MGTECON 328: Economics of the Media, Entertainment, and Communications Sector

Syllabus

Winter 2024



Instructor Information

Instructor Email Office Location

Ali Yurukoglu ayurukog@stanford.edu E318

General Information

Description

MGTECON 328 is an elective centered on the media, entertainment, and communications sectors. We will explore a variety of historical and current day topics from markets such as film, television, streaming, music, news, print, radio, wireless, broadband, gaming, sports, among others. We will combine industry institutional knowledge with economic and statistical analysis.

Course Deliverables

Before each class, there will be a set of discussions questions to answer and submit on Canvas concerning the readings for that session. These must be submitted these by 9 am on the day of the class.

The group book review/report is due on the final day of the quarter. You will submit a preference ranking from a list of suggested books, and I will assign you to a group accordingly.

Your grade depends on class participation and preparedness (30%), discussion question responses (40%), and a group book report (30%).

All provisions of the Stanford Honor Code apply.

Prerequisites

This course assumes familiarity with microeconomics and statistics as taught in the first year MBA courses at Stanford. Some of the material will be review of concepts from those courses, and some new lessons will build off of what you learned in those courses. I will not review the concepts in such detail that you can have a full understanding if this is your only exposure. Taking the course concurrently with microeconomics and D&D is allowed, and indeed could be stimulating, but might also be challenging at times.

Other Policies

You are allowed one unexcused absence. Attendance is otherwise mandatory, except for excused absences following standard GSB policies. Additional unexcused absences will cause your letter grade to drop by one degree.

Electronic device usage is not permitted during class.

Course Assistant

Alexandra Small: arsmall@stanford.edu

Guest Speakers (in chronological order)

- Erik Allebest (Founder and CEO, Chess.com)
- Ryan Nakashima (Director, Hearst Media)
- Jeff Bewkes (Former Chairman and CEO of Time Warner)
- Andrea Wong (Media and Entertainment Executive (ABC, Lifetime, Sony), Boards of Roblox, Liberty Media)
- Jeff Small (CEO, Amblin Partners)
- Tina Perry (President, OWN Network)
- Jeremy Erlich (Global Head of Music, Spotify)

Course Schedule

The course schedule and due dates for all assignments are available on Canvas.

Date	Topics
1/12	Introduction
	Book selection
	Read: (1) Was This \$100 Billion Deal the Worst Merger Ever? https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/19/business/media/att-time-warner-deal.html
1/16	Consumer demand, willingness-to-pay, and user metrics
	 Read: Read: The Welfare Effects of Social Media (Intro, sections I.A, IV.C, V.A): https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20190658 Read: Something to Talk About: Social Spillovers in Movie Consumption (Intro, section III, and section V,a): https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/688177 Read: "Best Seller Lists and Product Variety" (Intro, section IV(ii) through p727)
	https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467- 6451.2007.00327.x

- (4) Read: "Platforms, Promotions and Product Discovery: Evidence from Spotify's Playlists" (Intro, Section 4.2) https://www.nber.org/papers/w24713
- (5) Read: Amended Musk Counterclaims vs Twitter (Paragraphs 29 to 34 only) https://cdn.arstechnica.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/public-version-of-amended-musk-counterclaims-twitter-v-musk.pdf
- (6) Read: Nielsen One Ads Sets Jan. 11 Launch, Cross-Platform Product Will Measure Viewership By the Second https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/nielsen-one-ads-launch-date-second-by-second-ads-1235290320/

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Behavioral economics and effects of media and communications on social behavior

Read:

- (1) Read: Digital Addiction (Abstract, Intro up to "In the final section of the paper", examine Figures 2, 4, and 5) https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20210867
- (2) Read: Social Media and Mental Health https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20211218
- (3) Watch: Real Sports Video Game Addiction segment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mee6QRN_Vxs
- (4) Read: Sophisticated Consumers with Inertia: Long-Term Implications from a Large-Scale Field Experiment (read abstract and intro) https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4065098
- (5) Read: Netflix Will Start Automatically Cancelling Inactive Accounts: https://variety.com/2020/digital/news/netflix-automatically-canceling-inactive-accounts-1234613201/
- (6) Read: NYT: Facebook Admits It Was Used to Incite Violence in Myanmarhttps://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/06/technology/myanmar-facebook.html
- (7) Read: Information Manipulation, Coordination, and Regime Change by Chris Edmond (Intro up to "Section 2 outlines the model.")

https://www.jstor.org/stable/43551563

(8) Read: 3G Internet and Confidence in Government (Intro up to "The only other multicountry study...") https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjaa040

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Effects of media and communications on social behavior and Chess.com Founder

Guest: Erik Allebest

Read:

- (1) Read: Checkmate! The chess business is suddenly booming https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/checkmatechess-business-suddenly-booming-n1249134
- (2) Read: Chess.com Announces Growth Investment from General Atlantic https://www.generalatlantic.com/media-article/chess-com-announces-growth-investment-from-general-atlantic/
- (3) Read: Soap Operas and Fertility: Evidence from Brazil https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.4.4.1
- (4) Read: Economic and Social Impacts of the Media (Conclusion and scan Table 19.1)
 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780444636
 85000019X
- (5) Optional Reading: He's the Bad Boy of Chess. But Did He Cheat? https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/04/business/chess-cheatingscandal-magnus-carlsen-hans-niemann.html

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Pricing and bundling

Read:

- (1) Read: The Welfare Effects of Bundling in Multichannel Television Markets (Intro and examine Table 8) https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.102.2.643
- (2) Read: "Viacom, Cablevision Settle Antitrust Lawsuit Over Channel Bundling" in The Hollywood Reporter 10/16/2016 https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/cablevision-832684

- (3) Read: The Information is testing a subscription bundle with **Bloomberg Media** https://digiday.com/media/information-testing-subscriptionbundle-bloomberg-media/
- (4) Read: Trai sets new rules on à la carte channel prices, network capacity fee https://www.livemint.com/industry/media/traisets-new-rules-on-a-la-carte-channel-prices-network-capacityfee-11577878719163.html
- (5) Read: Discovery To T-Mobile: What Do You Think You're Doing Bundling Us? https://www.forbes.com/sites/robpegoraro/2020/11/06/discover y-to-t-mobile-what-do-you-think-youre-doing-bundlingus/?sh=1f4927f84a32
- (6) Read: You've Got Mail: The newsletter service Substack claims to be the future of media. Is it a future we want? https://www.proguest.com/docview/2479794496/7915D2129493 4721PQ/3?accountid=14026
- (7) CNBC: 2024 is Shaping Up To Be the Year of the Streaming Bundle https://www.cnbc.com/2023/12/26/2024-year-of-streamingbundle.html
- (8) Optional: United States vs Lowe's Inc, A Note on Block Booking (read p152-154) (optional) https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108731

Content Negotiations and Vertical Relationships

- (1) Read: Gameday for Disney to Boost ESPN Growth https://www.wsj.com/articles/gameday-for-disney-to-boostespn-growth-1500299241?st=7cw34p82xyo08qs
- (2) Read: TWC subscribers miss Linsanity https://tv5.espn.com/blog/newyork/knicks/post/_/id/11459/time-warner-cable-subscribersmiss-linsanity
- (3) Read: Sony Music Catalog Pulled from Resso, Tiktok's Sister **Subscription Platform** https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/sony-music-pullscatalog-resso-tiktoks-sister-subscription-platform/

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- (4) Read (option A): Australia's News Media and Digital Platforms Bargaining Code is Great Politics But Questionable Economics https://promarket.org/2020/09/21/australias-news-media-digital-platforms-bargaining-code-great-politics-questionable-economics/
- (5) Read: Canada to Force Google, Facebook to Pay News Publishers https://stanford.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost .com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=156125522&site=ehost -live&scope=site
- (6) Read (option B): This was Sony Music's contract with Spotify https://www.theverge.com/2015/5/19/8621581/sony-musicspotify-contract

2/2 Vertical Integration

- (1) Read: Effects of vertical mergers in multichannel TV markets: evidence from regional sports programming https://microeconomicinsights.org/effects-of-vertical-mergers-in-multichannel-tv-markets-evidence-from-regional-sports-programming/
- (2) Read: Disney and YouTube TV cut a deal to bring back ESPN, FX, and other channels https://www.theverge.com/2021/12/19/22845373/youtube-tv-disney-espn-channel-fx-abc-restored
- (3) Read: Comcast could lose Comcast-owned channels in December https://thedesk.matthewkeys.net/2020/10/comcast-warns-customers-of-dropping-comcast-channels/
- (4) Read: Microsoft Defeats FTC's Roadblock on Path to Activision Merger https://www.proskauer.com/blog/microsoft-defeats-ftcs-roadblock-on-path-to-activision-merger
- (5) Meta wanted to beat Apple to the punch buying Supernatural https://mixed-news.com/en/meta-wanted-to-beat-apple-to-the-punch-buying-supernatural/
- (6) Read: Letter from Comcast to Eisner https://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/11/citynews.bro adcasting1

Date	Topics
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- (7) Read: Comcast bids for Disney https://money.cnn.com/2004/02/11/news/companies/comcast disney/#:~:text=NEW%20YORK%20(CNN%2FMoney),and%20a%2 Opotential%20regulatory%20conflict.
- (8) Read: Netflix to FCC: Large ISPs Have Anti-Competitive Interconnection Clout https://www.nexttv.com/news/netflix-to-fcc-large-isps-have-anti-competitive-interconnection-clout

2/6 Buying and selling advertising, Measuring advertising effectiveness

- Read: Generalizable and Robust Effects of TV Advertising (Read Introduction and Relevant Literature)
 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3273476
- (2) Read: Close Enough? (Read intro up to "To build and scale observational methods for advertising measurement") https://arxiv.org/abs/2201.07055
- (3) Read: Super Returns to Super Bowl Ads?
 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11129-016-9179-0
 (read Introduction)
- (4) Read: Pricing Power in Advertising Markets: Theory and Evidence (Intro) https://web.stanford.edu/~ayurukog/adprices.pdf
- (5) Read: The talk of the town: Ageism in advertising https://www.proquest.com/docview/233139360/37B6BCE022854 10FPO/1?accountid=14026

Two sided markets and mixed revenue models, how to fund journalism

Guest: Ryan Nakashima

- (1) Read: Premium tier subscriptions for local news: Ad-free and beyond https://medium.com/@rnakashi/premium-tier-subscriptions-for-local-news-ad-free-and-beyond-1d660e2dd04d
- (2) Read: Article gifting pays itself forward for Hearst Newspapers https://www.inma.org/blogs/Product-and-Tech/post.cfm/article-gifting-pays-itself-forward-for-hearst-newspapers
- (3) Read: Measuring Consumer Sensitivity to Audio Advertising: A Field Experiment on Pandora Internet Radio

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> http://www.davidreiley.com/papers/PandoraListenerDemandCu rve.pdf (Read Section 2 "Experimental Design" and Section 3 "Results" up to 3.1 on p 10).

- (4) Read: One paper by Nobel Prize winner Jean Tirole that every internet user should know https://www.vox.com/2014/10/13/6968423/jean-tirole-platformcompetition
- (5) Read: Netflix is still saying 'no' to ads https://techcrunch.com/2020/01/22/netflix-is-still-saying-no-toads
- (6) Read: Advertising-Supported Version of HBO Max Launched at \$9.99 a Month https://www.nexttv.com/news/advertising- supported-version-of-hbo-max-launched-at-dollar999-a-month
- (7) Read: TikTok confirms small test of an ad-free subscription tier outside the US https://techcrunch.com/2023/10/02/tiktok- begins-testing-4-99-ad-free-subscription-tier/

2/13 Content creation, copyright, and "Peak TV"

- (1) Read: How Many Is Too Many? There Are Now More Than 500 TV https://www.forbes.com/sites/tonifitzgerald/2020/01/10/howmany-is-too-many-there-are-now-more-than-500-tv-shows/
- (2) Watch: YouTube: FX Networks CEO on Platforms, Content, Brands https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pzCXATxNjA
- (3) Read: Free Entry and Social Inefficiency in Radio Broadcasting (Intro and conclusion): https://www.jstor.org/stable/2556055
- (4) Read: The "New York Times" and the Market for Local Newspapers? (Intro) https://www.jstor.org/stable/30034376
- (5) Read: Twin Movies in The Independent 7/5/2018: https://www.independent.co.uk/artsentertainment/films/features/twin-films-hollywood-moviesvolcano-deep-impact-armageddon-capote-infamous-florencefoster-jenkins-a8431091.html
- (6) Read: Good 4 who? How music copyright has gone too far https://www.theverge.com/22672704/olivia-rodrigo-switchedon-pop-charlie-harding-music-copyright

- (7) Read: Apple Explores A.I. Deals With News Publishers https://dnyuz.com/2023/12/22/apple-explores-a-i-deals-with-news-publishers/
- (8) Read: New York Times sues Microsoft, ChatGPT maker OpenAl over copyright infringement https://www.cnbc.com/2023/12/27/new-york-times-sues-microsoft-chatgpt-maker-openai-over-copyright-infringement.html
- (9) Read: Copyright Policy Options for Generative Artificial Intelligence (Read Intro up to paragraph beginning "Section 2 develops a model...") https://www.theverge.com/22672704/olivia-rodrigo-switched-on-pop-charlie-harding-music-copyright

Removed for Class Visit

The labor market for talent

- Read: Technical Change and Superstar Effects: Evidence from the Rollout of Television (Intro) http://personal.lse.ac.uk/koenigf/Superstars Koenig.pdf
- (2) Read: Fighters Win Key Ruling in Case That Could Upend U.F.C.'s Business https://www.proquest.com/docview/2478107645?accountid=14026
- (3) Read: It's the Year 2120. MasterClass Is the Only School Left https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/25/style/masterclass-secrets.html
- (4) Read: Netflix Can't Recruit Disney's Fox Executives, Appeals Court Rules
 https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/appeals-court-netflix-poaching-1235056525/
- (5) Read: Disney Settles Anti-Poaching Lawsuit https://www.forbes.com/sites/legalentertainment/2017/02/02/disney-settles-anti-poaching-lawsuit/?sh=257fd3293983
- (6) Read: Nobody wins in the Hollywood strikes, including billion-dollar studios https://www.vox.com/money/23843034/wga-sag-aftra-strike-amptp-studios-netflix-warner-bros

Date	Topics
2/16	Guest: Jeff Bewkes
	(1) Read: LA Times: The Very Model of a Modern Media Manager (May 16, 2003) https://www.proquest.com/docview/421990141/7AC993E8A2774 2F5PQ/1?accountid=14026&sourcetype=Newspapers
	(2) Read: Bewkes' legacy: The rise of HBO and a successful sale of Time Warner https://money.cnn.com/2018/06/13/media/jeff-bewkes-time-warner-ceo-legacy-att/index.html
	(3) Read: Time Warner's \$9 Billion Cable Spinoff https://www.cbsnews.com/news/time-warners-9-billion-cable-spinoff/
2/20	Guest: Andrea Wong
	(1) Read: "The Bachelor and His Barbies: Love at 25th Sight" NYT, Nov 17, 2002 https://www.proquest.com/docview/2230215043/71358F9E1535 45DDPQ/1?accountid=14026
	(2) Read: Netflix in Talks for Epic British Royal Series 'The Crown' From Sony Pictures Television https://variety.com/2014/digital/news/netflix-in-talks-for-british-royal-series-the-crown-with-sony-pictures-television-1201189304/
	(3) Read: Five Years On: Has Liberty Media Been Good for F1? https://www.planetf1.com/news/five-years-on-has-liberty-media-been-good-for-f1/
	(4) Read: Roblox, the game company made wildly popular by kids, goes public with \$41 billion valuation https://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/03/11/roblox-ipo/
2/23	Guest: Jeff Small
	(1) Read: Amblin Partners Promotes Jeff Small to President and Co-CEO (from 2016) https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/amblin-partners-promotes-jeff-small-861651/

(2) Amblin CEO Jeff Small Re-Ups With Company https://deadline.com/2022/07/amblin-ceo-jeff-small-1235079455/

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Antitrust 1: Horizontal Mergers

- (1) Read: Killer Acquisitions https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3241707
- (2) Read: Disney and Pixar: The Power of the Prenup https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/business/media/01pixar.h tml
- (3) Read: The FTC is suing Facebook to unwind its acquisitions of Instagram and WhatsApp
 https://www.theverge.com/2020/12/9/22158483/facebook-antitrust-lawsuit-anti-competition-behavior-attorneys-general
- (4) Read: Judge allows Federal Trade Commission's latest suit against Facebook to move forward https://www.npr.org/2022/01/11/1072169787/judge-allows-federal-trade-commissions-latest-suit-against-facebook-to-move-forw
- (5) Optional A1: Read: The court let T-Mobile buy Sprint because Sprint completely sucks https://www.theverge.com/2020/2/12/21134278/sprint-tmobile-merger-court-ruling-opinion-decision-explainer-carriers-antitrust
- (6) Optional A2: Read: AT&T Drops Its T-Mobile Merger Bid in \$4B Fail https://www.wired.com/2011/12/att-tmobile-merger-ends/
- (7) Optional B1: Read: FCC communications on ATT & Comcast https://transition.fcc.gov/transaction/att-comcast/comcast_pickdeclaration.pdf
- (8) Optional B2: Read: F.C.C. Blocks EchoStar Deal With DirecTV https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/11/business/fcc-blocks-echostar-deal-with-directv.html
- (9) Read: Judge blocks Penguin Random House-Simon & Schuster merger https://www.cnbc.com/2022/11/01/judge-blocks-penguin-random-house-simon-schuster-merger.html
- (10)Read: FCC's Standard General-Tegna Merger Designation Could Prompt Constitutional Challenge

Date	Topics
	https://www.nexttv.com/news/fccs-standard-general-tegna- merger-designation-could-prompt-constitutional-challenge
3/1	Guest: Tina Perry
	(1) Read: Tina Perry - Cable Hall of Fame https://syndeoinstitute.org/honorees/past-honorees/2022- honorees/tina-perry/
	(2) Read: OWN president Tina Perry talks finding an audience and unscripted hits https://realscreen.com/2021/06/10/own-president-tina-perry-talks-finding-an-audience-and-unscripted-hits-at-realscreen-live/
3/5	Guest: Jeremy Erlich
	(1) U.S. and European Regulators Approve Universal's Purchase of EMI https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/22/business/global/universal-takeover-of-emi-music-is-approved.html
	(2) Read: SEC v Spotify https://s29.q4cdn.com/175625835/files/doc_financials/2022/ar/b 283934e-7a7c-4da6-8749-856dfa4c36e6.pdf
	(3) The Editor vs. the Algorithm: Targeting, Data and Externalities in Online News https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3399947
	(4) Read: Revenue Streams https://www.proquest.com/docview/1634241670/B2008F27D3CF https://www.proquest.com/docview/1634241670/B2008F27D3CF https://www.proquest.com/docview/1634241670/B2008F27D3CF
3/8	Antitrust 2: Monopolization allegations in search and digital advertising
	(1) Google Complaint: https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1328941/download
	(2) The unredacted Texas-led lawsuit alleges that Google doesn't play fair https://www.thecurrent.com/the-unredacted-texas-led-lawsuit-alleges-that-google-doesnt-play-fair
	(3) Justice Department Sues Google for Monopolizing Digital Advertising Technologies https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-

google-monopolizing-digital-advertising-technologies

- (4) Texas Accuses Google and Facebook of an Illegal Conspiracy https://www.wired.com/story/texas-accuses-google-facebookillegal-conspiracy/
- (5) Google hit with its third antitrust lawsuit since October, this time by a bipartisan coalition of states https://www.cnbc.com/2020/12/17/google-faces-a-thirdgovernment-antitrust-lawsuit.html
- (6) Maintenance of Monopoly: U.S. v. Microsoft: https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2015/04/MaintenanceMonopoly08.pdf
- (7) Optional: Slide Deck Used by DOJ Economics Expert in Search Case https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-10/417254.pdf
- (8) Optional: Slide Deck Used by Google Economics Expert in Search Case https://drive.google.com/file/d/15WU8qeQzc8PQQFDzw78jIWWH W_Lmb_MR/view

3/12 **Regulation and Auctions**

- (1) Listen: Planet Money Podcast on Reverse Spectrum Auction: https://www.npr.org/2020/11/06/932048876/hacking-theperfect-auction
- (2) Read: UK to set up 'pro-competition' regulator to put limits on big tech https://techcrunch.com/2020/11/27/uk-to-set-up-pro- competition-regulator-to-put-limits-on-big-tech
- (3) Read: How the EU's Digital Markets Act challenges Big Tech https://www.reuters.com/technology/how-eus-digital-marketsact-challenges-big-tech-2023-09-06/
- (4) Read: Reps. Trahan, Schiff & Casten Introduce Digital Services Oversight and Safety Act https://techpolicy.press/reps-trahanschiff-casten-introduce-digital-services-oversight-and-safety-act/
- (5) Read: Reserve Prices in Internet Advertising Auctions: A Field Experiment (Intro, Section 5.2, Conclusion) https://web.stanford.edu/~ost/papers/rp.pdf

- (6) Read: From Mad Men to Maths Men (Intro) https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3428421
- (7) (Optional) Read: Optional: How AT&T Became a Monopoly https://www.cablefax.com/technology/how-at-amp-t-became-amonopoly
- (8) (Optional) Read: Paul Milgrom, price discoverer and Nobel laureate https://voxeu.org/article/paul-milgrom-price-discoverer-and-nobel-laureate
- (9) (Optional) Read: How two-way cable will change your life (1973): https://books.google.com/books?id=fkktZ45KH3UC&lpg=PA57&ots=qrTV-69hFM&pg=PA57#v=onepage&q&f=false

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News media and horizontal differentiation Fox News effect

- (1) Read: Bias in Cable News (Intro) https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20160812
- (2) Read: A stunning new study shows that Fox News is more powerful than we ever imagined https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/8/16263710/fox-news-presidential-vote-study
- (3) Read: Social Media, News Consumption, and Polarization: Evidence from a Field Experiment (Intro) https://levyroee.github.io/Papers/Social Media and Polarization.pdf
- (4) Read: Greater Internet use is not associated with faster growth in political polarization among US demographic groups https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1706588114 (Significance and Abstract)
- (5) Read: Cross-Country Trends in Affective Polarization https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article/doi/10.1162/rest a 01160/109 262/Cross-Country-Trends-in-Affective-Polarization (Figure 1 on p18)
- (6) Read (optional): Competition and ideological diversity: historical evidence from US newspapers https://microeconomicinsights.org/competition-and-ideological-diversity-historical-evidence-from-us-newspapers