

MEDIA CONSUMPTION **LATAM** REPORT 2021

EXPLORING THE EVOLUTION
OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA, AND
ITS REACH AMONG EXCLUDED
COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

SHERLOCK
COMMUNICATIONS

The global pandemic has prompted swift changes and a digitisation of consumption patterns, accelerated in an unprecedented way. More than a year into the COVID-19 public health crisis, how has media consumption changed in Latin America, one of the most unequal regions in the world?

Despite the demographic kaleidoscope, mass media tends to cater to a singular audience profile, essentially ignoring massive swathes of society. There is much to consider in order to understand excluded groups in Latin America, not least the geography of a region that contains vast numbers living in isolated regions, including indigenous tribes and agrarian communities.

Excluded groups include the poor, rural communities, women, the disabled, indigenous groups, older people and LGBT+. The long list encompasses huge swathes of society, even outweighing those typically represented in the traditional media. Is it time for the pendulum to swing?

Photos: August de Richelieu/ Pexels, Walter Kumaruara/ Ana Daiane/ Yago Rafael





ASK THE AUDIENCE

In 2020, **Sherlock Communications** examined the digital revolution in Latin America, and its impact on traditional media outlets. Print media was hit hardest. In our **Media Consumption 2021 LATAM Report**, we revisit some of the same themes. How has the pandemic impacted news consumption for Latin Americans? Which sources are trusted in the region? Has this changed in a year scarred by Covid-19? Are scientists, or politicians, considered any more credible than this time last year?



Photo: Igor Alexander / iStock. Icon: Kustarti / Noun Project

In January 2020, we spoke to more than 2,300 people living in Latin America, capturing a region on the cusp of a pandemic. This year, we spoke to even more respondents. In March 2021, over **3,100 people from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru** answered many of the same questions. The results are fascinating.

In addition, we spoke to activists in different countries around the region to identify the groups which are traditionally ignored by media content, to figure out what's happening, and to look for some good news to report. We decided to ask people in the region that may be feeling excluded, to further develop our understanding of their opinions. We conducted studies in a Rio de Janeiro favela and in a remote region of the Amazon.



WINDS OF CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA

As predicted, print news media took the hardest hit among traditional news sources (TV, radio and print) in 2021. While 77% of people in Latin America said they read the news in print (i.e. newspapers or magazines) at least once a week, more than 22% across the region said they did not. The most startling drop-off occurred in Mexico. In 2020, 3% of Mexicans said they never got their news in print, while a year later, this had increased to 18% - a drop of 443%! In Colombia, the print media drop-off was 275% (in 2020, 5% never got their news in print, while this year it was 19%).

One in four respondents said they didn't listen to news on the radio, but this didn't reflect a major change from last year's results, when 21% said the same. The biggest change noted in the region was in Colombia, where in 2020 18% said they didn't use the radio as a news source, compared to more than 25% this year.

Television fared better. An average of just 6% said they never turned on the TV for news reports. Again, the biggest change was noted in Colombia. Last year, 3% said they didn't watch TV news, compared to 9% this year, representing a year-on-year change of 182%.

In 2020, 3% of Mexicans said they never got their news in print, while a year later, this had increased to 18% - a drop of 443%!





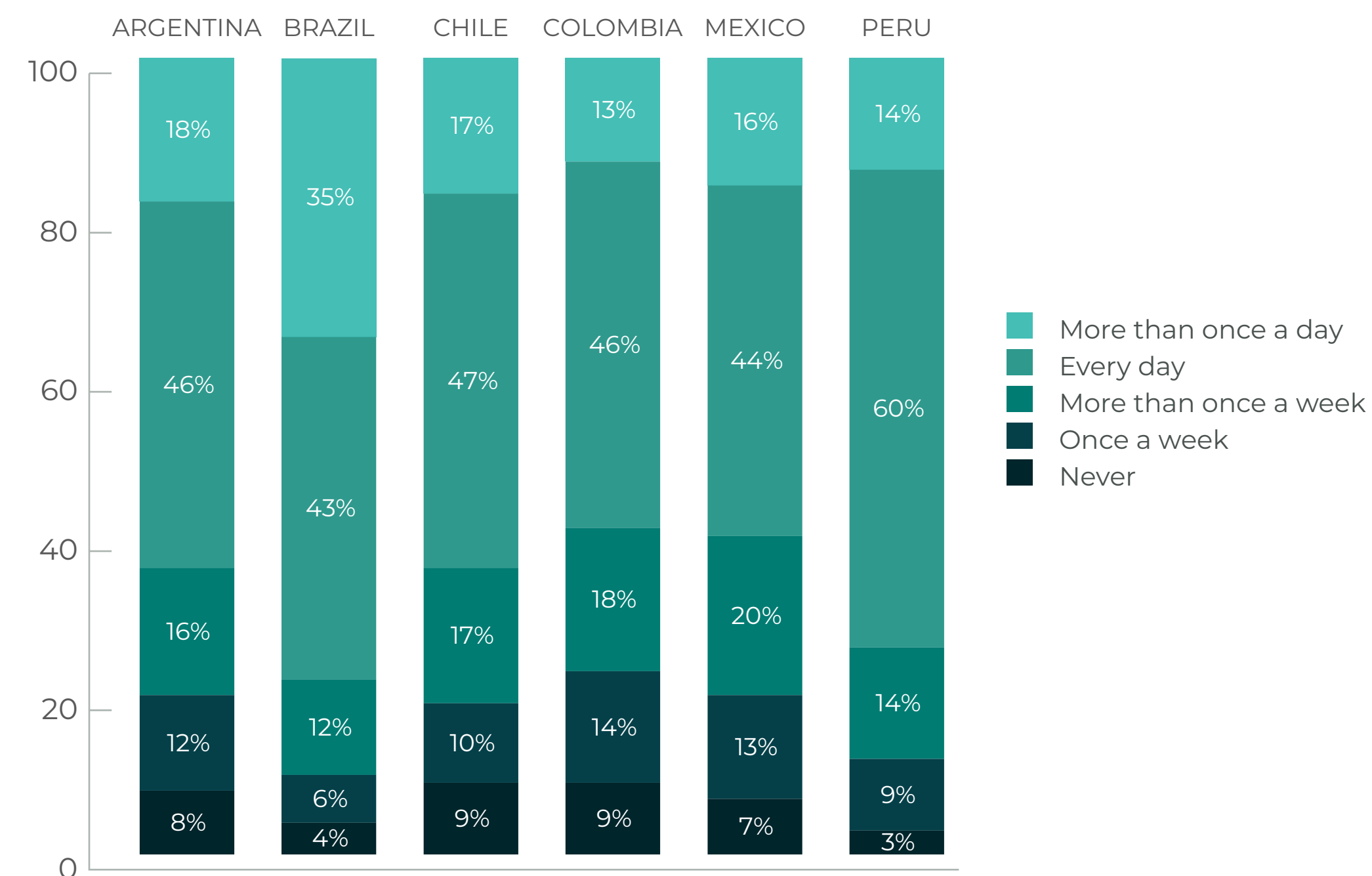
TURN ON THE TV!

An average of 93% of Latin Americans watched news on the television at least once a week, 2% less than last year. The most notable drop was in Colombia, where last year 97% watched TV news on at least a weekly basis, compared to 91% in this year's survey.

Nearly 48% of people in Latin Americans watched the news on TV every day, and 19% consumed TV news more than once a day. 16% tuned in to TV news more than once a week, while just under 11% watch once a week. Just under 7% did not watch TV news at all.

Brazilians were the biggest consumers of daily TV news in the region, with 78% watching at least one news broadcast per day; 43% turned on the TV news at least once a day, while more than 35% got their news from the TV more than once a day.

How often do you watch TV news?



74% of respondents from Peru said they consume news at least once a day from TV; 60% every day, and 14% more than once a day. 60% of Colombians and Mexicans watched at least one TV news broadcast per day, with around 44% of Mexicans tuning in at least once a day and 15% watching more than one TV news broadcast per day. More than 9% of Chileans and Colombians said they never watch the news on TV, while just less than 3% said the same in Peru.



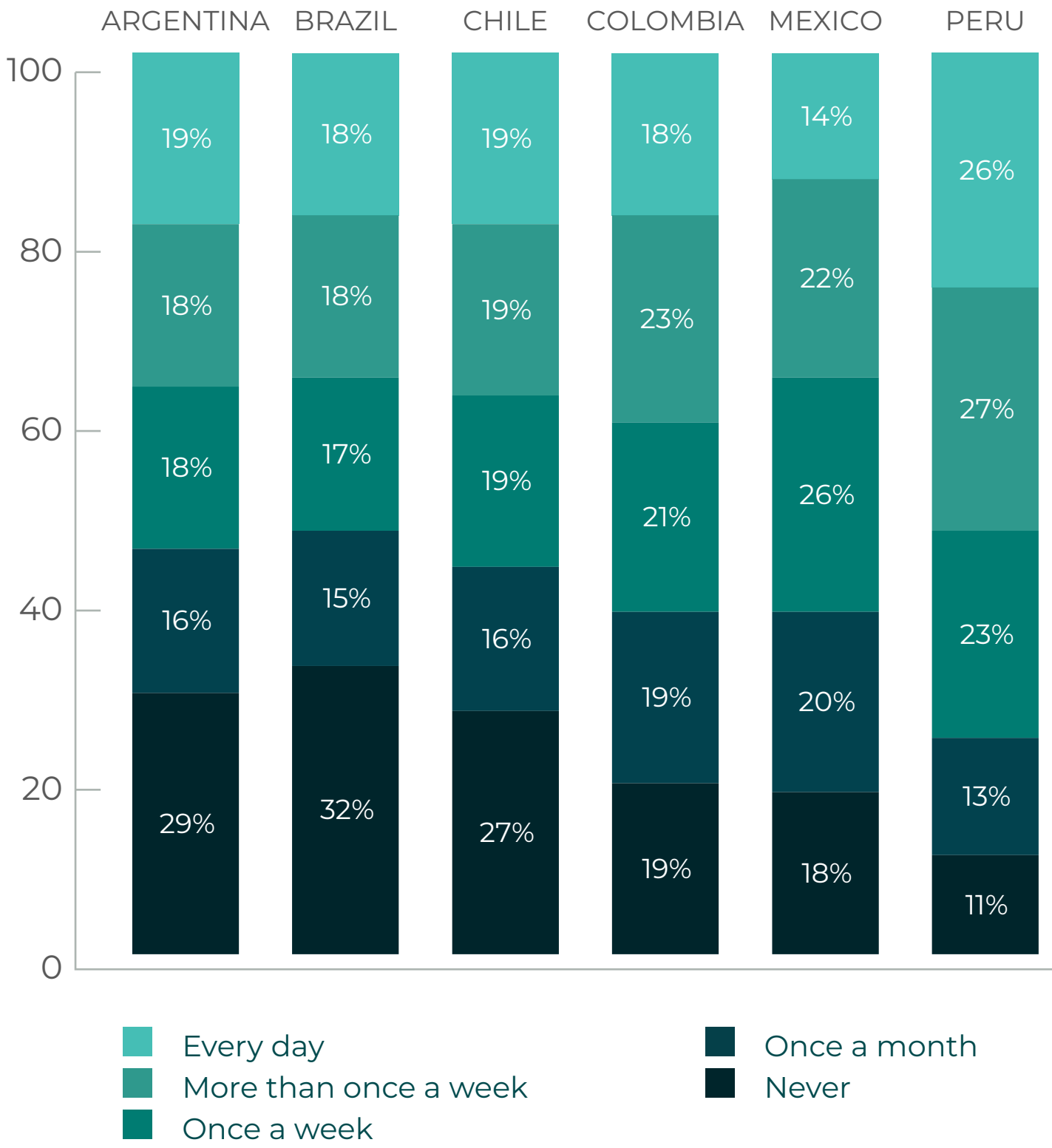
PRINT MEDIA TAKES A HAMMERING IN LATIN AMERICA

A year ago, we predicted that print media would have a tough year ahead in Latin America, but we underestimated just how tough it would be. Since last year, 80% more Latin Americans said that they never read the paper. In 2020, 12% told us they never read the paper, while this year 22% of Latin Americans said they don't source their news in print.

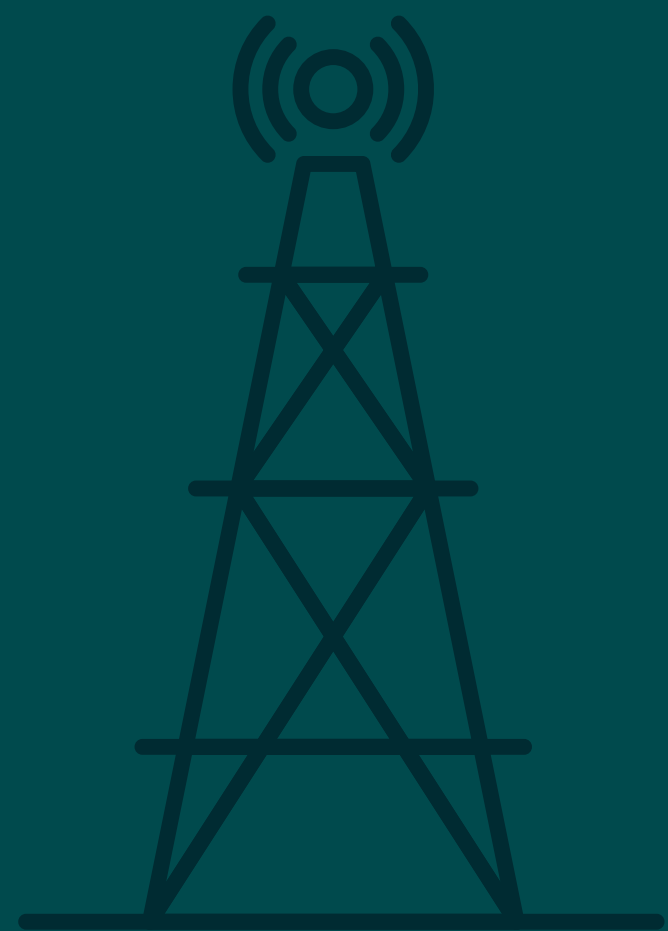
The most stark rejection of print news was witnessed in Mexico, where 18% said they never read the paper - a hike of 443% from last year, when only 3% said the same. In Colombia, 5% did not source their news from print media last year, while this year that number had leapt to 19%, an increase of 275%. Argentina showed the least change, with 24% telling us last year they never read the paper for news, and 29% reporting the same this year, a hike of 19%.

Icon: Teewara Soontorn/Noun Project

How often do you read newspapers or magazines?



Nearly 40% of Latin Americans read the news in print on a daily basis. 21% do so more than once a week but not daily, while just under 17% only read print news on a weekly basis. Brazilians were the least likely group in Latin America to get their news from newspapers or magazines, with more than 32% saying they never do so (compared to 23% last year).



NEWS ON THE RADIO

There was also a notable rejection of the radio as a source of news, with one in four Latin Americans telling us they never use the radio for news - 14% more than last year. Argentinians were least likely to get their news from the radio (28%). Daily listeners of radio news decreased in all but two countries, Brazil and Peru, which registered increases of 14% and 3% respectively. (The city of São Paulo currently hosts 19 radio stations, each with at least one million listeners!) Listenership to daily radio news was down by 19% year-on-year in Colombia; 18% in Mexico; 16% in Argentina and by 11% in Chile.



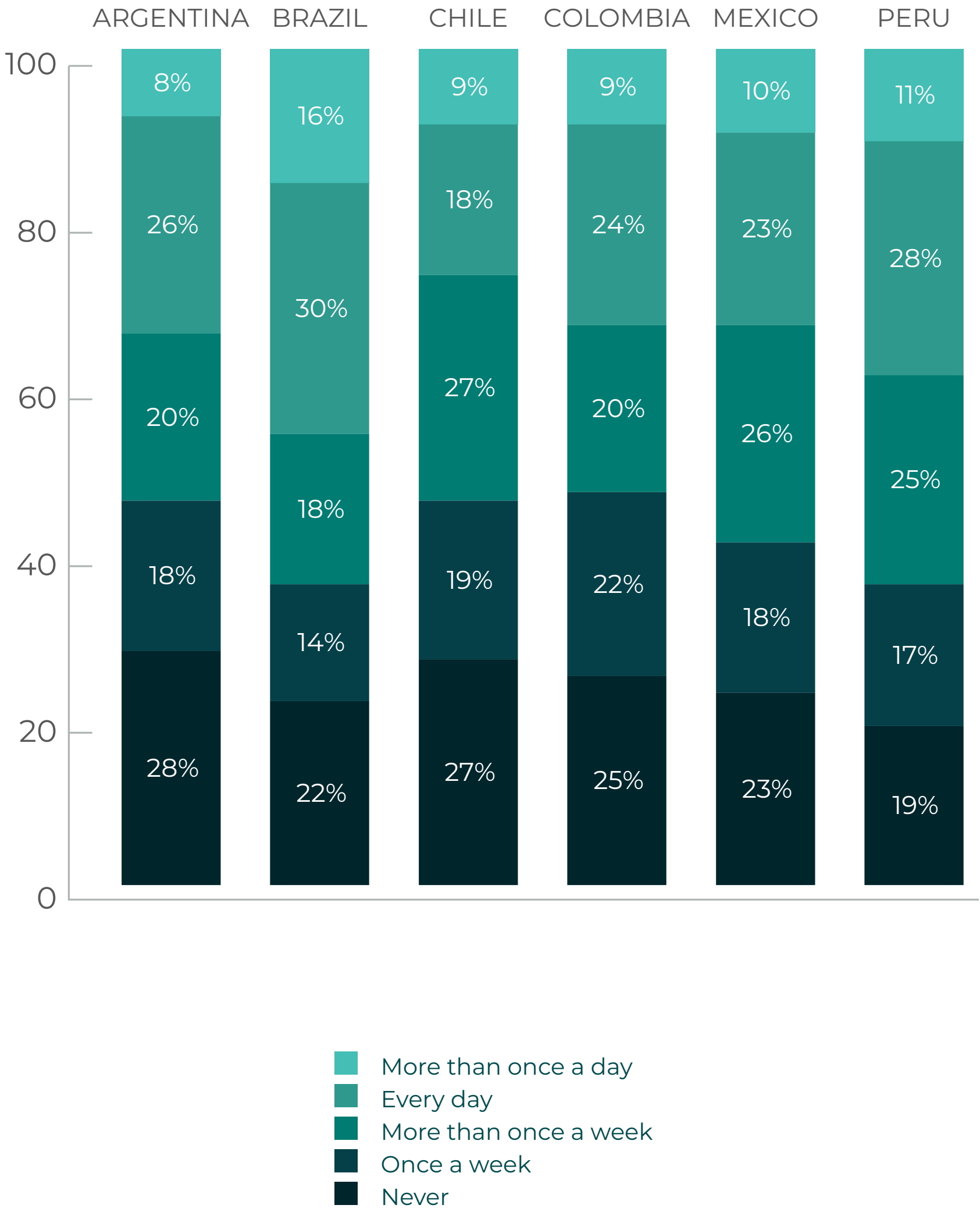
One in three people in the region said they listen to newscasts on the radio at least once every day. Brazilians were the most likely regional group to listen to daily news on the radio, with 46% tuning in on a daily basis, 16% of Brazilians listened to more than one radio news broadcast per day. In Peru, 39% listened to radio news at least once a day, and of these 28% tuned in to every day. 19% of Peruvians never listened to the news on the radio, a 21% increase on last year. Chile was least engaged with radio as a news source, with just over 27% getting their daily news from the wireless. One-third of this group told us they tuned in several times a day.

76% in the region listened to radio news at least once a week, with the biggest drop-off since last year seen in Colombia, where 9% less people caught up with radio news on at least a weekly basis compared to last year. In Mexico, the drop-off was 7%.



Brazilians were the most likely regional group to listen to daily news on the radio

How often do you listen to radio news?





TRADITIONAL MEDIA TRUST BAROMETER

Latin Americans are more likely to trust TV journalism, online news sites and blogs than print media journalism. People across the region trust news from social media more than the content of podcasts.

In Brazil, TV was considered the most trustworthy source of news for nearly 37% of the population, while online news sites were preferred for 29%. Print media and radio were considered most reliable for 11% and 10% respectively. 9% said social media was the best place to find trustworthy news, while 4% cited podcasts as the best source.

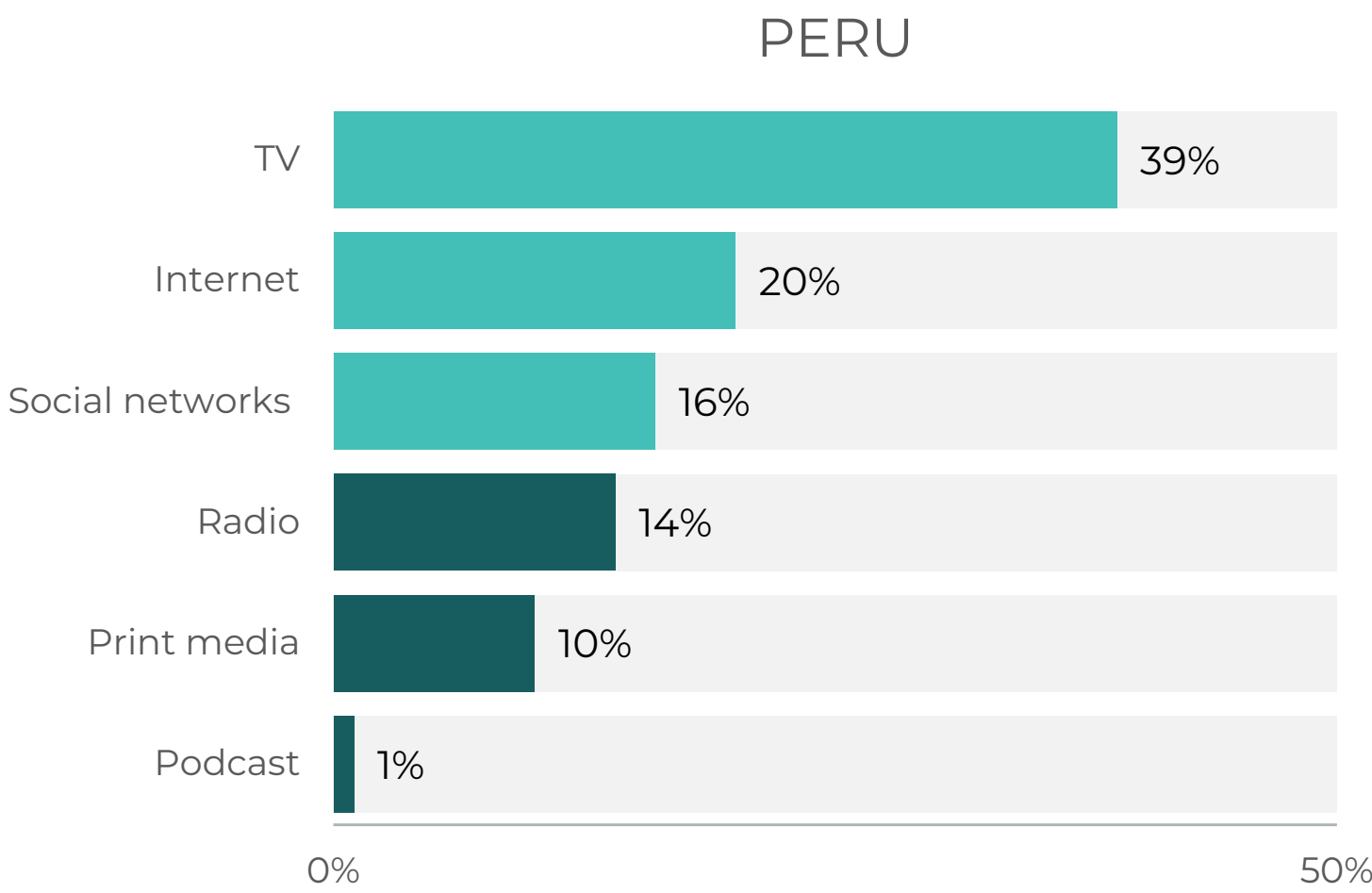
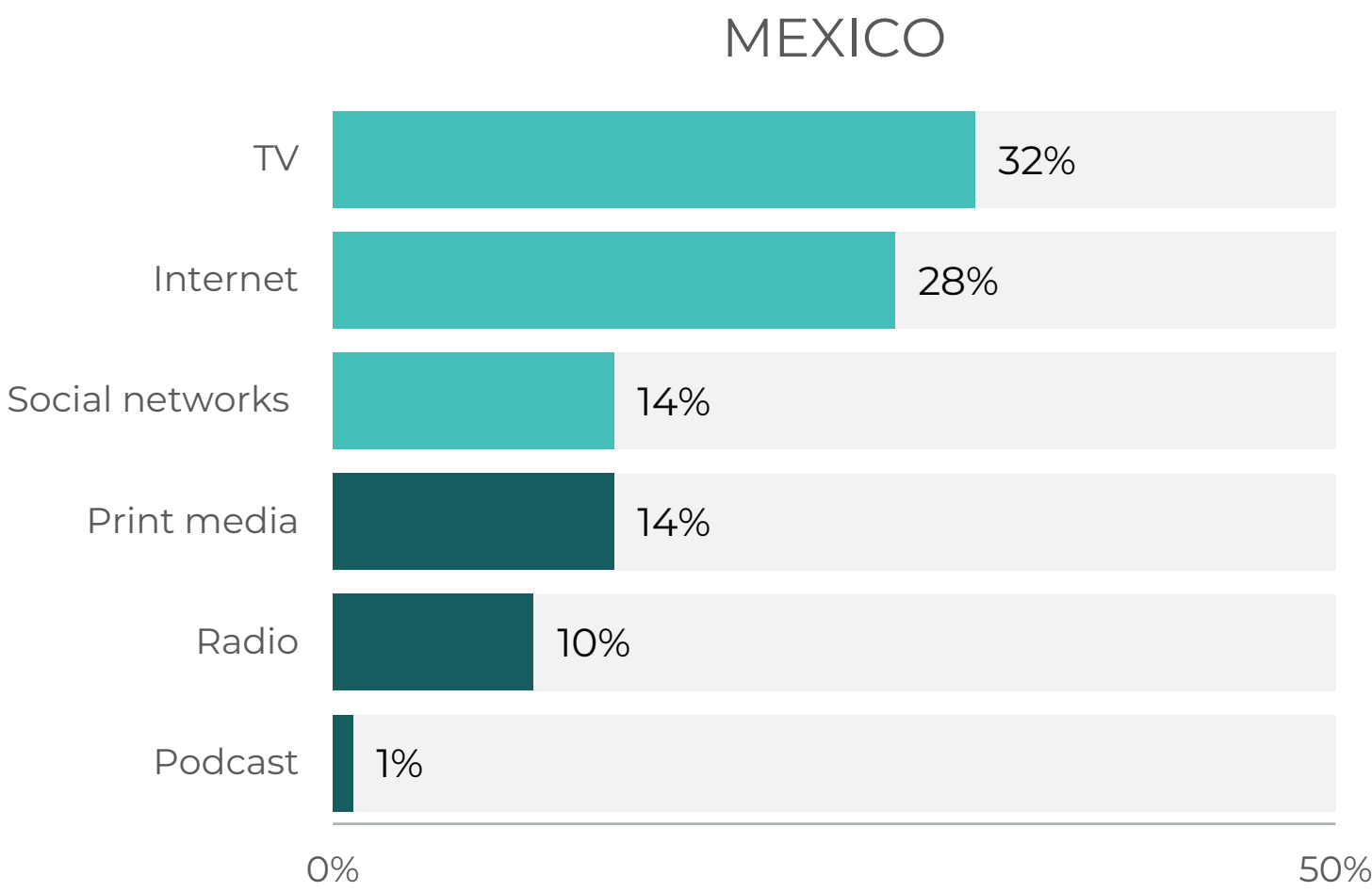
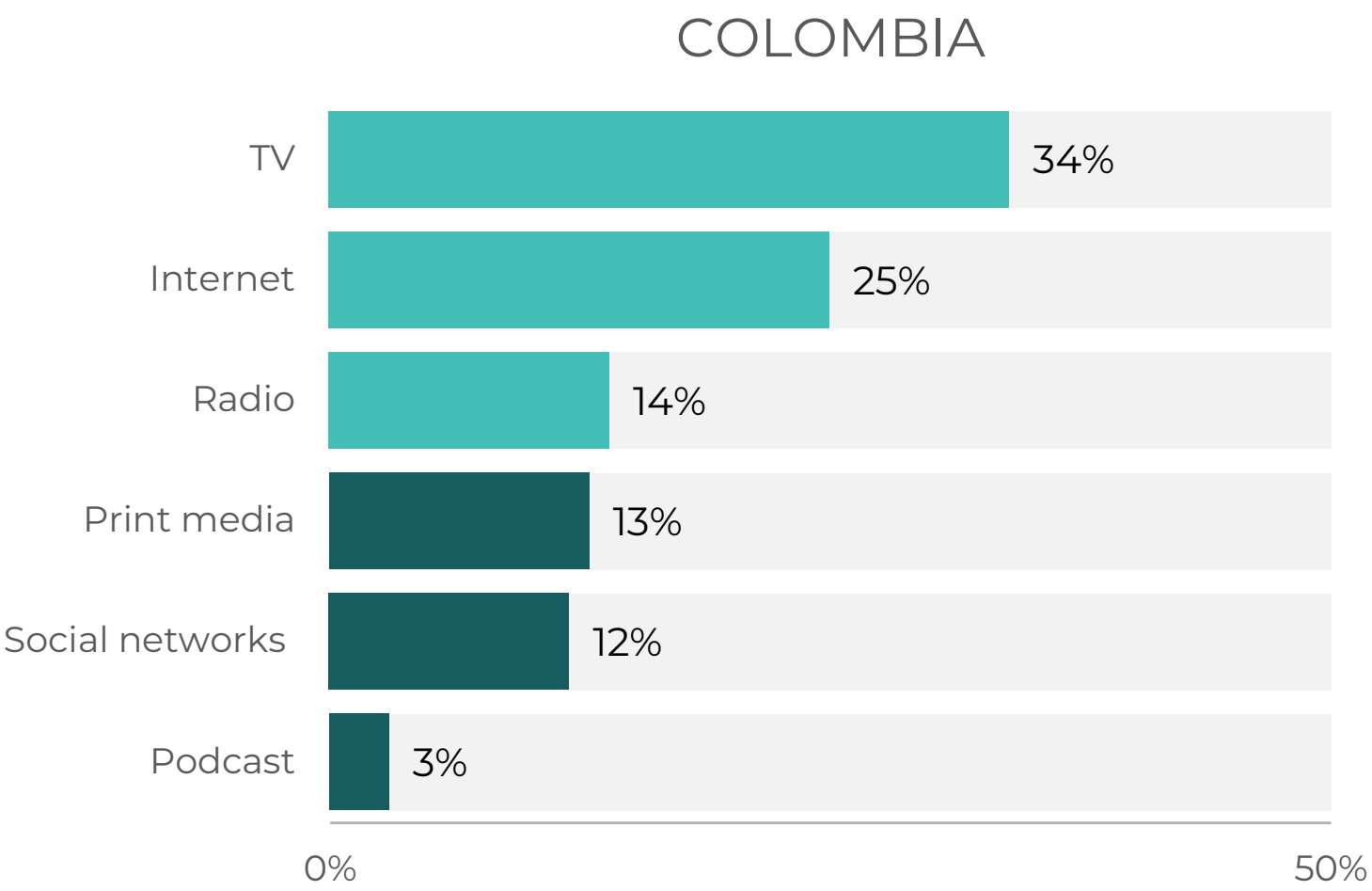
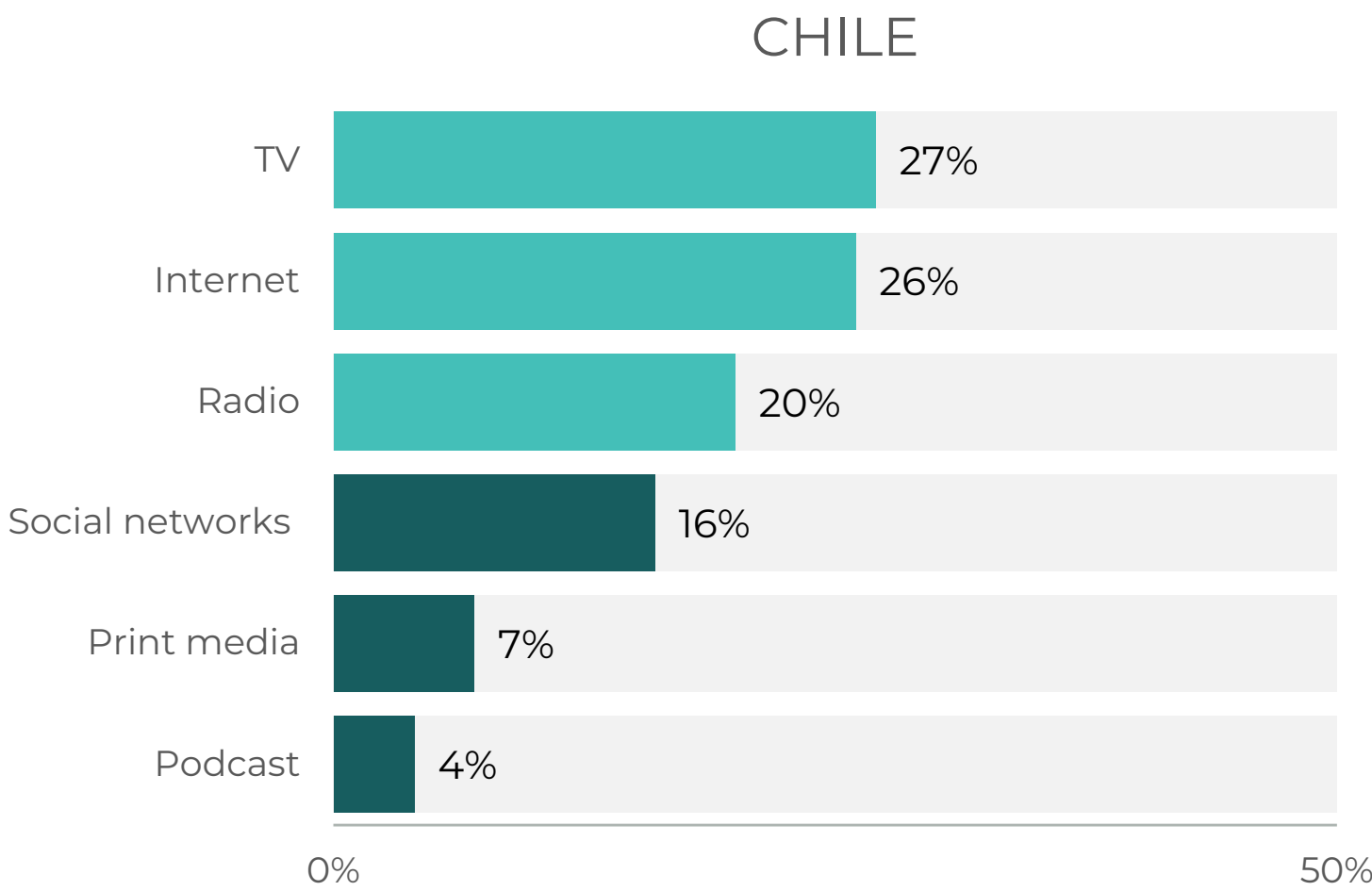
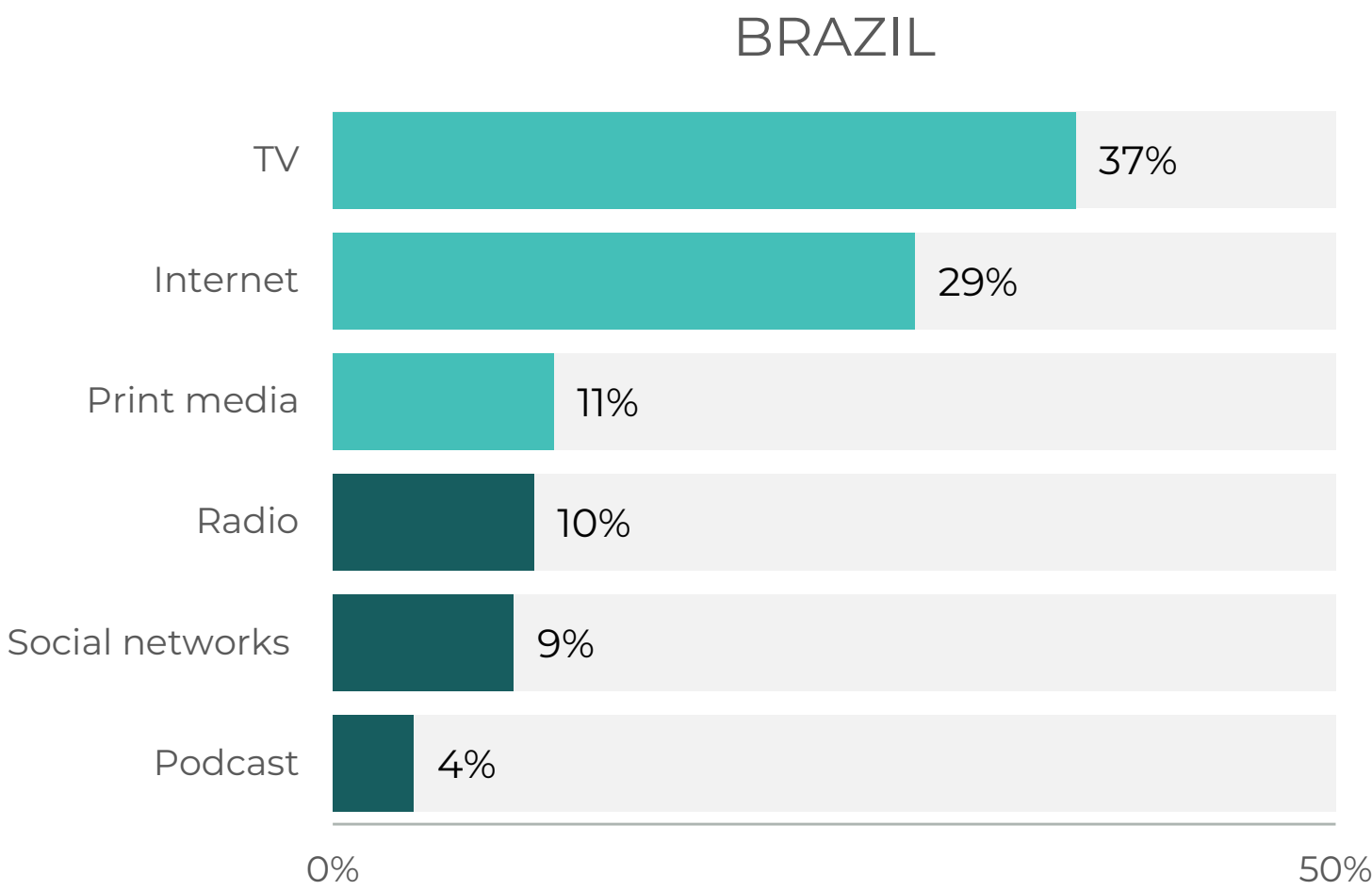
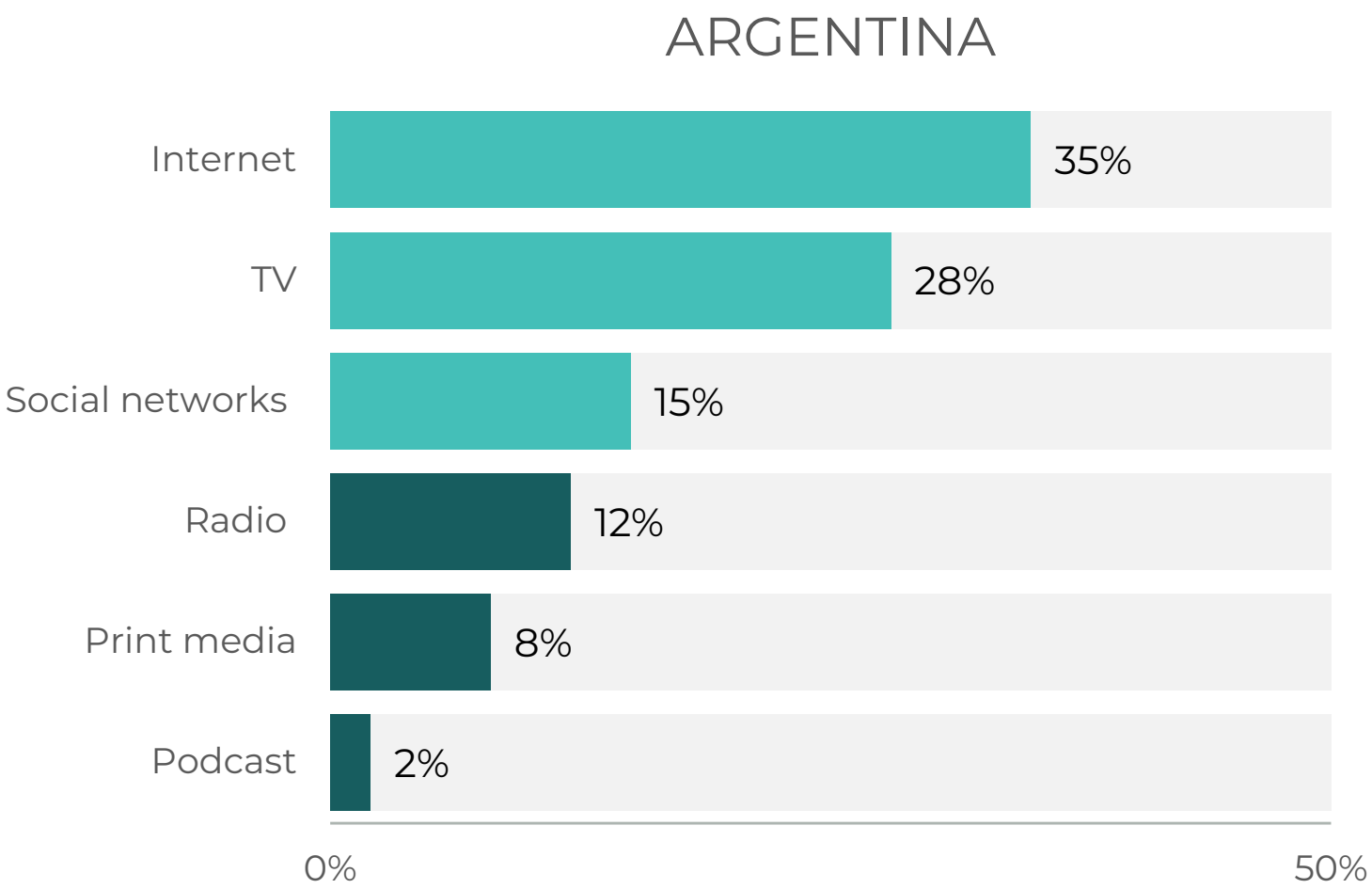


Photo: Juan Alberto Casado/iStock. Icon: ProSymbols/ Noun Project

TV news was the most trusted source for Mexicans too, with over 32% picking it as their number one choice. 28% said news sites were their first choice for trustworthy news, while 14% voted for social networks and 14% said print media was best. Only 10% of Mexicans stated radio news was the most trustworthy source, while 1% said podcasts were the best place for factual news.

Regionally, 7% of Latin Americans said they didn't trust any of the news sources listed (i.e. social media, TV, print media, radio, online news sites, or podcasts). Blanket rejection was highest in Argentina and Colombia (9% each), followed closely by Chile (8%).

The most reliable source of information in your view is:





SOCIAL MEDIA TRUST BAROMETER

430 million people were online in Latin America in January 2021, according to [Statista](#). The six countries we analysed for this report hold 359 million internet users, with the lion's share located in Brazil (160 million people, or 76% of the population).

We asked over 3,000 people in Latin America which social media platforms they trusted as a news source. From a list of Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp and TikTok, 13% said *none of the above*. 9% in both Mexico and Peru said they didn't trust news on social networks, while the same was true for 14% of Brazilians and Colombians, for 16% of Chileans, and for 17% of Argentinians.

Despite a shrinking market share, Facebook was seen as the most trustworthy of the social media platforms for news, with an regional average of 27% selecting it as their most trusted news source. 38% of people in Peru preferred Facebook, along with 33% in Mexico, 27% in Argentina and Colombia, 22% in Chile and just 15% in Brazil.

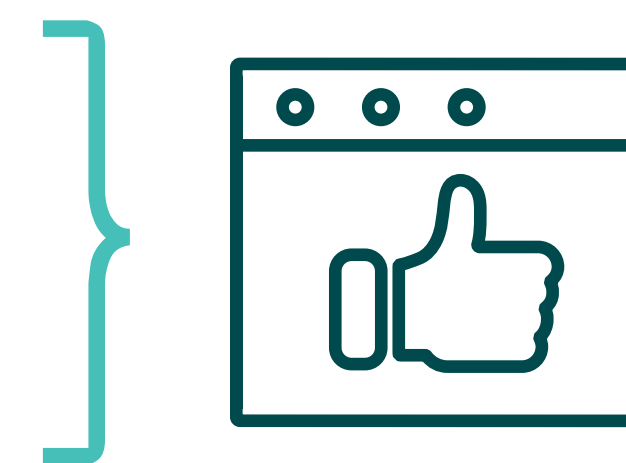
Brazilians cited YouTube as the most trustworthy news source, with 29% of respondents putting it in first place. 17% of Brazilians gave their number one vote to Instagram; 16% to LinkedIn; 15% to Facebook; 12% to Twitter, and 10% to WhatsApp.

32% of Chileans named Twitter as their number one social network for factual news, while 22% trust Facebook most, and 17% voted for Instagram. In Mexico, Facebook was the most trustworthy news source for one in three respondents, who rated Twitter (28%) and Youtube (20%) highly too. WhatsApp was considered the most trusted source of news for just over 8% of Mexicans, LinkedIn for 5% and Instagram for just 4%.

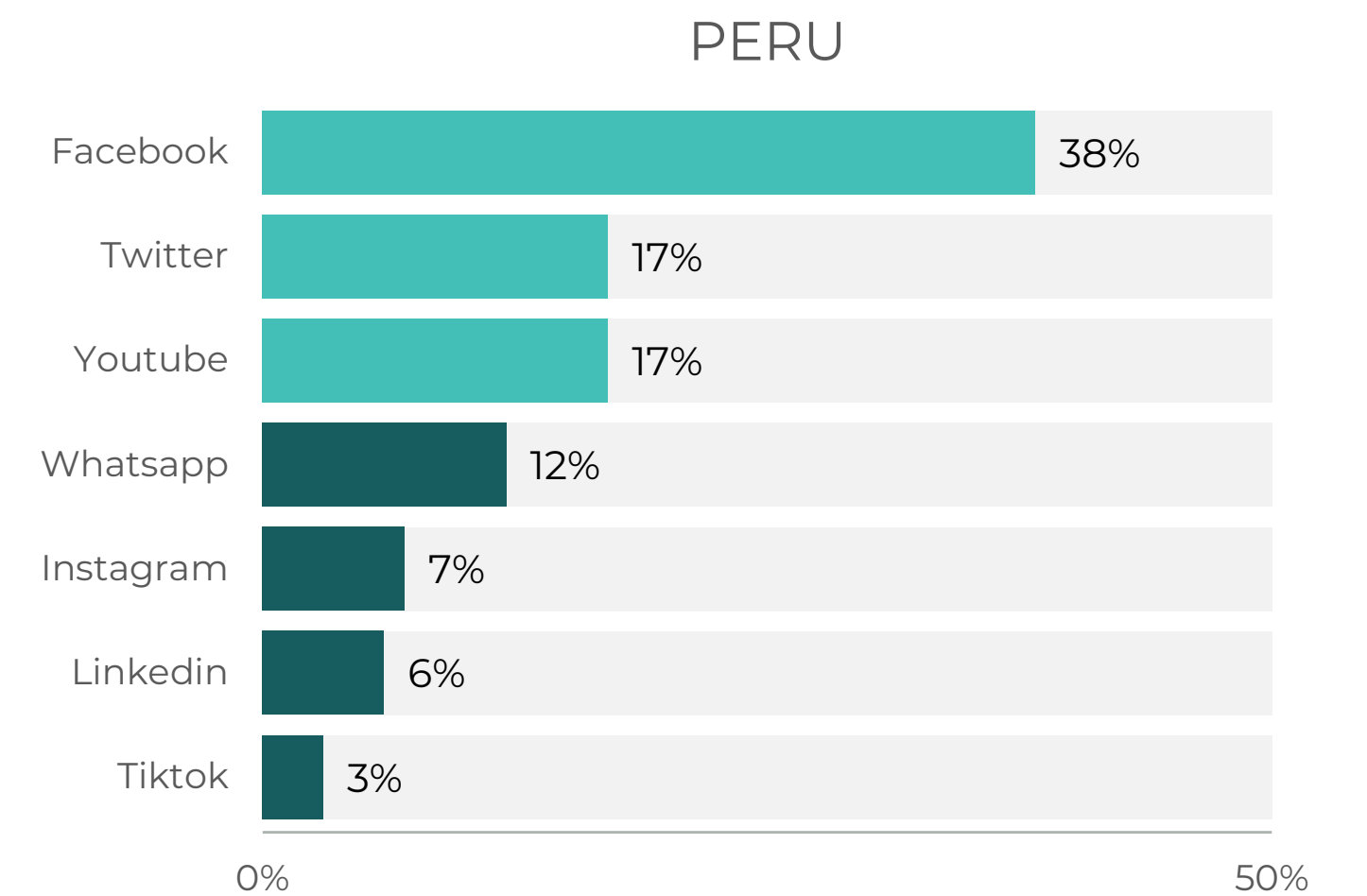
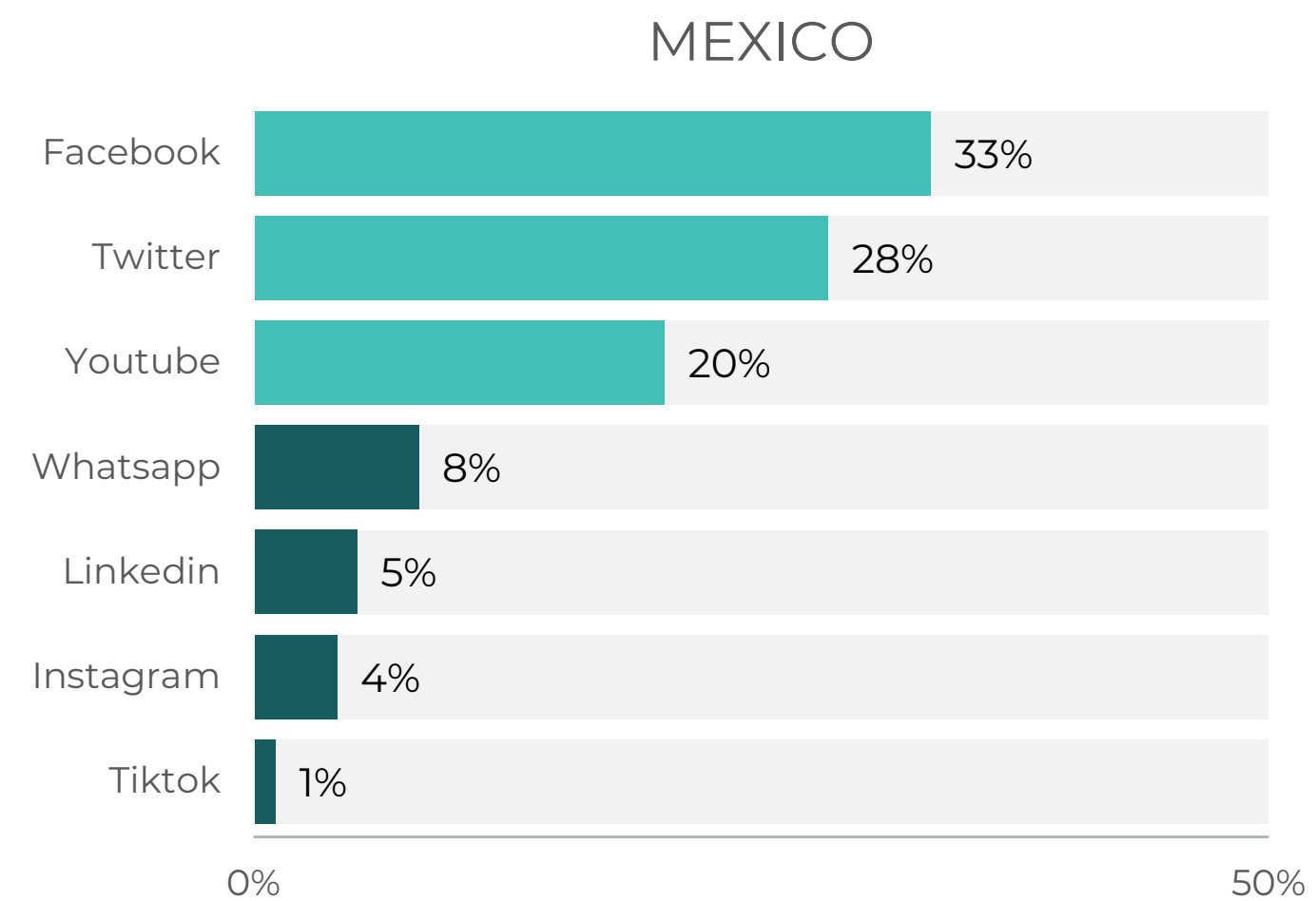
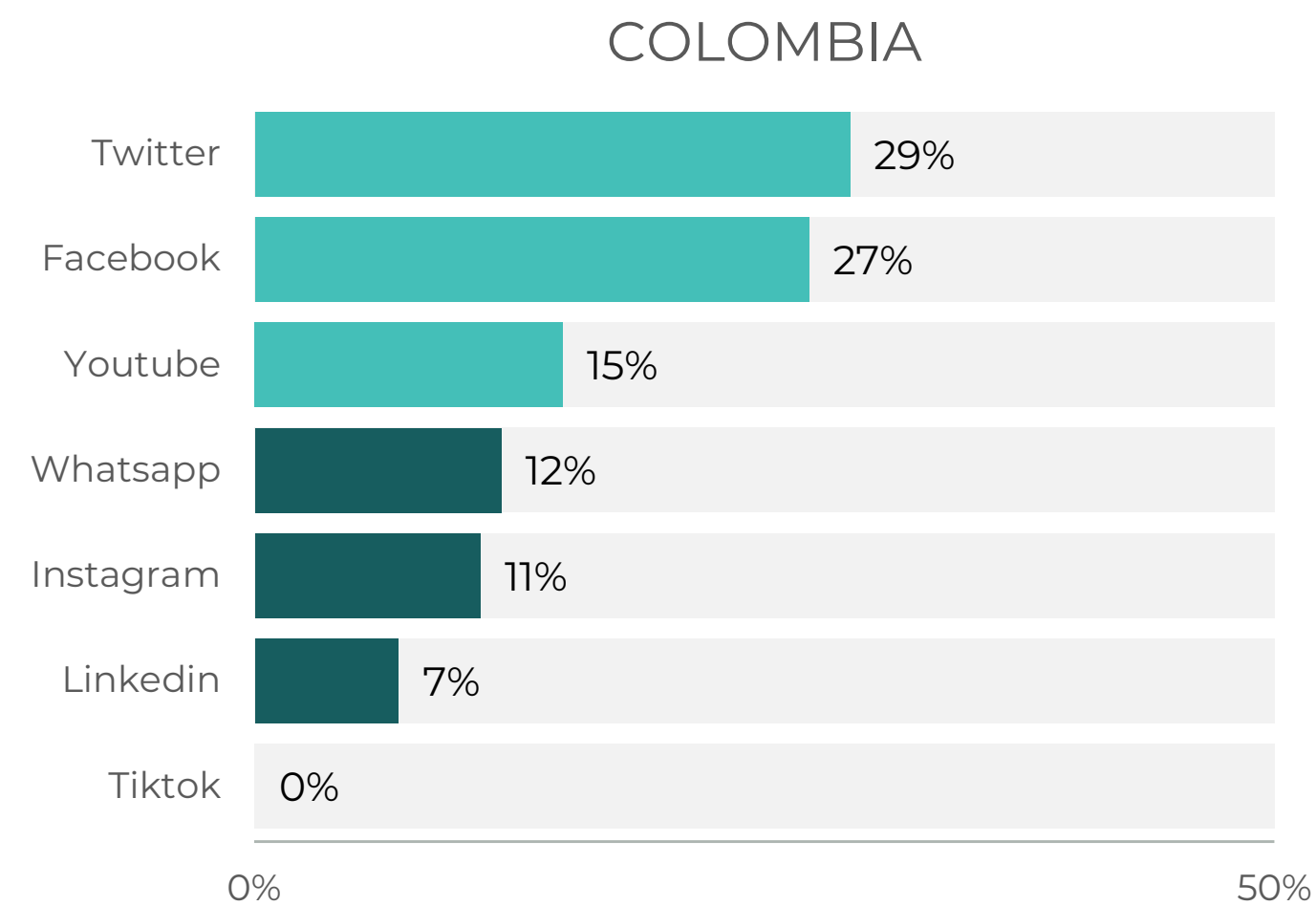
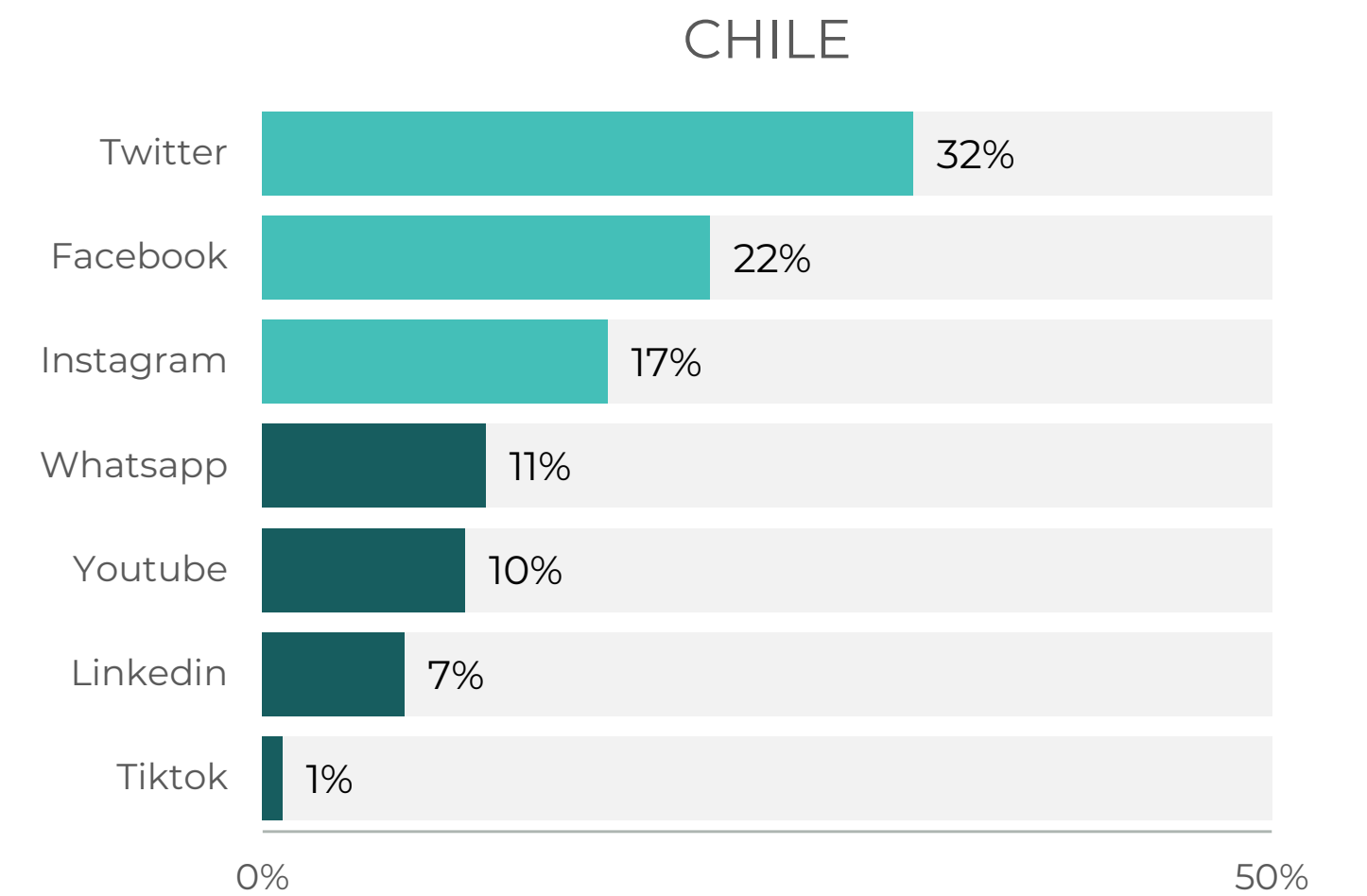
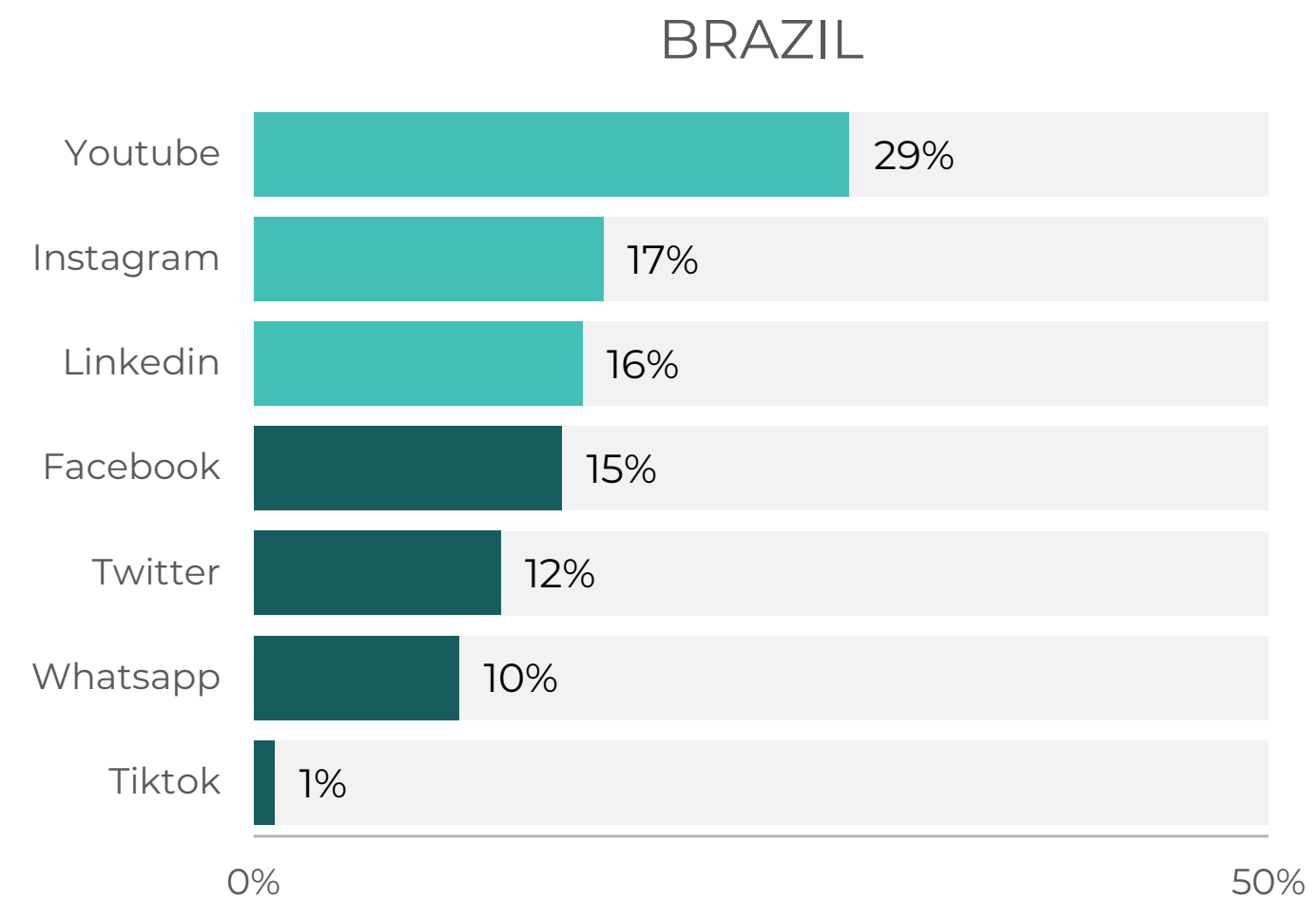
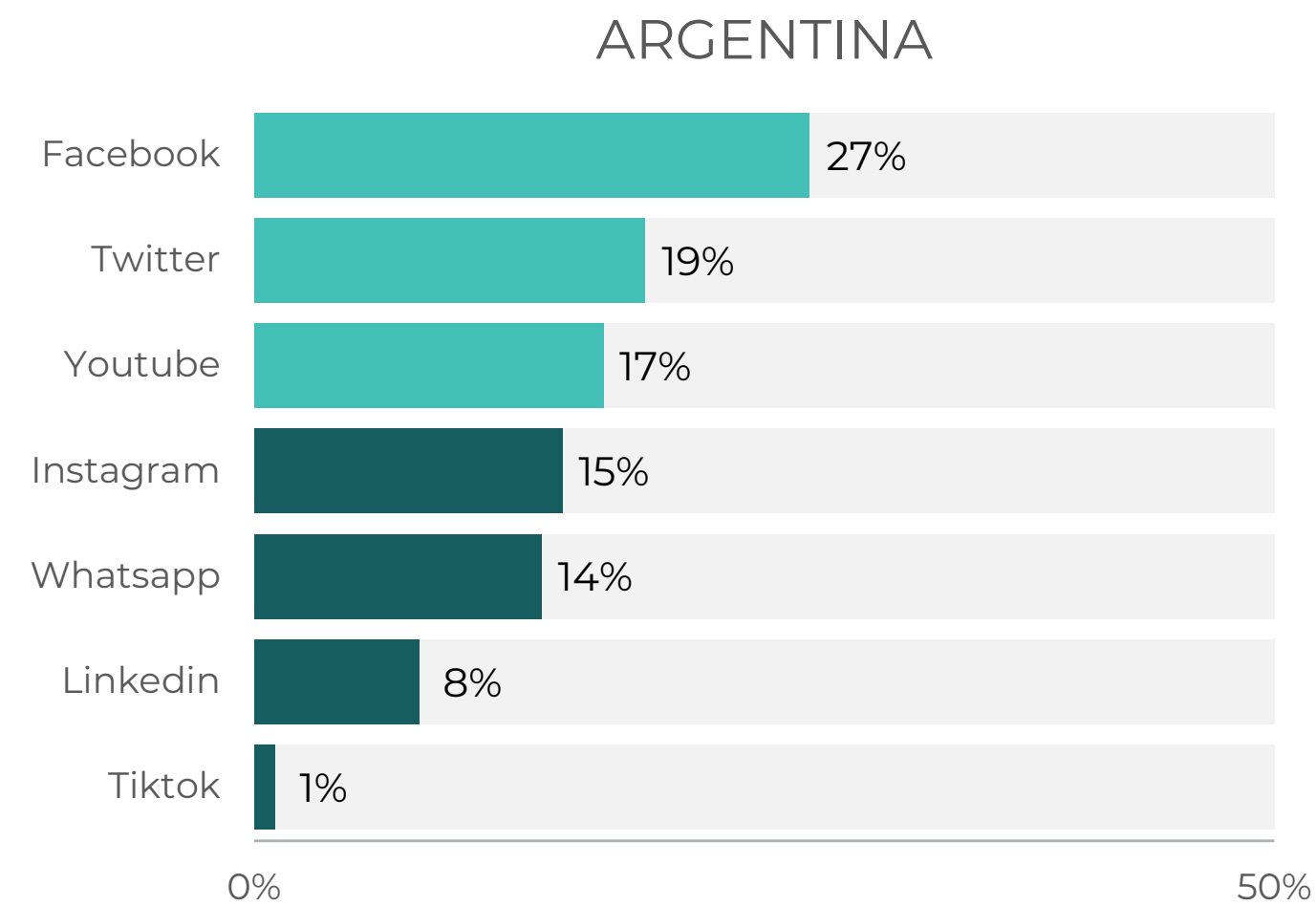
Mexicans were least inclined to rate Instagram as a top news source. Argentinians were more favourable towards the network, with more than 15% giving the top vote to Instagram. 17% of Chileans, 11% of Colombians, and 7% of Peruvians shared this opinion.

TikTok was not considered to be a competitor of other social network platforms, at least not as a news source. The regional average for people choosing TikTok as the best factual news site was just over 1%, slightly buoyed by the 3% of Peruvians who gave the video sharing platform their number one vote.

Despite a shrinking market share, Facebook was seen as the most trustworthy of the social media platforms for news



The most trusted social media and messaging apps for news consumption in Latin America





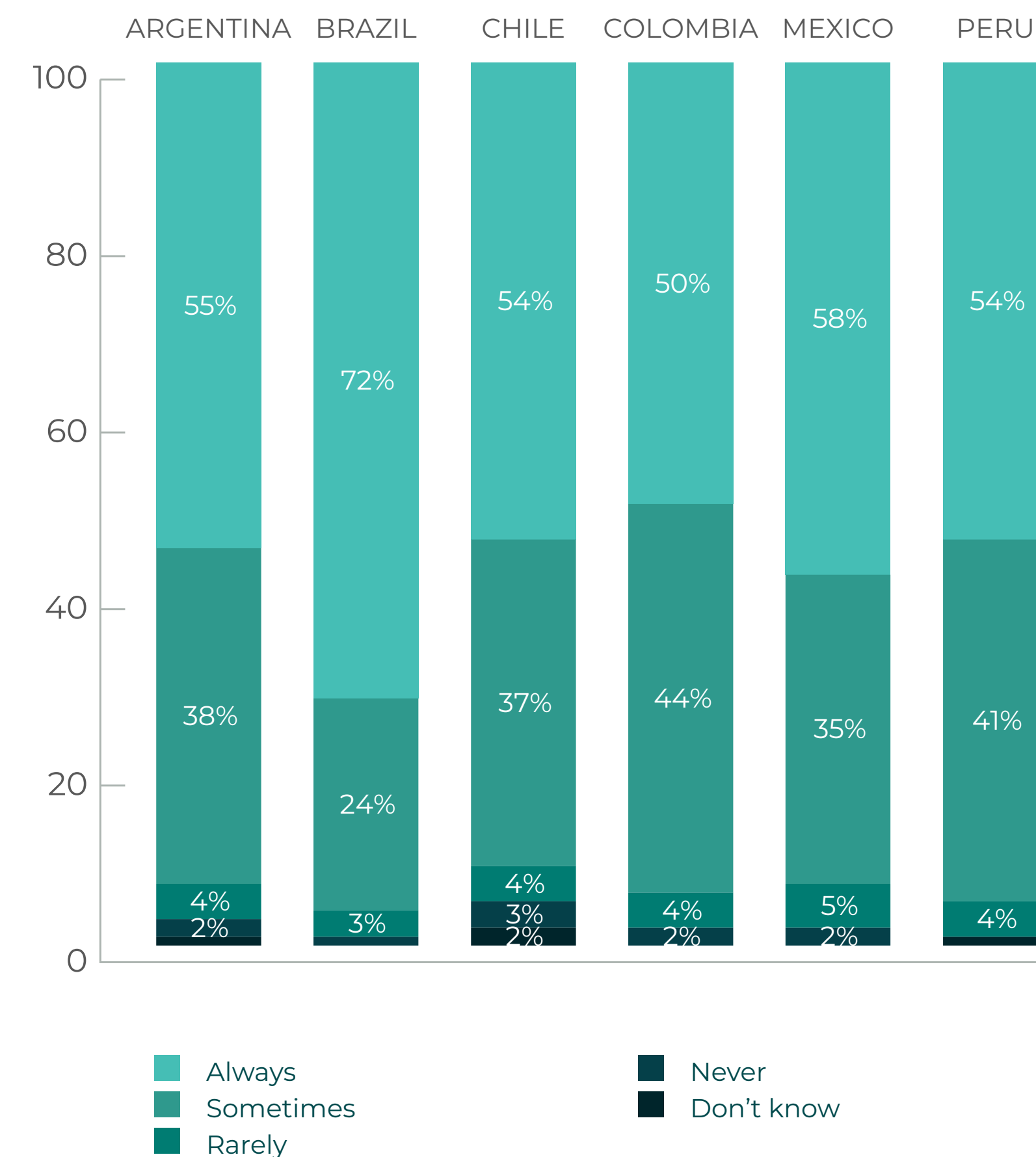
FACT-CHECKING

Latin Americans don't always believe what they read on social media, and more than 93% said they verify news from social platforms before sharing. Brazilians are most likely to fact check: more than 70% always question social media news before sharing, and just under 25% said they sometimes do so.

Peruvians, Colombians and Argentinians were the next most likely to fact check social media news, while Chileans were least likely to do so, with nearly 8% saying they haven't acquired this habit. Mexicans, Argentinians and Colombians were less likely to fact-check than people in Brazil or Peru.

Icon: Nithinan Tatan/Noun Project

Do you have the habit of verifying news that you see on social media and in messenger groups before you share them with other people?





FAKE NEWS

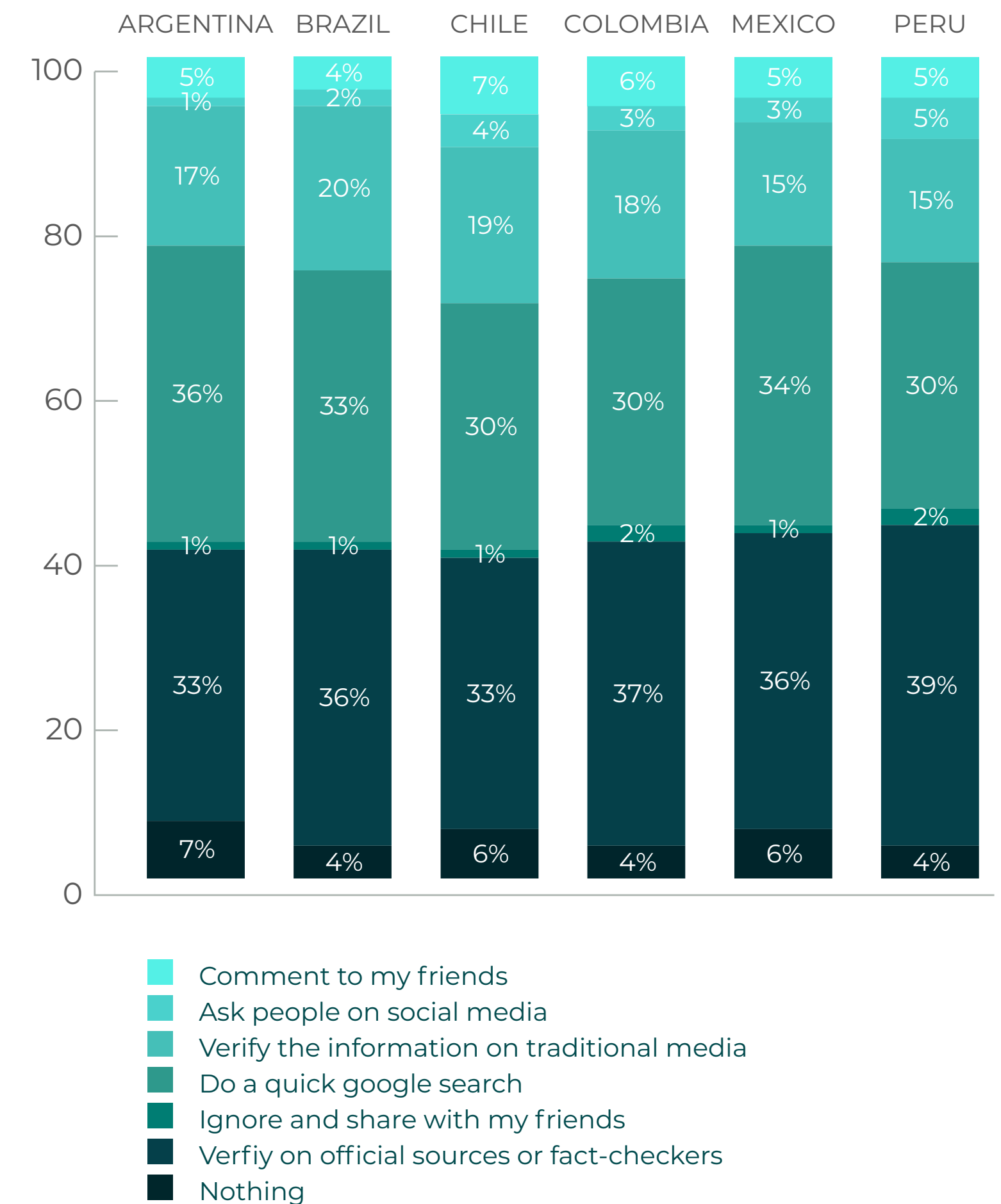
What do Latin Americans do when they suspect news may be false? An average of just over 32% said they perform a quick Google search to verify information, with Argentinians most likely (36%) to Google when in doubt, in contrast to just under 30% of Colombians and Chileans.

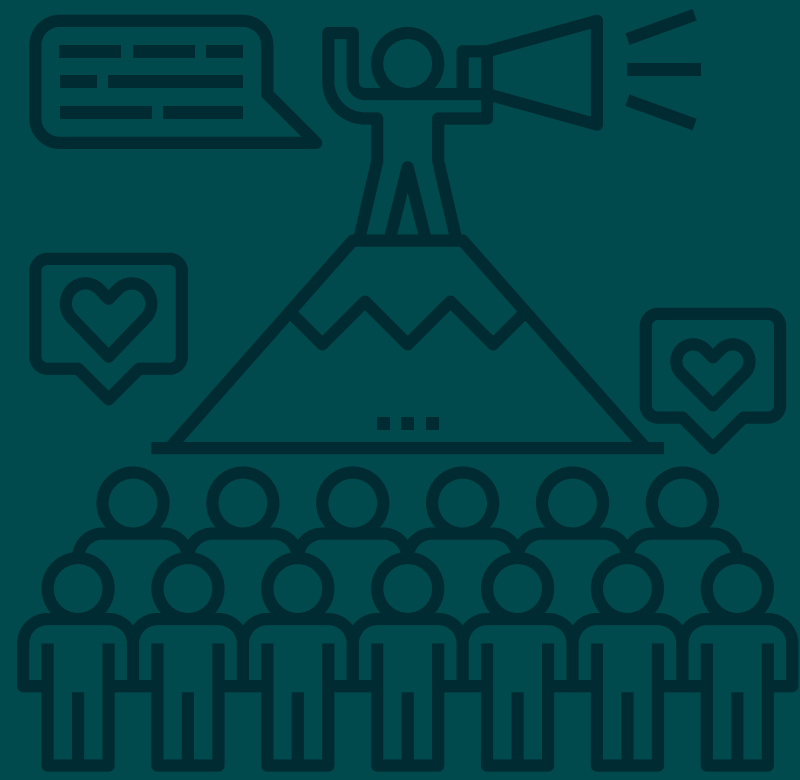
More than 5% said they talk to friends when they come across dubious news stories, while just under 3% said they asked people on social media for verification. Chileans were most likely to mention their doubts to friends (7%) while in Argentina less than 1% were likely to fact-check using social media.

Fact-checking in traditional media outlets was the preferred tactic for more than 17% of Latin Americans. Brazilians (20%) were the group most likely to turn to traditional media for verification, while Peruvians (15%) were the least likely. One in three people (36%) in Latin America said they turn to official information sources or fact-checkers when in doubt, a statistic that remained largely unchanged from last year's results.

Colombians (2%) were the most likely to disregard the possibility of fake news and share with friends regardless, while Argentinians were least likely (0.5%) to do so. 5% across the region said they do nothing when they see information which they suspect is false. Argentina (7%) and Chile (6%) were most likely to fully ignore news which they consider to be false.

What do you do when you suspect news is false?





REAL LIFE TRUST BAROMETER

Politicians are the least trusted source of information in Latin America. 34% of respondents *don't trust them at all*, while 36% say they *trust them very little*. Only 3% *completely trust* elected officials. Chileans have the least trust in politicians, with less than 1% saying they *completely trust* them, while nearly half *don't trust them at all*. A further 30% of Chileans trust politicians *very little*, and 14% trust them *somewhat*. Only 7% trust politicians as a source of factual news.

Scientists are held in high regard, with 88% of respondents stating they either *trust* or *completely trust* what they have to say. Less than 1% in the region said they *don't trust* scientists at all. An interesting trend can be seen in Peru. Last year, 12% trusted scientists *very little* or *not at all*, whereas now only 3% say the same. Meanwhile, 74% of people in Peru said last year that they *completely trust* scientists, while a year later, only 46% say the same.

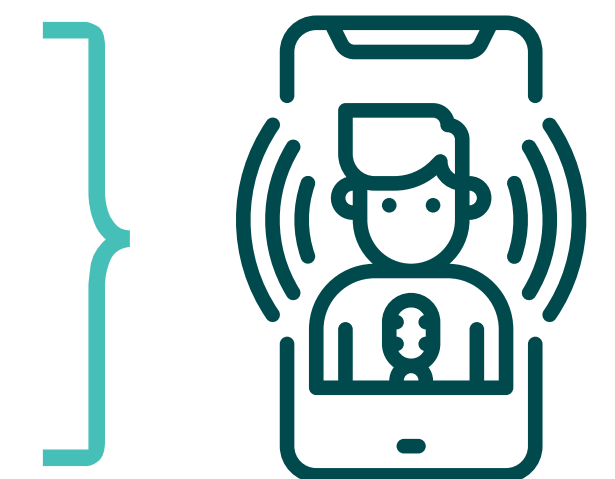
Icons: Beccis/KonKapp/Noun Project

Three out of four people either *trust* or *completely trust* journalists to report the truth. Brazilians, Colombians and Mexicans are most likely to trust reporters, while 16% of Chileans trust them *very little* or *do not trust them at all*. This marks a slight improvement on last year, when more than 24% of Chileans said they distrusted journalists.

How influential are influencers in Latin America? As it turns out, not as much as they might like. 55% of Latin Americans said they *trust them very little* or *not at all* when it comes to factual news. The greatest rejection of influencers as bastions of truth came from Argentina, where 23% of respondents don't trust them at all, and 41% trust them very little. Rejection was high in Colombia too - 24% don't trust them at all, while 39% trust them very little. On the other hand, 35% of Brazilians either trust or completely trust influencers' messaging. This is considerably higher than the regional average of 23%.

What about family? For 6% of Latin Americans, family members are not the best go-to source for news. 8% of Brazilians trust their family very little or not at all. In contrast, 72% in Brazil *trust* or *completely trust* their own kin, while 20% *trust them a little*. Regionally, 79% of respondents *trust* or *completely trust* their family as sources of factual news.

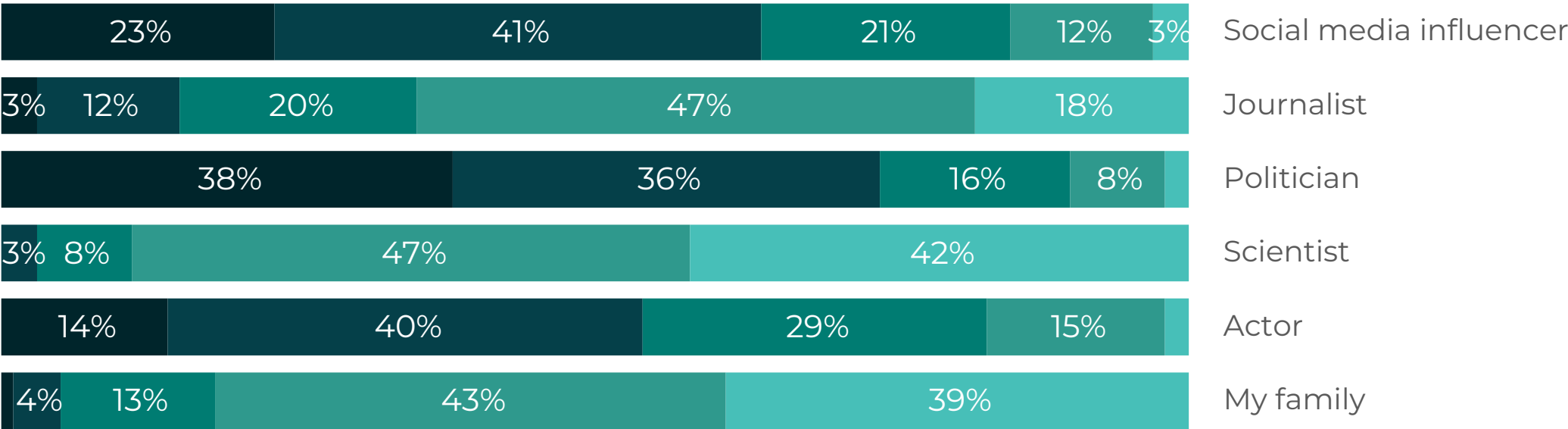
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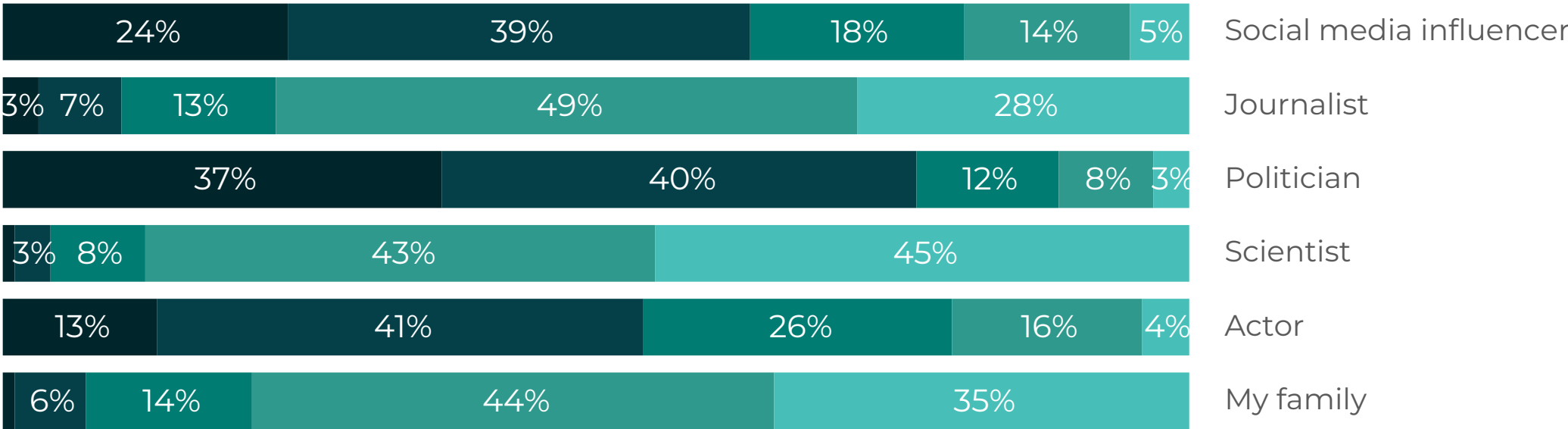
Who do you trust most?

Don't trust at all Trust very little Trust a little Trust Completely trust

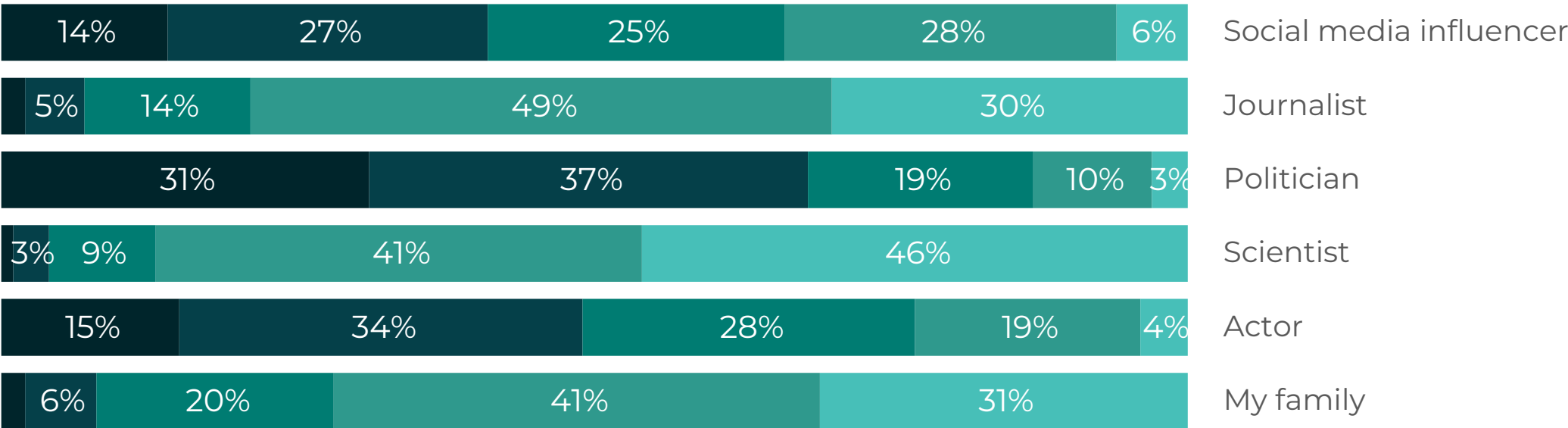
ARGENTINA



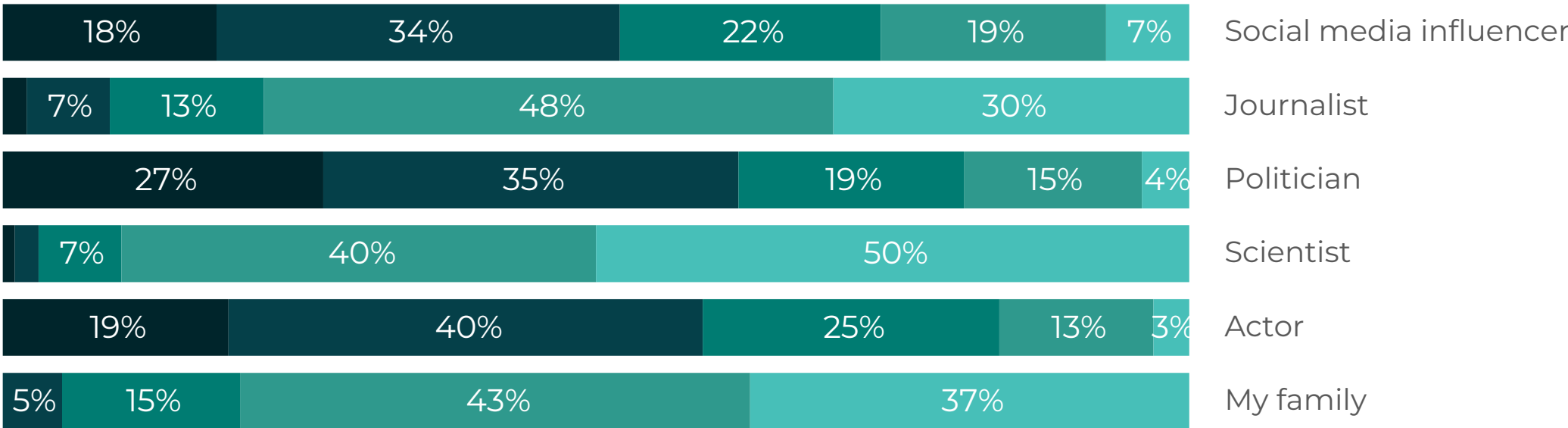
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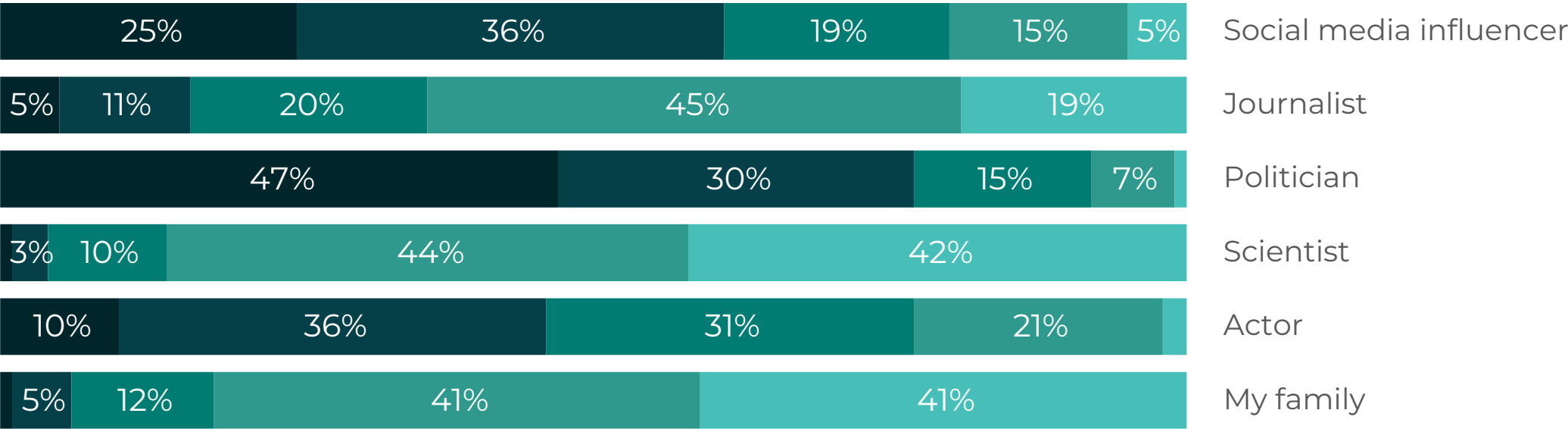
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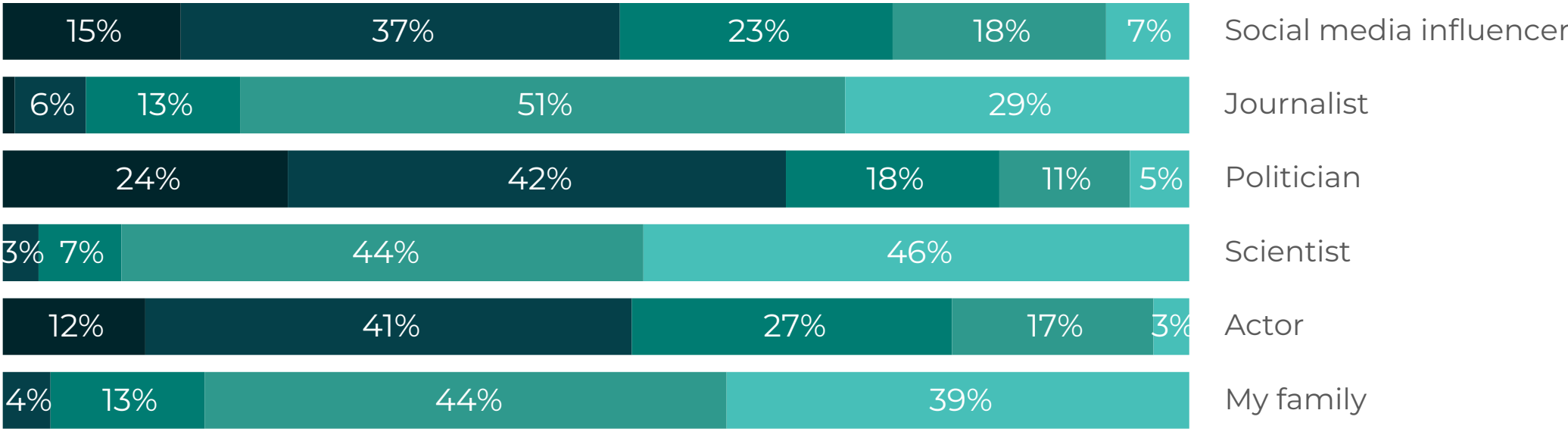
MEXICO



CHILE



PERU





A PATH TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

Argentina seems to be taking steps in the right direction towards gender equality. In late 2020, the country's Commission for Women and Diversities approved a bill on gender equality in the media (both public and private) and other communication platforms, believed to be the first of its kind in the world.

The Equity Law, designed to represent the voices of diverse groups as a redressing of historical faults in the media, such as victim blaming - outlines a requirement for 50/50 parity between men and women, and further establishes a quota of 1% for transvestite, trans, and intersex people. According to the Public Defender's Office, Argentina already has more 'gender editors' than any other Latin American country, even in traditional media outlets like Clarín, TN, and the Télam public media agency.



Photo: JohnnyGreig/ iStock. Icon: Adrien Coquet/Noun Project

INTERVIEW

Mariana Iglesias, Gender Editor, Clarín

Mariana Iglesias is gender editor with Diario Clarín, Argentina's biggest newspaper, and received the Lola Mora Award from the General Directorate of Women for her contribution towards the deconstruction of gender stereotypes and her work promoting the rights of women, lesbians and transvestites.



Despite the fact that women make up half of the Argentine population, they "continue to experience situations of historical inequality that have not changed", said Mariana. Equality is still a long way off, not only for women, but also for LGBT+ groups, indigenous people, afro-descendants, and those living in poverty, she added.

“We must tell the stories of injustice and inequality, but also those of women who advance and manage to take up spaces, contributing to a narrowing of gender gaps.”

Despite the existence of roles like hers, “there is still a lack of representation in the media” and excluded groups don’t have an adequate platform to express their experience of discrimination. Argentina has laws like the Law on Comprehensive Sexual Education; the Law of Sexual and Reproductive Health; the Micaela Law, introduced in 2018 to combat gender based violence; and the Brisa Law, which provides financial assistance for children who have lost their mothers due to gender-based violence. But for Mariana, while existing legislation is “theoretically very good”, much of it is not applied in everyday practice.

Continued dialogue and equality awareness for all is imperative. The role of the journalist is “not only about giving news and telling what is urgent, but also about creating space for reflection” so that society can understand rights and, importantly, assume responsibility for compliance.

Feminist movements in Argentina have come a long way, Mariana added, but in order to achieve equality, society needs to address the “historical injustice of the sexual division of labour, or tasks of care” which she claims are the basis of all gender inequality. “In patriarchal societies, men hold economic and government power, and that leaves women in second place, that of submission,” she added “These inequalities promote gender violence.”

New generations need role models. “We must tell the stories of injustice and inequality, but also those of women who advance and manage to take up spaces, contributing to a narrowing of gender gaps.”

Mexico’s [CIMAC](#) (Women’s Communication and Information AC), in its 2011 publication “[Towards the construction of non-sexist journalism](#)”, said that “conducting non-sexist journalism requires professional work with a gender perspective that makes visible, from a language without stereotypes, the social condition in which women live”. They further suggested that “the media, as a thermometer of language and social conceptions of a given time, are references for the construction of identities, for the formation of mentalities and the creation of ideology.”



Cordoba, Argentina - March 8, 2018:
Women march to ask for their rights
on international women's day.

Photo: Roberto Michel/ iStock



INTERCULTURALITY TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION

Indigenous people make up around 9% of Latin America's population, but their representation in traditional media platforms remains limited. The United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People specifically mentions the right of these groups to establish their own means of sharing information.



Photo: 12MN/ Unsplash. Icono: Made x Made/Noun Project

INTERVIEW

**Cecilio Soria, promoter and defender of
Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights, Peru**

Cecilio Soria is a native communicator, member of the Shipibo-Koniba indigenous community, one of the most representative of the Peruvian Amazon. He currently directs the radio program La Voz Indígena: La Hora Shipiba and former president of the Network of Indigenous Communicators of Peru.



Cecilio maintains that the national media in Peru only caters to the Lima point of view, and although national broadcasters *TV Peru* and *Radio Nacional* broadcast some bilingual programmes, their signal does not reach remote regions where many indigenous people live. Moreover, he points to the racism of the Peruvian media. “We indigenous people feel that we are being discriminated against and displaced. There is a lot of racism in the media and that is why they don’t convey the richness of our culture”. Traditional news platforms “mostly deal with negative issues. When they talk about the jungle, they usually talk about crimes, accidents and environmental problems. They do not deal with the ancestral cultural richness of our communities and its practical uses today”. Unlike the individualistic culture that exists in the capital city, native groups “coexist and carry out multiple group activities in a harmonious way.”

“Interculturality is very important because our mestizo brothers have to know a little about indigenous peoples and vice versa”. He said equality can only exist, as defined in the constitution, as a result of inclusive communication between all Peruvians. “By communicating, we will even realize that we have many common problems and goals.”

Cecilio’s brother Jorge founded the “*Comando Matico*” group last year to promote the use of medicinal plants in treating certain symptoms

“It is very important to have interculturality in the media because otherwise racism will grow and there will always be a clash between cultures.”

of Covid-19. “We want to share our knowledge of traditional medicine, about our preparations and how they should be taken, but we don’t have a radio where we can speak widely about these issues that we consider so beneficial for society”. Instead, “we suffer from the illegal felling of trees that destroys our natural pharmacies, the pharmacies of the indigenous peoples”.

“It would be ideal to have a national AM or FM radio”, he said, also broadcast online “through which we can transmit the news relating to indigenous people and our culture. This radio station should be in the jungle, and its contents should be managed by us in its entirety and all programs should be bilingual, that is, in Spanish and native languages, so that there is interculturality”. Radio is the best way to communicate with and between indigenous groups. “The Shipibo listens to the radio first. Radio is the means of communication that is closest to the native peoples. Those who have an internet signal also use their phones to access information.”

Photo: atlantic-kid/istock



Cecilio has seen some positive change, albeit at a regional level, in Masisea (on the border with Brazil, in the Ucayali region), and he broadcasts a radio programme *Voz Indígena: La Hora Shipiba* (‘Indigenous Voice: Shipibo Time’) on Masisea Municipal Radio, set up with support from the local mayor, Silvio Valles Lomas (the municipality’s first indigenous mayor in over 100 years). Lomas passed away last year, but Cecilio said “the current mayor is also interested in supporting intercultural efforts and that is very positive. It encourages the spirit and esteem of the community.”

“It is very important to have interculturality in the media because otherwise racism will grow and there will always be a clash between cultures. Even international researchers are interested in the way we live and manage our economy, but in our country our own culture is not spread despite the fact that there are many things that can be learned from us”.

INTERVIEW

Walter Oliveira - Indigenous Communicator, Brazil

Amazonian resident Walter Oliveira may be only 25 years old, but he has 16 years of experience as a reporter and activist. Born in Muruari, a five hour boat ride from the Amazonian city of Santarém, Walter began sharing information with people who lived along the riverside from the age of nine. “We used to talk about the defence of our land from the threats of loggers and miners, as well as what was going on in the communities”.

As a teenager, he joined the Saúde e Alegria (Health and Happiness) social project as a volunteer, and ten years later Walter still helps out with the health and sustainability initiative. He is also one of the founding members of the *Jovem Tapajônico* (Youth of Tapajós) collective, which works with young people in the region and teaches them to hone their critical thinking skills, particularly relating to the forest around them.

During the pandemic, Walter took part in a project called *Com Saúde e Alegria, Sem Corona* (‘With health and happiness, without Corona’), delivering hygiene kits and information to people living in remote areas. “We travelled by boat to the riverside communities with a loudspeaker, giving relevant information regarding the gravity of the pandemic and the virus.” He said it was important to reach people without an internet signal.



Rather than entering the communities, they would meet with one leader from each and pass the hygiene kits and relevant information to them. “We realised that in order to combat fake news and grab people’s attention, we needed to speak the language of the community – so we created parodies and poems about the pandemic.”

A boat goes to Santarém on Sundays and Wednesday and returns on Tuesdays and Fridays, but the fare is expensive for locals to afford, and few use the service, further isolating them from whatever is happening in the world of news and communication.

In many villages, people can only check their WhatsApp messages and social media networks once the village generator is turned on from 7-10:30pm. As signal strength is generally very weak, people don’t tend to go looking for information online or on news sites. Phone signals are not strong either, and those that live in the region often have to go to a set point in order to receive messages.

According to Walter, major television corporations and religious channels exert a great deal of control over people’s access to information in such isolated regions, and are often the only point of access to information from the outside world. *Jornal Tapajós*, transmitted digitally directly from the community, does not reach far, especially during high winds. The *Rede Mocoironga de Comunicação* radio station is broadcast from Santarém, reaching nearly 80 communities and villages.

For Walter, the voice of young people and community leaders is hugely important, because “the media shows what it wants to”. He said community collectives are a lifeline for those living in rural isolation. “They are created by us, about us, and for us. There is so much talk in the media about the Amazon, but it’s rare that we - the people that actually live here - are permitted to speak for ourselves.”

Photo: Walter Kumaruara/ Ana Daiane/ Yago Rafael



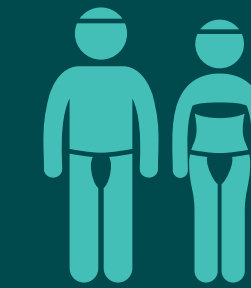
EXCLUSIVE SURVEY

TRADITIONAL GROUPS

In order to really understand the perspective of traditional groups, we talked to people in different villages, located around five hours by boat from the city of Santarém in north Brazil



61% of the people we spoke with identified as “indigenous”; 29% as “*extrativista*”; 7% as farmers, and just over 3% as “*ribeirinho*”.



Three-quarters were aged between 18 and 25; 19% were between 26 and 35, while 6% were aged between 36 and 45.



65% had completed secondary school, and 29% had attended university.



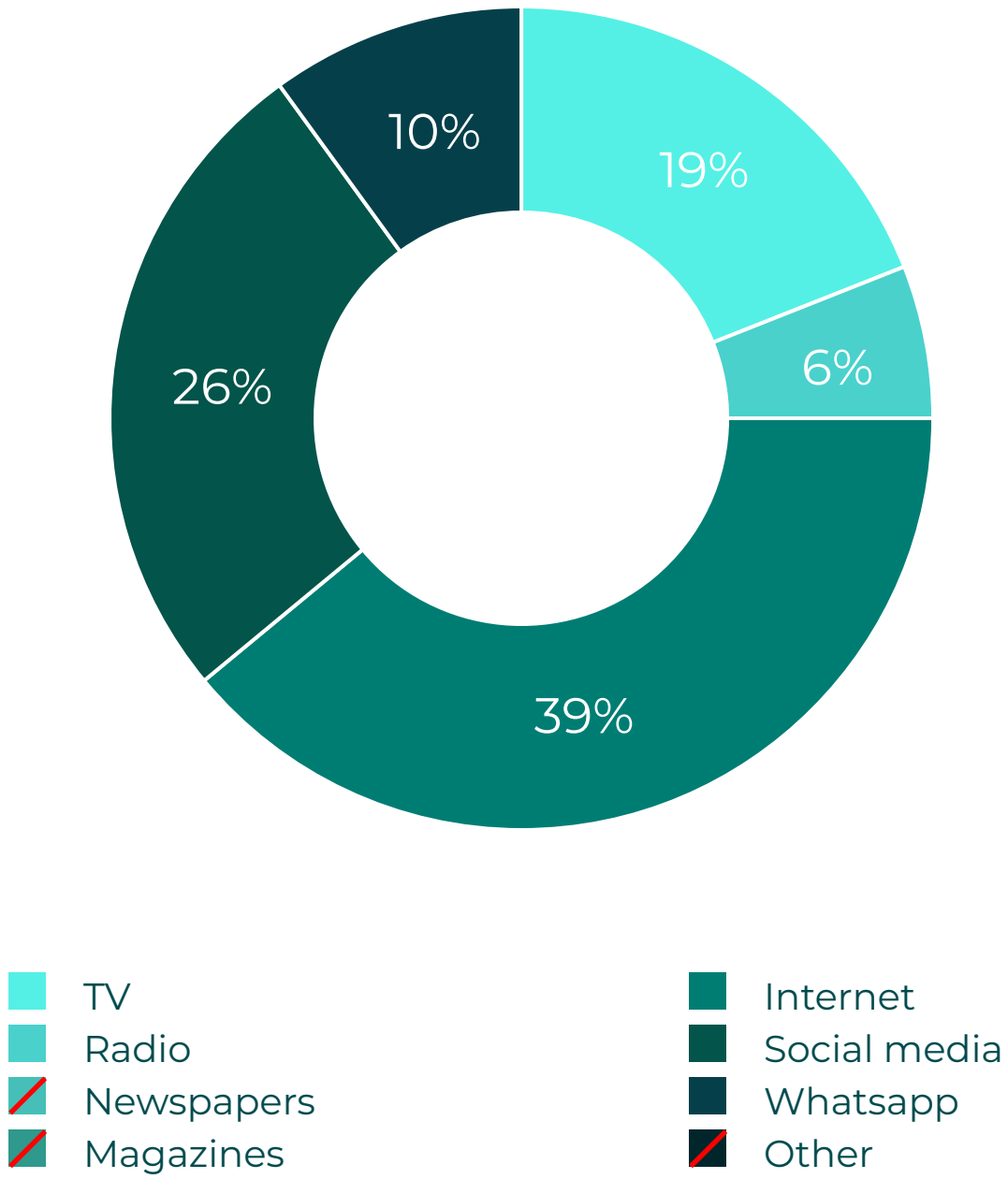
65% did not have a computer in their home. Everyone had a smartphone (NB: potential bias as survey was distributed by phone).



Over 30% had more than three smart-phones in their home; while the same amount had just one. 26% had two smartphones at home, while 10% had three.

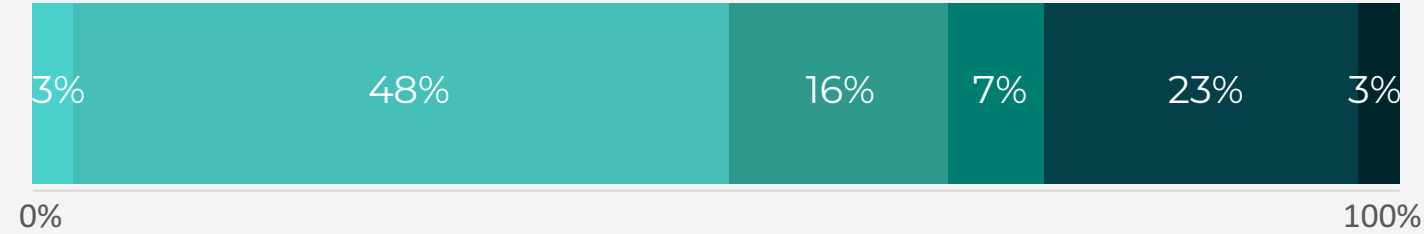
39% normally access news online, while 26% get their news from social media. 19% cited TV as their primary news source, with nearly 10% getting theirs from WhatsApp. More than 6% listened to news on the radio, while no-one listed newspapers as a news source. (In a follow-up question, three out of four respondents said they don't have access to print media like newspapers and magazines).

Where do you access news?

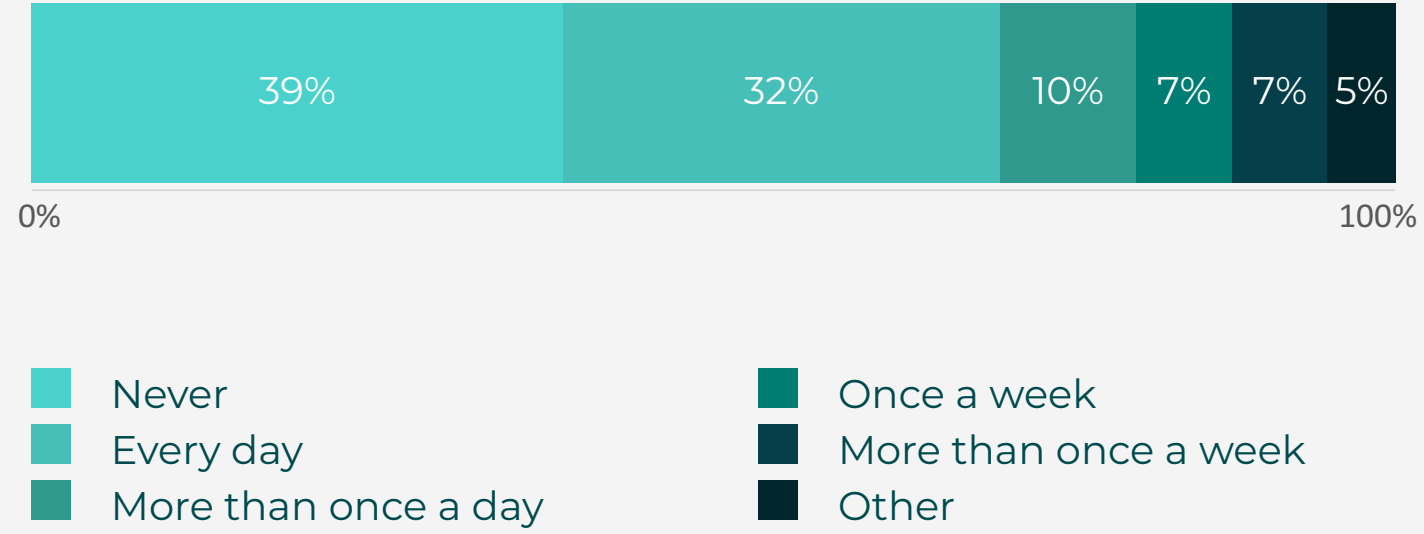


64% watch the news on TV every day (a quarter of whom tune into televised news more than once a day). 7% get news from the radio once a week, and the same amount tuned in more than once a week, but not daily. 3% never watch the news on TV. 39% never listen to the news on the radio, while 42% catch the news on the wireless at least once a day. 7% get news from the radio once a week, and the same amount tuned in more than once a week, but not daily.

How often do you watch the news on television?



How often do you listen to the news on the radio?



For local news, nearly half said they found the information they needed online; 3% got their local information at school, while “home”, “WhatsApp”, “newspaper”, “TV”, “social media”, and the “radio” were cited by 6% each. Another 6% said they got their local information “in a place where there is total silence”.

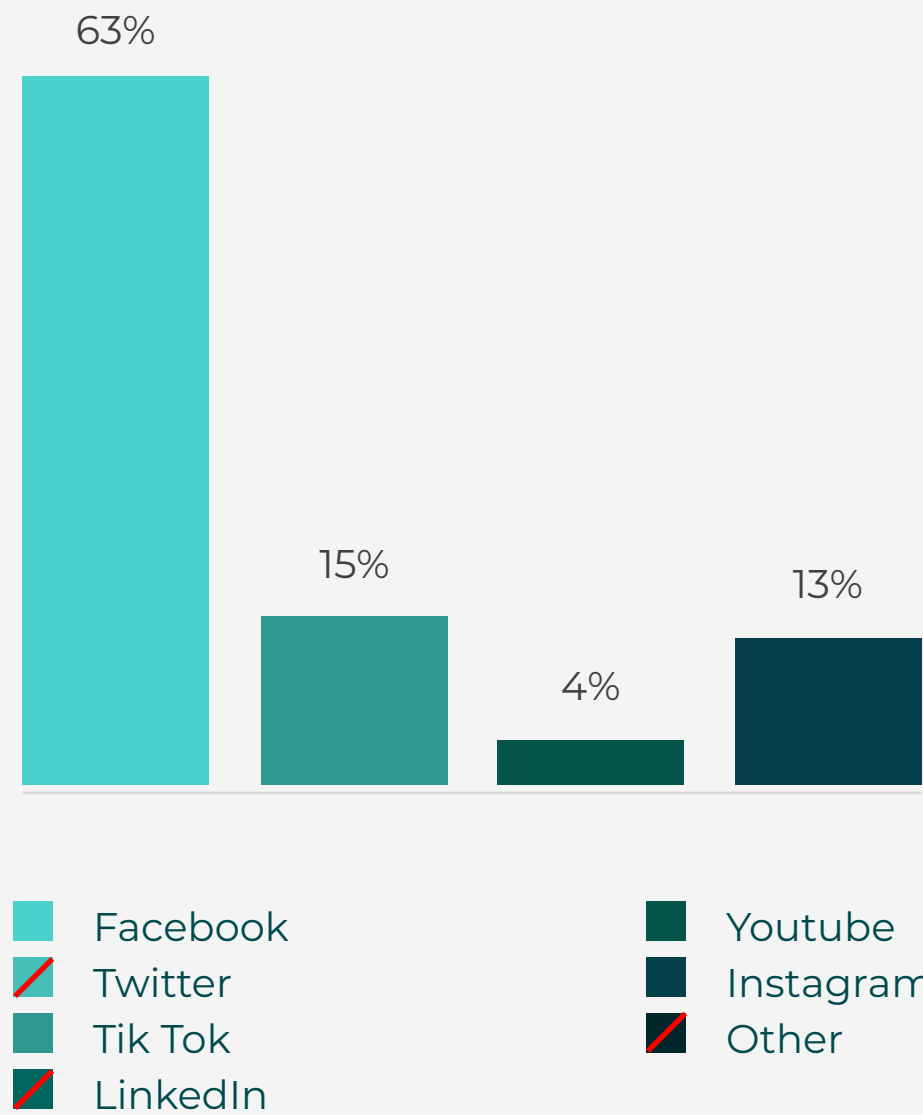


Photos: Walter Kumaruara/ Ana Daiane/ Yago Rafael

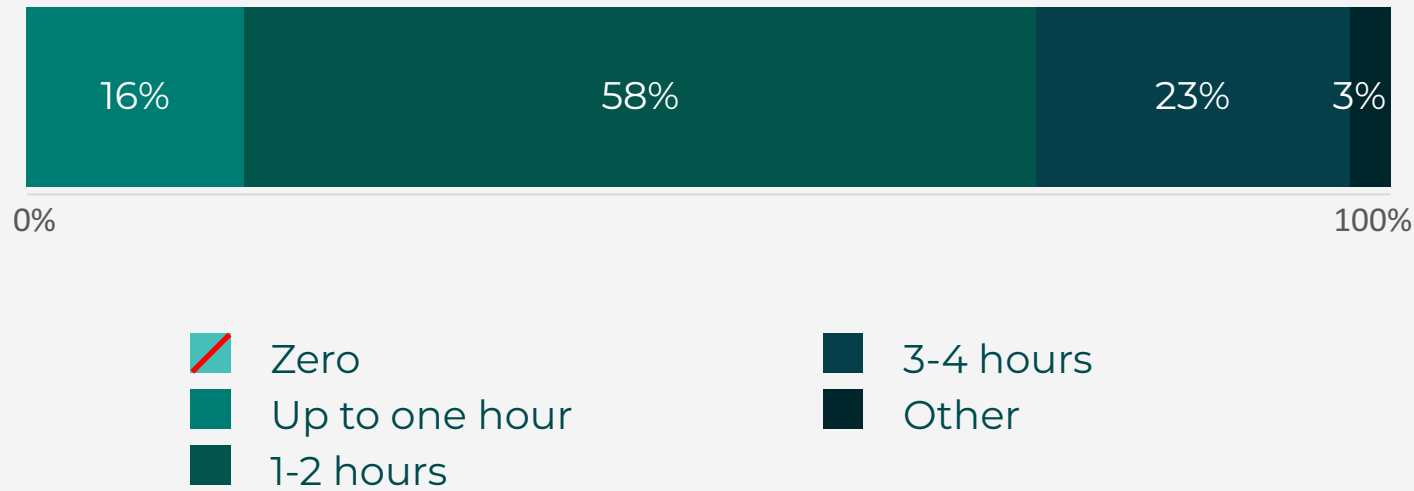
Facebook was by far the most popular social media platform, with 63% telling us this was where they spent most of their time on social media. TikTok has overtaken Instagram in the Amazon, with 15% saying the former was their ‘go to’, compared to 13% who preferred the latter. Only 4% named YouTube as their favourite social media platform. LinkedIn and Twitter were no-one’s favourites, while 13% chose “other” without specifying.

58% told us that they spend 1 to 2 hours a day on social media platforms, while one in four spent 3 to 4 hours daily. 16% spent less than an hour per day looking at social media, while 3% did not specify.

Which social media do you spend the most time on?



How many hours do you spend on social media each day?



How do people in Brazilian traditional groups react to messaging which they suspect might be false? 3% said they do nothing, while 39% said they would not share news on social media if they suspected it to be false. When in doubt, 3% ask a family member, while 13% ask a friend. 16% turn to Google for a quick search, and 19% seek official sources to verify information before sharing. 7% said they did not know.

What do you do when you suspect a news story on social media is fake?

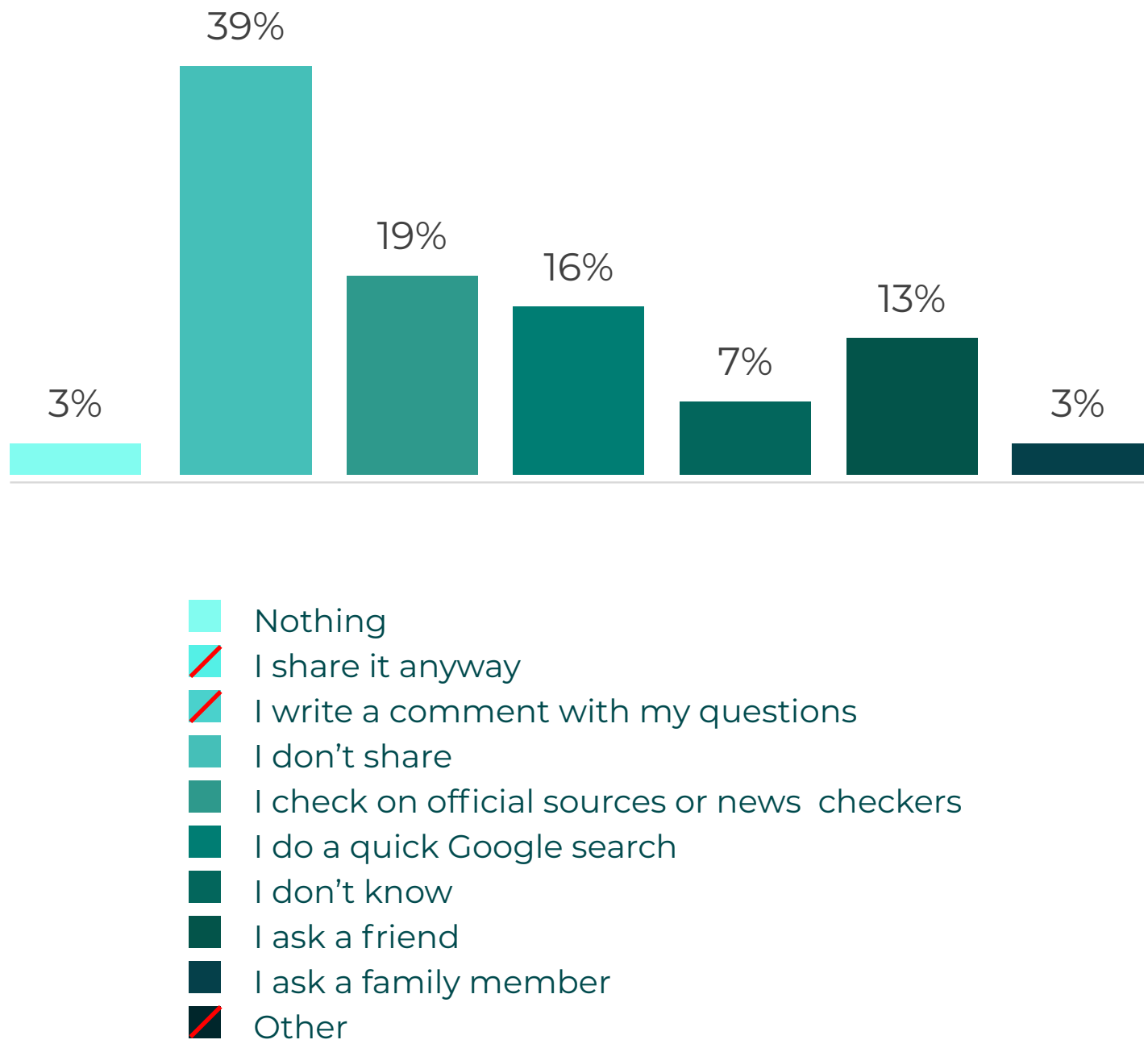
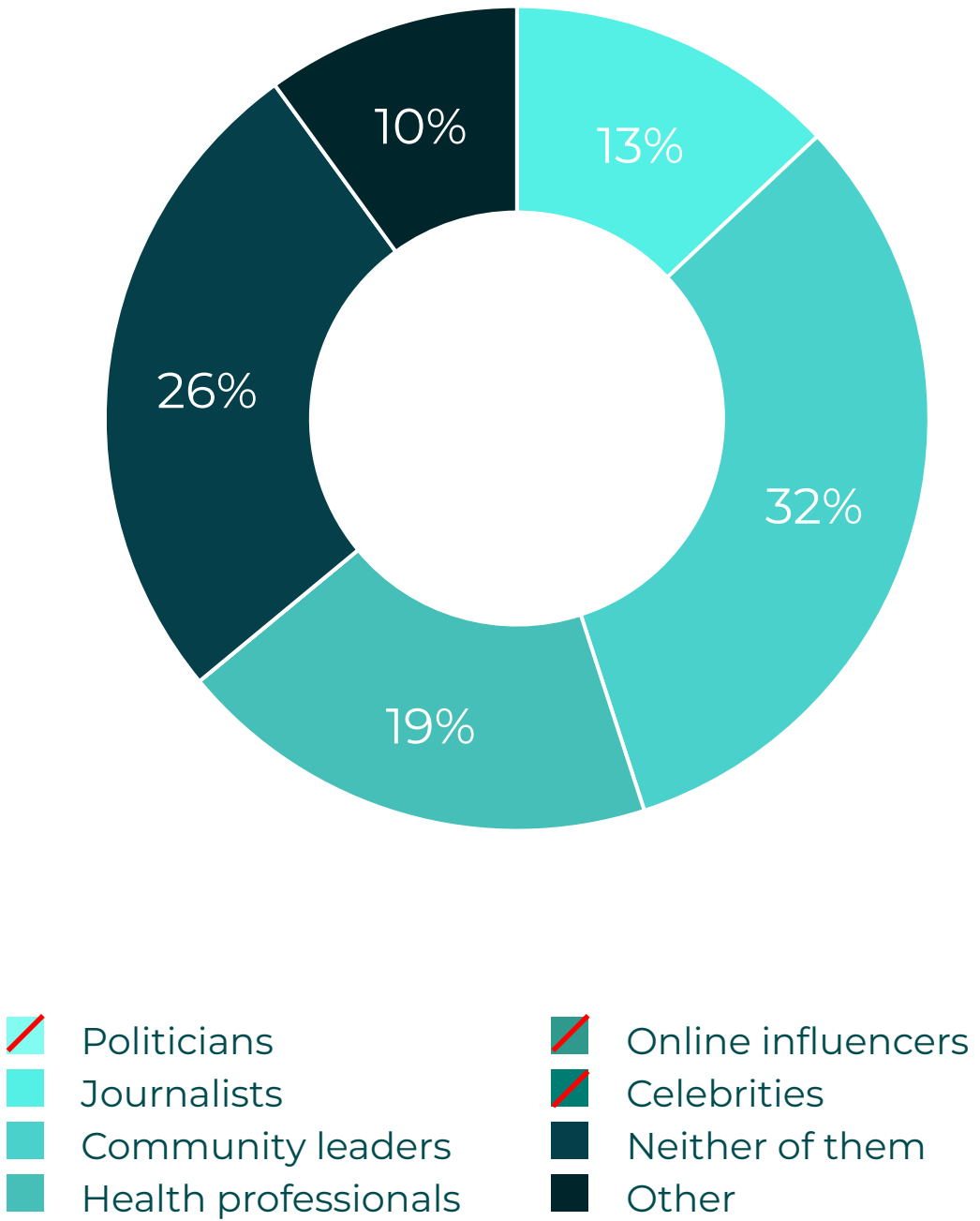


Photo: Walter Kumaruara/ Ana Daiane/ Yago Rafael

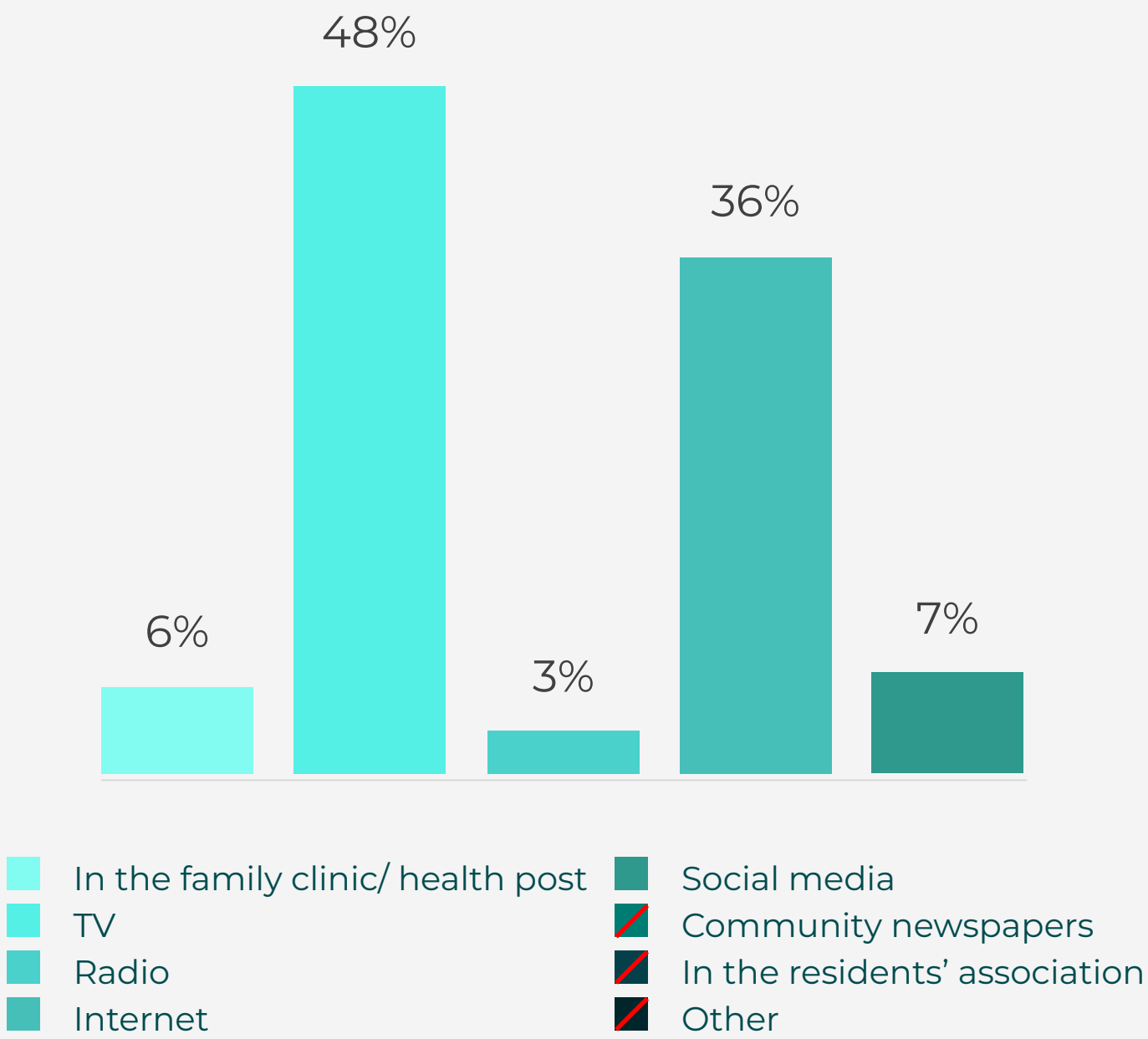
Who do Brazilian traditional groups trust? One in four said they didn't trust any of the people we listed: politicians, journalists, community leaders, health professionals, online influencers, and celebrities. 32% said community leaders were most trustworthy, 19% named health professionals and 13% mentioned journalists, while nearly 10% replied "other" but didn't provide further details.

Who do you trust most?



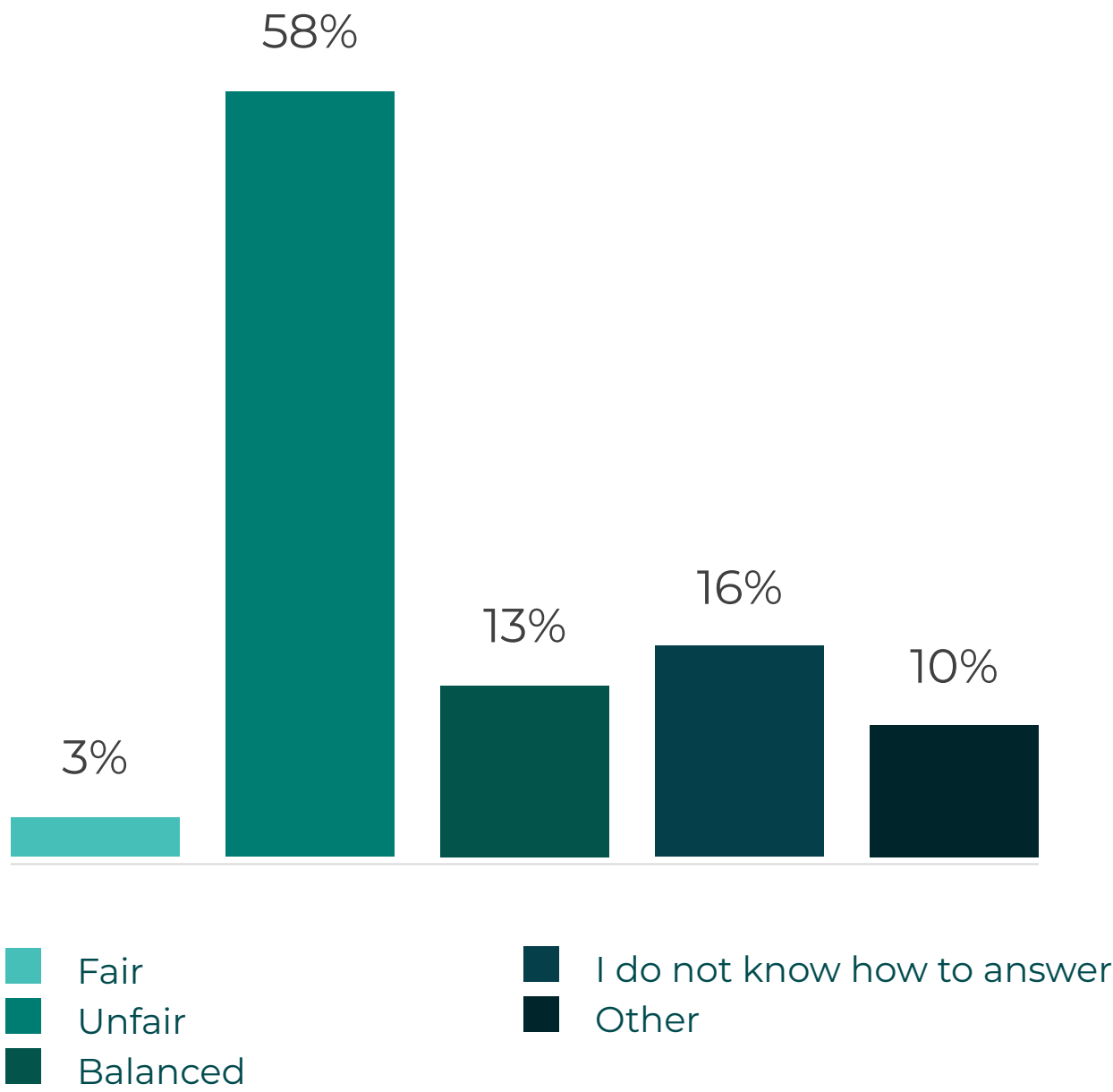
Where have Amazon dwellers accessed health information during the pandemic? 48% got updates from TV, and 36% got theirs online. 6% got pandemic-related guidance at their local health centre, and 7% got it on social media. Only 3% got their health info on the radio.

Where did you access health information during the pandemic?



Only 3% felt that indigenous people are treated fairly in the media, while 13% felt that representation is balanced. A further 16% said they didn't know how to answer this particular question, and nearly 10% opted for "other" without giving any further explanation. 58% said they thought media representation was "unjust".

What words would you use to describe the way indigenous communities are represented in the media?





FAVELAS

In 2019, Brazil registered 5.1 million households living in over 13,000 “subnormal settlements” or *favelas* - a 37% increase since 2010. Low-income families typically live in these *favelas*, characterised by poor sanitation and precarious access to public services, and often run by the shadow power of drug trafficking gangs or militia groups.

Despite being largely shunned as a valid audience, research published in 2020 showed that the 13.6 million people living in Brazil’s favelas circulate up to R\$119.8 billion (around USD\$22.5 billion) per year. In general, these communities are ignored by companies, seen as crime ridden no-go areas. But, notwithstanding certain issues, *favelas* are busy hubs of local small enterprises.



Photo: PurpleImages/ iStock. Icon: Creative Mania/ Noun Project

INTERVIEW

Daiene Mendes - Favela em Pauta

Daiene Mendes is director of *Favela em Pauta*, an online news portal whose content is produced by *favela* residents, aimed at a wide audience that wants to know more about everyday life and issues in Brazil’s many *favelas*. A resident of *Complexo de Alemão*, a huge network of favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Daiene said communications with excluded groups is of immense importance in a country like Brazil: “it’s important that we have community communication, from the people and for the people.”

Traditional media outlets in Brazil are owned and staffed by the elite in Brazilian society, and exclusively cater to an elitist audience, Daiene said. “We have a



“We have a huge issue in Brazil with inequality. What we see in the media is the creation of news stories that cater to one part of society, while completely ignoring huge groups.”

huge issue in Brazil with inequality. What we see in the media is the creation of news stories that cater to one part of society, while completely ignoring huge groups. It’s the rich talking to the rich. A vast proportion of the population is not represented in the national media.” When TV cameras go into favelas, it is often to bring live coverage of armed combat between police and traffickers.

For Daiene, “this social exclusion is clearly visible in national journalism in Brazil – the vast majority are white women under the age of 30.” [Research from 2012](#) showed that 64% of Brazilian journalists were women, 72% were white, and 59% were under the age of 30. 61% had studied journalism in private colleges. Updated data is due this year. This profile of the reporter is not reflective of those living in favelas,

Daiene said. “Historically in Brazil, we see the exclusion of black and poor people from society, even down to the basic right of access to education. It’s important to have efficient community communication so that people, often the poorest in society, can become more aware of their rights. This is a fundamental objective of community journalism.”

Daiene noted progress in recent years as more and more “young people from the favelas have broken the traditional paradigm and gained access to the university system. These young people are forming a movement and working hard to bring more visibility to issues relating to people living in favela communities. We are making new rules. It’s important that we tackle misconceptions and prejudice.”



Photo: cocogelado / iStock



EXCLUSIVE SURVEY

FAVELA RESIDENTS

To understand more about reality in favela communities, we conducted a survey in the Morro da Coroa favela in Santa Teresa, a neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.



The respondents were of mixed age, with 29% aged between 36 and 45; 24% between 26 and 35; 19% between 46 and 55; 14% over 55, and 14% aged between 18 and 25.



67% of the group had completed secondary school; 29% went to primary school only, while just 5% had gone to university.



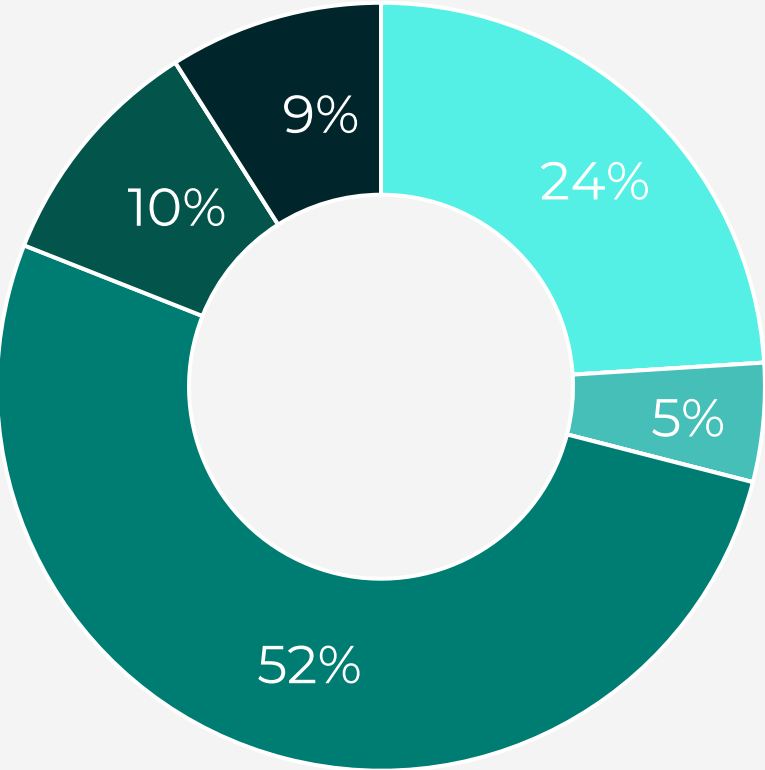
43% of the sample did not have any computers in their homes; 48% had one, and 9% had two.



Only 14% of the sample did not have a smart-phone in their homes; another 14% had one; 29% had two; and 29% had more than 3.

The internet was cited as the main source of news, with 52% saying they went online for their news updates. 24% turn on the TV for the news; 9% head to social media; and 5% mention newspapers as a source of news.

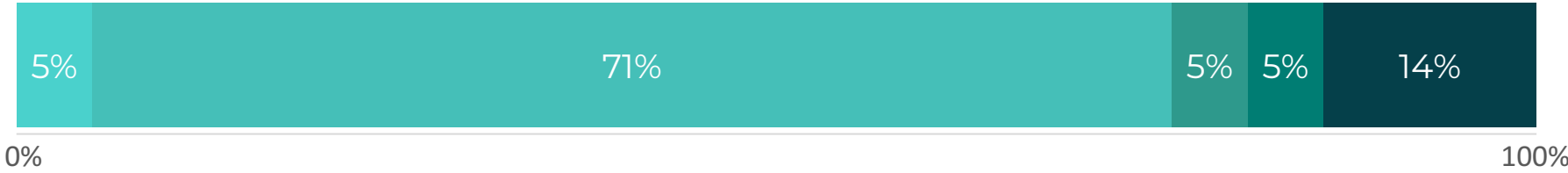
Where do you access news?



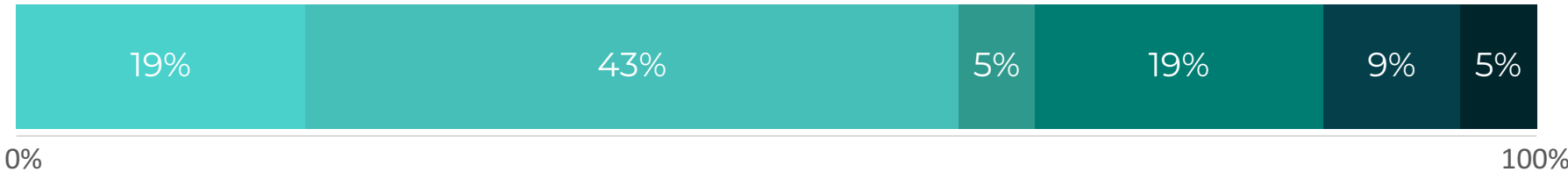
- TV
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Internet
- Social media
- Whatsapp
- Other

76% watched the news on TV every day. Another 19% watched it at least once a week. Nearly half of the sample audience listened to the news on the radio every day, while 28% did so at least on a weekly basis, and 19% never listened to radio news. Print news was not a popular news source among the favela residents we spoke to, with 48% saying they never read the newspaper, and a further 24% saying they only do so if they get a freesheet. 9% read the paper every day for news, while 19% do so once a week.

How often do you watch the news on television?



How often do you listen to the news on the radio?



- Never
- Every day
- More than once a day
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Other

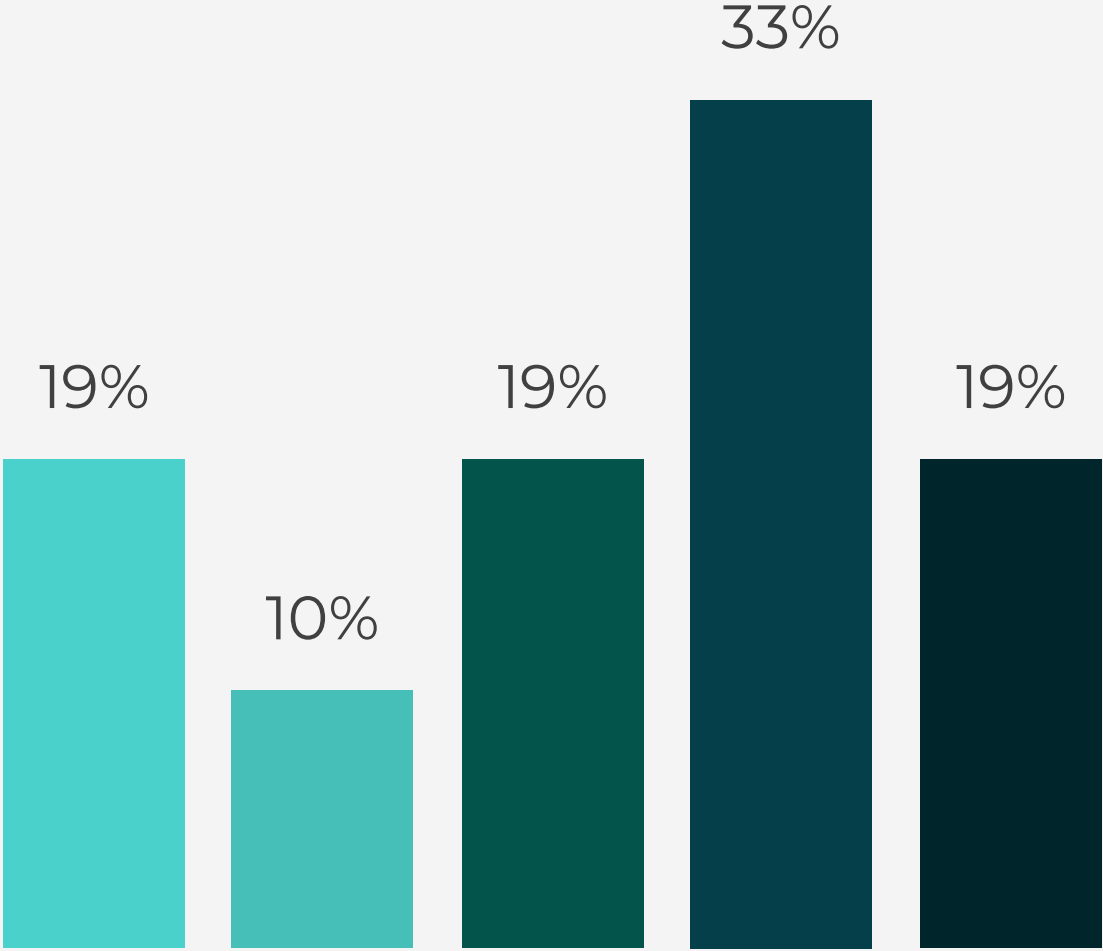
How often do you read newspapers and magazines in print?



- Only when I receive free newspapers
- Every day
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Never
- Other

Instagram was the most popular social media network cited in the favela, with one in three listing it as their top app. YouTube was the preferred social network for 19%, and Facebook got the number one vote from another 19%. Twitter was the preferred social network for 10% of respondents; 5% chose WhatsApp, and another 5% listed “Google”. 10% of the sample did not use any social media platforms.

Which social media do you spend the most time on?



- Facebook
- Twitter
- Tik Tok
- LinkedIn
- Youtube
- Instagram
- Other

57% spend more than 3-4 hours on social networks every day, with some stating that they spent 8-10, or even 10-15 hours on social networks. Others said they always have their phone to hand, and are constantly checking things online. 19% spend 1-2 hours looking at social media, and 14% spend less than an hour a day doing so.

How many hours do you spend on social media each day?

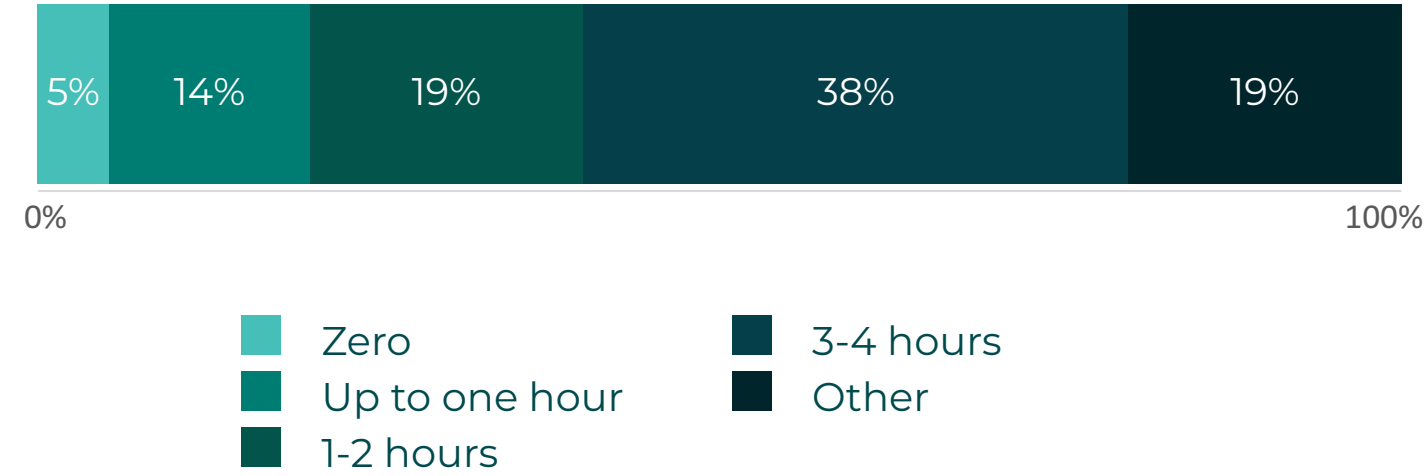
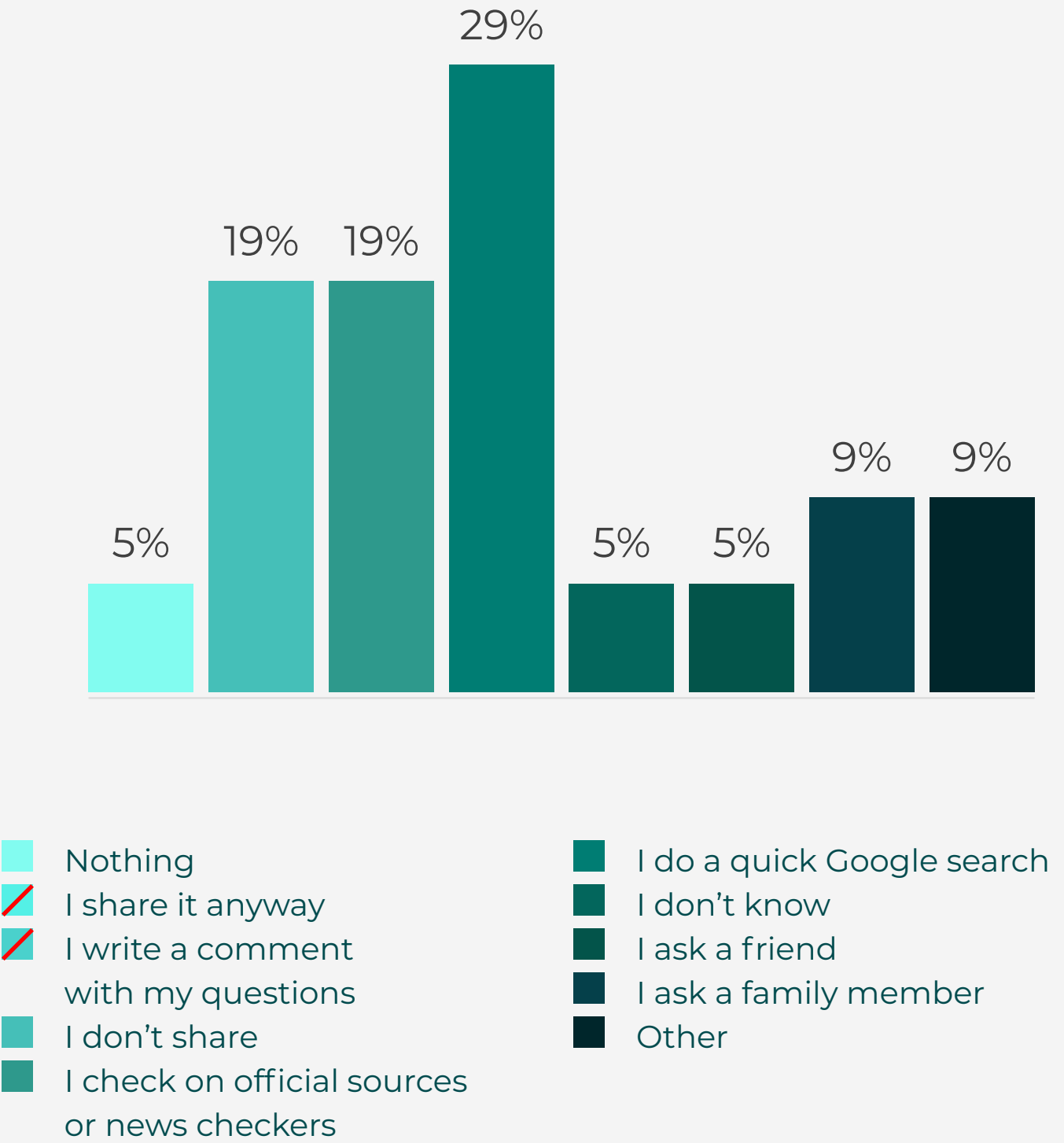


Photo: PeskyMonkey/ iStock

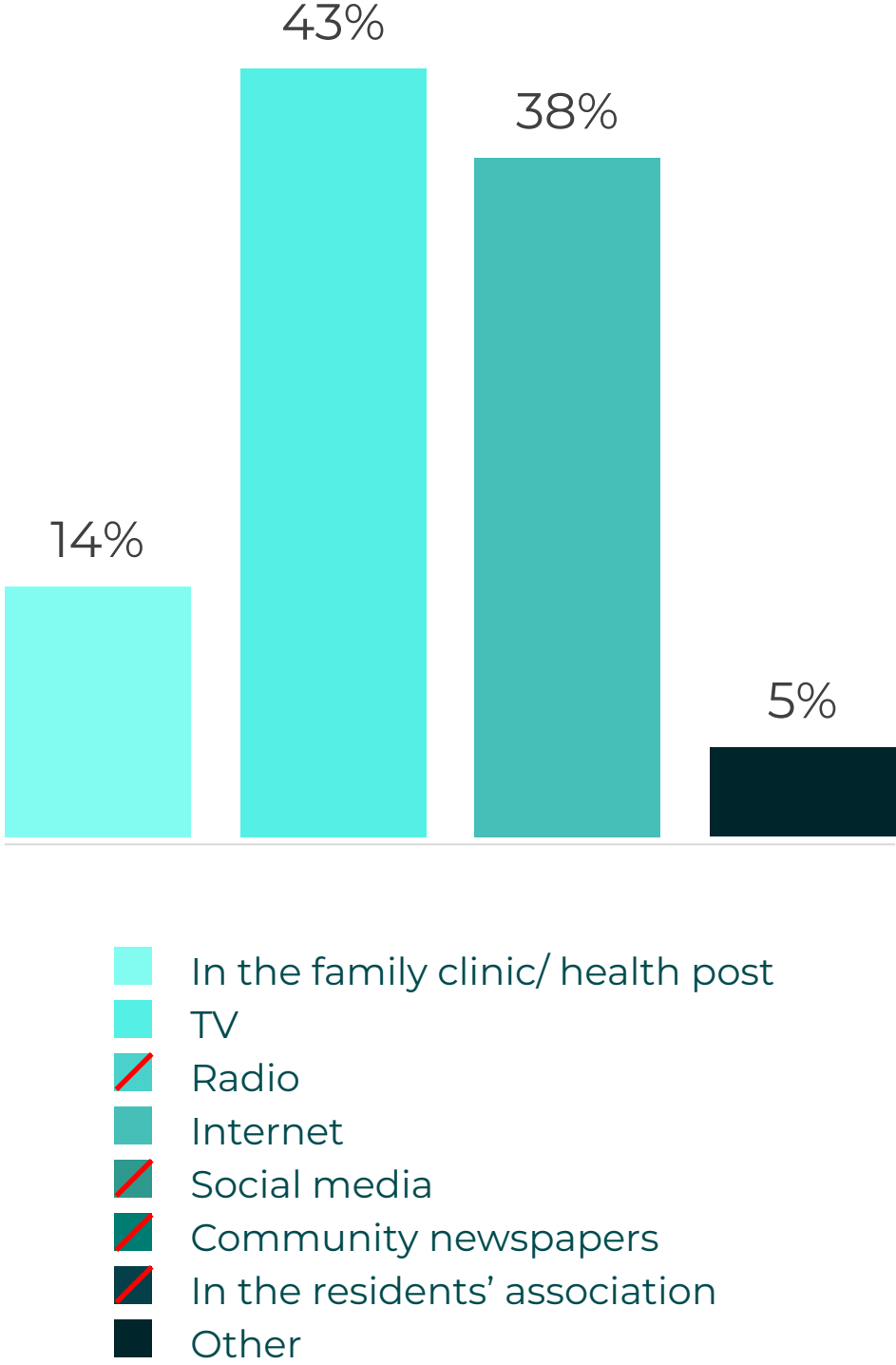
What if they suspect that news on social media may be false? 19% don't share if they're unsure. 14% ask a friend or family about their doubts, and 5% did not know. 29% google to find out more, while 19% verify the information through official sources before taking any further action.

What do you do when you suspect a news story on social media is fake?



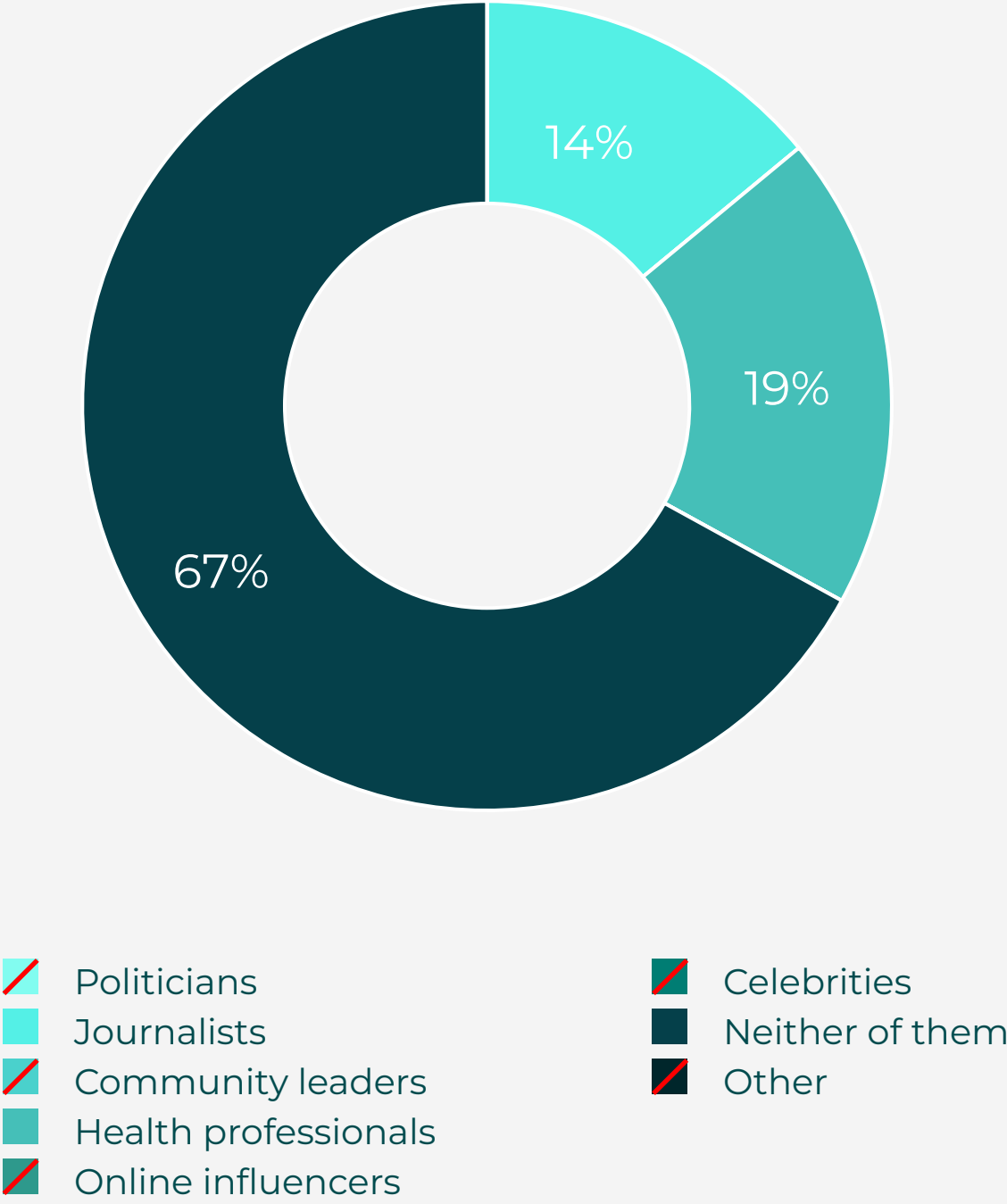
Where did favela dwellers access their health information during the pandemic? 43% got it from watching TV, while 38% looked online. 14% used their local health centre as a focal point for information, while 5% got their information from both health centres and the internet.

Where did you access health information during the pandemic?



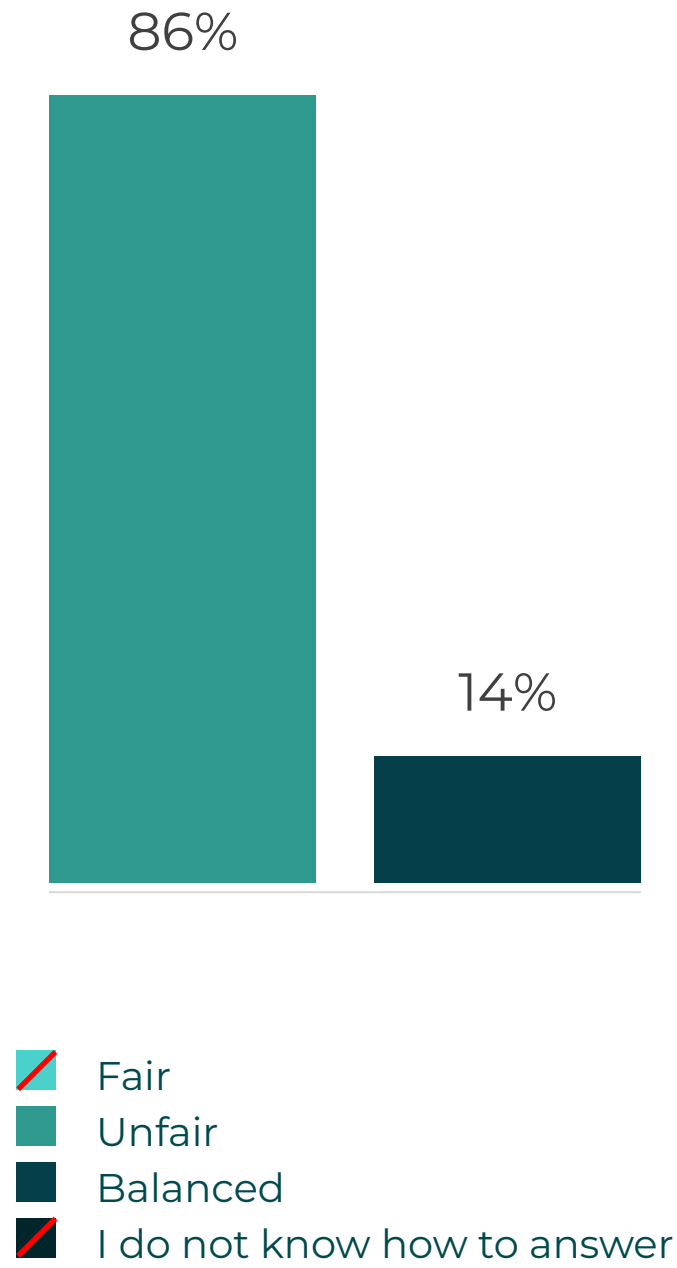
When asked about trust, the consensus was overwhelming. 67% don't trust any of the following groups: politicians, journalists, community leaders, health professionals, online influencers, or celebrities. 14% trust journalists, and 19% trust health professionals. No one trusted politicians, community leaders, online influencers or celebrities.

Who do you trust most?



86% felt that favela communities are unfairly represented in the media, while 14% said they thought that coverage was balanced. Some added qualifiers such as “prejudiced”, and accused the media of lying, sensationalism and hypocrisy. One respondent said that favelas are “viewed poorly - they think we are all thieves.”

What words would you use to describe the way favela communities are represented in the media?





DISABILITY AS DIVERSITY

COLOMBIA

The outlook for the disabled is progressive in Colombia, where society is increasingly aware of the importance of creating inclusive spaces, and inclusion policies exist for previously ignored subsets of society. Local media occupies a large proportion of media content, and various localities and communities are relatively well represented. This was particularly important for public health messaging during the pandemic. Bogotá and Medellín, two of the biggest cities in Colombia, each have more than 80 community media platforms.

People with disabilities regularly appear on major media platforms like *Caracol Radio*, *Canal Capital*, *City TV*, the National Army station, *Canal Teleamiga* and *Radio Nacional de Colombia*, among others. As well as foregrounding the voices of disabled people, Colombian media increasingly employs people with physical limitations in the production process. Viewers are exposed to a multi-faceted

view of disability, including content featuring NGOs that work with disabilities, and voices from public services. Journalists typically use appropriate terminology in their representation of disability, and national programming does not tend to victimise disabled people in society. Certain outlets specifically treat issues relating to Afro and indigenous groups.



INTERVIEW

Mauricio Naranjo, News Editor, Noticias Caracol Digital

Mauricio Naranjo believes that “breaking down barriers of exclusion and discrimination is everyone’s job.” The news editor of Colombia’s Noticias Caracol Digital said that the media has a duty to ensure that disabled people have full access to information. “We’re not talking about doing anyone a favour; it’s an ethical and professional imperative,” he said, adding that closed captioning and sign language interpretation are not enough.

“We must improve visibility and, at the same time, engage in awareness raising work with the rest of society.” Content relating to people with disabilities is consistently covered on Noticias Caracol in a respectful and dignified manner. “The community is an active part of the news. They are protagonists of the news”

ARGENTINA

While there are not many media platforms specifically dedicated to people with disabilities in Argentina, those that exist are comprehensive in their output, publishing general interest information and addressing contemporary social issues. Messaging around inclusion raises awareness on the importance of value and respect of people for their diversity, and promotes the full integration of people with disabilities. Some media outlets promote self-management and personal development for members of disadvantaged groups. Others tackle questions of human rights, security, and gender equality from a broader perspective.

In a guide published by the [National Disability Agency](#), readers are told that “disability is not in a person. Rather, it arises from the interaction of people with functional deficiencies with environmental and attitudinal barriers.” Diversity is “an intrinsic characteristic of humanity”, states the governmental guide, which outlines correct and incorrect terminology regarding disability.

PERU

Peru is home to more than [1.5 million](#) people with disabilities, but they are poorly served by the country’s media. Only the State-broadcast channel complies with the a ‘General Law on Persons with Disabilities’ (Law No. 29973), which states that “the informative, educational and cultural programs transmitted through television broadcasting [should] have language interpreters of signs or subtitles”. Sessions of Congress are simultaneously translated into sign language, as are news programmes on TV Peru. While traditional media platforms do cater to disabled people through content on health and technology, there is little specific programming that analyses the problems faced by Peru’s disabled community.

In recent months, national and international disability activists have complained that a new disability law, which will override the previous one, was drafted without consultation, despite Peru ratifying the UN [Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) in 2008. The Convention obliges signatory parties to consult with people with disabilities through representative agencies on “the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities.”

BRAZIL

A quarter of the Brazilian population declared some level of disability in 2010, when the most recent national census was taken. That’s nearly [46 million](#) people! 12.5 million people Brazilians have serious disabilities - just under 7% of the population. Nearly ten million Brazilians are deaf or have some level of hearing deficiency. By law, all Brazilians are entitled to have access to information. For many, this would mean access to services available in Libras, or Brazilian sign language, which was officially recognised in 2002. However, reality falls short of this ideal. The pandemic was particularly hard on the deaf community, as mixed public health messaging muddled the waters and everyone put on masks, making lip-reading an impossibility.

Brazil’s first lady Michelle Bolsonaro is fluent in Libras, and is an advocate for inclusivity for deaf people in Brazil. She addressed the nation in Libras when her husband was sworn into office in January 2019. Governmental messaging on Brazilian TV tends to include a Libras interpreter. But most websites in Brazil don’t provide Libras versions of their sites or messaging. [SignumWeb](#) is a Brazilian start-up that helps companies to communicate with their customers using Libras.



LGBT+

INTERVIEW

Enrique Torre Molina, LGBT+ activist and communicator, Mexico

Enrique Torre Molina - LGBT+ activist, co-founder of online platform *Colmena 41* and a podcaster on #MafiaGay - told us that many groups are excluded from traditional media messaging in Mexico. When he turns on the TV, he knows what production decision makers look like, and what audience they wish to cater to. It's rare to see anyone that's not white, "pretty" and middle-class. Groups like LGBT+, the disabled, or indigenous people are not fairly represented on traditional media

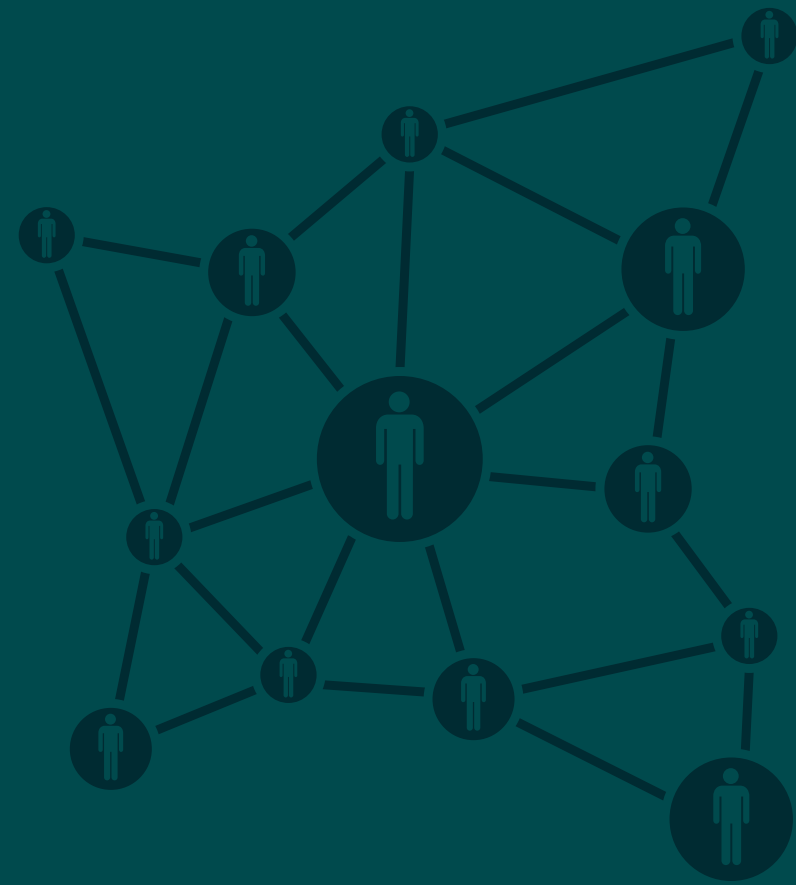


Photo: Jacome R Co/Istock. Icon: Andrei Yushchenko/Noun Project

platforms, he maintains. Neither do people with non-binary gender identities, or even those with body-sizes that are not considered to be the 'norm'.

In order to change this, "we need to put ourselves at the centre of decision making. We need to be included in the creative process, from production to distribution." Enrique says stakeholders must realise that the old-fashioned way of classifying content and audiences no longer makes sense. While corporate inclusion policies have improved in many other sectors, the media is lagging behind in Mexico. They need to "understand that inclusion and diversity are not just 'nice' to have. It's time to view inclusion as a business imperative".

Young people and excluded groups are leading the change in Mexico, he said, and it's all happening online. Digital media is "where I can see diversity and interesting proposals," he notes, citing content and streaming platforms which are created and used by younger generations.



REACHING THE EXCLUDED

According to [Razón y Palabra](#) (Reason & Word), an e-magazine that focuses on communication in Latin America, alternative communication modalities are necessary due to media classifications imposed by a capitalist system. The struggles of certain social classes create the need for alternative media which represent a platform for disparate groups such as feminist movements, indigenous and displaced people, disabled people and LGBT+ groups.

Consider Brazil's excluded communities: 818,000 indigenous people, an unknown number of *quilombo* dwellers, around 46 million citizens that identify as disabled, and more than 13 million people living in favelas. That's more than 30% of the Brazilian population of 211 million people. Communicators that ignore excluded groups are missing out on a massive part of the Latin American demographic. Customers don't all need to look the same!



Photo: Igor Alecsander / iStock. Icon: Gilbert Bages / Noun Project

As Latin Americans drift ever further from traditional media sources, it is time for large media corporations to sit up and pay attention. Are people seeking alternatives because they no longer accept traditional narratives? Would people start buying the paper again if they felt that its contents related to them, or has the digital tide turned for good? The Folha de São Paulo broadsheet newspaper has made a start, and since 2019 features [PerifaConnection](#), in which columnists publish content related to those living in the periphery of society in Brazil. The themes covered include violence, human rights, and race issues.

In an era when users are routinely flooded with digital information, it's important to fully understand how people react to certain platforms and voices. Fake news is a concern, and it's vital to build a sense of trust around any brand or entity in Latin America. If people are going online to verify information, it's important that they

There is no shortage of activists battling for a better tomorrow, and companies would do well to engage with, and help bring visibility to, excluded groups.

can easily access factual and trustworthy content. Just don't ask a politician to front a campaign, as so few in the region have any trust in their elected officials. This raises further questions, not only about representation in the media, but also about politics. Mass protests in recent years across all of Latin America point to growing unease in the region, with populations demanding better and more.

Refreshing developments can be seen around the region, and while there is a long way to go, legislation on equality and inclusiveness suggests at least some political intent towards a better path (or it could be mere lip service!). Companies should embrace the diversity that defines Latin America, and not just in a tokenistic way. There is no shortage of activists battling for a better tomorrow, and companies would do well to engage with, and help bring visibility to, excluded groups. While charity is laudable, it may not necessarily be the answer. Equal societies make for good economies, and hopefully more major actors can wake up to this reality.

The most important take-away from this analysis is the importance of representation. Media outlets need to have a greater diversity of voices, and stop feeding tired and prejudiced narratives to a narrow echelon of society. The potential demographic is so much broader, if communicators would just widen their perspective.



Photo: Los Muertos Crew/ Pexels

Mixed methods are necessary when attempting to communicate with excluded groups, who may not have access to TV, radio or internet in their homes. A measure of inventiveness is required to ensure that, for example, indigenous communities are reached. There is life beyond the broadsheet, and community radio and freesheets are important ways to communicate with the masses. Those seeking to communicate with *favela* communities often need to think outside the box. Community billboards are becoming a trend, with companies paying to display messaging on the sides of houses within the community. Sponsorship of sport team kits, or hi-vis jackets for delivery drivers are other ways to get a brand noticed in the *favela* environment.



ALTERNATIVE MEDIA GUIDE TO LATIN AMERICA

Alternative media in Latin America has emerged from an urgent need to communicate the points of view of groups whose perspectives tend to be overlooked by more traditional media outlets. Here are some:

Icon: Noun Project

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Brasil de Fato (Brazil In Fact): This website and network of regional freesheet newspapers was launched at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil, in 2003. The populist editorial focus is on issues around social justice and human rights. The network's radio agency, *Notícias do Planalto (NP)*, produces audio and text materials covering similar themes. (Brazil)

La Red de Médios de los Pueblos (People's Media Network) is a group of independent media producers which was created in 2009, as a means of unifying the media platforms of many social and popular organisations, that provide localised and alternative content not covered by larger media organisations. (Chile)

PerifaConnection: Folha de São Paulo column with a panel that publishes content related to those living on the margins of society in Brazil. Themes include violence, human rights, and race issues. (Brazil)

La Oreja Roja (The Red Ear): 'Power to the people' is the tagline of this important Colombian online media platform, whose stated objective is "the promotion of debate among citizens with data and arguments." The site is "committed to delivering accurate, truthful, responsible, humane, equitable, impartial and independent information." (Colombia)

Cuestión Pública (Public Issue): according to their website, "Public Issue was created to fill the gap in offers from independent investigative journalism in Colombia and to shed light on cases of abuse of power. Our mission is to be the watchful eyes of power on behalf of the ordinary citizen, using the force and depth of counter-power journalism." (Colombia)

Delfino: Independent journalism platform (Costa Rica)

Surcos Digital: A platform dedicated to social movements (Costa Rica)

FAVELA

A Voz da Favela (The Voice of the Favela): Published by ANF (Favela News Agency) for the past 20 years, the paper has a print run of 50,000 and is distributed using a pay-what-you-can model, providing income to many residents that are involved in handing out the paper. Covers news related to the *Maré* favela complex in Rio de Janeiro. (Brazil)

Favela em Pauta (Favela on the Agenda) An online news portal with content written by *favela* residents, aimed at readers who are curious to know more about day-to-day life in Brazil's many *favelas*. (Brazil)

RACE

Alma Preta (Black Soul): Independent media agency that focuses on issues of race since 2015. (Brazil)

Costa Rica Afro: An Afro-feminist collective aiming to empower afro-descendent women, bring visibility to the many contributions made by these communities, and combat racism. (Costa Rica)

GENDER

CIMAC (Women's Communication and Information AC): a 30-year-old independent journalistic and investigative organisation, focused on gender related issues, which promotes the organisation of female journalists, the gathering of evidence around issues like equality, sexism, and violence in the media, and the defence of women's right to freedom of expression, and to information. (Mexico)

LatFem: a digital feminist news outlet that provides a free access information service, mainly focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. The team of feminist professionals and activists is made up of journalists, communicators, writers, researchers, photographers, illustrators and designers. LatFem has a network of collaborators and correspondents in the region and founded the Network of Feminist Journalists of Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of Oxfam. Due

to its regional reach, Latfem claims to be the only feminist medium of its kind. (Argentina)

Red Colombiana de Género (Colombian Gender Network): a space for women and men who seek to make women visible in the media, to count on them as a source, to promote their human rights based on the principles of equality, freedom and dignity of women, and to promote the use of inclusive and non-discriminatory language to name them. (Colombia)

LGBT+

Colmena 41: This LGBT+ platform aims to “connect and inspire” the community and its allies with get-togethers, shared research and collaborations (Mexico)

#MafiaGay: Podcast that features interviews with people from the LGBT+ community about their lives and careers (Mexico)

Sentiido: Independent digital journalism portal that develops critical and constructive journalism, guided by human rights and diversity (Colombia).

INDIGENOUS

Mapu Express: Communication collective based in the Mapuche community (Chile)

Ama Llulla: An independent media network made up of OjoPúblico, IDL-Reporteros, Ideeleradio, Útero.pe, LaMula.pe, El Búho, Sudaca, Convoca, El FILTER and local radio stations from eight regions of the Andean and Amazon region. The network was formed to fight misinformation by ‘Fact checking’ political discourse during the 2021 elections. Promoted by the [United Nations Development Program](#) (UNDP), its coverage includes recaps of checks in podcast format, translated into at least two native languages, *Quechua* and *Ashaninka*. (Peru)

Radio Yandê: the first ethnic media for indigenous groups in Brazil. Aiming to promote Brazil's indigenous culture, the web-based radio station boasts half a million listeners in 80 countries, bringing together the voices of indigenous people around the world. It features items including *Comunica Parente*, in which audio reports (including grievances, stories and testimonies) are aired, and [Boletim Wayuri](#), a monthly podcast by the ‘Network of Indigenous Communicator of Rio Negro’. (Brazil)

DISABLED

Discapacidad Perú: a programme on disability issues, broadcast online on Radio Euforia every Saturday morning at 11. Its [website](#) publishes recurring news on community issues and its [fanpage](#) has 2,602 followers - it is still a limited initiative. (Peru)



Sherlock Communications (www.sherlockcomms.com) is a public relations and digital marketing agency that has won several awards in Latin America. Headquartered in São Paulo, the company also has offices in Lima, Bogota, Santiago, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, San José, Panama City and Guatemala City. **With a multidisciplinary and fully bilingual team**, our mission is to help companies bridge the commercial and cultural gap between Latin American and foreign markets.

The agency won and was highly recommended for more than 55 global awards in the past two years, including **Best Agency in LATAM and Best Campaign in LATAM for the PRWeek Global Awards. Sherlock Communications** was also named by The Holmes Report's Creative Index 2019 as the second most creative agency in the world and the **most creative in Latin America**.

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