

Media Trust in Albania – Media Polarization and Media (dis)Trust



Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in Albania, as more than four fifths of citizens claim to be using it on a daily basis (83%). Social networks are the second most commonly consumed news source, through which more than half of the population aged over 18 is informed on a daily basis (53%).

Almost half of the respondents provided as their main reasons for distrusting the media the spread of disinformation (48%) and the perception that media outlets are under political influence (47%), while another 25% said they spread propaganda, which is linked mainly to the political influence.

The online media landscape suffers considerably in terms of transparency of its ownership and its newsroom staff, making anonymity the norm.

The public has problems understanding propaganda and distinguishing between independent news sources and propaganda.

Propaganda has reached disturbing dimensions, as we have come to accept that politicians are in fact media outlets.

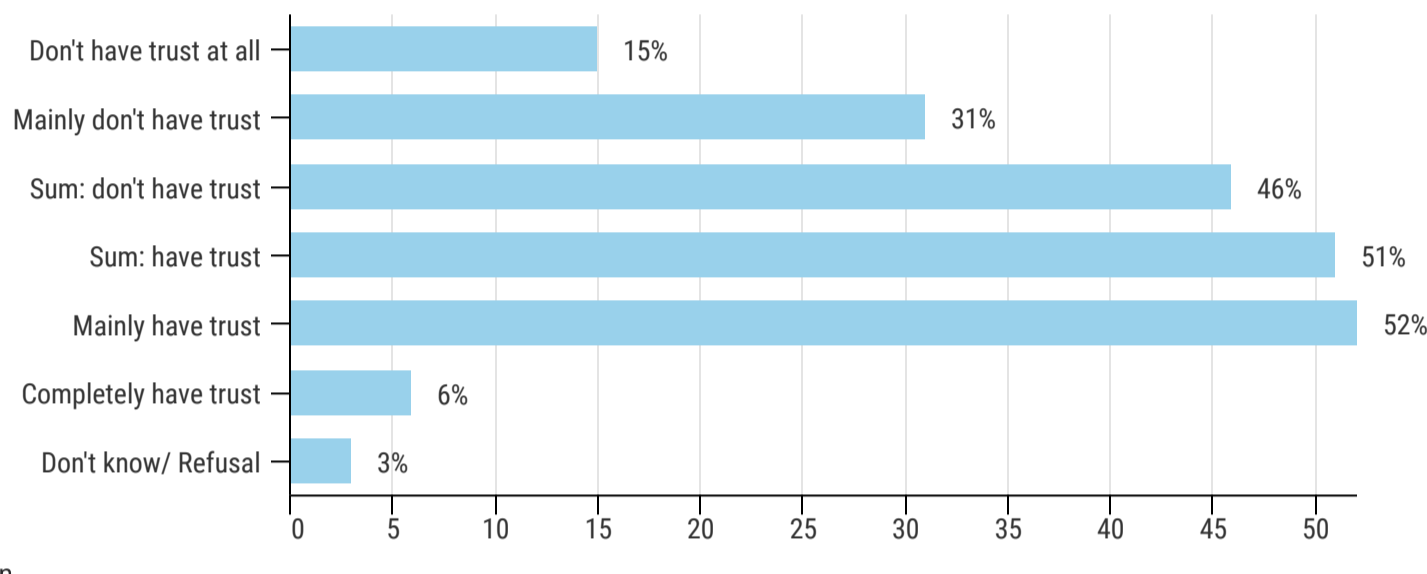
What is most worrying is not propaganda on its own, but the problem that we have agreed to become a conveyor belt for this propaganda.

The repetition of hate narratives against journalists through different channels has led to a solidification of the lack of trust in the media from citizens.

The whole profession of journalism has been devalued. It has been a very gradual process, and now, ignoring or verbally assaulting a journalist is no longer a problem.

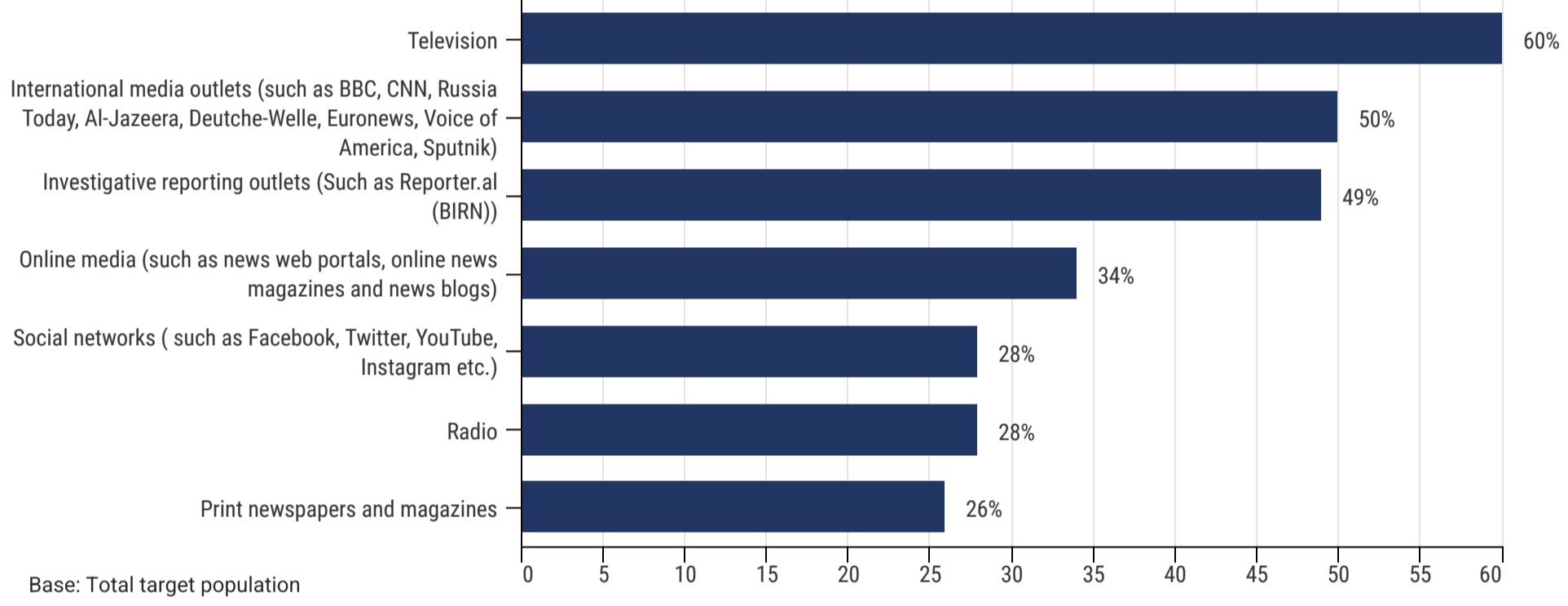
Perhaps the so-called NGO media model is the only one that seems to work for the moment, not affected from politics and economics.

In general, how much trust do you have in the media - such as newspapers, TV, radio or online news sources - when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly in Albania?



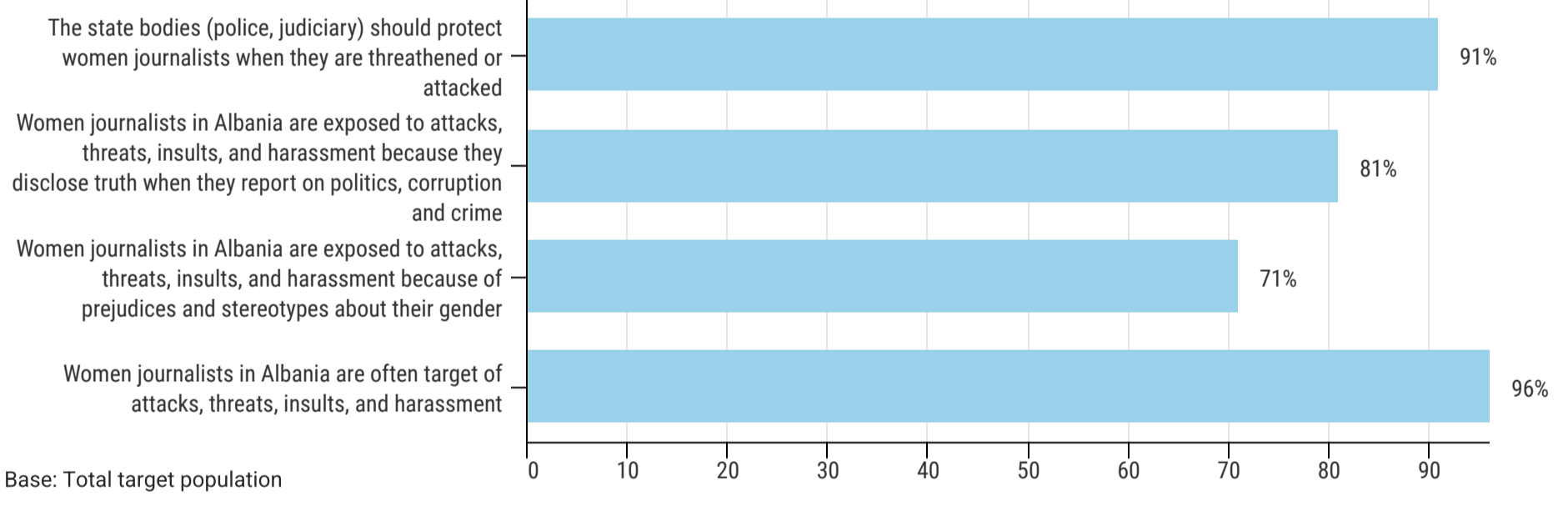
Base: Total target population

To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Mainly + Completely trust (Marks 3+4)



Base: Total target population

The following statements refer to the position of women journalists in Albania. On a scale from 1 to 4 , how much do you agree with each. - Agree (Marks 3+4)



Base: Total target population

Policy recommendations:

Both traditional and online media should consider self-regulating themselves, either individually or as a community, to commit to ethical standards in reporting, including avoiding hate speech and narratives.

Efforts for the improvement of media literacy efforts should be ongoing from all actors. Government should engage in the adoption of a strategy and clear policies on the adoption of media literacy as part of the curriculum in an appropriate form. Civil society actors should continue and intensify their efforts to raise awareness of critical thinking and media literacy in society. Public institutions and civil society should coordinate in this regard, possibly also engaging the media as a supporter of these initiatives and policies.

The media should be more proactive in making transparent the data on their contacts, ownership, staff and funding. They should also offer an option for users to reach them for complaints and respect the principles of publishing corrections or confutations if necessary.

Public awareness campaigns highlighting professional standards and achievements in the media should be organized more frequently, contributing to the public debate on media conduct.

Online media should seriously and responsibly address the moderation of their comments in line with respecting the right to privacy and dignity.

The media should consider policies on the use of ready-made material from official sources, such as labelling it, editing it and contextualizing it.

Civil society organizations should be more vocal when encountering cases of hate speech in the media, calling for the correct coverage of the issues at stake and leading a public debate in this regard. Efforts should not be limited to identifying such narratives or cases and should also offer a counter-narrative, such as debunking these cases through fact-checking platforms.

Efforts to engage in media literacy initiatives should employ different formats, targeting all age groups, in order to cover the gap that exists in terms of media literacy skills.

These are the findings of the research on media trust in Albania conducted in 2021 within the project "Resilience – Civil society action to reaffirm media freedom and counter disinformation and hateful propaganda in the Western Balkans and Turkey" in seven countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.