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The Trust Gap: How and Why News on Digital Platforms Is Viewed More Sceptically Versus News in General

Camila Mont'Alverne, Sumitra Badrinathan, Amy Ross Arguedas, Benjamin Toff, Richard Fletcher, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen

TRUST IN NEWS PROJECT

Contents

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About the Authors

Dr Camila Mont'Alverne is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow who works on the Trust in News Project. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil. Her main research interests are in the area of political communication, focusing on political journalism, media trust, and media and elections.

Dr Sumitra Badrinathan is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow who works on the Trust in News Project and Assistant Professor of Political Science at American University, Washington DC. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include studying misinformation, media effects, and political behaviour in India using experimental and survey methods.

Dr Amy Ross Arguedas is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow who works on the Trust in News Project. She obtained her PhD in the Department of Communication Studies at Northwestern University in 2020. Before pursuing her doctorate, Amy worked as a journalist for fi e years at the Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*.

Dr Benjamin Toff leads the Trust in News Project as a Senior Research Fellow at the RISJ and is an Assistant Professor at the Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota. He received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a bachelor's degree in Social Studies from Harvard University. He was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the RISJ from 2016 to 2017. Prior to his academic career, Dr Toff worked as a professional journalist, mostly as a researcher at the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2011.

Dr Richard Fletcher is the Director of Research at the RISJ and a principal investigator of the Trust in News Project. He is primarily interested in global trends in digital news consumption, comparative media research, the use of social media by journalists and news organisations, and, more broadly, the relationship between technology and journalism.

Professor Rasmus Kleis Nielsen is the Director of the RISJ and Professor of Political Communication at the University of Oxford. He is a principal investigator of the Trust in News Project. He was previously Director of Research at the RISJ. His work focuses on changes in the news media, political communication, and the role of digital technologies in both. He has done extensive research on journalism, American politics, and various forms of activism, and a significant amount of omparative work in Western Europe and beyond.

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Executive Summary and Key Findings

What role, if any, do social media, search engines, and messaging apps play in eroding the public's confiden e in the news media? In virtual roundtable discussions with small groups of journalists and publishers last year (Toff et al. 2021a), many expressed concern that digital platforms were at least partly to blame for declining levels of trust in news in many places around the world (Newman et al. 2022). Some worried that platforms enable bad-faith criticism of journalism to circulate more easily and insidiously while polluting the information environment with low quality substitutes for factual reporting. Others saw platforms as undermining news audiences' connections with their brands, even as they often saw digital media intermediaries as essential to reaching segments of the public least likely to tune in through legacy modes such as print or broadcast.

In this report, the latest instalment of our ongoing Trust in News Project, we explore these questions from the perspective of audiences. Drawing on an original dataset of survey responses collected in the summer of 2022 across four countries – Brazil, India, the UK, and the US – we examine the relationship between trust in news and how people think about news on digital platforms, especially Facebook, Google, WhatsApp, and YouTube, some of the most widely used platforms around the world. What we find is som what nuanced; how people think about information on platforms varies considerably. It depends on the platform, it depends on the country, it depends on the audiences within those countries, and it depends on the kinds of news those audiences are encountering in these varying spaces.

At the same time, apart from these contextual differences, there is a striking commonality. We find a onsistent 'trust gap' between how much people in all four countries trust information in the news media in general and how much they trust news found via these digital companies, which they tend to be more sceptical towards. We find such gaps ven as we also find that considerable majorities still hold positive feelings towards the platforms themselves.

While these findings may at first seem ounter-intuitive, they make sense when considered alongside other findings in our report oncerning the reasons why people say they use platforms. These vary from connecting with others (especially important for WhatsApp and Facebook) to entertainment and passing time (YouTube ranks highly for this); getting news and information from platforms is often a secondary concern. Large numbers can and do keep up with news via the sources of information the companies deliver (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022; Duchovnay et al. 2021), yet news itself is rarely central to most people's experiences while using these products. That makes platforms far more important to news organisations in search of broadening their audiences than news is to the platforms themselves. That may also be why many feel more positive towards platforms generally, even though they also see significant problems associated with them, as we also show in this report. This includes problems around false and misleading information, harassment, contentiousness when it comes to talking about politics, and other issues. Many users find plat orms enjoyable or helpful in their day-to-day lives despite these concerns, no matter what they think of the news they might find there

To be sure, the trust gap between news overall and news on platforms is larger for some services (Facebook) and smaller for others (Google), and different in some countries (trust is much higher in India than the other countries) and for some audiences (younger, college educated, politically interested people are more likely to trust news both on and off platforms), but, strikingly, the lowest levels of trust are consistently found among people who do not use platforms at all.

Some may shun platforms precisely because they do not trust them. Others may be expressing a value judgement about the kinds of news found on platforms, which they perceive as distinctly lower in quality compared to that found elsewhere. (And certainly platform algorithms prioritise some types of content over others.) But our findings also point to the degree to which many may base their evaluations of news on platforms on ideas they hold about the nature of the information in these spaces – ideas that may be rooted in culture and conversation as much as, or even more so than, direct (or past) experiences using these services. Such ideas influen e how people behave in these digital spaces and what they expect to find there While the views of non-users of platforms may seem less important than the perspectives of those with the most experience using these services, non-users are in many cases a majority of the public, and their beliefs about information on platforms may impact ongoing policy debates over how these services should operate.

The importance of ideas about news on platforms also applies to news in general. As our findings also sh w, many respondents hold quite negative ideas about how journalism is practised in their countries, seeing journalists as manipulators mainly out to serve themselves and the agendas of powerful politicians. While many also say they frequently encounter criticism of the news media on social media in particular – some of which, to be sure, may be wholly legitimate – exposure to such ideas about news appears to circulate widely offline as well, with many citing conversations with ordinary people as one of the main places they encounter such critiques.

Where does this leave news organisations? The challenge for many may be less about an erosion of trust due to their being seen on platforms and more about being seen at all in these spaces – and for their brands to register with audiences when they do so. For disconnected and disengaged audiences, as we have previously highlighted (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022; Toff et al. 2021b), indifference rather than growing hostility towards news may be the more insidious and ultimately existential challenge facing the industry. News is rarely what most people are looking for when using these services, and platforms have been increasingly looking to oblige. As a spokesperson from Facebook said earlier this year, 'Most people do not come to Facebook for news, and as a business it doesn't make sense to over-invest in areas that don't align with user preferences.' (Fischer 2022). The company announced it was shifting away from its 'Facebook News' initiative, and instead will be prioritising posts by friends and family, and emphasising content produced by 'creators' in a similar style to TikTok.[1] These decisions raise several concerns, including the prospect that Facebook (and other social media following a similar strategy) will be far less effective at driving incidental exposure to news, which has been shown to increase both the volume and diversity of news people consume (Ahmadi and Wohn 2018; Fletcher and Nielsen 2018; Nelson and Webster 2017; Masip et al. 2018). In addition, while content produced by 'creators' might be highly engaging, it can also be highly variable and sometimes of questionable quality when it comes to providing accurate factual information

[1] See www.wired.com/story/facebook-feeds-tab-chronological/ and www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-shifts-resources-from-news-tab-and-bulletin-to-focus-on-creator-economy-11658250433

about current affairs. These changes to platforms also pose many challenges to news organisations, not only those that rely on traffic oming from platforms to their own websites but also those that have looked to these services as their primary means of reaching younger and less loyal audiences. The changing landscape for digital information is likely to make that more difficult which makes finding alternati e strategies all the more essential.

Background on this Report

The Reuters Institute's Trust in News Project seeks to understand the drivers of trust in news, the factors responsible for its apparent decline in many countries in recent years, the differences in how this plays out in different places around the world, and what might be done about it. We focus on four countries spanning the Global South (Brazil and India) and North (the UK and the US) which, despite large cultural, societal, and political differences, share commonalities in the relevance of digital platforms for how people interact with others, solve daily tasks, and get information. Data from the Reuters Institute's *Digital News Report 2022* shows that significant proportions of the public in all our countries use platforms regularly with smaller but still considerable numbers getting news from them as well.[2]

This report is closely connected to two previous reports we have published in the last nine months. The first as mentioned above, was based on roundtables we organised with senior managers and journalists from news organisations worldwide, in which they described their main challenges when it comes to building and sustaining trust with the audiences with whom they seek to engage (Toff et al. 2021a). The second was based on qualitative interviews we conducted investigating how less-trusting audiences think about the news they encounter on platforms, the shortcuts they use in making quick judgements about news they come across, and how specific eatures of platforms shape these experiences (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022). In this document, we explore broader patterns using representative survey data about audience behaviours and perceptions when it comes to social media platforms by summarising results from an original survey we fielded in June and July 2022 across all our countries.

We worked closely with the research firm Ipsos to poll appr ximately 2,000 respondents per country using broadly representative samples with quotas for (at the minimum) age, gender, region, and other characteristics specific to each ountry's population. In Brazil and India, surveys were fielded fa e-to-face in all major regions in each country. Conducting surveys in-person in these countries was particularly important for reaching the comparatively high numbers who do not have internet access at home (22% in Brazil and 67% in India in our samples) or on a personal mobile phone device (14% in Brazil and 33% in India). In the UK and the US, where internet penetration is more ubiquitous, surveys were instead fielded online with samples intended to approximate the national populations in each country. In addition to English, questionnaires were translated into Spanish for the US, Portuguese for Brazil, and into ten languages in India.

2 In Brazil, 78% of participants said they use WhatsApp for any purpose and 77% said the same about YouTube. 41% said they use the messaging app for news, while 43% said they do it on the video platform. In India, where the *Digital News Report 2022* data shows that YouTube and WhatsApp are used by 76% of survey respondents for any purpose, 53% use the former and 51% use the latter for news. In the UK and the US, Facebook is the most used platform for news (19% and 28%, respectively), while 62% of respondents in the UK say they use it for any purpose and 58% of American respondents say the same.

Survey questionnaires were designed by the authors of this report to capture respondents' distinct perceptions of individual platforms, their levels of trust towards news on them, reasons why people use them, and the problems they associate with them. We also asked questions about exposure to disagreement and political conversation on platforms and perceptions about journalists and news organisations, some of which may or may not be shaped by experiences using platforms. The questionnaire took on average approximately 15 minutes to complete online and 25 minutes in person. Due to a technical error when the survey was programmed, a small number of questions that we focus on in section three were omitted. For this reason, a separate supplementary survey was also conducted entirely online in the four markets in July 2022. We offer expanded information about the methods used for sampling, field ork, and weighting for both surveys in Appendix A.

Summary of Key Findings

In the pages that follow, we draw on these systematically collected survey data to better understand what people think about news on different platforms in different countries. Below we restate and elaborate on several of the key findings from the se tions that follow:

- **Levels of trust in news on social media, search engines, and messaging apps is consistently lower than audience trust in information in the news media more generally**. We found gaps in trust for most platforms in all four countries, with news on Google sometimes at parity with news overall but news on other platforms typically viewed more sceptically. Trust was also considerably higher across the board in India compared to the other three countries.

- **A considerable portion of this trust gap is explained by lower levels of trust among people who do not use platforms.** Many of the same people who lack trust in news encountered via digital media companies – who tend to be older, less educated, and less politically interested – also express less trust in the news regardless of whether found on platforms or through more traditional offline modes

- **Despite comparatively lower trust in news on platforms, many hold broadly positive feelings towards them, especially Google and YouTube, as well as WhatsApp in Brazil and India**. Relatively small numbers of respondents in all four countries expressed negative feelings towards the technology companies. This might indicate that people's feelings towards platforms are largely unrelated to expectations around what news they may or may not find there

- **Many of the most common reasons people say they use platforms have little to do with news**. For most platforms, people are more likely to say they use them to connect with other people in their lives or for entertainment or to pass the time rather than to find out in ormation about current affairs. The majority in some countries also say they use platforms for commercial purposes (buying or selling products) or for work or school.

- **News about politics is viewed as particularly suspect and platforms are seen by many as contentious places for political conversation – at least for those most interested in politics**. Rates of trust in news in general are comparatively higher than trust in news when it pertains to coverage of political affairs. This disparity is particularly pronounced in Brazil, where nearly two-thirds of people also say they feel they have to be careful when talking about politics with friends and acquaintances. This is true both in general as well as while using Facebook or WhatsApp. As many as 20–30% of the most politically interested people in all four countries say they have stopped talking to someone on these platforms due to disagreements about politics.

- **Negative perceptions about journalism are widespread and social media is one of the most often-cited places people say they see or hear criticism of news and journalism**. As many as half the respondents in all four countries say they believe journalists try to manipulate audiences to serve the agendas of powerful politicians or care more about getting attention than reporting the facts. Those who use platforms are also more likely to say they often encounter criticism of the news media. However, as news is not central to most people's experience using platforms, rates are not necessarily higher when compared to other sources of criticism about news many say they encounter, including from ordinary people and friends in offline onversations.

- **Misinformation and harassment are among the leading problems many associate with platforms**. Despite positive feelings towards most platforms, large majorities in all four countries agree that false and misleading information, harassment, and platforms using data irresponsibly are 'big problems' in their country for many platforms. In the US and UK, larger percentages singled out Facebook in particular when it came to these problems, whereas elsewhere broader majorities saw such problems as applicable to all four platforms we asked about.

1. What Is the Trust Gap and Where Is It Most Pronounced?

In this section we explore levels of trust in news on digital platforms in relation to news in general and what these gaps mean with respect to people's relationships with news in their countries. In general we found that significantly ewer people say they trust news found via platforms compared to information in the news media overall. While gaps are smallest for some widely used services, such as Google or WhatsApp (at least in Brazil and India), the pattern holds across many different platforms in all four countries. We also show in this section how these gaps are particularly related to certain demographics, political preferences, and differing ways that people consume news. News about politics is viewed as particularly suspect, with considerably fewer saying they trust news when it comes to coverage of political affairs compared to news in general.

Trust in News on Platforms Is Low Relative to Trust in News More Generally

Our survey shows a clear gap in how audiences think about news on platforms versus news in general, with audiences in all four countries generally perceiving news on most platforms as less trustworthy compared to information in the news media overall. While there are some exceptions for some platforms – particularly in Brazil, where some gaps are smaller or even reversed – the consistency of the pattern across contexts is noteworthy.

For our main general measure of trust we took a similar approach to the one employed in the project's 2021 survey (Toff et al. 2021b), asking first to what xtent respondents felt they could trust 'information in the news media' in their country on a fi e-point scale from 'do not trust at all' to 'trust completely'.[3] Respondents who felt uncertain or torn could select 'neither trust nor do not trust' as a middle response category or, alternatively, could select 'don't know'. We asked similarly worded questions pertaining to news on platforms, eliciting different responses on the same fi e-point scale for each of seven distinct platforms that are widely used in the four countries that are our focus: Facebook, Google, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube.[4, 5]

3 This approach is informed by the work of Strömbäck and colleagues (2020) on the subject, which advocates for more standardised measures that make the object of trust more concrete. Given that audiences may have many different aspects of news media in mind when asked to state how much they do or do not trust it, we see value in specifying trust in the 'information in the news media' as a way to focus respondents' attention on one of the most relevant facets of news. These differences in question wording may also explain why we found somewhat higher levels of trust in news in general in some countries compared to some other surveys, including the Reuters Institute's *Digital News Report 2022*, which focuses purely on an online population. For clarity, we collapse responses for 'trust completely' and 'trust somewhat' in the figures e report in this section.

4 Respondents were asked separately to indicate which of these seven platforms they had heard of before. The small number in each country who had not heard of a given platform before were excluded from being asked about whether they trusted news on that platform. The size of these excluded groups does not account for the magnitude of the trust gap. Additional information about the sample and top-line results for these items are provided in the appendices.

5 Despite the ban on TikTok's use in India, we asked people how they felt about the platform or if they had never heard of it before and separately about their use of the platform during the past 30 days. Given the small percentage of respondents who reported using the platform in India (5%), we exclude TikTok from comparisons with other variables in India.

In Appendix B we provide more detailed results for these questions, but in Figure 1.1 we show how levels of trust in news on platforms vary in relation to levels of trust in news overall. India in particular exhibits much higher levels of trust compared to the other countries, whereas Brazil ranks slightly behind the US and the UK. About a third of audiences in Brazil (as well as in the US) also said they did not think information in the news media in their country could be trusted in general. The Reuters Institute's *Digital News Report 2022* (Newman et al. 2022) previously found a decline in trust in news in Brazil. In recent years Brazil had exhibited above-average levels of trust compared to the other countries, but this trend may have stopped.[6] Declining trust there may be due to a combination of fatigue from the COVID-19 pandemic in a country that was severely affected; a contentious political environment, including sustained criticism of journalists from President Jair Bolsonaro;[7] and particularly acute increases in poverty in recent years, all of which may affect audience attitudes towards news.

With respect to trust in news on platforms, Google is among the most trusted across all four countries (57% in Brazil, 77% in India, 52% in the UK, and 53% in the US), while Facebook was among the least trusted in the UK (27%) and the US (29%). There is also a stark divide for trust in news on WhatsApp in Brazil (53%) and India (54%), where more than half of the population in those countries say they trust news there. Respondents in Brazil (46%) and India (51%) also report higher levels of trust for news on YouTube compared to people in the UK (29%) and the US (20%). Trust levels for information on Instagram are higher in Brazil (39%) when compared to the other three countries (27% in India, 24% in the UK, and 26% in the US), where Instagram is among the least trusted platforms, along with TikTok in the UK and the US (20% in both countries say they trust news on it).

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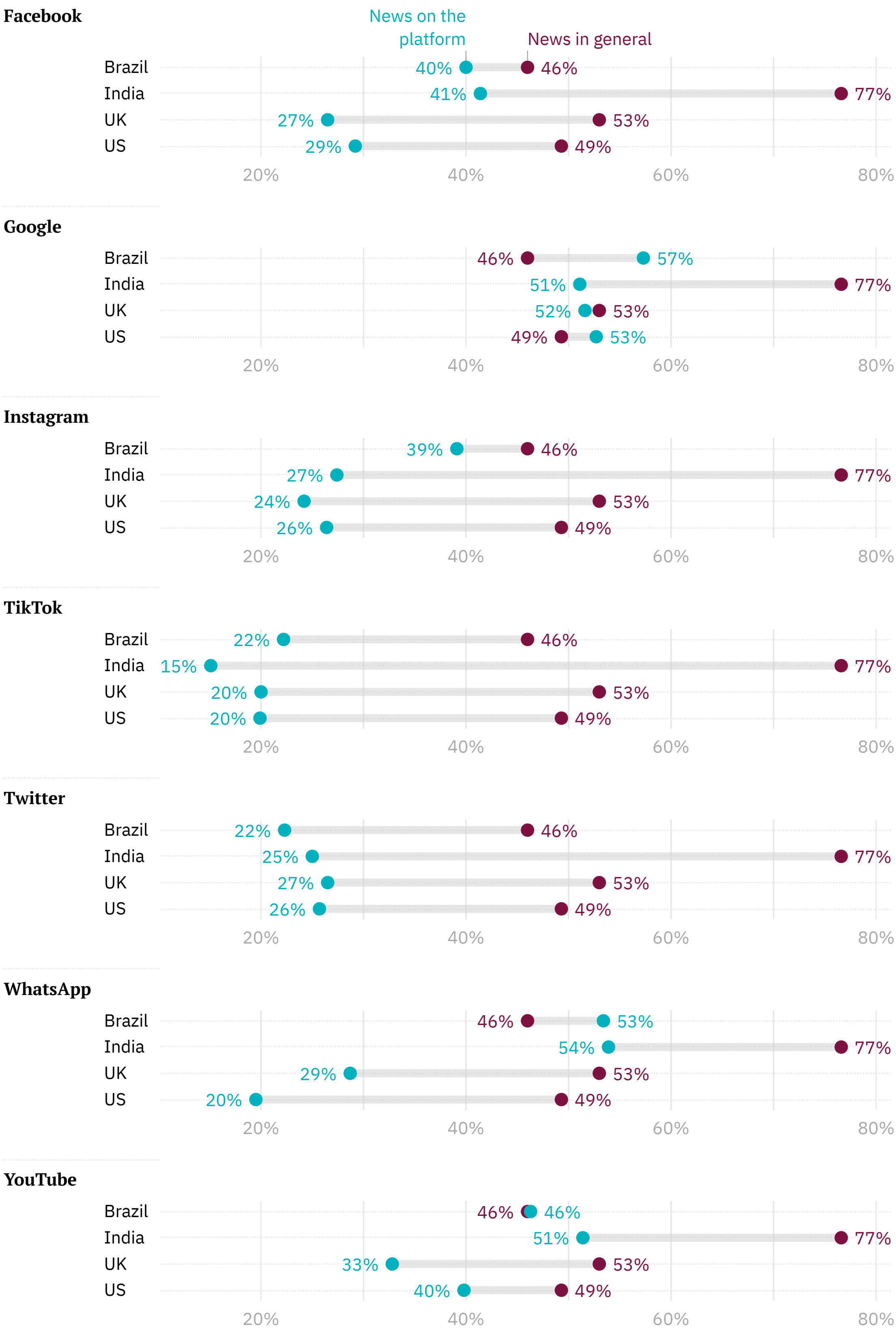
[6] Our survey sample also differs from the *Digital News Report*'s exclusive focus on an online population. Among our respondents in Brazil, significant per entages do not have internet access at home (22%) or on a mobile phone (14%).

[7] See https://rsf.org/en/bolsonaro-family-vents-more-anger-ever-brazil-s-media

Figure 1.1: Trust in news on platforms is lower than trust in news in general

Percentage who trust information in the news media in general versus news on each platform in each country



Q5. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US]? **Q21.** Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? *Base: Total sample in each country: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Includes all who responded 'trust somewhat' and 'trust completely'.*

By comparing levels of trust in news in general in each country with trust in news on platforms, the gaps in trust are highly noticeable for most, although not all, platforms. In general, people in all four countries tend to trust news in general at higher levels than they trust news on platforms. These differences are significant across most plat orms in India, the UK, and the US, with the exception of news on Google in the UK and US, where levels of trust are similar or slightly higher. The trust gap is particularly pronounced when it comes to TikTok, which might be due to a combination of the platform being more focused on entertainment content and being less familiar to many respondents. Brazil is somewhat different compared to the other countries, with respondents tending to trust news on Google, WhatsApp, and YouTube at least as much as, if not more so than, news in general in their country. We suspect these country-level differences may refle t demographic and political differences among each country's populations, which we address in more detail below.

Who Is Least Trusting of News on Platforms?

While there are many factors underlying why trust gaps persist, we focus here on the three most important differences around those who trust news on platforms and those who do not. These differences relate to (a) whether people use platforms at all; (b) their age and level of educational attainment; and (c) political factors, not only in terms of political orientation but also the degree to which people are politically interested and engaged.

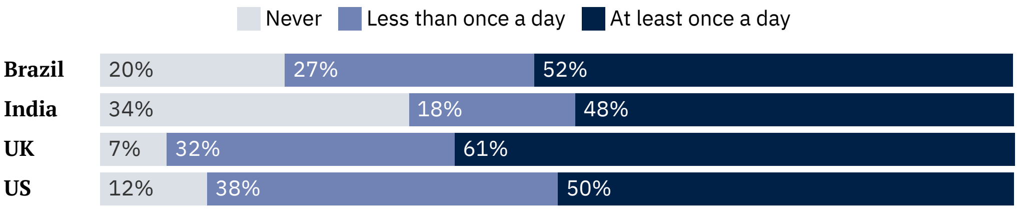
Disparities in trust are closely linked to who uses platforms and who uses them for news

First, and perhaps most important, we note that those who trust news on platforms are often quite similar in profile to those who trust in ormation in the news media in general. Second, as we underscored in our report last year (Toff et al. 2021b), trust tends to be highest among those who access news most frequently. Third, the profile of people who use plat orms tends to include people who use more news.

Combined, this means that gaps in trust between news in general and news on platforms tend to be explained largely by higher levels of distrust among people who do not use platforms. It is worth keeping in mind that there are significant portions of the publi in all four countries, but especially India and Brazil, who still do not consume news online, much less do so on digital platforms. For example, when we asked people how often they accessed news online – including from social media platforms, messaging apps, and search engines – we found that about half of the samples in all four countries did so daily and just over six in ten in the UK, but as many as one-third of Indian respondents and one-fi th of Brazilians never got news online (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: About half of respondents in all countries get news online every day

Percentage in each country who never get news online, that get news online less than once a day, or at least once a day

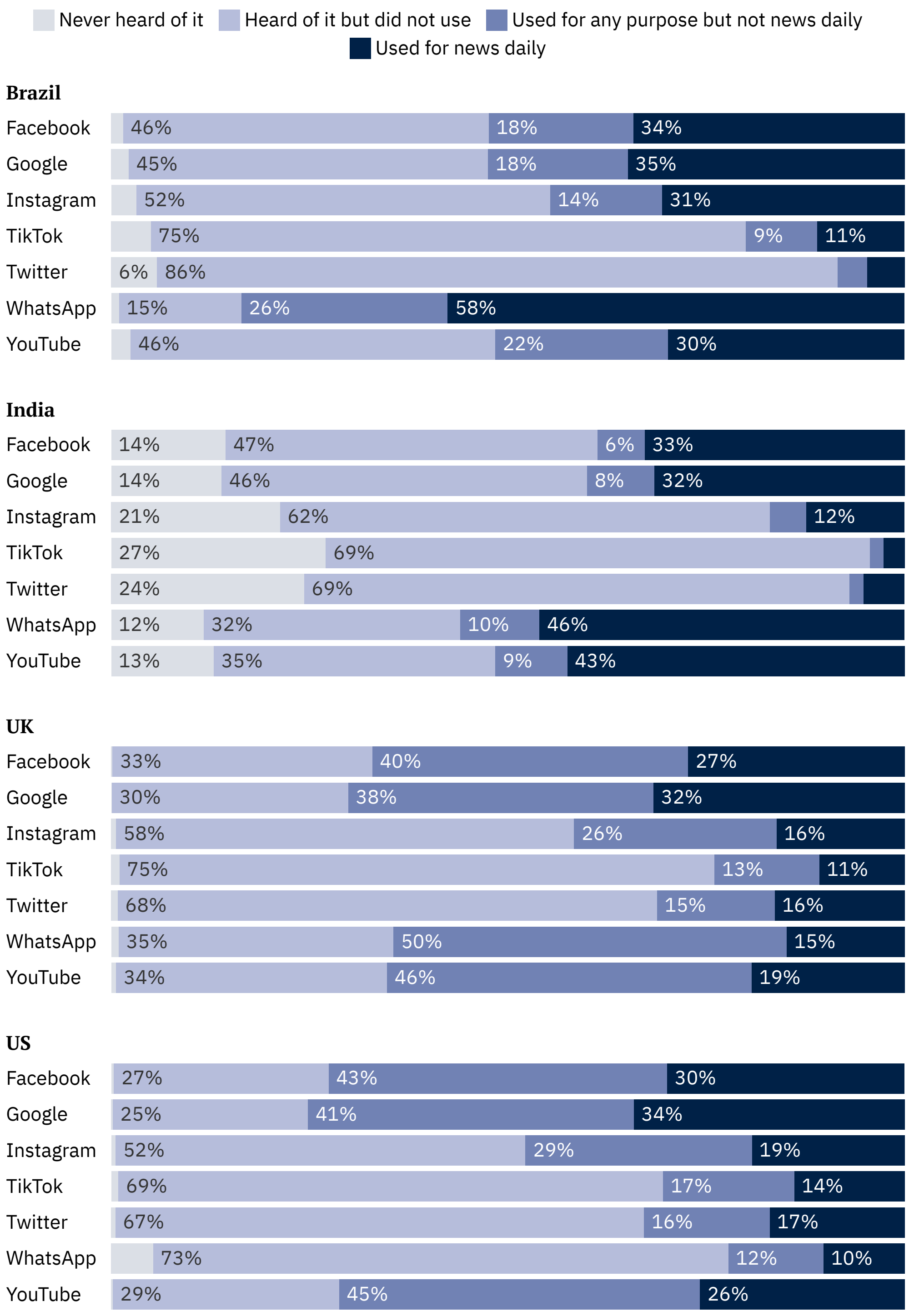


Q3. Many people access news in different ways. Thinking about your own news habits, how often, if at all, do you... Get news online (including social media, messaging apps or search engines)? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116.*

Many people also do not use platforms at all and/or rarely get news from them when they do. As shown in Figure 1.3, while the vast majority of respondents say they have heard of each of the seven platforms we asked about, many do not use them (remember many of our respondents in Brazil and India have limited or no internet access). Even smaller percentages get news from platforms on a regular basis. Facebook, Google, and YouTube ranked as the most used in all countries, with WhatsApp being the most widely used platform in Brazil (84%) and India (56%).

Figure 1.3: Large portions of the public do not use platforms but have opinions on them

Percentage in each country who have heard of each platform, used them for any purpose, and received news from them daily or more often



Q18. Which, if any, of the following platforms have you used for any purpose in the past 30 days? **Q20.** How often, if ever, would you say you get news via the following platforms? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: The categories shaded in blue for 'Used for any purpose but not news daily' and the 'Used for news daily' when combined constitute the full subgroup who used each platform for any purpose.*

These differences matter in helping to explain gaps in trust. Those who say they access news on platforms daily or more frequently also tend to exhibit higher levels of trust in news relative to those who do not use platforms at all, or those who do so but rarely or never get news from them (see Figure 1.4). Differences between platform users in general and platform users who get news from them are smaller in Brazil and India, again refle ting smaller differences *among* platform users in those countries, but both groups tend to be more trusting towards news overall. The differences are most clearly noticeable across all platforms in the UK and the US.

Figure 1.4: People who use platforms for news daily trust news in general more

Percentage who trust information in the news media in general among those who do not use platforms, those who use them for any purpose, and those who use them daily for news

Q5. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US]? **Q20.** How often, if ever, would you say you get news via the following platforms? *Bases: Among platform non-users, they range from 328 on WhatsApp to 1,831 on Twitter in Brazil, 939 on WhatsApp to 1,986 on Twitter in India, 659 on Google to 1,678 on TikTok in the UK, 525 on Google to 1,479 on TikTok in the US. Among platform users, they range from 169 on Twitter to 1,672 on WhatsApp in Brazil, 148 on Twitter to 1,195 on WhatsApp in India, 528 on TikTok to 1,547 on Google in the UK, 644 on TikTok to 1,591 on Google in the US. Among daily users for news, they range from 95 on Twitter to 1,152 on WhatsApp in Brazil, 110 on Twitter to 982 on WhatsApp in India, 237 on TikTok to 698 on Google in the UK, 216 on WhatsApp to 722 on Google in the US. Note: We categorised individuals who used each platform at least once in the past 30 days as 'users'. This figure shows percentages for those who said they 'trust completely' or 'trust somewhat' the information from the news media in their country.*

Differences by age and education

Parallel to these differences rooted in use of platforms and use of platforms for news, we also see systematic differences in trust related to two key demographic variables. As we showed in a previous report (Toff et al. 2021b), older and less educated people tend to be the least trusting towards news in general, and the same is true with respect to trust in news on most platforms (see Figure 1.5). There is, however, mixed evidence about the role of age for trust in news, especially from studies including other countries showing that younger audiences tend to be less trusting than older people (Kalogeropoulos et al. 2019; Hanitzsch et al. 2017).

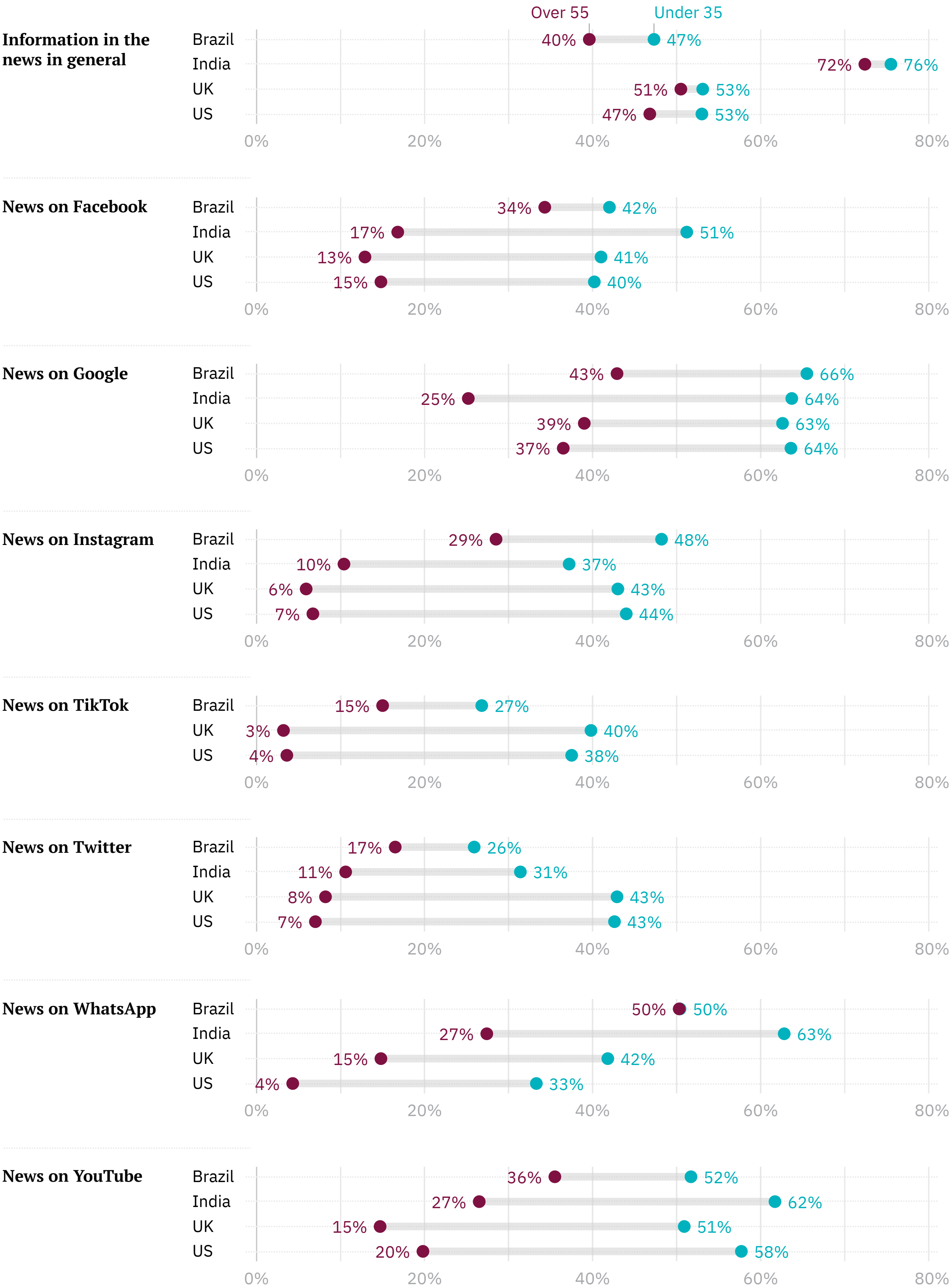
In our data, gaps in trust by age are considerably wider when it comes to trust in news on platforms than news overall. This is in line with other research showing that younger audiences tend to trust social media platforms more than older people.[8] These results may at first seem counter-intuitive given that age tends to be correlated with news use and news use with trust, but the larger differences found for trust in news on platforms may be a refle tion of age differences in who uses platforms and gets news from them. Although older respondents are more likely to say they get news from television at least once a day in most countries, for example, a higher proportion of younger people say they often get news online (including on social media), which likely explains why people under 35 years old tend to be more trusting towards news on platforms in particular.

The largest gaps are found when comparing trust in news on Google in India, YouTube in the US, and Instagram and TikTok in the UK, where differences when examining younger and older respondents reach nearly 40 percentage points. Age gaps are somewhat smaller in Brazil, and there is no difference by age for trust in news on WhatsApp, a platform that is widely used in the country.

[8] See https://changingchildhood.unicef.org/pt/stories/is-scrolling-believing

Figure 1.5: Young people are more trusting of news on platforms

Percentage who trust information in the news media in general as well as news on platforms among those who are under 35 versus over 55



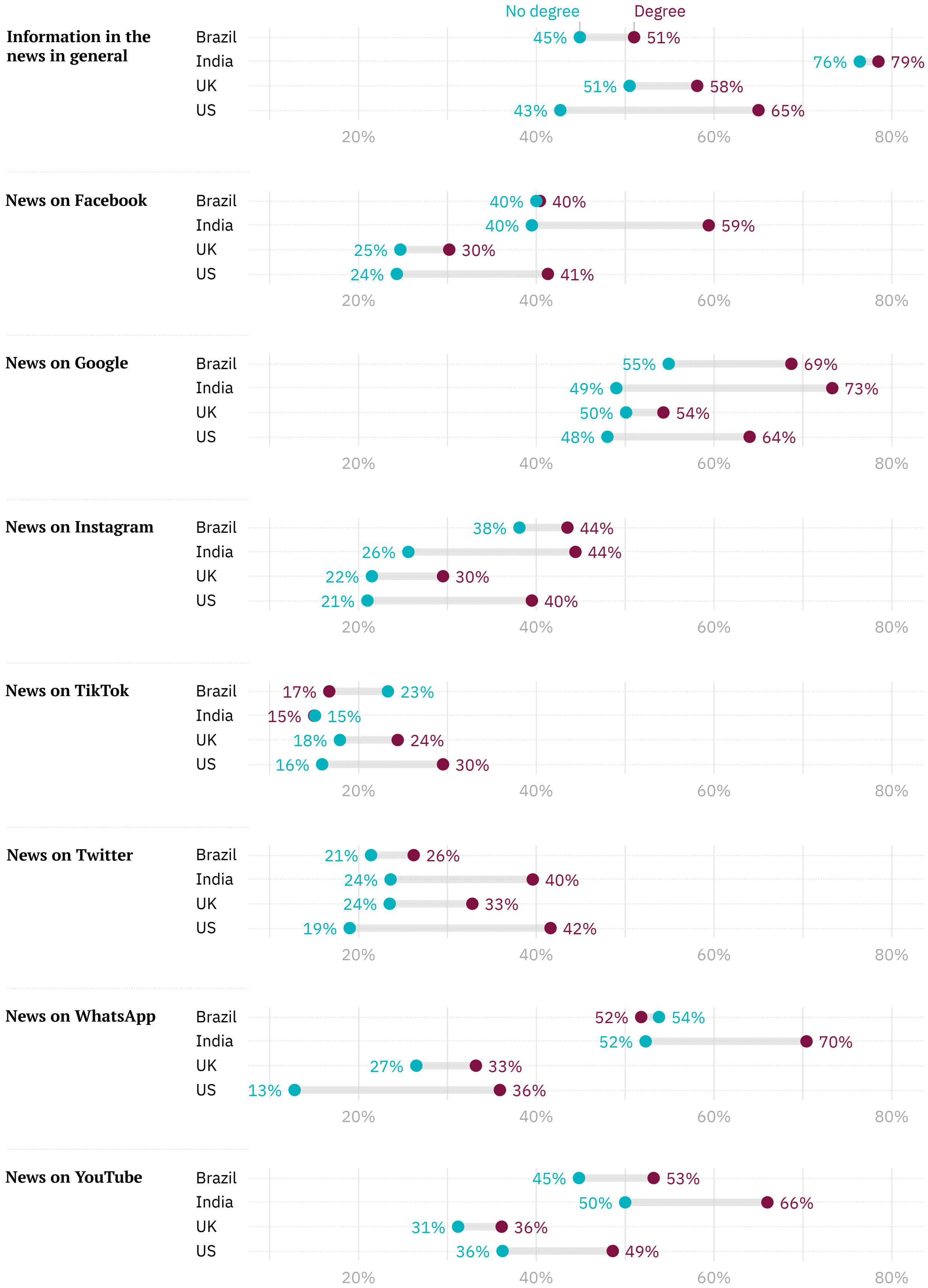
Q21. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? **AGE.** What is your date of birth? *Base: Under 35: Brazil = 709, India = 1,015, UK = 666, US = 669. Over 55: Brazil = 539, India = 348, UK = 727, US = 700. Note: Includes all who responded 'trust somewhat' and 'trust completely'.*

Likewise, those who have college degrees are also more likely to trust news overall as well as on platforms, again with some variation by country and platform (see Figure 1.6). Among Americans there is a 22 percentage point gap in trust in news in general between those who are or are not college educated, which is considerably larger than in the other countries. When looking at trust in news on platforms only, there is a significant gap in the US and in the UK for Twitter, a platform with a reputation for a somewhat niche user base (Pew Research Center, 2019). There is basically no difference by education for those who trust news on WhatsApp and Facebook in Brazil but, as a general trend, those who are more educated also trust news on platforms more, similar to the patterns we observe when examining trust in news in general.

In Brazil and India the biggest gap between those who are and are not college educated is seen with respect to levels of trust in news on Google; however, news found through the search engine still enjoys moderate to high levels of trust even among those who are less educated. In India we also see large gaps for trust in news on WhatsApp and Facebook, in which a larger percentage of respondents with college degrees say they trust news on these platforms. In Brazil, on the other hand, those without a college degree are more likely to trust news on TikTok. These results for Brazil may be a refle tion of some previously studied political dynamics there showing how higher levels of education in the country do not necessarily predict political behaviour (Schlegel 2021).

Figure 1.6: More educated people are more trusting of news in general and on platforms

Percentage who trust information in the news media in general as well as news on platforms among those who have a college degree or more versus those who do not have a college degree



Q21. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? **EDU.** What is your highest level of education attained? *Base: Degree: Brazil = 338, India = 191, UK = 733, US = 621. No degree: Brazil = 1,662, India = 1,943, UK = 1,473, US = 1,495. Note: Includes all who responded 'trust somewhat' and 'trust completely'.*

Differences related to politics

Lastly, one of the other major dividing lines when it comes to explaining who is least trusting of news on digital platforms pertains to politics. In some countries, these political divides are very much related to support for different political parties and major political figures but more generally, as we emphasised in our last report, there are significant cleavages bet   een those who are interested and engaged in politics versus those who are not, and that extends to trust in news on platforms as well.

With respect to partisanship and political orientation, trust in news and trust in news on platforms is polarised, but more heavily so in the Global North countries we studied. In the US and the UK, a larger share of those who hold favourable opinions towards Joe Biden and Boris Johnson,[9] respectively, trust news on all platforms. As an example, 78% of those who have favourable opinions of Biden and 70% of those who have favourable opinions of Johnson trust news on Google, versus 42% and 51%, respectively, of those who have unfavourable opinions about these figures This might be an expression of how people who support political leaders in these two countries are more trusting across the board, since such individuals are also more likely to trust news in general, while patterns are less clear in Brazil and India. In Brazil we find little evidence of any differences in the percentages who trust news overall or on platforms according to levels of support for, or opposition to, Jair Bolsonaro. Where differences exist, they tend to be very small and not statistically significant In India, support for, or opposition to, Modi also tends to be less relevant to explaining disparities in trust in news. WhatsApp is one of the few cases where there are significant dif erences in trust in news along political lines, with 70% of those holding a more favourable opinion towards the Indian prime minister saying they trust news on WhatsApp, versus 58% of those who have unfavourable opinions towards him. We report these differences in full in Appendix B.

A more consistent explanation for differences in trust in news on platforms comes from examining political interest. The same pattern holds across all four countries: people who are more interested in politics also have higher levels of trust in news on platforms (see Figure 1.7). To be sure, there is variation in how these dynamics play out. In Brazil we see virtually no difference when it comes to Facebook and TikTok but considerable differences in trust levels for news on Google, Instagram, and YouTube between those who are most and least politically interested. This might be due to differences in the kinds of content people associate with these platforms, with users and non-users alike in Brazil perhaps perceiving Facebook and TikTok as spaces containing less political news content altogether, making those platforms, therefore, less polarising by political interest.

WhatsApp in Brazil is the only platform where trust levels from less politically interested respondents is slightly higher, perhaps due to a combination of warnings about the credibility of information circulating there and the importance the platform has for political discussion in the country (Rossini et al. 2021), since a significant share of politically interested Brazilians stil say they trust news on WhatsApp.

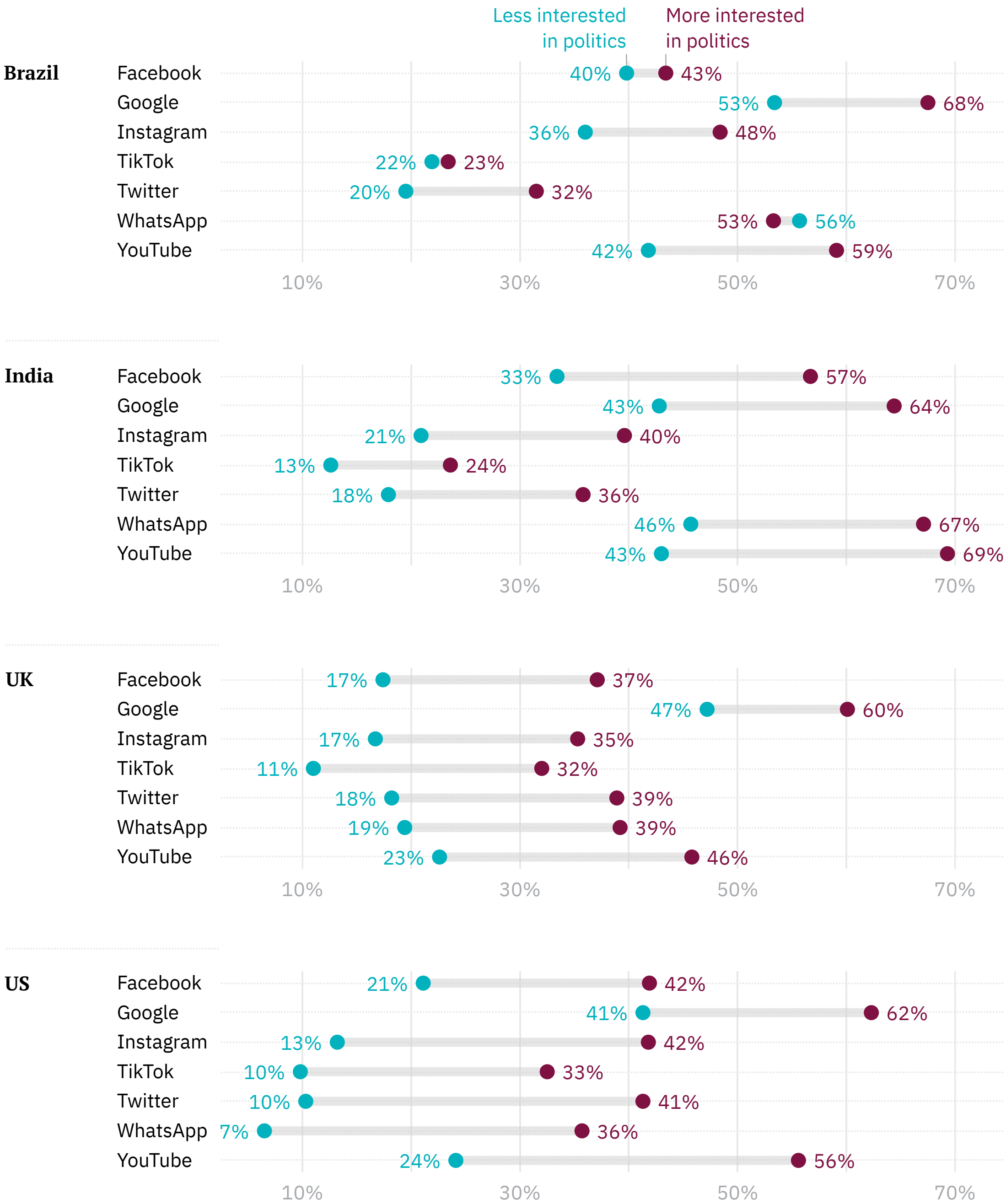
[9] Boris Johnson was Prime Minister of the UK when this survey was in the field and resigned on Se tember 6th 2022.

The importance of WhatsApp for political discussion might also be at issue in India (Badrinathan 2021; Chauchard and Garimella 2022), but the most politically interested Indian respondents have higher levels of trust in news on the messaging app. Differences related to political interest are also apparent for trust in news on YouTube, Google, and Facebook in India.

In the UK the largest gap in trust according to political interest is on YouTube. British respondents also have lower levels of trust in almost all platforms, which might be a consequence of a more limited use of platforms for news in the first pla e. The US also shows lower levels of trust in news on platforms, even among politically interested individuals, when compared to Brazil and India, with the largest gaps for trust on YouTube, followed by Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok.

Figure 1.7: Politically interested people are more trusting of news on platforms

Percentage who trust news on each platform among those who are more versus less interested in politics

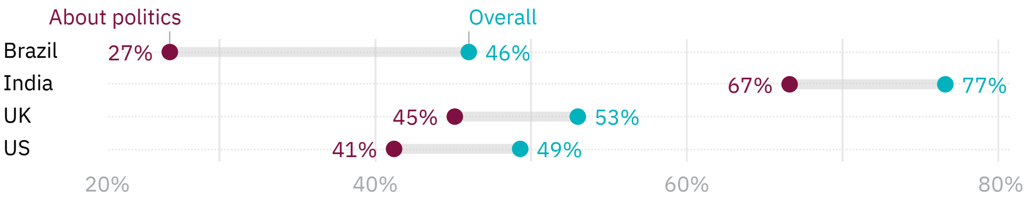


Q21. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? **Q9.** How interested, if at all, would you say you are in politics? *Base: Extremely or very interested: Brazil = 350, India = 526, UK = 784, US = 812. Slightly interested and not interested at all: Brazil = 1,213, India = 1,061, UK = 748, US = 824. Note: Includes all who responded that they 'completely trust' or 'somewhat trust' news on platforms. The 'more interested' category includes those who said they were 'extremely interested' or 'very interested' whereas the 'less interested' category includes those who said they were 'slightly interested' or 'not at all interested'. The middle response ('moderately interested') was excluded.*

One reason political interest may be particularly relevant to explaining disparities in trust in news relates to another finding from our most re ent qualitative research on trust in news (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022). In that report, we noted that many of those who used platforms regularly and had low trust in the news they found there made important distinctions according to news topic. They often emphasised that news about politics was viewed with suspicion, whereas they often did not care as much about evaluating the trustworthiness of the sources of information they encountered on platforms when it came to non-political subjects, which accounted for most of the news they saw.

We included a question in our survey that tested whether audiences in general made similar distinctions. After asking about trust in information from the news media in general, we asked a follow-up question about trust in information from the news media 'when they cover politics'. What we found may help explain why political interest is such an important factor alongside the use of platforms, age, and education. The way that many people think about political news is distinct from how they evaluate other topics, and those who are less politically interested tend to be particularly unlikely to trust news when it comes to coverage of politics. As many respondents have previously told us in qualitative interviews, those least interested in politics were often fearful of being misled or manipulated when they encountered political news. Across all four countries we found considerably lower levels of trust for news about politics compared to news overall (see Figure 1.8). These differences were largest in Brazil, where only 27% said they could trust information in the news media when they cover politics.[10] These larger disparities in Brazil may well be a consequence of the contentious political environment around the next general elections, which will happen in October 2022.

Figure 1.8: Trust in news in general is higher than trust in news about politics
Percentage who say they trust information from the news media in general versus when they cover politics



Q6. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US] when they cover politics. **Q5.** Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US]. *Base: Total sample in each country: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Includes those who 'somewhat trust' and 'completely trust' the news media in general versus the news media when they cover politics.*

These results underscore the importance of politics in shaping how people think about trust in news and add to our other observations in this section showing how trust in news on platforms depends not only on people's use of platforms, but also on key demographic variables including age and education, as well as political attitudes, especially level of interest. In summary, what we have documented in this section are commonalities across the four countries that help to explain gaps in trust in information in the news media versus news found on platforms. In the next section we build on these results and show that despite often relatively high scepticism towards news on platforms, many hold fairly positive feelings towards platforms because they largely use them for reasons unrelated to news.

[10] Interest in political news is also much lower in Brazil than in the US and the UK. When we asked people about their interest in different kinds of news topics, only 18% of Brazilians said they were very or extremely interested in news about the subject, making it one of the topics that generated the least amount of interest. That was considerably lower than the 35% or more of respondents who said the same in India, the UK, and the US. We report these results in Appendix B.

2. News Is Rarely Central to People's Experiences Using Platforms

In this section we focus on people's broader feelings towards platforms and why they say they use them. Reasons vary to some degree from platform to platform, but they are often unrelated to news, which helps account for why, despite gaps in trust towards news on most platforms, audiences in all four countries have fairly positive feelings associated with platforms in general. This may be because people tend to use them for many other purposes in daily life, with news and information being largely a secondary concern, even if many also see the quality of the information on platforms as problematic, as we will show in the third section of this report.

Most Express Positive Feelings Towards Most Platforms

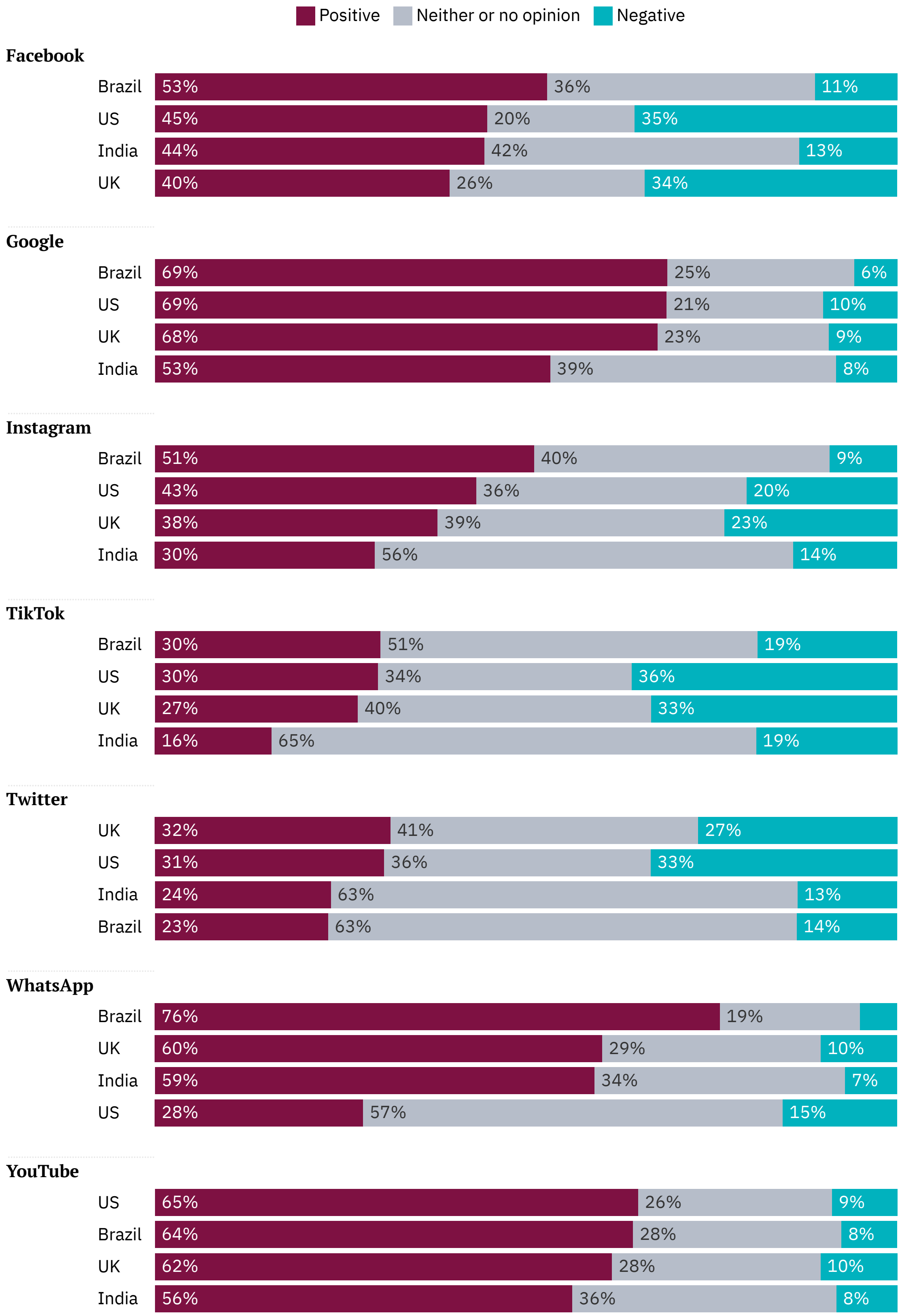
The trust gap we found holds consistently across most platforms and countries, yet we also find that, overwhelmingly, most people hold fairly positive feelings towards platforms in general – if they possess any feelings at all (see Figure 2.1). In addition to asking about trust in news on each platform, we asked a separate question designed to measure whether people felt 'positive or negative' about each of the platforms, irrespective of whether they themselves used them. We wanted to better understand how people think about platforms in general, not only how they think about news on these services. We found similar patterns across the four countries; all platforms received an overall net positive rating, with the exception of Twitter in the US and TikTok in India, the UK, and the US.

While the share of positive evaluations varies significantly from one plat orm to the next, Google is perceived most favourably in all countries, followed closely by YouTube. WhatsApp is the platform with the highest proportion of positive feelings in Brazil, and the majority of respondents in India and the UK also view it favourably. TikTok and Twitter generally received the lowest shares of positive evaluations in all countries, although in some cases percentages were low because of higher numbers who held no opinion or had never heard of the platforms.

Negative evaluations of Facebook were particularly apparent in the UK and the US when compared with Brazil and India. This might refle t discussions regarding platform regulation that may be more salient among audiences in Global North countries. As we discuss in the following sections, it is likely that positive evaluations of platforms are closely related to the specific reasons respondents use them and may ha e little to do with how people think about the quality of news they find there If Google, WhatsApp, or YouTube give people what they want when it comes to why they primarily use them – connecting with friends and family or offering diversionary entertainment – it may not matter to most people whether the news they find there is per eived as untrustworthy (even though it can be highly problematic from a wider, societal, point of view).

Figure 2.1: People have positive feelings towards most platforms

Percentage in each country who feel positive, negative, or neither about each platform



Q17. Generally speaking, how positive or negative do you feel about the following platforms? We would like to know your perceptions, irrespective of whether you use these or not. *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: The 'Neither or no opinion' category includes all those who responded 'neither positive nor negative', 'never heard of it', and 'don't know'.*

Less Positive Evaluations of Platforms Are Found Mainly Among People Who Do Not Use Them

Similar to the results we showed in the first se tion, usage of platforms is closely linked to how positively people evaluate them. This, too, may be another indication of how people may evaluate platforms based on criteria specific to h w they use them. Respondents who used each platform during the previous 30 days were far more likely to hold positive evaluations of them compared to those who did not (see Figure 2.2). These differences were highly pronounced for many platforms. The biggest gap between users and non-users is for WhatsApp in the US, where 81% of users and 13% of non-users said they had positive feelings about the platform. Only about one-fi th of Americans used the platform for any reason during the previous 30 days, but in India, where the messaging app is much more widely used, a significant gap bet een users and non-users was also found: 84% of users and 36% of non-users expressed positive feelings about WhatsApp. These differences are also pronounced in most platforms in the other countries. In Brazil, 86% of Google users and 38% of non-users have positive perceptions of the platform. In the UK, the biggest gap in positive evaluations by usage was observed for TikTok, where 70% of users and 14% of non-users said they had positive opinions about it.

Figure 2.2: Platform users are more likely to have positive feelings about them

Percentage who have positive feelings towards platforms among those who do not use them, those who use them for any purpose, and those who use them daily for news

Q17. Generally speaking, how positive or negative do you feel about the following platforms? We would like to know your perceptions, irrespective of whether you use these or not. **Q19**. Typically, how often do you use the following platforms for any purpose? **Q20.** Typically, how often do you use the following platforms for news? *Base: Among platform non-users, they range from 328 on WhatsApp to 1,831 on Twitter in Brazil, 939 on WhatsApp to 1,986 on Twitter in India, 659 on Google to 1,678 on TikTok in the UK, 525 on Google to 1,479 on TikTok in the US. Among platform users, they range from 169 on Twitter to 1,672 on WhatsApp in Brazil, 148 on Twitter to 1,195 on WhatsApp in India, 528 on TikTok to 1,547 on Google in the UK, 644 on TikTok to 1,591 on Google in the US. Among daily users for news, they range from 95 on Twitter to 1,152 on WhatsApp in Brazil, 110 on Twitter to 982 on WhatsApp in India, 237 on TikTok to 698 on Google in the UK, 216 on WhatsApp to 722 on Google in the US. Note: We categorised individuals who use each platform at least once in the past 30 days as 'users'. This figure shows percentages for those who said they felt 'very positive' or 'somewhat positive' towards platforms.*

Among those who get news from platforms at least once a day or more frequently, we also found slightly higher levels of positive feelings towards platforms compared to users overall. These differences are largely explained by higher rates of positive feelings towards platforms among those who use these services more frequently for *any* purpose – not necessarily because of anything related to the news. In fact, there is basically no difference in levels of positive feelings among daily users of platforms for any purpose and those who use them for news daily. This holds true for most platforms across all countries, with a few exceptions, including Facebook in the UK and the US, where a larger percentage of those who use the platform at least daily for news hold positive feelings towards it (70% in the UK and 76% in the US) compared to even those who use the platform at least daily for any purpose (57% in the UK and 61% in the US).

As we look more deeply at the data in this section, one reason that trust in news on platforms may be low relative to the positive feelings many said they associated with platforms is that ideas about platforms encompass a host of other factors often unrelated to news and information.

Examining Reasons Why People Say They Use Different Platforms

What explains positive feelings towards most platforms but relatively low trust in news on them? A significant fa tor is that most people use most platforms for other purposes often unrelated to news. These findings echo prior academic studies that similarly sh w news constituting a small proportion of what most people see or do on digital platforms (Malik and Pfeffer 2016; Miller et al. 2016). Google is perhaps something of an exception, where comparatively higher numbers do say they use it in order to get up-to-date information about what is happening in the world, but as we showed previously, trust gaps are also smallest for that platform, an indication that how people think about news on platforms may depend on what they associate with doing while using these services.

The results we report in this section involve responses to a set of questions we asked about why people say they use digital platforms. These results are crucial to explaining why people hold mainly positive feelings about platforms even when levels of trust in them are relatively low. As will be clear throughout this section, the reasons respondents give for using platforms are often not related to news but might be very relevant for completing tasks in their daily lives or for maintaining personal relationships. Concerns about the quality of news and information on platforms – which, as we show in Section 3, are held by many – may well be less important when it comes to explaining most people's overall attitudes towards platforms.

In constructing our survey questionnaire we included a number of questions that capture the reasons we heard mentioned most frequently during qualitative interviews with platform users (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022). The structure of these questions allowed respondents to select all that they felt applied to them; the reasons were not mutually exclusive from one another. We focus in this section on four of the most-used platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Google, and we organise this section reason by reason rather than platform by platform in order to capture some of the commonalities and differences between platforms (and across countries) rather than discussing each separately.

We note, however, an important caveat to the findings e report on in this section. Unlike the rest of this report, here we draw on a separate sample of respondents from an additional data collection we conducted in July 2022. When we asked about reasons for using platforms in our original survey, two of the four platforms were inadvertently omitted from the questionnaire due to a technical error. Given that recontacting respondents interviewed face to face in various locations around Brazil and India was not feasible, we decided to field a separate su vey to collect responses for these items for all four platforms. This separate survey differed from our main survey results in several important ways: most significant among them is that it is ased on an *online* survey of audiences in all four countries, meaning these results cannot be said to be representative of the entire populations and are not directly comparable to our other results, especially in Brazil and India. The survey samples we are describing in this section are composed of younger, more educated, and more urban respondents. In the case of India, only English speakers were invited to participate in this follow-up survey, whereas our face-to-face survey was fielded in 11 dif erent languages.[11] Still, despite these limitations we believe that platform-by-platform comparisons are revealing and helpful for providing context for understanding other results in this report.

Reason 1: Connecting with people

One of the leading reasons that respondents in all four countries said they used platforms for was as a tool to ‘connect with people’ (see Figure 2.3). However, this reason was applicable mainly with respect to two platforms in particular: WhatsApp and Facebook. A relatively larger proportion of Indian respondents also said they use YouTube to foster connections with others, but this was more unusual elsewhere. (We did not include this reason when we asked about reasons for using Google.) That connecting with people was one of the most frequently cited reasons for using Facebook may refle t that platform’s emphasis on this in recent years (Mosseri 2018).

Figure 2.3: Connecting with other people is one of the main reasons to use platforms
Percentage who say they use each platform to connect with people

Q27, Q35, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/WhatsApp/YouTube] to connect with people. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

The degree to which WhatsApp in particular is largely perceived as a communication tool rather than as a conduit for information about news and current affairs – even as many say they get news frequently there – is refle ted in data from our main survey where we asked respondents who used WhatsApp about the types of groups that they generally were engaging with. Although people might see news in groups or conversations where this is not the primary focus, our previous qualitative research (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022) shows limited exposure to news on

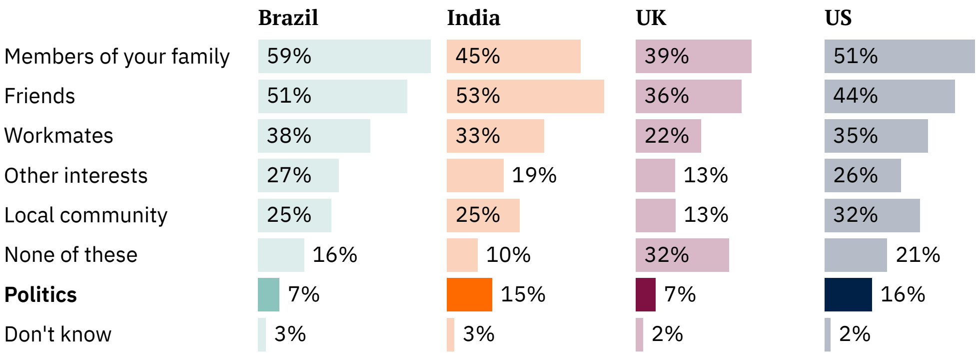
[11] In Appendix A, we report additional information about this separate data collection. There we also include results for the two platforms (YouTube and WhatsApp) included in the main survey.

WhatsApp when people navigate among their most frequently used groups and conversations. The messaging app is used less widely in the US and to a lesser extent the UK, but among those who do use it, large numbers of users report mainly participating in groups with social connections, such as family, friends, and workmates. This is also the case in India and Brazil, where the platform is broadly used.

Political groups ranked quite low on the list of types of groups WhatsApp users said they had used in the past 30 days. A minority in all countries said they used a political group, most of them in India and the US. Despite the attention that political groups receive in Brazil (Chagas 2022; Machado et al. 2019), only a small share of WhatsApp users report participating in such groups on the platform (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: A minority of respondents use political WhatsApp groups

Percentage of WhatsApp users in each country who have used each of the following kinds of groups in the previous 30 days

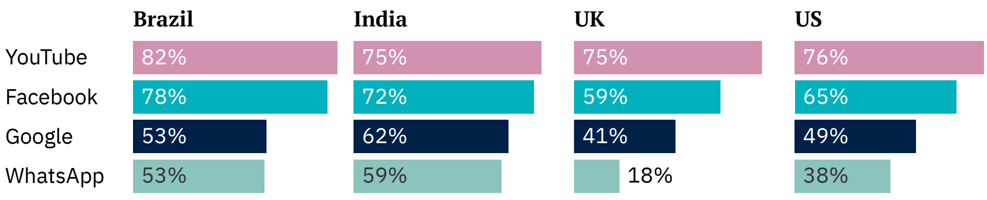


Q29. WhatsApp allows you to set up, join and participate in groups, where you can discuss news or related topics with multiple people at the same time. Which, if any, of the following groups have you used in the past 30 days on WhatsApp? Please select all that apply. *Base: Brazil = 1,672, India = 1,195, UK = 1,421, US = 470.*

Reason 2: Entertainment or passing time

We also see similarities across countries around platforms people most associate with using for 'entertainment or to pass the time'. YouTube ranked most highly as the platform most said they used for this purpose (see Figure 2.5). Of course, there are likely to be many differences in the kinds of entertainment people are engaging with on these platforms. Some political communication studies have investigated to what extent the video platform is also used for political purposes (Munger and Phillips 2022; Ribeiro et al. 2020), but we suspect for many, given levels of political interest in general, the forms of entertainment or leisure they are referring to when responding to this question are largely non-political or unrelated to current affairs.

Figure 2.5: YouTube is the platform most people say they use for entertainment
Percentage who say they use each platform for entertainment or to pass the time



Q27, Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube] for entertainment or to pass the time. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

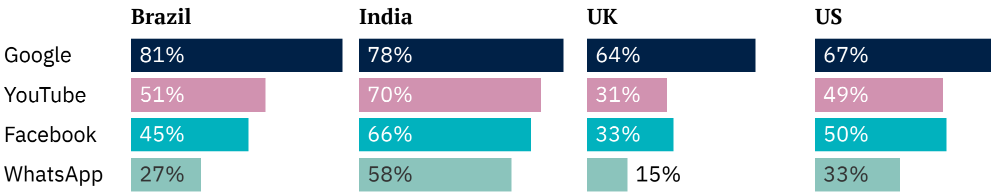
Facebook ranked second to YouTube as the platform associated with entertainment or passing time as a reason for using it. A significant share of users in all ountries also said they used the social network for this purpose. Smaller segments of respondents said they used Google or WhatsApp for this purpose in all countries, although the majority selected it as a reason in both Brazil and India.

Reasons 3 and 4: Getting information and exposure to different perspectives

When it comes to news-related reasons for using platforms, Google is the one service most people across all four countries consistently said they used for such purposes, although YouTube was also frequently associated with certain forms of information-seeking.

Nearly eight in ten in Brazil and India said they used Google to 'get up-to-date information about what is happening in the world' and a clear majority also did so in the UK and the US (see Figure 2.6). However, the percentages who felt this reason applied to other platforms were much lower, especially relative to how many said they used Facebook or WhatsApp to connect with others. Getting news on these platforms may often seem like a secondary purpose – maybe even an intrusion, even as broadly defined as e have referred to news in our questions (rather than more narrowly as, say, exclusively straight factual reporting). In the UK and the US, fewer than half of respondents said they used YouTube or Facebook when looking for information. In Brazil, the numbers for each were closer to 50%. Only in India did a majority cite 'get up-to-date information about what is happening in the world' for all four platforms. Although in this case WhatsApp was the lowest ranked of the four, this might point to a difference between intentional and incidental exposure to news on the platform. For example, 58% of Brazilians that responded to our main survey said they got news on WhatsApp at least once a day, but the share in our online survey that said they considered it one of the reasons they use the platform is much smaller.

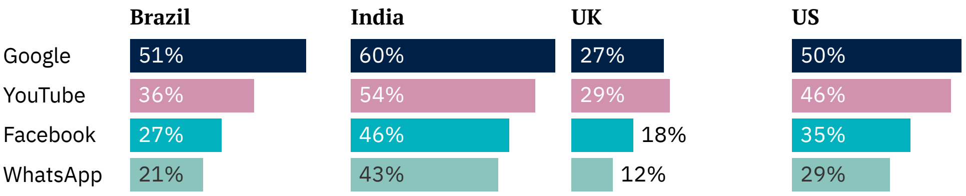
Figure 2.6: Google is the platform more people say they go to when looking for information
Percentage who say they use each platform to get up-to-date information about what is happening in the world



Q27, Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube] to get up-to-date information about what is happening in the world. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

Although broader than news, we also included an additional reason respondents could select –pertaining to getting 'perspectives unavailable elsewhere' – that we formulated based on our interviews with platform users (see Figure 2.7). Here we see evidence of YouTube being valued alongside Google for this purpose, although, in general, smaller percentages cited this reason across the board, particularly on Facebook and WhatsApp.

Figure 2.7: Fewer respondents say they use platforms to get different perspectives
Percentage who say they use each platform to get perspectives not available elsewhere



Q27, Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube] to get perspectives not available elsewhere. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

Additional reasons: Learning new things, commercial purposes, or work and school

Finally, we included several additional reasons unrelated to news that also often generated somewhat higher percentages of agreement. These included learning how to do new things (which was mainly associated with Google and YouTube) as well as using platforms for commercial purposes or for work or school. These latter reasons, which majorities often cited with respect to certain platforms, may be important to explaining why so many hold such positive feelings towards platforms (see Figure 2.8). A perception that platforms are useful for daily tasks – in other words, to help them live their lives – may be a critical reason why many are willing to overlook things they simultaneously view as big problems on platforms.

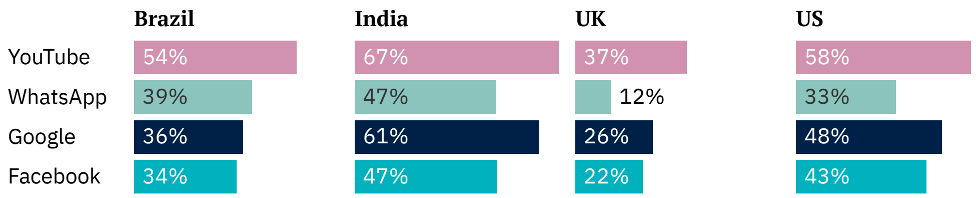
Figure 2.8: YouTube and Google are the main platforms people say they use to learn new things
Percentage who say they use each platform to learn how to do new things

Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/Google/YouTube] to learn how to do new things. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

Similarly, considerable portions of the public said they turned to certain platforms for commercial purposes. The majority in both Brazil and India said they used YouTube when deciding between products to buy, and it was the same for Google in India. In Brazil and India, between one-third and just under a half said they used WhatsApp and Facebook to sell or buy things (see Figure 2.9). Although less often cited as a reason, using platforms for work or school was selected comparatively more often for Google than other platforms, but less so overall in the UK compared to the other countries (see Figure 2.10).

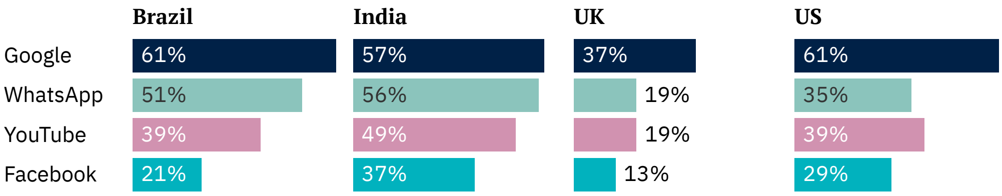
Although unrelated to news, these widely cited reasons for using platforms provide helpful context to understanding how platforms may be used differently in different places, which may also contribute to varying ways in which they are evaluated in each country.

Figure 2.9: Fewer people in the UK use platforms for commercial purposes than in Brazil, India, and the US
Percentage who say they use each platform for information when deciding between products they might buy or for commercial purposes (selling or buying things)



Q27, Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/WhatsApp] for commercial purposes (selling or buying things) or I use [Google/YouTube] for information when deciding between products I might buy. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

Figure 2.10: Google is the platform most used for work or school but less so in the UK
Percentage who say they use each platform for work or school



Q27, Q35, Q40, Q43. Thinking now about [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube] for work or school. *Note: These results are based on an online survey of internet users in the four countries. Base: Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203. Google users: Brazil = 823, India = 916, UK = 719, US = 202. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. YouTube users: Brazil = 862, India = 943, UK = 656, US = 205.*

In summary, while news on platforms may be increasingly important for many news organisations, it is less clear that it ranks highly as a reason why most people use platforms in the first pla e. Understanding such preferences is likely to help explain how many may be less trusting of news on these services, even as they have generally positive feelings towards the platforms in general. As long as people are generally satisfied with plat orms for serving the specific reasons th y have for using them, news may rarely enter into the equation at all. However, a large share of the public in all four countries also believes the quality of the information on platforms is, in fact, a problem in itself.

3. Perceived Problems with Platforms

Despite the positive feelings towards platforms we described in the previous section, many respondents in our surveys still expressed considerable concern about major controversies that have been in the news about them. In this section, we report results pertaining to a set of questions we asked about the same four platforms we focussed on in the previous section. These questions were designed to capture how widespread perceptions about problems on platforms may or may not be among the broader public in these four countries. The specific problems we asked about are those we heard most frequently expressed in both our previous qualitative interviews, as well as from journalists and publishers in roundtable discussions held in December 2021. These problems included concerns about misinformation circulating on platforms, harassment, and privacy and safety issues. We show how many in the UK and the US are particularly concerned about problems with Facebook more than other platforms, while even larger percentages in Brazil saw problems on all four platforms. Platform users in India, on the other hand, were less likely to say they recognised any of these issues as 'big problems'.

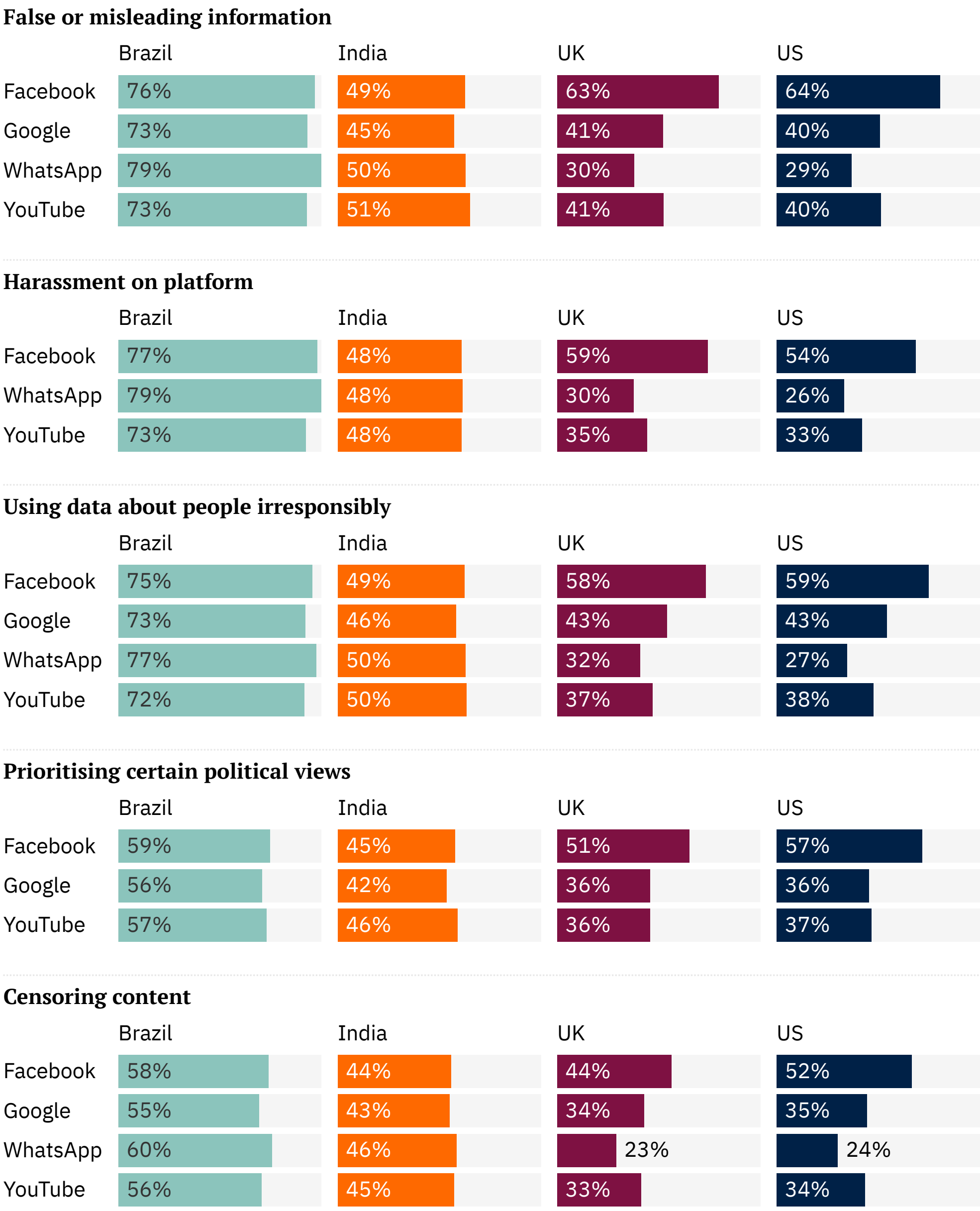
Our findings in this se tion show how audiences express a variety of concerns about different kinds of problems on platforms. In the second part of this section, we also devote some attention to one concern in particular: whether platforms are perceived as contentious spaces for discussion about political matters. We do find some vidence in this regard, but smaller proportions of the public tend to do so, and they tend to be particularly concentrated among the most politically interested individuals.

Many 'Big Problems' on Platforms Despite Positive Feelings Towards Them

A significant share of respondents in India the UK, and the US, and the majority in Brazil, indicated that they agreed that several high-profile issues that plat orms have publicly grappled with were, in fact, 'big problems' (see Figure 3.1). This was especially true for Facebook in Brazil, the UK, and the US, but relatively fewer recognised them as such in India. Only in Brazil were similar levels registered when it came to Google, WhatsApp, or YouTube.

Figure 3.1: People agreed false or misleading information, harassment, and other issues were 'big problems' across many platforms

Percentage in each country who think the following are problems on each platform



Q22, Q23, Q24, and Q25. How much of a problem, if at all, do you think each of the following are when it comes to [Facebook/Google/WhatsApp/YouTube]? *Bases exclude those who never heard of the platform: Facebook: Brazil = 1,970, India = 1,826, UK = 2,202, US = 2,109. Google: Brazil = 1,956, India = 1,837, UK = 2,204, US = 2,112. WhatsApp: Brazil = 1,980, India = 1,885, UK = 2,185, US = 2,004. YouTube: Brazil = 1,951, India = 1,858, UK = 2,192, US = 2,112. Note: Includes those who said these are 'A very big problem' or 'A moderately big problem'.*

To be clear, in all the results we report in this section, we focus on responses from all who had heard of each platform, regardless of whether they used them. As we note previously, many who do not use platforms may still have opinions about them. We seek to capture the broader public's views accordingly. At the end of this section, however, we consider how use of platforms relates to perceptions about what problems may or may not exist on them.

Problem 1: False or misleading information

Overall, the issue that elicited the largest percentages viewing it as a 'very big' or 'moderately big problem' was that pertaining to misinformation. More than three-quarters of respondents in Brazil said they believed that issue was a big problem on both Facebook and WhatsApp, and nearly as many said the same for Google and YouTube.

Misinformation on WhatsApp generated much lower levels of concern in the other three countries, which likely refle ts the comparatively higher levels of scrutiny that platform has received in Brazil, owing to reports of misleading content circulating in WhatsApp groups there (Mont'Alverne et al. 2019; Resende et al. 2018). It is also plausible that Brazilians have simply encountered more problems with misinformation while using WhatsApp. That said, misinformation on WhatsApp has also garnered considerable attention in the news media in India, especially due to some high-profile incidents of violen e tied to misleading WhatsApp messages in recent years (McLaughlin 2018), but no similar levels of concern about that platform were registered there.

In the UK and the US, concerns about misinformation are highest for Facebook, but 40% of people also see false and misleading information as a big problem on Google and YouTube. That 63% in the UK and the US said they think misinformation is a big problem on Facebook may refle t the salience of that platform in debates concerning the subject, as well as recent political events that have involved the platform. Scholarly work has also focused heavily on what role the platform may have played as a vector for misinformation during the last US presidential campaigns (Guess et al. 2018; Sanderson et al. 2021) as well as during Brexit (Del Vicario 2017).

Problem 2: Harassment

Harassment is another common concern across all countries. In Brazil, more than 70% of platform users saw the issue as a big problem on the three platforms we asked about, with WhatsApp garnering the highest levels of concern. Brazilians also saw harassment as a big problem on Facebook, and slightly fewer did so on YouTube. While our survey did not specify harassment restricted to political affairs or journalism, these particular forms of harassment have reportedly become more common in Brazil.[12] However, this is not the only kind of harassment frequently documented in the country; a study from the NGO Plan International Brazil (2020) documents that 77% of young women who responded to the survey reported being harassed online, with Facebook and WhatsApp identified as the main spa es where such incidents occurred.

In the UK and the US, more than half of respondents saw harassment as a big problem on Facebook. In recent years, young women who are journalists have raised concerns about being the targets of harassment on these platforms (Lewis et al. 2020), and our findings sh w the problem is also perceived to be quite widespread among the public in the US. Data from a 2020 survey from the Pew Research Center (2021) also show that 41% of Americans say they have personally experienced online harassment, and three-quarters of these said it happened on social media.

In contrast with these numbers, less than half of Indian respondents said they saw harassment

[12] See https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2022/06/15/jornalistas-denunciam-aumento-de-ataques-a-imprensa-durante-governo-bolsonaro

as a big problem across these three platforms, but there is little evidence that this is because harassment is less of an issue in the country. There are reports about increasing frequency of online harassment as a consequence of the pandemic,[13] and journalists in India have also emphasised their own experiences with abuse as well (Chen et al. 2018). It is, therefore, possible that lower levels of concern about this issue may refle t cultural differences around what is perceived to be a ‘big problem’ relative to other problems in society.

Finally, we note that levels of concerns with harassment vary to some degree by gender but often such differences are modest. On Facebook, where we see some of the largest differences by gender, 81% of women in Brazil say harassment is a big problem there compared to 73% of men. In the UK, 61% of women and 56% of men say the same. In India and the US there are no significant gender dif erences in evaluating harassment as a big problem on Facebook.

Problem 3: Using data about people irresponsibly

Concerns about how platforms use people’s data also registered as a big problem, following a similar pattern. Facebook was again most associated with this problem in all four countries. In the UK and the US, more than half of respondents said they saw data management issues as a big problem, and three-quarters of Brazilians also said so. Debates about how the company uses people’s data to deliver ads and algorithms to personalise what it shows people, and several public scandals around who has access to this information, have been the subject of considerable public discussion in recent years. It appears such issues have resonated with the majority of the public in these countries. In Brazil and India, a significant share of respondents also saw misuse of data as a concern on WhatsApp, while in the UK and the US almost half of respondents see it as a problem with respect to Google too.

Problems 4 and 5: Prioritising certain political views and censoring content

We included two additional problems in our survey refle ting concerns over platforms’ decision-making when it comes to political content or other kinds of sensitive information. Specificall , we asked about whether platforms prioritising certain political views was a big problem on Facebook, Google, or YouTube, and separately whether censoring content was a big problem on any of the four platforms.

Respondents in the US were somewhat more likely to see such issues as big problems on Facebook – concerns that are also shared to some extent by British respondents. Facebook has recently been at the centre of debates about the removal of misinformation concerning COVID-19. The platform also took steps to bar political figures including former President Donald Trump, in response to events at the US Capitol on 6 January 2021. However, we note that even as relatively large percentages said they thought such issues were big problems, elsewhere in this report we have also shown that relatively few said they look to platforms as a source for exposure to different perspectives as one of the reasons they used them. In other words, it is not altogether clear how salient these issues may be to people’s own personal use of platforms.

In Brazil, concerns with platforms prioritising political views or censoring content were still shared by more than half of respondents, but that represents a somewhat smaller proportion

[13] See https://www.news18.com/news/india/women-face-epidemic-of-online-stalking-harassment-on-seeking-help-in-covid-crisis-3760676.html

of the public there when compared to the other issues we asked about. In India, the percentage who saw these issues as big problems were no different than for the other issues.

Understanding differences in perceptions of problems across countries

We sought to examine what might explain some of the different dynamics we observed across these four countries by considering what subgroups within each country were more or less likely to identify these issues as big problems on each platform. Across all platforms, users in India and Brazil are more likely to say each of the subjects we asked about are, in fact, big problems; 62% of Facebook users in India, for example, say false or misleading information is a big problem on the platform, compared to just 49% of those who said the same among the public at large (excluding those who had never heard of Facebook). In Brazil, 86% of Facebook users said they agreed false or misleading information was a big problem on the platform, compared to 76% of the general sample.

In contrast, in the UK and the US there were fewer differences between users and non-users of platforms when it came to perceptions about problems on platforms. The proportion of Facebook users that say false or misleading information is a problem on the platform (63%) is virtually the same as those who say it is in the overall sample. In other words, non-users of platforms in the US and the UK are equally likely to perceive that platforms have these various problems, whereas in Brazil and India, concern about these issues is driven mainly by those who use these services.

Political preferences also affect how people think about these problems, but only for specific problems and platforms. For example, 70% of Indian respondents who view Modi favourably, and 39% of British interviewees who view Johnson favourably, say they believe false or misleading information is a big problem on WhatsApp, but, in comparison, rates are significantly l wer for those who view the Indian (58%) or UK (24%) prime ministers unfavourably.

In Brazil no differences were observed with respect to evaluations of problems on WhatsApp and Google according to political preferences. For other problems, however, political divides were more apparent. Among those with favourable views towards Bolsonaro, 74% said they thought YouTube censoring content was a big problem, compared to 60% of those who did not have favourable views towards the Brazilian president. In addition, 76% of Bolsonaro supporters said they thought censorship was a big problem on Facebook, compared to 65% among those who do not support him. These political differences may be impacted by some recent politically salient controversies, including Facebook's removal of pages by Bolsonaro supporters accused of coordinated inauthentic behaviour on the platform and YouTube's decision to delete videos due to concerns over misinformation about COVID-19 and election processes in Brazil.[14, 15]

In the US and the UK we see a similar political divisiveness in perceptions around some problems on platforms. Among those with an unfavourable view of Joe Biden, 64% say Facebook censoring content is a big problem on that platform, compared to just 44% of Biden supporters.

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[14] See https://www.reuters.com/article/us-facebook-disinformation-brazil-idUSKBN24A3FP

[15] See https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-57923862 and https://www.dw.com/pt-br/youtube-remove-v%C3%ADdeo-de-bolsonaro-sobre-elei%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-2018/a-61490366

In the UK, 71% of those with unfavourable views about Johnson say the same compared to 54% of those who support the UK's then prime minister.

Platforms as Sites for Politically Contentiousness and Divisive Debate

In addition to the problems we asked about in the previous section, we asked two questions designed to assess to what degree audiences perceive platforms as contentious spaces for debate over political matters. Both are drawn from previous research on this subject, including an academic study about contentious political discussion in Wisconsin in the US in the months following a particularly fractious political event (Wells et al. 2017) and a study by the Pew Research Center (2016) that examined perceptions around political debate on platforms in particular.

We asked respondents whether they felt 'comfortable talking about politics with friends and acquaintances' or felt they needed to 'be careful with what you say'. We also asked respondents whether there is anyone they stopped talking with due to disagreements over political matters during the previous 12 months. Both questions were asked in general to all respondents in all four countries, but we also separately asked users of WhatsApp and Facebook to say whether they felt they had to be careful with what they said on each of those platforms specifically and whether they had stopped talking with someone due to disagreements over statements made about politics on those platforms specificall .

Although in general we find vidence that platforms are seen, at least to some extent, as sites for contentiousness around political conversation and debate, it is important to keep in mind the degree to which such concerns are largely concentrated among those who are most interested in talking about politics. Most people in most places do not say they talk much about politics in their day-to-day lives. Their experiences on platforms are largely extensions of these experiences offline We asked a separate question of all respondents about how often they talked about politics with others in their lives. Nearly a third of respondents in Brazil (31%) and more than a quarter in India (27%) said they 'never' did so, far higher than the 10% and 11% in the UK and the US, respectively, who said the same.

These baseline differences across countries notwithstanding, significant proportions of the public in India (51%) and Brazil (64%) also said they felt they needed to be careful when talking about politics in general, indicating how contentious the environments in these countries may be currently when it comes to any discussion of political matters (see Figure 3.2). In India's case this might also refle t the growing application of censorship laws that the government has implemented, which may impact people's willingness to talk freely about their political opinions.[16] Rates were also nearly as high in the US, perhaps owing to episodes of political violence seen there in recent years. There have also been recent cases of physical violence related to politics in Brazil and India, which might help to explain why large numbers of people do not feel comfortable discussing the topic in these countries either.[17]

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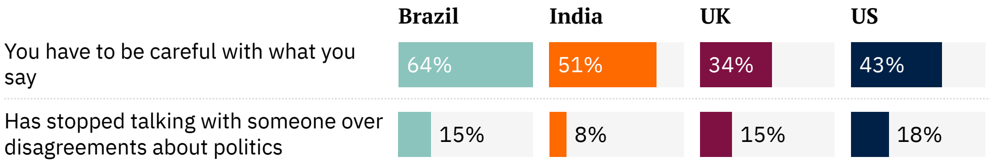
16 See https://time.com/5946092/india-internet-rules-impact/

17 See https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-party-official-sh t-dead-pre-election-political-violence-escalates-2022-07-10/ and https://apnews.com/article/local-elections-violence-india-elections-narendra-modi-dd330e0c886397f8dd99b5de6c616623

Figure 3.2: More people in Brazil and India think they need to be careful about what they say

Percentage who agree with these statements in each country



Q11. Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements about politics in the past 12 months? **Q12.** Do you feel comfortable talking about politics with friends and acquaintances, or do you feel like you have to be careful with what you say? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116.*

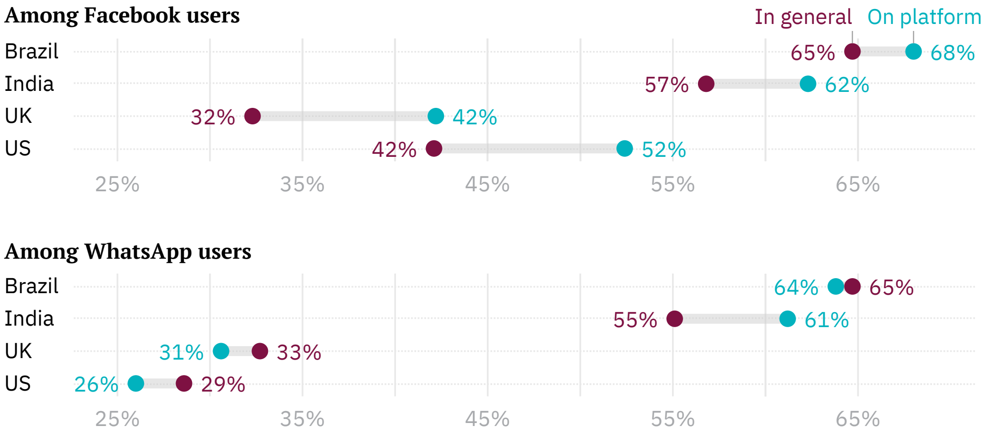
Relatively smaller percentages said they had stopped talking to someone due to disagreements about politics in the previous year, although 15% of those in the UK and Brazil said this had been their experience and almost one-fi th (18%) of Americans said the same.

Comparing political contentiousness on platforms to experiences in general

When it comes to platforms, higher proportions of respondents say they need to be careful with what they say there compared to the percentages who say the same in general. Larger differences were observed among Facebook users than among WhatsApp users (see Figure 3.3). Respondents from the UK and the US who use Facebook are more likely to say they need to be careful with what they say on the platform, while Indian respondents who use WhatsApp are more likely to say the same. There is virtually no difference for Brazilian respondents on both platforms.

Figure 3.3: More people say they need to be careful about what they say on Facebook than offline

Percentage who say they 'have to be careful with what you say' in general as well as on Facebook and WhatsApp



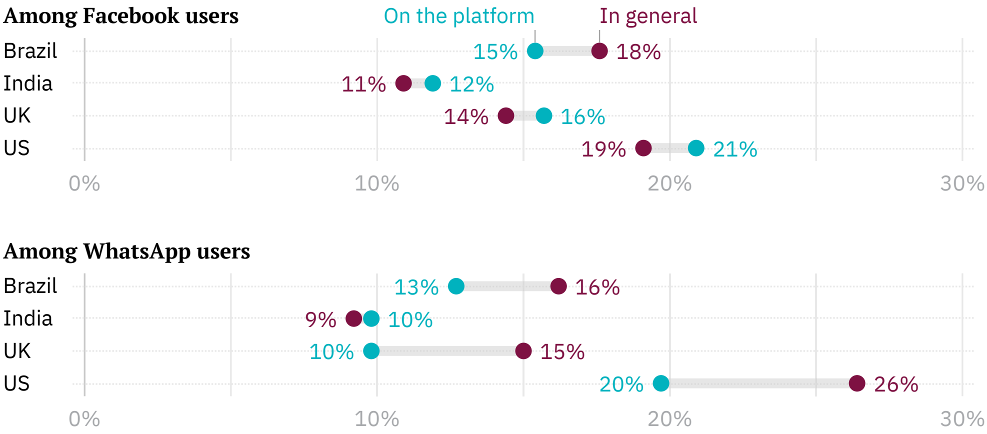
Q31. Do you feel comfortable talking about politics on WhatsApp with friends and acquaintances, or do you feel like you have to be careful with what you say? **Q45.** Do you feel comfortable talking about politics on Facebook with friends and acquaintances, or do you feel like you have to be careful with what you say? **Q12.** Do you feel comfortable talking about politics with friends and acquaintances, or do you feel like you have to be careful with what you say? *Base: WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203.*

People are, however, somewhat less likely to say they stopped talking to someone due to disagreements about politics on platforms. There were minimal differences when it came to

Facebook and among WhatsApp users. Where differences were observed in Brazil, the UK, and the US, people were somewhat less likely to say they had experienced such disagreements on the messaging app itself (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: More people generally stopped talking with someone due to political disagreement offline than on social media

Percentage who say they 'have stopped talking to someone due to disagreements about politics' in the past year in general as well as on Facebook and WhatsApp

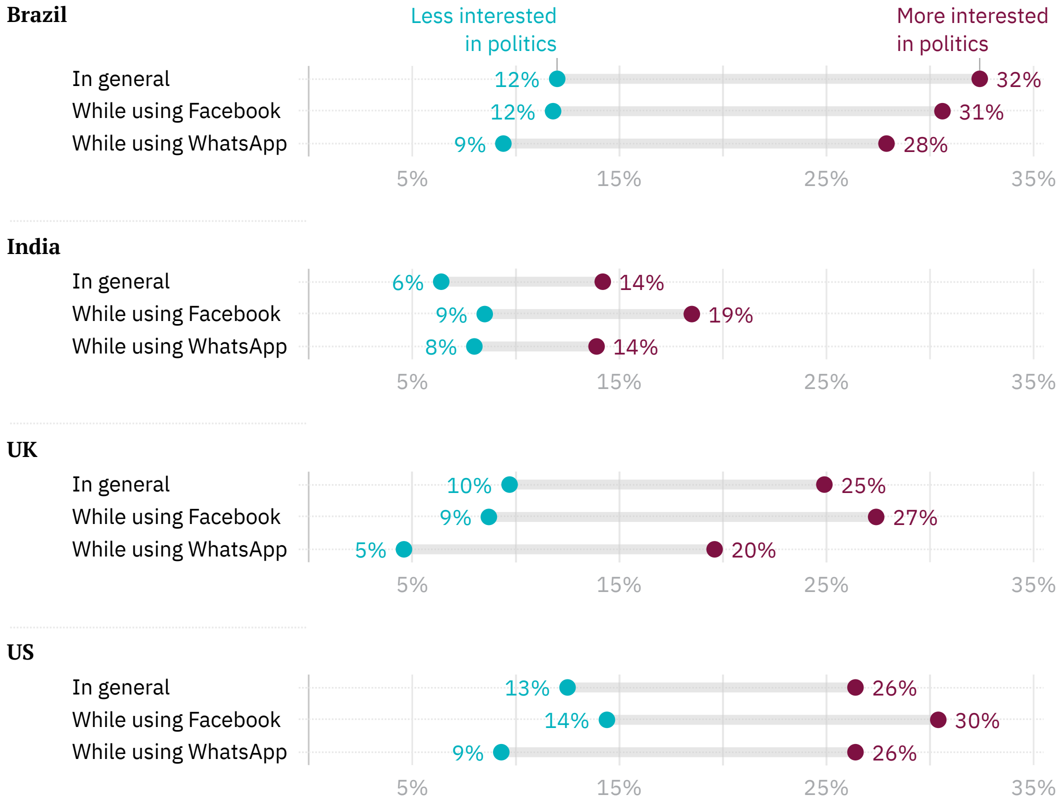


Q30. Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements on what has been said via WhatsApp about politics in the past 12 months? **Q44.** Thinking now about Facebook. Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements on what has been said via Facebook about politics in the past 12 months? **Q11.** Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements about politics in the past 12 months? *Base: WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203.*

Such experiences, however, are not evenly distributed among the public at large. Those who experience such disagreements are largely concentrated among respondents who are more interested in politics and thus more likely to encounter political discussion and debate in these settings. When we examine the subset of the public that is more politically interested, we find much higher levels report experiencing such disagreements on the platform (see Figure 3.5). This holds true across all countries and platforms, which helps to explain why, even when people see platforms as potential places for divisive and uncomfortable political interactions, it does not necessarily harm many people's positive evaluations of these services, since only the subset of people most interested in politics are likely to be encountering such contentiousness.

Figure 3.5: People who are more interested in politics are more likely to have stopped talking to someone due to political disagreement

Percentage who say they 'have stopped talking to someone due to disagreements about politics' on platforms in the past year by political interest



Q30. Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements on what has been said via WhatsApp about politics in the past 12 months? **Q44.** Thinking now about Facebook. Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements on what has been said via Facebook about politics in the past 12 months? **Q11.** Is there anyone you have stopped talking with due to disagreements about politics in the past 12 months? **Q9.** How interested, if at all, would you say you are in politics? *Base: Full sample: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. WhatsApp users: Brazil = 943, India = 987, UK = 844, US = 228. Facebook users: Brazil = 715, India = 874, UK = 650, US = 203.*

These results serve as a helpful corrective for both researchers and journalists, who may sometimes assume their own experiences on platforms map onto those of other people. But those who study platforms and use them to disseminate news are likely to encounter far more political divisiveness in these spaces than more typical users. That does not negate the problems such users may face when using these services, but it helps to explain perhaps some of the disconnect that may exist at times between the public's attitudes towards platforms and the concerns of policymakers and other engaged critics.

4. How Ideas About Journalism Relate to Use of Platforms

As people increasingly encounter news on platforms while doing other things, such experiences with news may play a growing role in shaping how people think about news. Platforms such as social media, messaging apps, and search engines are not only sites where news itself circulates but they may also be important places where people encounter discussion about and criticism of journalism itself. In this section, we explore people's ideas about news and the journalists who produce it, how these ideas relate to the public's use of platforms, and how people make sense of what is or is not trustworthy online.

We find that many people hold quite negati e perceptions about journalism and journalists. These perceptions are often – but not in all countries – concentrated among those who exhibit lower trust in news. We also find that si eable minorities in all four countries say they encounter criticism of the news media frequently, and that those with lower trust in news are more likely to say they see or hear such criticism often. When we asked people where they saw such criticism and from whom, many pointed to both social media and politicians as being key sources for exposure to criticism about the news, along with ordinary people and everyday conversations. Many also said they paid close attention to social indicators provided by platforms – what others say about posts in comments and how many likes or shares messages received. In other words, one way platforms may facilitate the spread of critiques about news and journalism is through making such signals much more visible to people.

Taken together, the findings in this se tion underscore the importance of social relationships in shaping the discourses about news that people are exposed to and the ideas they embrace about the news. The impact of platforms on trust in news cannot be fully separated from the networks of people that audiences engage with on platforms themselves.

Perceptions of Journalism and Journalists Tend Towards the Unfavourable

When we asked respondents in all four countries to state their agreement or disagreement with several statements we often heard expressed in our previous qualitative interviews with audiences, we found on balance many held fairly negative perceptions of journalists (see Figure 4.1). However, in Brazil and India audiences often held a mix of otherwise contrasting views, both positive and negative.

Close to a half of respondents in all four countries agreed that journalists try to manipulate the public to serve the agendas of powerful politicians or care more about getting attention than reporting the facts. Negative views were highest among respondents in India, where 53% also agreed that journalists are only 'in it for the money', echoing perhaps ongoing concerns in the country about paid news and professionalism within the industry. Meanwhile, positive perceptions were lowest in the UK and the US, where under 40% of respondents agreed that journalists independently verify information they report or try to keep their opinions from slanting the news.

Figure 4.1: Negative perceptions of journalists are common across countries
Percentage who agree that most journalists...

Negative perceptions

	Brazil	India	UK	US
Try to manipulate the public to serve the agendas of powerful politicians	50%	58%	50%	51%
Care more about getting attention than reporting the facts	47%	57%	51%	52%
Are careless or sloppy in what they write or report	41%	52%	41%	40%
Are only in it for the money	38%	53%	45%	43%

Positive perceptions

	Brazil	India	UK	US
Independently verify the information they report	48%	57%	39%	39%
Try to keep their opinions from slanting the news	46%	53%	35%	37%

Q49. When thinking about journalists who report the news, in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Includes those who responded 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'.*

When looking at the relationship between perceptions of journalists and trust in news, we find that individuals who are trusting of n ws are more likely to hold positive perceptions of journalists, but not necessarily overwhelmingly so. For example, in India and the US, of those who trust news in general, 59% and 54% respectively agreed overall that journalists try to keep their opinions from slanting the news, compared to 36% and 18% respectively among those who do not trust news in general. When it comes to negative perceptions, we find the in erse pattern in the UK and the US, where higher percentages of individuals who lack trust in news overall held negative perceptions, compared to their more trusting counterparts.

The relationship between negative perceptions and trust is more mixed in Brazil and India, where more trusting individuals were not only more likely to hold positive perceptions of journalists but negative ones too. Such results may seem surprising, but we suspect they refle t the disconnect between trust in information in the news media and what people think about journalistic practices. The latter may not be something that most have put much thought into, particularly those who are more disengaged from news altogether. Moreover, these results might also indicate that trust in the information in the news media is not only or even primarily anchored around ideas people have about journalistic practices and procedures, but instead based on other factors involving how people feel about the value of news to their lives altogether.

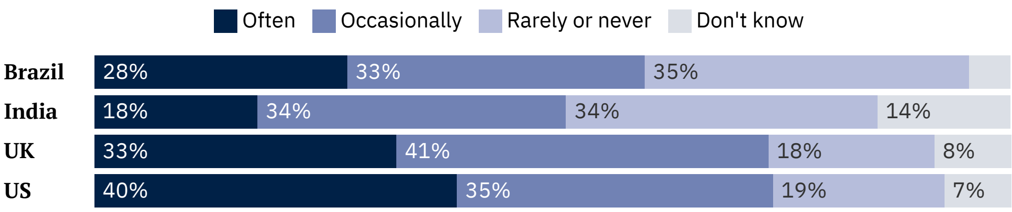
How Platforms Play a Role in Helping to Circulate Criticism About News

These findings relate to a se ond set of questions we asked pertaining more directly to exposure to criticism about news and journalism. We asked a series of questions about how often respondents 'heard people criticising journalists or the news media'. For those who said they at least sometimes heard such criticism, we also asked from whom they heard such critiques and where, including several possible online and offline sour es.

Scholars who study journalism have taken a growing interest in how public perceptions of the profession, both positive and negative, may be shaped by a range of factors, including not only people's own past experiences with news but also how they hear journalism spoken about around them (Carlson 2017).

We found that sizeable minorities in each country said they often saw or heard others criticising the news media (see Figure 4.2). As many as 40% of respondents in the US, 33% in the UK, 28% in Brazil, and 18% in India said they 'very often' or 'somewhat often' saw or heard such criticism. Including those who only occasionally see or hear such criticism, more than half of respondents in Brazil (61%) and India (52%) and close to three-quarters of respondents in the UK and US said they had such encounters at least some of the time.

Figure 4.2: Sizeable minorities often encounter criticism about journalism or the news media
Percentage who say they hear people criticising journalists or the news media often, occasionally, or rarely or never

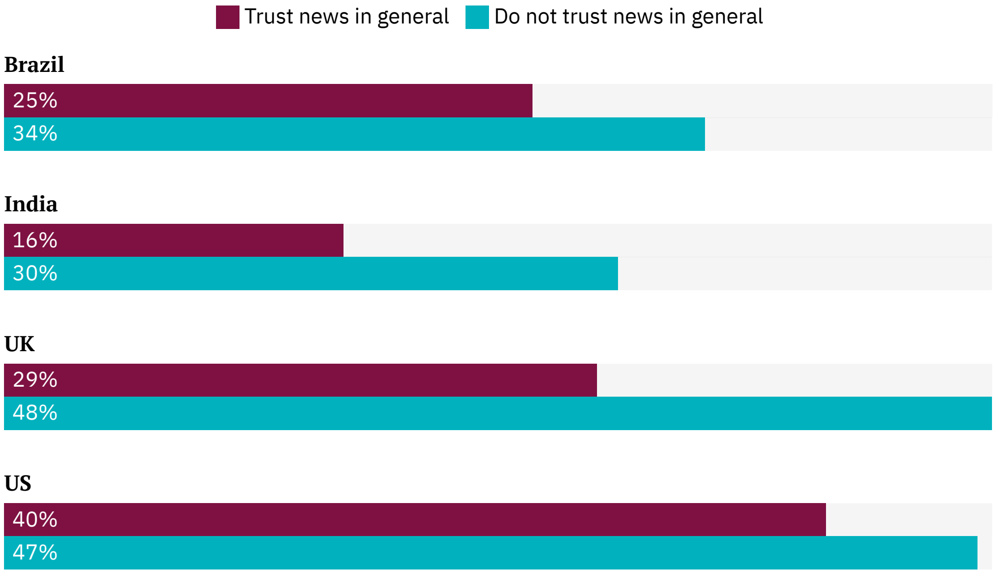


Q50. How often, if at all, would you say you see or hear people criticising journalists or the news media? *Base: Total sample in each country: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: The 'often' category includes respondents who said 'very often' and 'somewhat often'.*

Furthermore, in all four countries, those who say they see criticism about journalism tend to be less trusting of news in general overall (see Figure 4.3). For example, in the UK, 48% of those who say they see criticism of news 'very often' or 'somewhat often' also say they themselves do not trust information in the news media in their country. This compares to only 29% for those who do trust news. Similarly, in India 30% of people who see criticism often say they do not trust news compared to just 16% who say they do. These numbers show there may be a relationship between trust levels and exposure to negative discourse about the news media, although we cannot assess the direction of causality to explain why with cross-sectional data.

Figure 4.3: People who are less trusting of news are more likely to say they often see criticism of journalists or the news media

Percentage who see criticism of the news media often among those who generally trust news and do not trust news in general



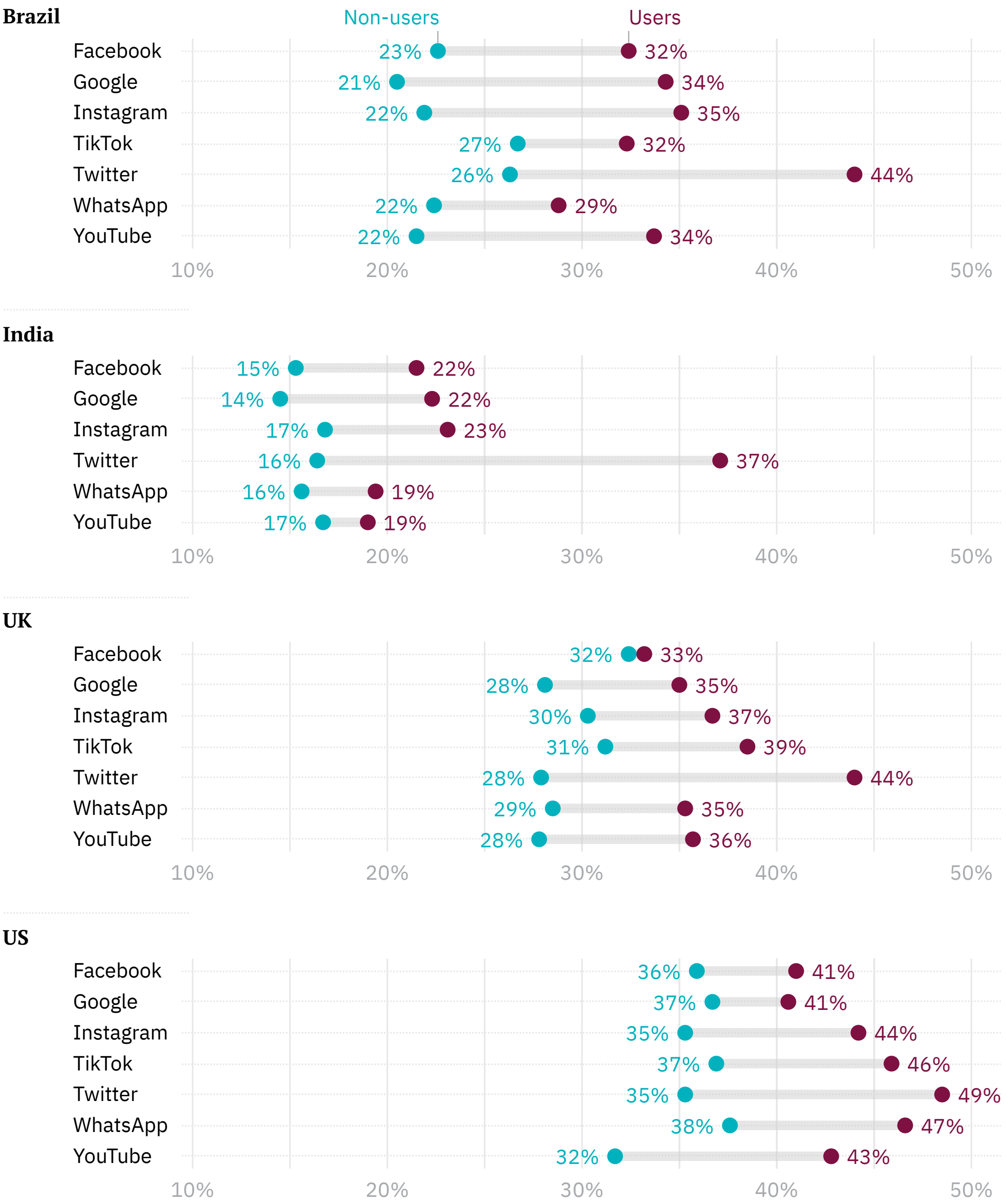
Q50. How often, if at all, would you say you see or hear people criticising journalists or the news media? **Q5.** Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US] *Base: Trust completely or somewhat: Brazil = 919, India = 1,633, UK = 1,169, US = 1,043. Do not trust very much or do not trust at all: Brazil = 667, India = 274, UK = 511, US = 690. Note: Figure includes all who say they see criticism 'very often' or 'somewhat often'.*

Where Do People Encounter Criticism of News?

Journalists and publishers have often voiced concerns about platforms contributing to the proliferation of criticism about journalism and outright attacks on the press, especially from those acting in bad faith (Toff et al. 2021a). We find some vidence supporting such a view. In all four countries, users of platforms also report more frequently seeing criticism 'very often' or 'somewhat often' compared to non-users of those platforms (see Figure 4.4). The gap between users and non-users is largest when it comes to Twitter, where the difference between both groups ranges from 21 percentage points (India) to 14 percentage points (the US).

Figure 4.4: Platform users are more likely to say they see criticism of journalists or the news media often

Percentage of users versus non-users of each platform who say they see criticism often



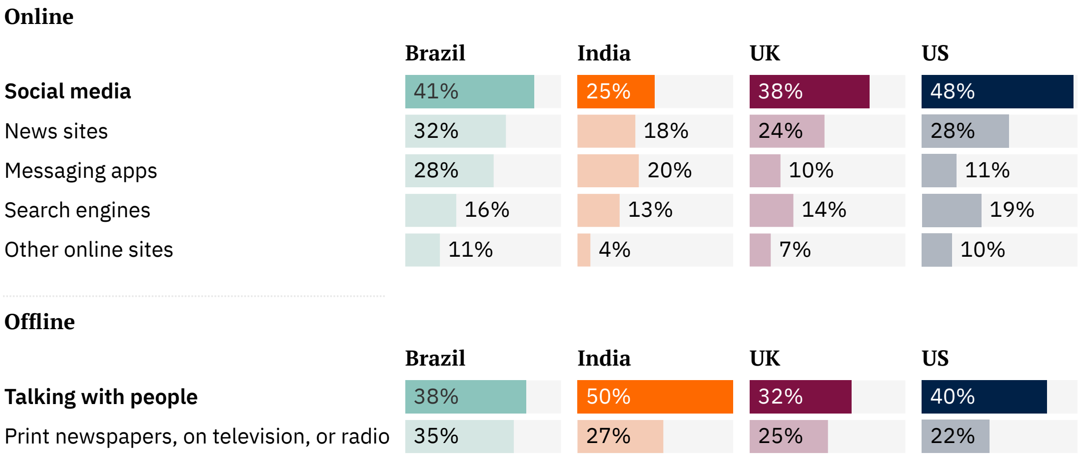
Q50. How often, if at all, would you say you see or hear people criticising journalists or the news media? **Q18.** Which, if any, of the following platforms have you used for any purpose in the past 30 days? *Base: Total sample in each country: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Includes all who say they see criticism 'often' and 'very often'.*

A higher percentage of non-users of platforms also say they rarely see criticism of news media, which reinforces the connection between using platforms and exposure to criticism about news. Differences are more pronounced in Brazil, where 44% of people who do not use Google say they rarely see criticism compared to 27% of Google users. In India, 34% of those who do not use Twitter say they rarely encounter criticism, against 24% of users. Differences are smaller, but still present, in the UK and the US. Twenty-one per cent of British people who do not use Twitter say they rarely see criticism, while 12% of users say the same. In the US, 23% of those who do not use Instagram report rarely seeing criticism, compared to 14% of users.

When we asked people who encounter criticism about where they saw or heard criticism of news media, 'social media' was cited as one of the main places where they have encountered such criticism: 41% in Brazil, 25% in India, 38% in the UK, and 48% in the US (see Figure 4.5). These results lend some further support to the concerns raised by journalists with whom we spoke last year (Toff et al. 2021a), which has also been documented by recent research (Literat et al. 2022), suggesting that digital platforms may help stoke criticism about news and journalism.

To be clear, social media was hardly the only place where respondents said they encountered criticism about news. Many also said they heard or saw criticism of the news media in conversations with other people. This ranked a close second in three of the four countries as another key context where such criticism emerges. In India, talking with others was the main way people said they encountered criticism of the news, with half of respondents selecting it. Furthermore, news media – both print newspapers and news sites online – also stand out as relevant avenues for encountering criticism, especially in Brazil, where roughly one-third of respondents said they had seen criticism in both.

Figure 4.5: Social media is one of the main sources people cite for exposure to criticism of journalists or news organisations
Percentage who often see or hear criticism of journalists or news organisations from each of these sources



Q53. Where would you say you mainly see or hear criticism of journalists or the news media? *Base: Brazil = 1,202, India = 1,098, UK = 1,622, US = 1,568. Note: Includes those who say the see criticism 'very often', 'somewhat often', or 'occasionally'.*

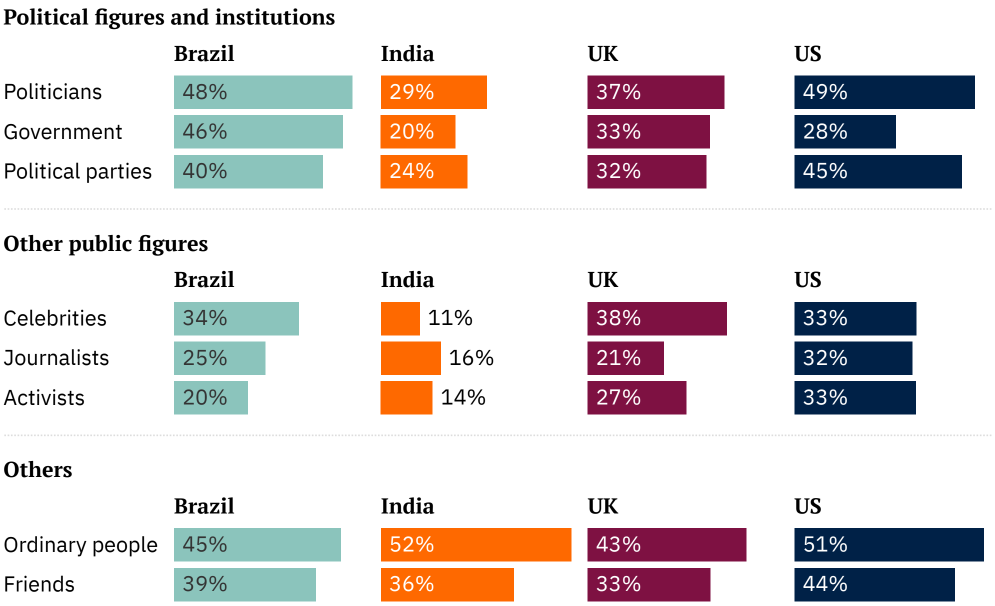
From Whom Do People Encounter Criticism of News?

When examining who this criticism tends to come from, we find that political figures stand ou as key contributors to negative discourse about news among those who say they see criticism (see Figure 4.6). For example, in both Brazil and the US, close to half of respondents say they have heard criticism about the news media from politicians during the previous 12 months. In Brazil, where President Jair Bolsonaro has maintained a publicly turbulent relationship with mainstream news organisations, another 46% pointed to the government as a source of criticism. Political parties are also a relevant source in some places.

However, political figures ere hardly the only sources of criticism that respondents named. Ordinary people were also mentioned by over half of respondents in India and the US, and more than 40% of respondents in Brazil and in the UK. In fact, in the UK and especially India, ordinary people are mentioned more frequently than any of the political figures and institutions as sources of news criticism. Friends are also mentioned by over one-third of respondents in each country, with the highest percentage in the US, where 44% identified them as a source. In Brazil, the UK, and the US, at least one in three people also said they have heard criticism of the news media from celebrities.

Figure 4.6: Political fi ures are sources of criticism, but interaction with ordinary people is too

Percentage who said they saw or heard criticism about journalists or news organisations from each of the following in the past 12 months



Q51. Which of the following have you seen or heard criticising journalists or the news media in the past 12 months? *Base: Brazil = 1,202, India = 1,098, UK = 1,622, US = 1,568. Note: Includes those who say they see criticism 'very often', 'somewhat often', or 'occasionally'.*

These results point to the varied sources of exposure to criticism about news and journalism that many encounter in their day-to-day lives. Some of it does appear to be shaped by encounters online while using platforms, but in many ways such encounters may be extensions of discourses occurring offline as ell. We cannot assess the nature of the criticism of journalists or the news media that respondents are referring to here; in some cases, media in these countries may well have been involved in misconduct, controversial events, or misleading treatment of specific groups (Ashraf 2014; Elmas y et al. 2013; Marques et al. 2019; Mendes 2011), which may well elicit legitimate critiques. Undue criticism or bad-faith critiques fuelled largely by political, partisan, or other grievances, however, can become a larger concern from a democratic perspective, where criticism may undermine the influen e of the press as an independent institution. These findings do n t speak to the nature of these criticisms, only the degree to which people see criticism online versus offline and from what sour es.

How Social Interactions on Platforms Influen e How People Decide What to Trust

The results in the previous section underline the importance of social interactions with ordinary people and friends as a source for exposure to criticism of the news media. These results point to the relevance of such dynamics in shaping the ideas people hold around how news works and the quality of the information environment in their country. A separate set of findings concerning what people pay most attention to when evaluating whether information may or may not be trustworthy online, illustrates a similar point. When people do encounter news on platforms they often pay a great deal of attention to what other people think about the information, including the number of people who have liked or shared a post or what people say about it in comments. Almost as many say such factors are important to pay attention to as say the same for whether or not they have heard of the media outlet behind it.

These findings ome from a set of questions we asked, based on a list of commonly cited factors from our previous interviews from our last report, that focused on shortcuts and cues people use to make decisions about what to trust online. While approximately two-thirds of audiences in the UK and the US, and slightly less than that in Brazil and India, say it is important to them to pay attention to the media outlet itself, information provided by platforms about what other people think about the information ranked almost as highly, especially in Brazil and India (see Figure 4.7). More than half of respondents in the two Global South countries say they pay attention to what people say in the comments or how many likes and shares the information has.

Figure 4.7: More people in Brazil and India rely on social media metrics to decide what to trust
Percentage who say each of the following are important or very important for deciding whether they can trust information on online platforms

	Brazil	India	UK	US
How many people have liked it or shared it	54%	59%	39%	37%
What people say about it in comments	56%	60%	53%	48%
Whether you have heard of the media outlet that reported it	61%	60%	66%	65%
The tone or language used in the headline	61%	63%	68%	64%
The image or images that accompany it	64%	61%	59%	59%
How highly it ranks in search results	56%	61%	46%	45%
That it's not a sponsored post or ad	47%	57%	63%	56%
The types of advertising found on the website	55%	61%	53%	49%

Q48. Thinking generally, how important, or not, are each of the following in helping you decide whether you can trust information you see on online platforms? *Base: Brazil = 1,819, India = 1,400, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Includes respondents who said each was 'very important' or 'fairly important'. For Brazil and India, we excluded respondents who do not have internet access at home or on their mobile phones.*

What Should Be Done to Better Differentiate Between Trustworthy and Untrustworthy News on Platforms?

Given people's varied experiences and encounters with criticism of news media in their countries – both on and off platforms – we sought to better understand how people thought about the question of who is most responsible for improving the quality of information on platforms. In recent years there have been considerable public discussions in all four countries around what additional actions platforms might take to counter misinformation and help individuals make more informed choices around the information they are exposed to while using these services. Some of these discussions have been prompted by pressure from governmental institutions. In other cases, platforms have adopted strategies on their own to respond to concerns, such as removing false and misleading posts about COVID-19,[18] banning political figures li e Donald Trump,[19] or delaying the launch of new features with the potential to impact forthcoming elections, such as WhatsApp's decision around its new 'Communities' tool.[20] However, even as debates have intensified around what a tions platform companies or governments might take, we know much less about what the public thinks about these issues. What studies have been conducted have generally focused exclusively on the US.

The questions we included in our survey were patterned on similar items from a recent Knight Foundation (2022) survey focused on platform governance in the American context. In our questionnaire we asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with several statements about different actors involved in these debates: (a) whether platform companies ought to do more to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information on the internet; (b) whether the government should do more; (c) whether news media organisations should do more; and (d) whether it is 'primarily the responsibility of individuals to decide for themselves what news they consider trustworthy versus news that they consider to be untrustworthy on the internet' (see Figure 4.8). We presented all four items to respondents and asked people to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement; we did not force people to choose between them. We did so to refle t the fact that each of these statements is not mutually exclusive from the others, and it is perfectly rational for a respondent to agree with all or none of the statements. Our aim, however, was to assess to what degree audiences in all four countries made distinctions between these actors or had formed views on the subject at all.

We found limited variation in the public's views on who should do more, especially in Brazil and India. We suspect this may be a consequence of how comparatively limited such debates have been in these countries, which makes it harder for people to distinguish between different actors. In the UK and the US we found somewhat more variation, but a majority agreed with all four statements there, too. The largest differences were found in the US, where the percentage of people who said they agreed the government should do more was 10–15 percentage points lower than the percentage agreeing with the other statements. In the UK also, significantl

[18] See https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/dec/17/twitter-to-remove-tweets-that-spread-lies-about-covid-vaccines

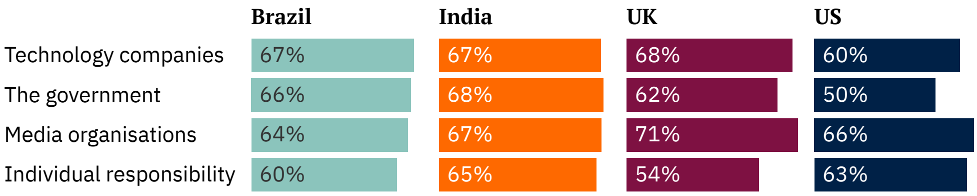
[19] See https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/04/facebook-says-donald-trump-to-remain-banned-from-platform-for-2-years-effective-from-jan-7.html

[20] See https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-prosecutors-ask-whatsapp-delay-launch-new-tool-until-january-2022-07-29/

fewer respondents said they agreed with the final statement about it being primarily an ‘individual responsibility’ to distinguish between what is or is not trustworthy on the internet.

Figure 4.8: High percentages across all countries think institutions and tech companies should act to differentiate trustworthy information online

Percentage who agree that each of the following should do more to differentiate between news they consider trustworthy and untrustworthy on the internet



Q26. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116.*

Different Perspectives Within Countries Around Who Is Most Responsible

We see more variation according to demographic variables in response to this question. More educated respondents in Brazil, India, and the US are more likely to agree that all should do more – platform companies, governments, the news media, and individuals – although the differences were modest.[21] In India and Brazil, those under 35 are also comparatively more likely to say institutions and individuals should do more, compared to those who are 55 years and older, who were more ambivalent in general. In the UK we found the opposite pattern, with older respondents somewhat more likely to say tech companies, the news media, and the government all should do more: 77% of respondents over 55 in the UK said news media organisations should do more, for example, compared to 61% of those under 35 who agree. Younger British respondents were also more likely to agree that it is a matter of individual responsibility. In the US we found fewer consistent patterns by age on these questions.

However, in an echo of the differences we observed with respect to trust in news on platforms, we found considerable differences on these items with regard to respondents’ political preferences. In other words, debates around what ought to be done to improve the quality of the information on platforms has become politically polarised to some extent, at least in some countries. In the US, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to agree that tech companies (76% versus 61%, respectively), the news media (80% versus 64%), and the government (64% versus 47%) should do more to differentiate between trustworthy and untrustworthy news online. The pattern is reversed when it comes to individual responsibility, where 75% of Republicans agreed with the statement compared to 66% of Democrats. There are also stark differences in India. Those who held more favourable views towards Modi were much more likely to agree with all four statements: 83% of Modi supporters think the government and news organisations should do more; 82% think tech companies should do more; and 81% think it is a matter of individual responsibility. Among those who do not support the prime minister, agreement was much lower: only 53% said they thought the government or news

[21] Three-quarters of those with a college degree in India, for example, said the government should do more, compared to 67% of those without college degrees. Likewise, in Brazil and the US more than 70% of those who went to college said news media organisations should do more, compared to roughly six in ten of those without college degrees. In the UK no significant differences were observed according to education levels.

media organisations should do more. Another 60% said the same for the platform companies, but just 51% said they agreed it was ultimately an individual responsibility to distinguish between what is and is not a trustworthy source of information on the internet.

Differences were much less pronounced in the UK and Brazil: the biggest difference is around individual responsibility, with 62% of Conservatives agreeing with it and 56% of Labour supporters. In Brazil there were fewer significant dif erences found along lines of support or opposition to Bolsonaro.

Conclusion

This report focuses on how people think about and use digital platforms for news in four countries and how these perceptions and behaviours relate to trust in news more generally. Our results point to the existence of a stark and consistent ‘trust gap’ – a disparity between levels of trust in news found on social media, messaging apps, and search engines, versus trust towards information in the news media more generally. Across Brazil, India, the UK, and the US, we find that audiences are generally less trusting of news on most digital platforms than they are of news in general and consider several possible factors that explain these differences.

First, while there is widespread concern that the growing use of platforms to access information has contributed to declining trust in journalism in many places around the world, our findings indicate a more nuanced possibility. Most intriguingly, we do not find l wer trust in news among those who use platforms most frequently and access news there, but rather lower trust among those who access news elsewhere or consume less news overall.

Does this mean platforms play no role in declining rates of trust towards news overall among the public? No. It certainly remains possible that broader changes across the news industry, many of which are related to the growing use of platforms, may impact the public’s perceptions about the trustworthiness of information in the news they encounter both online and offline However, many of those who are least trusting towards news on platforms are of a similar profile to those who lack trust in n ws more generally. They are older, less educated, and less interested in politics, a subject that elicits heightened scepticism when it comes to whether news is perceived as trustworthy or not. In short, much like trust in news generally, those who are distrusting towards news on platforms are often those most disconnected from using either platforms or news. Some likely do so *because* they do not trust these services as tools for staying informed, but as our previous research has indicated, others lack trust because they largely fail to see the relevance of news to their lives (Ross Arguedas et al. 2022; Toff et al. 2021b) and/or view platforms sceptically as holding little value to them personally.

Second, echoing previous research (Andı 2021), many of the most common reasons people say they use platforms have little to do with news. Instead, the leading reasons many said they used platforms involved connecting with other people or for entertainment purposes. Fewer see platforms as places to find in ormation about current affairs or gain access to different perspectives on such matters. While there is variation across platforms – Google and YouTube tend to be seen as more useful in this regard than Facebook or WhatsApp – low trust in news found on these services may partly refle t the degree to which many perceive these services as offering something distinct from what they expect from news media. These differences in expectations persist, even as many do say they regularly get news while using these companies’ products. These differences are also likely to explain the considerably positive feelings that respondents in all four countries generally hold towards most platforms, even as many lack trust in the news they might find while using them

Third, despite these net positive feelings, large segments of the public in all four countries do see a host of ‘big problems’ associated with digital platforms, ranging from false and misleading information to harassment to concern over data being used irresponsibly. Of course, not all platforms are viewed in the same way. In the UK and the US, such concerns were especially concentrated around Facebook, whereas in Brazil and India the public was less likely to differentiate between platform companies when expressing concern about such issues. For the most politically interested segments of the public, Facebook and WhatsApp are also seen as somewhat contentious places to talk about current affairs. Even though such disagreements over politics may largely be an extension of polarisation offline rather than a phenomenon unique to platforms themselves, they may add to the litany of problems that many associate with platforms. That, in turn, may contribute to more negative attitudes about the specific forms of news that platforms deliver.

Lastly, we also found that considerable portions of the public in all four countries held negative perceptions about the way journalists do their jobs, echoing findings in our report from last summer (Toff et al. 2021b). What is more striking is that social media was among the most frequently cited places many said they saw or heard criticism of news and journalism. That said, the source of such criticism was often ordinary people and friends, including in offline conversations and not simply online, which raises questions about the centrality of digital platforms in facilitating such negative discourse about news. In short, while news on platforms may be subject to far more scrutiny than news in a pre-digital era, any link between exposure to such criticism and declining levels of trust towards news cannot be assessed on the basis of this cross-sectional data alone.

Implications of Our Findings

As we have previously discussed (Toff et al. 2021a), as audiences devote more of their time and attention to using digital platforms, it poses countless challenges for news organisations around the world. As a trade-off for expanding reach and scale, newsrooms have often ceded considerable control to these outside companies in terms of how their content is distributed and how often and in what form their work appears on these services. Such relationships have been further strained as publishers become increasingly dependent on platforms to reach segments of the public least interested in consuming news through legacy modes, even as platforms themselves have pivoted to serving up other kinds of experiences farther removed from news, recognising that many of their most active users have less interest in such content, especially where politically contentious issues are involved.

The trust gap we document in this report is likely a refle tion of this mismatch in audience perceptions about what platforms are for, the kinds of information they get when using these services, and how people think more generally about news media. It is possible, hence, that the main challenge for news organisations when it comes to building and sustaining audience trust is less about the specific problem of h w their journalism is perceived when audiences encounter it online, and more about the broader problem of being seen at all, including on platforms. For relatively unknown brands and new entrants, there is a risk of 'guilt by association' when appearing in environments characterised by low trust in news. But for more established brands that audiences already have crystallised views about, the more fundamental issue is reaching people. Such problems are likely to be further compounded in the coming years by choices platforms make about the prominence of news on their services going forward, as several have announced their intentions to further prioritise user-generated content, following the approach of other platforms such as YouTube or TikTok. While surfacing many different new voices, it also seems probable that such strategies will reduce how frequently people are incidentally exposed to news from professional journalists working for media organisations when using the platforms in question, which raises new questions about the character and quality of the content featured instead—at least with regard to factual reporting on public affairs.

Where might this leave news organisations? To start, it further underscores the importance of cultivating brand familiarity by connecting with audiences both online and offline Some of the least trusting audiences may not be users of digital platforms at all, and those who do use them may not look to such services as spaces where they typically seek to access news. Although we focus less on brand-specific trust in this report we do find as we have previously, that there exists a strong connection between using news more frequently and trusting it. Although news organisations are rightly conscious of the fact that younger audiences are devoting less time and attention to legacy media, a strategy to build brand loyalty through digital platforms alone puts news organisations at a significant disadvantage when plat orm companies shift their focus, or when audiences make clear they have minimal interest in conventional journalism there. While news organisations cannot simply ignore the way their content is seen on platforms, they cannot depend on them either as a basis for building lasting relationships with audiences.

Our findings also sh w the degree to which platforms differ. Audiences do perceive news on different platforms differently and say they use them for sometimes distinct purposes. That insight is an important one for news organisations that seek to engage with audiences in these spaces. The degree to which audiences may be more trusting of news on Google, for example, may point to the enduring importance of search engines in particular as spaces for exhibiting news content, even as social media and messaging apps have attracted relatively greater attention in recent years. Very different forms of news are likely to connect with audiences on search, where users are more likely to be seeking out information, than in social media spaces, where news may be seen as more of a distraction.

Finally, the findings in this report on the trust gap and those in our revious reports on other gaps in trust have indicated the existence of some more substantial challenges facing news media that go beyond the specific challenges in olving any single news organisation's relationship with their audience. When half or more of the public think journalists serve the agendas of powerful politicians or care more about getting attention than reporting the facts, it suggests that for much of the public basic journalistic standards are perceived as largely absent, or at least rarely adhered to. While individual brands might seek to differentiate themselves by emphasising what makes their product superior in quality to their competitors, enduring negative preconceptions about what journalists do, much of which happens behind the scenes beyond the public's view, means that news outlets are largely engaged in defensive rearguard actions. That is true whether brands are engaging with audiences on platforms or in other spaces. Changing deep-seated ideas about journalism is a more fundamental challenge that may take industry-wide efforts to tackle. It is also one we hope to devote more attention to in the coming year.

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Appendix A: Technical Summary

This study has been designed and commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's Trust in News Project to understand the role of digital platforms for trust in the news media in Brazil, India, the UK, and the US. Survey field ork was conducted by the research firm Ipsos during June and July 2022 In Brazil and India, where internet penetration is comparatively lower, surveys were fielded fa e-to-face using samples recruited by interviewers, who approached respondents by going door to door to reach the broadest spread of respondents. In the UK and the US, surveys were fielded online using panels wned by Ipsos and trusted suppliers. An additional supplementary data collection of a smaller number of questions was conducted online in the four markets in July 2022.

- Ipsos was responsible for the field ork and provision of weighted data and tables only, and the RISJ was responsible for the design, reporting, and interpretation of the results. Although all survey methods have trade-offs with respect to achieving a fully representative sample, considerable efforts were taken to reach broad cross-sections of respondents in each country in the hopes of assembling samples that best approximate the relevant populations. In Brazil, sampling was conducted at a municipal level and included all macro regions in the country. In India, 19 states were represented, ensuring coverage of all macro regions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted door-to-door. In the UK and the US, participants were drawn from panels owned by Ipsos and trusted suppliers.

- Sampling quotas were applied based on national populations. In the UK and the US, quotas were set on age, gender, and region, and in addition working status in the UK. In Brazil, quotas were set on age, gender, and social grade within a region, and on urban/rural locations within a region. In India, quotas were set on state, age, gender, and social grade across urban and rural locations. Additionally, post-survey weighting was applied to further improve the representativeness of the samples due to differences in non-response among subgroups. These quotas and weights are described in the table below.

- Surveys were conducted primarily in Portuguese (Brazil) and English (the UK and the US). In the US, the survey was also provided in Spanish. In India, the questionnaire was translated into Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odiva, Tamil, and Teluga.

- The survey questionnaire (15 minutes in length online and 25 minutes in person, on average) was generally the same across the four countries; however, some adjustments were necessary due to translation issues.

- It is important to note that some of the questions included in the survey rely on recall, which is often imperfect or subject to biases. We have tried to mitigate these risks through careful questionnaire design and testing. On the other hand, surveys can be a good way of capturing fragmented media consumption across platforms (e.g. social media, messaging apps, and websites), people's attitudes towards them, and tracking activities and changes over time.

- Due to a technical error, two of the four questions were inadvertently omitted from the original questionnaire. Given that recontacting respondents interviewed face-to-face in various locations around Brazil and India was not feasible, we decided to field an additional survey conducted entirely online in all four countries. This separate survey primarily included questions about reasons why people use Facebook, Google, WhatsApp, and YouTube. These online samples differ considerably from the main survey samples in Brazil and India. Respondents tended to be considerably more educated and likely to live in urban environments. This additional data collection was also conducted exclusively in English in India and in Portuguese in Brazil.

- Full methodological reports concerning sampling techniques and complete questionnaires will be made available on our website.

Table A1: Specifics f the main survey

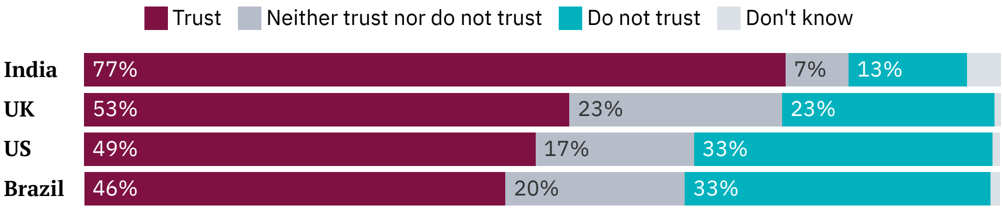
Country	Sample size	Mode	Language	Quotas	Weighting
Brazil	2,000	Face-to-face	Portuguese	Age, gender, social grade (within region), and urban/rural (within region)	Age, gender, region, social grade, education
India	2,134	Face-to-face	Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odiva, Tamil, and Teluga	State, age, gender, social grade across urban and rural locations	Age, gender (split by rural and urban), state, region, social grade, and education
United Kingdom	2,206	Online	English	Age, gender, region, and working status	Age, gender, working status, education, region, and social grade
United States	2,116	Online	English and Spanish	Age, gender, and region	Age, gender, working status, education, region, and income

Table A2: Specifics f the additional data collection

Country	Sample size	Mode	Language	Quotas	Weighting
Brazil	1,000	Online	Portuguese	Age, gender, region, and working status	Age, gender, region, and working status
India	1,050	Online	English	Age, gender, region, and working status	Age, gender, region, and working status
United Kingdom	1,113	Online	English	Age, gender, region, and working status	Age, gender, working status, education, region, and social grade
United States	1,000	Online	English and Spanish	Age, gender, and region	Age, gender, working status, education, region, and income

Appendix B: Supplementary Descriptive Results

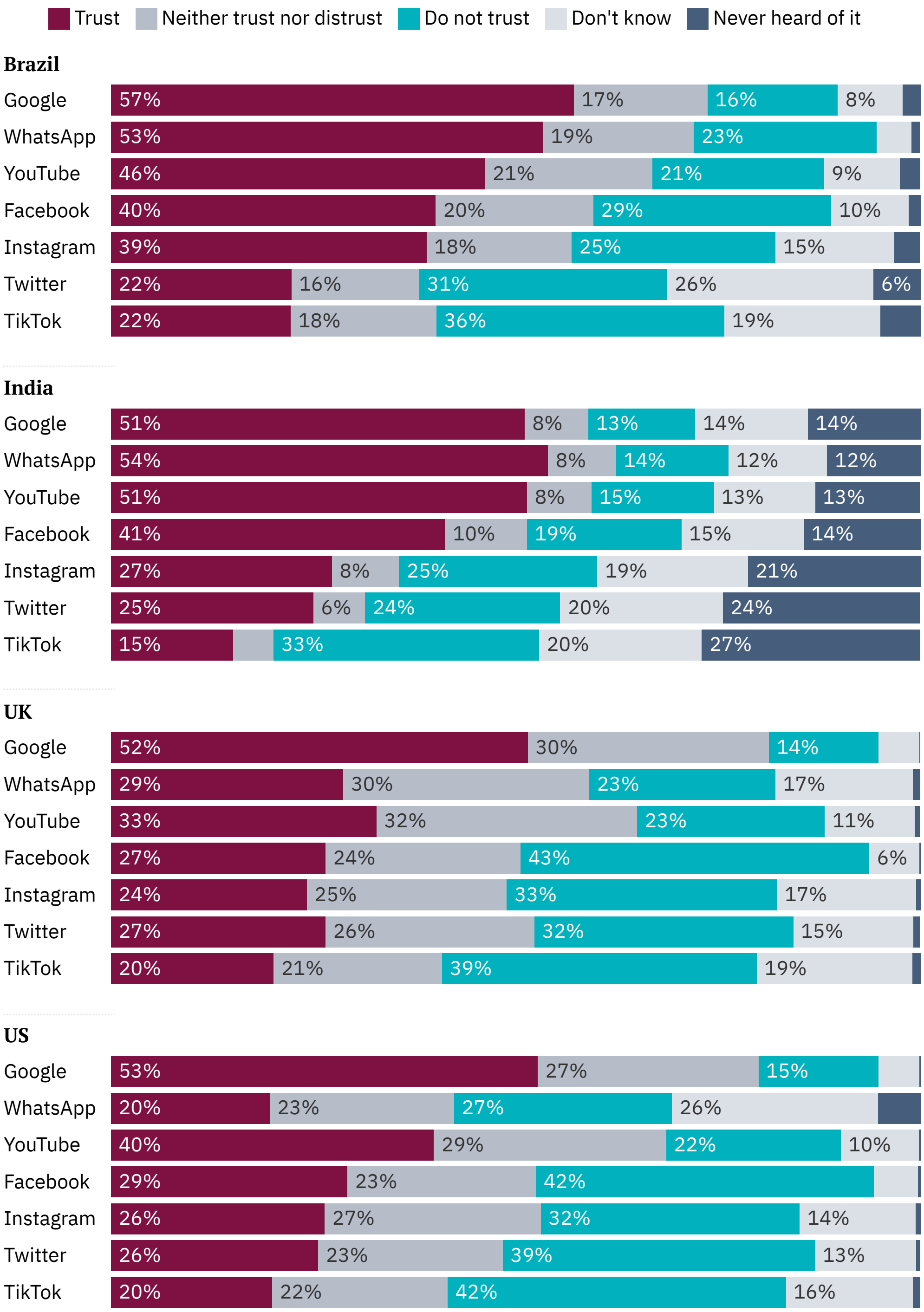
Figure B1: Trust in news in general across countries
Percentage in each country who trust information from the news media in general



Q5. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust, or not trust information from the news media in [Brazil/India/the UK/the US]?
Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116.

Figure B2: Trust levels vary considerably according to platform

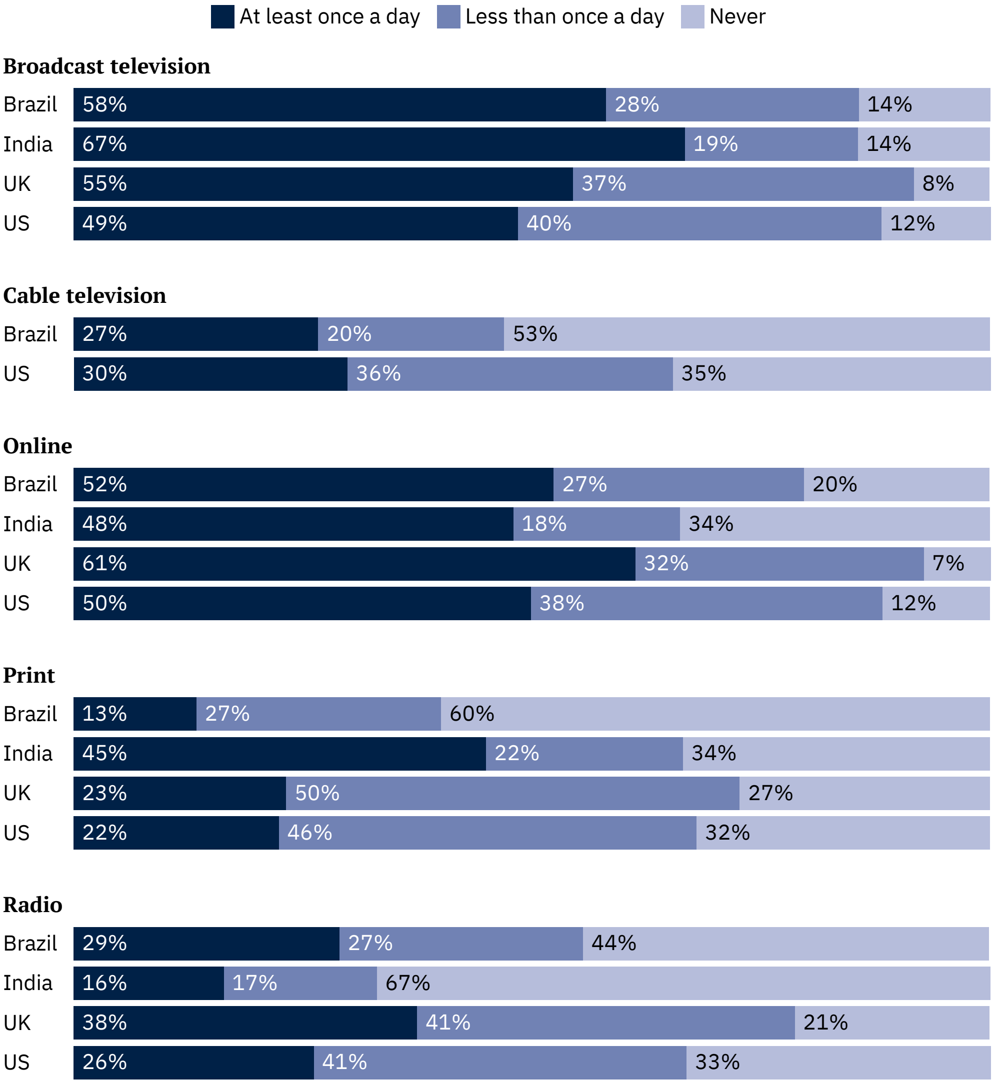
The percentage in each country that trust news on each platform



Q21. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? *Base: Total sample in each country: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116.*

Figure B3: Broadcast television and online are the most frequently used news sources in all countries

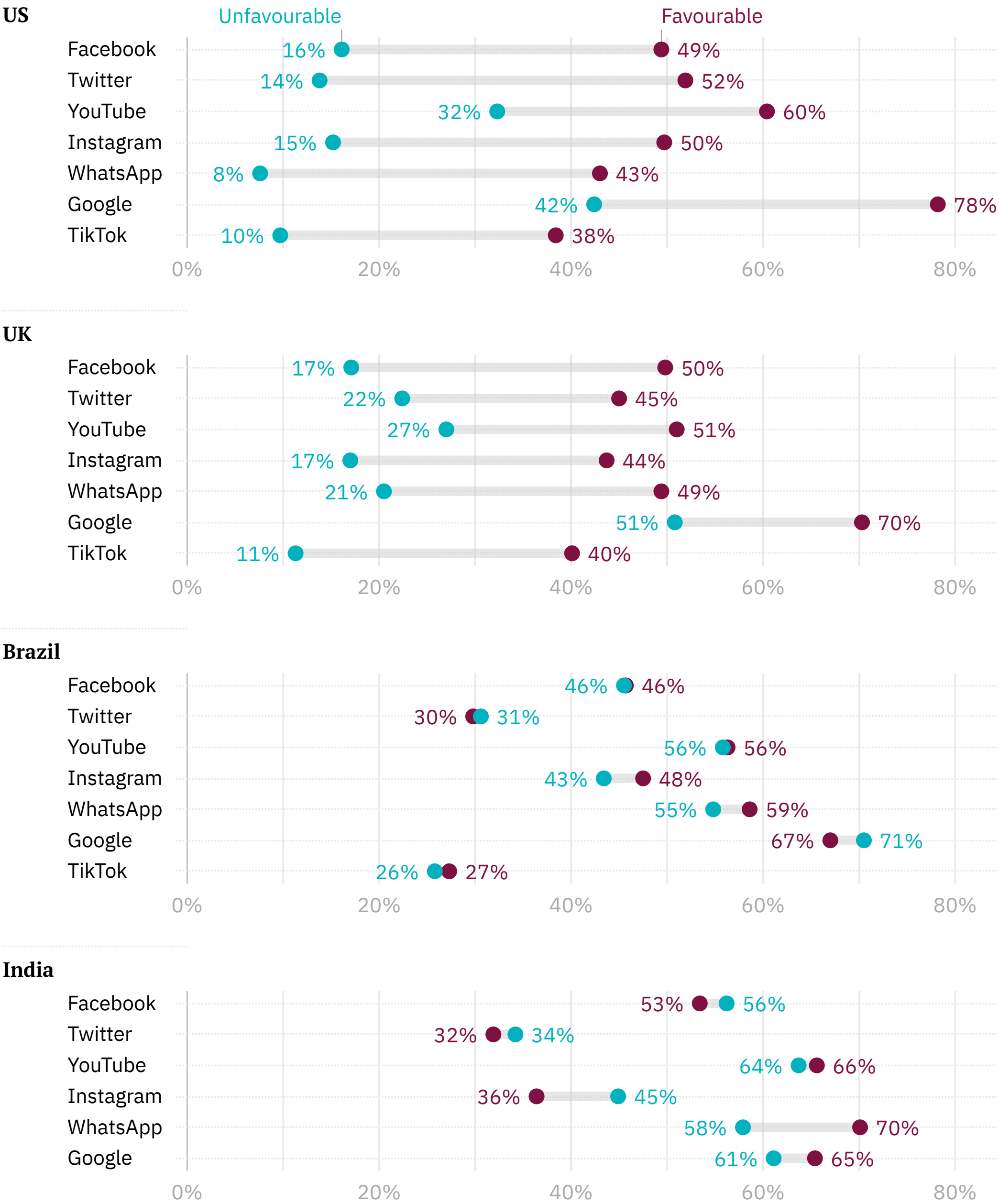
The percentage in each country who get different kinds of news at least once a day, less than once a day, and never



Q3. Many people access news in different ways. Thinking about your own news habits, how often, if at all, do you...Read news in print (using a newspaper or magazine); Listen to news on the radio or while using a podcast; Watch news on local or national broadcast television; Get news online (including social media, messaging apps or search engines); Watch news on 24-hour cable television? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: We did not ask about 24-hour cable news in the UK and India.*

Figure B4: In the UK and the US, those who hold more favourable views towards political leaders have higher levels of trust in news on platforms

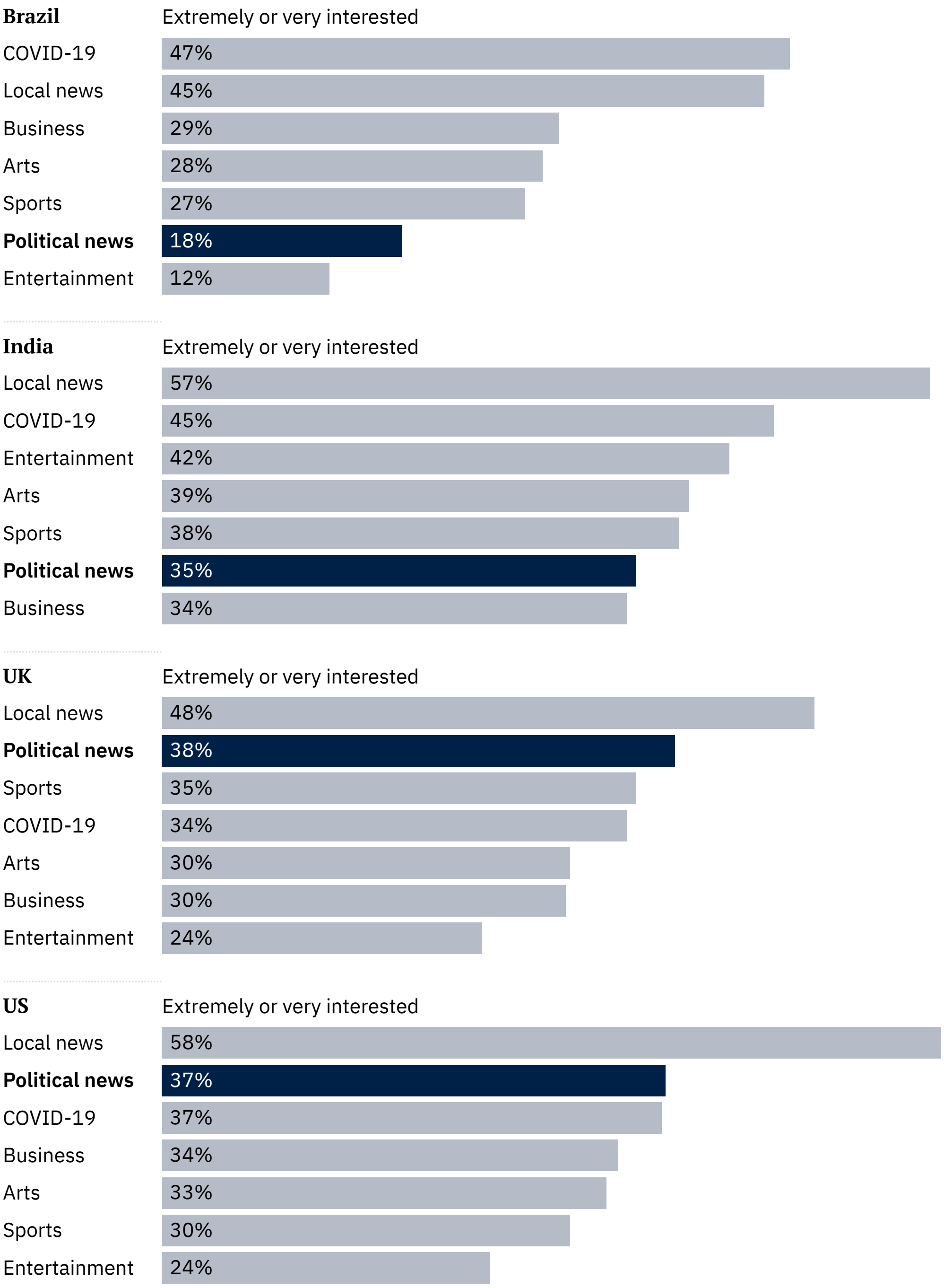
Percentage who trust news on platforms according to their opinions about the country's political leader



Q21. Generally speaking, to what extent do you trust or not trust news on the following platforms? **D9**. How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion of [Jair Bolsonaro/Narendra Modi/Boris Johnson/Joe Biden]? *Base: Very unfavourable or mostly favourable: Brazil = 227, India = 655, UK = 465, US = 605. Mostly unfavourable or very unfavourable: Brazil = 374, India = 110, UK = 821, US = 500. Note: Includes all who responded 'trust somewhat' and 'trust completely'.*

Figure B5: Interest in political news varies according to countries

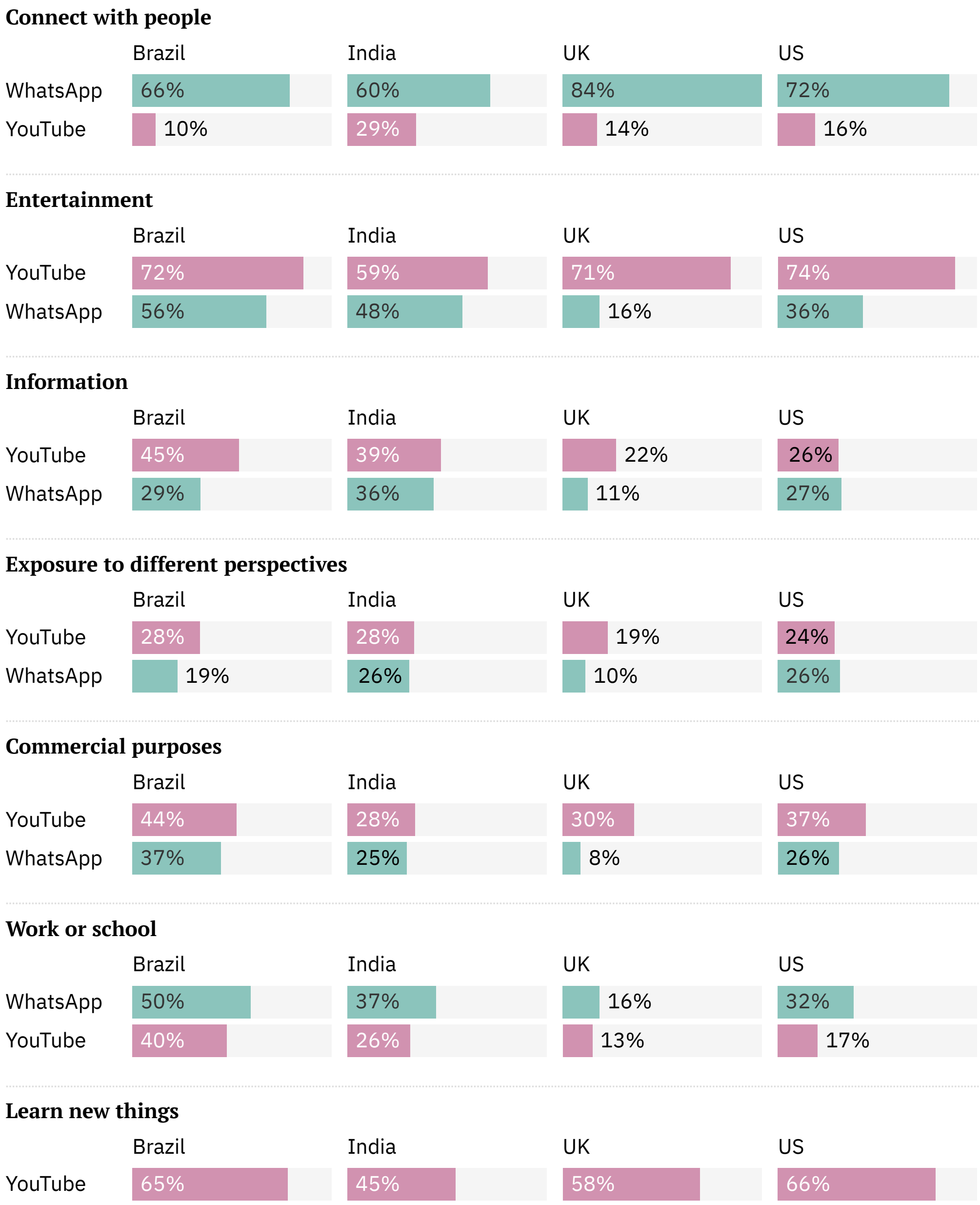
Percentage who say they are extremely or very interested in each news topic



Q7. How interested, if at all, are you in the following types of news? *Base: Brazil = 2,000, India = 2,134, UK = 2,206, US = 2,116. Note: Figure includes respondents saying they are 'extremely' or 'very interested' in each type of news.*

Figure B6: Reasons for using platforms according to those who responded to the main survey

Percentage who use WhatsApp and YouTube for each of the following reasons



Q27, Q35. Thinking now about [WhatsApp/YouTube]. Which, if any, of the following statements do you feel applies to you? I use [WhatsApp/YouTube] for/to... *Base: WhatsApp users: Brazil =1,672, India =1,195, UK =1,421, US = 470. YouTube users: Brazil = 1,032, India = 1,101, UK = 1,493, US = 1,508.*

Table B1: Number of respondents referenced in bases for fi ures in the report who have heard of each platform, use them, and get news on them daily or more often

Country	Platform	Never heard of the platform	Have heard of it	Used for any purpose during previous 30 days	Got news from it at least daily
Brazil (N = 2,000 in the full sample)	Facebook	30	1,970	1,048	684
	Twitter	116	1,884	169	95
	YouTube	49	1,951	1,032	596
	Instagram	63	1,937	893	611
	WhatsApp	20	1,980	1,672	1,152
	Google	44	1,956	1,050	698
	TikTok	100	1,900	400	220
India (N = 2,134 in the full sample)	Facebook	308	1,826	826	699
	Twitter	519	1,615	148	110
	YouTube	276	1,858	1,101	907
	Instagram	454	1,680	362	264
	WhatsApp	249	1,885	1,195	982
	Google	297	1,837	854	673
	TikTok	577	1,557	93	57
United Kingdom (N = 2,206 in the full sample)	Facebook	4	2,202	1,480	602
	Twitter	18	2,188	688	361
	YouTube	14	2,192	1,439	425
	Instagram	13	2,193	919	356
	WhatsApp	21	2,185	1,421	328
	Google	2	2,204	1,547	698
	TikTok	23	2,183	528	237
United States (N = 2,116 in the full sample)	Facebook	7	2,109	1,536	633
	Twitter	11	2,105	695	360
	YouTube	4	2,112	1,508	546
	Instagram	12	2,104	1,011	407
	WhatsApp	112	2,004	470	216
	Google	4	2,112	1,591	722
	TikTok	19	2,097	644	294

Note: The number of weighted observations in each group is shown.

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