64.9% (male 21,041,384/female 21,008,320)

65 years and over: 16.5% (male 4,470,839/female 6,220,778) (2010 est.)

ETHNIC GROUPS (2010): Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, Basque minorities

RELIGIONS (2010): Roman Catholic 83%-88%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, Muslim 5%-10%, unaffiliated 4%

LANGUAGES: French 100%, rapidly declining regional dialects and languages: Provençal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish.

CLIMATE: Oceanic, continental and Mediterranean: generally cool winters and mild summers, but mild winters and hot summers along the Mediterranean; occasional strong, cold, dry, north-to-northwesterly wind known as mistral.

CAPITAL: Paris

FLAG: Blue, white and red vertical stripes

ANTHEM: La Marseillaise

MONETARY UNIT: Euro, which replaced the franc as the official currency in 2002

GOVERNMENT TYPE: Republic

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: Twenty-two regions subdivided into 96 departments:

Alsace, Aquitaine, Auvergne, Basse-Normandie (Lower Normandy), Bourgogne, Bretagne (Brittany), Centre, Champagne-Ardenne, Corse (Corsica), Franche-Comte, Haute-Normandie (Upper Normandy), Ile-de-France, Languedoc-Roussillon, Limousin, Lorraine, Midi-Pyrenees, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Pays de la Loire, Picardie, Poitou-Charentes, Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, Rhone-Alpes

DEPENDENT AREAS: Four overseas departments: Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane (French Guiana), and Reunion.

Seven overseas territories: Clipperton Island, French Polynesia, French Southern and Antarctic Lands, Mayotte, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Martin, Wallis and Futuna

1 territory with special status: New Caledonia.

Note: the United States does not recognize claims to Antarctica; New Caledonia has been considered a "sui generis" collectivity of France since 1999, a unique status falling between that of an independent country and a French overseas department.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS: Fête de la Fédération, 14 July (1790);

Note: although often incorrectly referred to as Bastille Day, the celebration actually commemorates the holiday held on the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille (on July 14, 1789) and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy; other names for the holiday are Fête Nationale (National Holiday) and quatorze juillet (14th of July).

CONSTITUTION: Adopted by referendum September 28, 1958, effective October 4, 1958

LEGAL SYSTEM: Civil law system with indigenous concepts; review of administrative but not legislative acts; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction.

SUFFRAGE: 18 years of age; universal

GOVERNMENT TYPE: Republic

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Chief of state: President Nicolas SARKOZY (since 16 May 2007)

Head of government: Prime Minister Francois FILLON (since 17 May 2007)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president at the suggestion of the prime minister

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#))

Elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term; election last held on 22 April and 6 May 2007 (next to be held in the spring of 2012); prime minister appointed by the president

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Bicameral Parliament or Parlement consists of the Senate or Senat (343 seats; 321 for metropolitan France and overseas departments, 2 for New Caledonia, 2 for Mayotte, 1 for Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, 1 for Saint-Barthelemy, 1 for Saint-Martin, 3 for overseas territories, and 12 for French nationals abroad; members indirectly elected by an electoral college to serve six-year terms; one third elected every three years); note - between 2006 and 2011, 15 new seats will be added to the Senate for a total of 348 seats - 326 for metropolitan France and overseas departments, 2 for New Caledonia, 2 for Mayotte, 1 for Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, 1 for Saint-Barthelemy, 1 for Saint-Martin, 3 for overseas territories, and 12 for French nationals abroad;

starting in 2008, members will be indirectly elected by an electoral college to serve six-year terms with one-half elected every three years; and the National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale (577 seats; 555 for metropolitan France, 15 for overseas departments, 7 for dependencies; members elected by popular vote under a single-member majority system to serve five-year terms)

Elections: Senate - last held on 21 September 2008 (next to be held in September 2014); National Assembly - last held on 10 and 17 June 2007 (next to be held in June 2012)

JUDICIAL BRANCH

Supreme Court of Appeals or Cour de Cassation (judges are appointed by the president from nominations of the High Council of the Judiciary); Constitutional Council or Conseil Constitutionnel (three members appointed by the president, three appointed by the president of the National Assembly, and three appointed by the president of the Senate); Council of State or Conseil d'Etat.

POLITICAL PARTIES

[UMP - Union for a Popular Movement](#)

[UDF - Union for French Democracy](#)

[PS - Socialist Party](#)

[FN - National Front](#)

[PCF - French Communist Party](#)

[Greens](#)

[MPF - Movement for France](#)

[PRG - Left Radical Party](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[French politics \(FR\)](#)

[BBC France profile \(EN\)](#)

[French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs \(EN\)](#)

[INSEE - National institute for statistics and economic studies \(EN\)](#)

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Contact information

The Global Alliance is always interested in cooperating with local institutions and associations to provide profiles of the social, economic and media context of member countries, along with details on the local public relations industry, its main activities and tips on successful local practice.

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