

# THE DRIVERS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION ON MESSAGING APPS

Second edition  
2021/2022

*Habits and perceptions of Brazilians in 2021 and 2022*

INTERNETLAB



# ROAD MAP

**02**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**03**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

03

Methodology

05

Sample profile of the quantitative survey

**09**

**RESULTS**

09

Messaging apps and their usage

30

Communication about politics on the apps

46

2022 elections on messaging apps

# METHODS

## QUANTITATIVE SAMPLE SURVEY



In order to enable the comparison with the **first edition of this survey (about the 2020 elections, published in 2021)**, half the questionnaire was composed of the same questions (related to WhatsApp usage and the sharing of political messages in this environment); other questions were included to better understand contextual elements (end of the year before 2022 national elections and the crescent use of Telegram).

### DATA COLLECTION

Panel of online respondents

### PUBLIC

Brazilian population 16 years of age or older that has internet access and uses WhatsApp and/or Telegram

### DATE OF EXECUTION

Dec. 16 to 28, 2021

### SAMPLE

2018 interviews spread across Brazil's 5 regions

### MARGIN OF ERROR

3 percentage points of the total sample  
(95% confidence interval)

### WEIGHTING FACTORS

Sample proportional to the surveyed universe;  
there was no need for weighting

# METHODS

## QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION GROUPS

### DATA COLLECTION

Online discussion groups

### PUBLIC

Brazilian population 16 years of age or older that has internet access and uses WhatsApp and/or Telegram and/or other messaging apps

### DATE OF EXECUTION

Jun. 18 to 30, 2022

### SAMPLE

groups with 5 to 8 people, as follows:

#### GROUPS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND APPS USED

Education	Exclusive users of WhatsApp	Users of Telegram	Users of other messaging apps
Incomplete Elementary or High School	1	1	
High School	1	1	1
College	1	1	

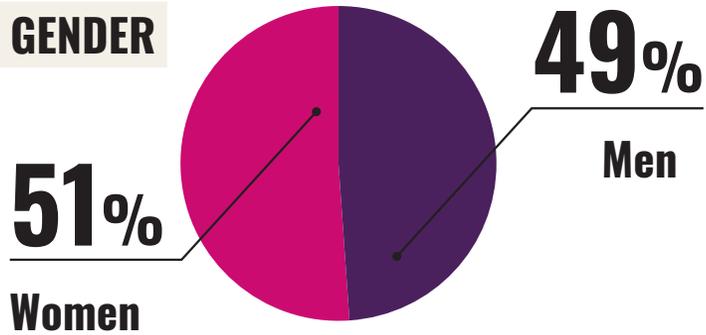
#### GROUPS BY SELF-DECLARED POLITICAL LEANING

Supporters of Bolsonaro	Supporters of Lula	Neither Lula nor Bolsonaro
1	1	1

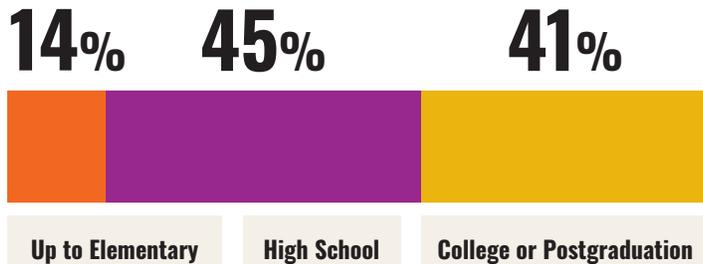
# SAMPLE PROFILE OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Q: What is your gender? Q: Considering IBGE's criteria, what is your race/color?  
 Q: How old are you? Q: What is your level of education? Q: What is your religion?  
 Base 2021: 2018 responses Base 2020: 3113 responses

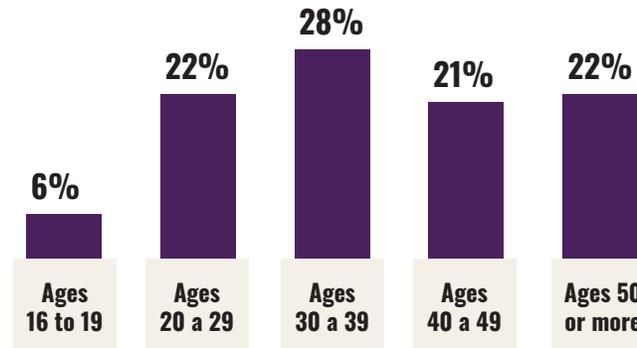
## GENDER



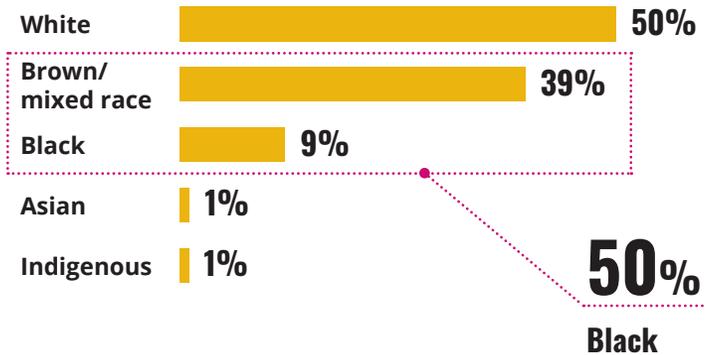
## EDUCATION



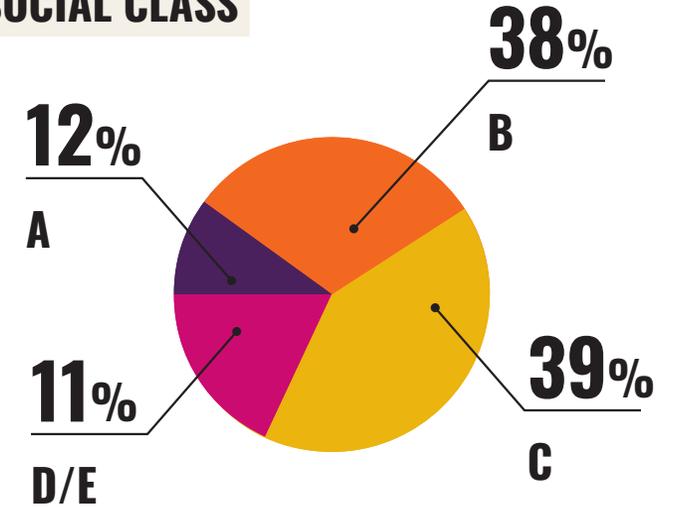
## AGE



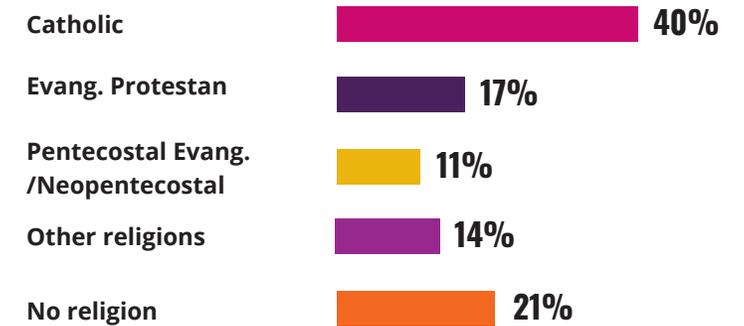
## RACE/SKIN COLOR



## SOCIAL CLASS



## RELIGION



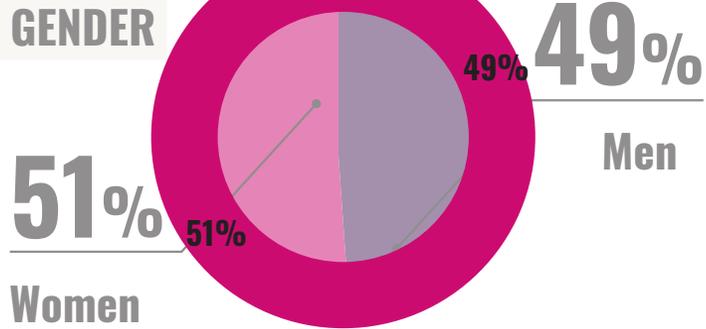
2020

AGE

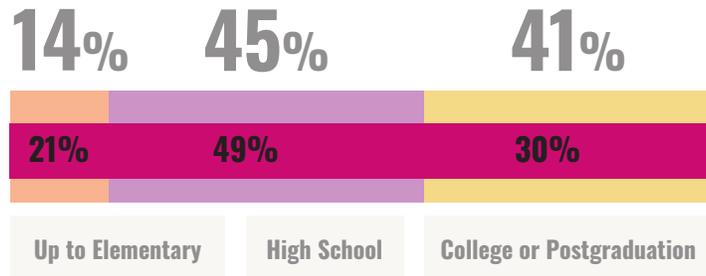
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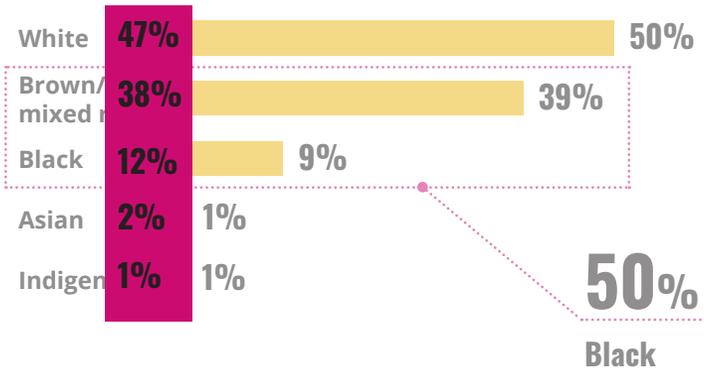
GENDER



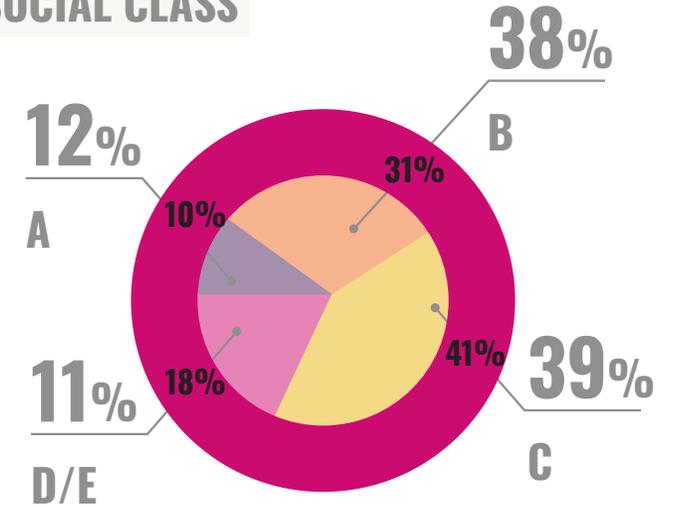
EDUCATION



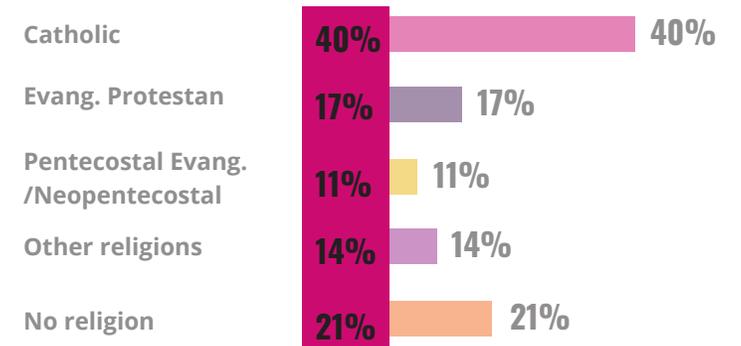
RACE/SKIN COLOR



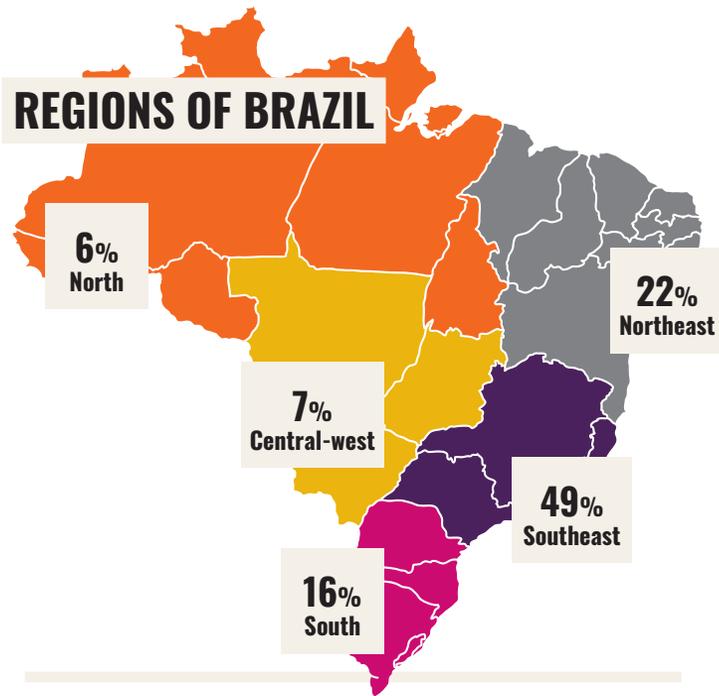
SOCIAL CLASS



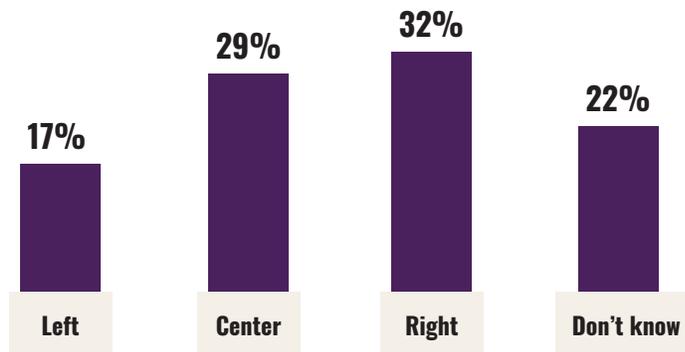
RELIGION



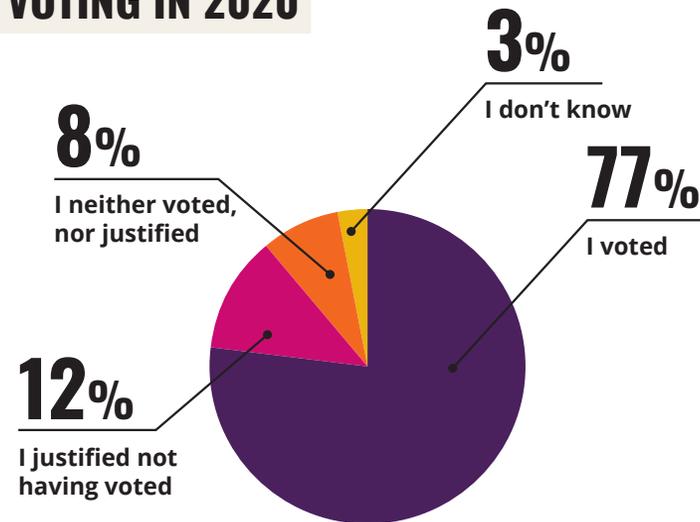
## REGIONS OF BRAZIL



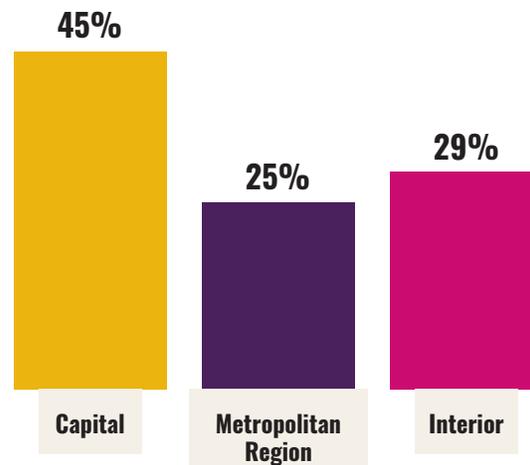
## POLITICAL LEANINGS



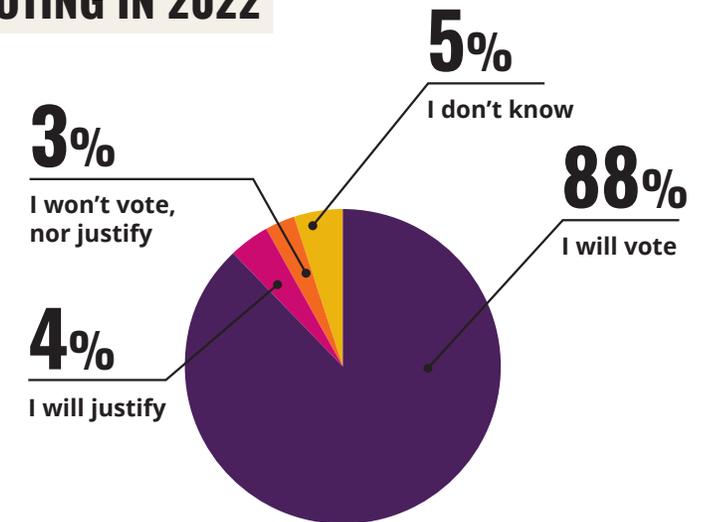
## VOTING IN 2020



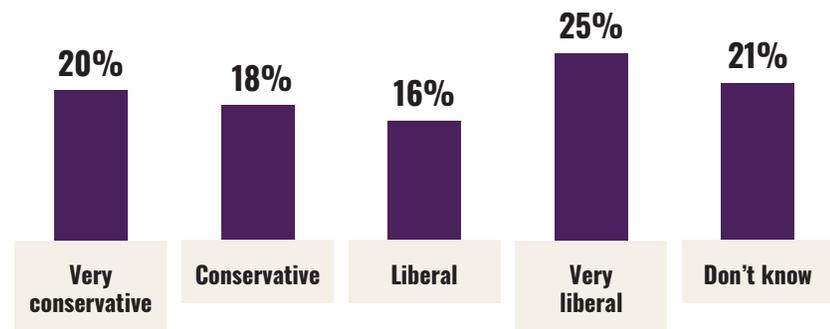
## SIZE OF MUNICIPALITY



## VOTING IN 2022

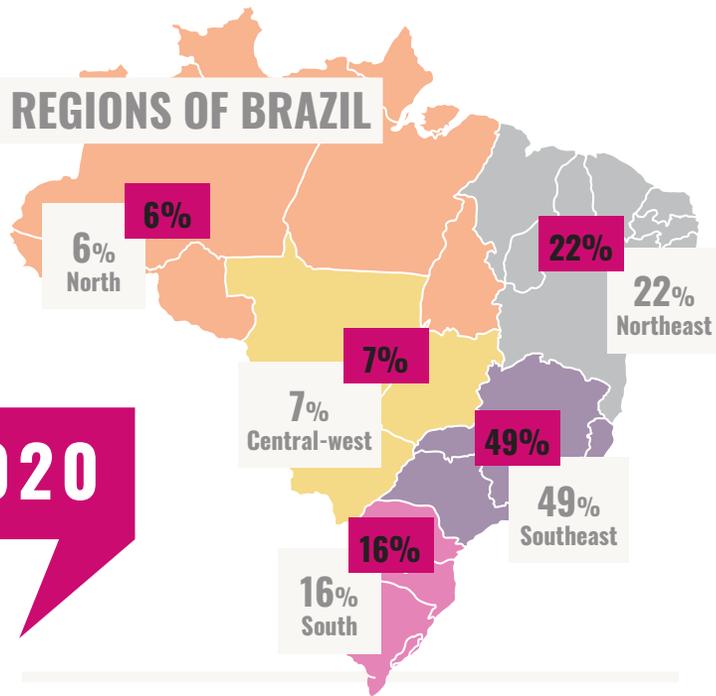


## STANCE ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VALUES



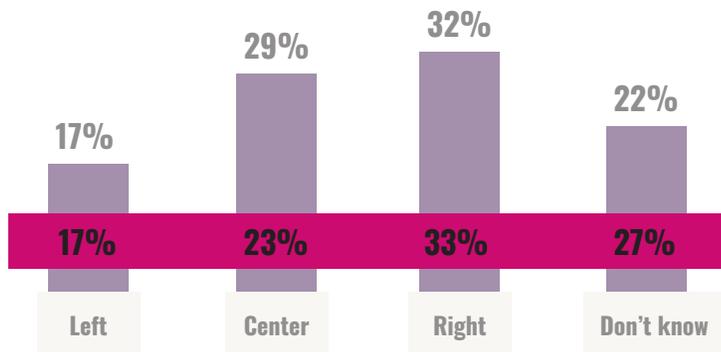
Q. In which state do you live? Q. In which municipality do you live? Base 2021: 2018 | Base 2020: 3113. | Q. What did you do in the municipal elections of 2020? Base 2021: 2018 | Base: 2020: 2552 | Q. In the presidential and state elections of 2022, what do you intend to do? Base 2021: 2018 | Q. Considering your political leaning, where do you stand between left and right, being 1 totally left and 10 totally right? Q. Where do you stand between conservatism and liberalism, being 1 totally conservative and 10 totally liberal? Base 2021: 2018 Base 2020: 2534 responses

## REGIONS OF BRAZIL

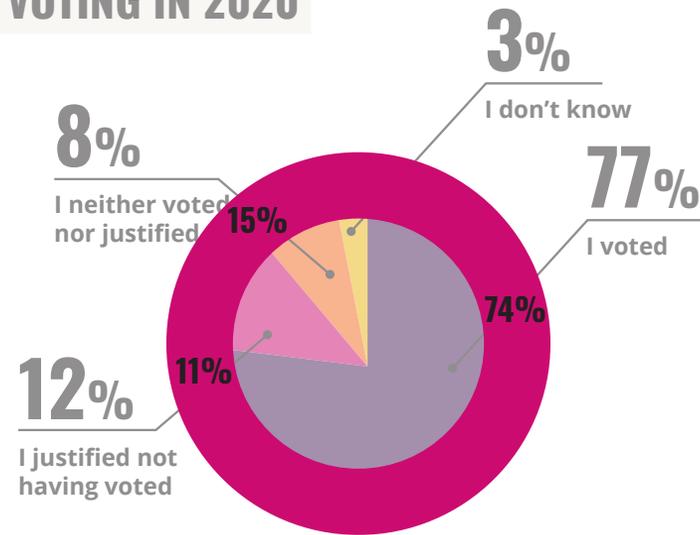


2020

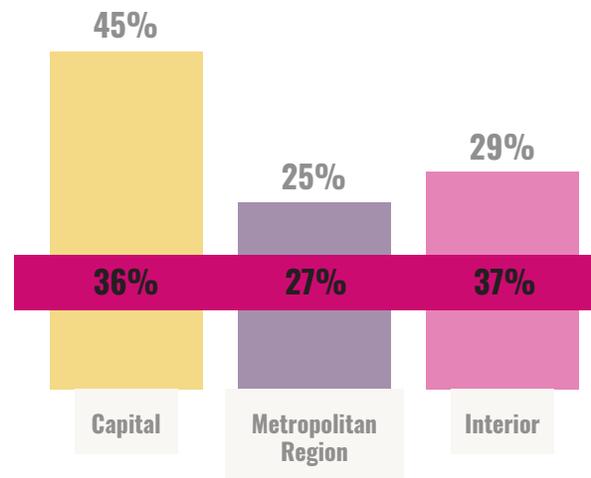
## POLITICAL LEANINGS



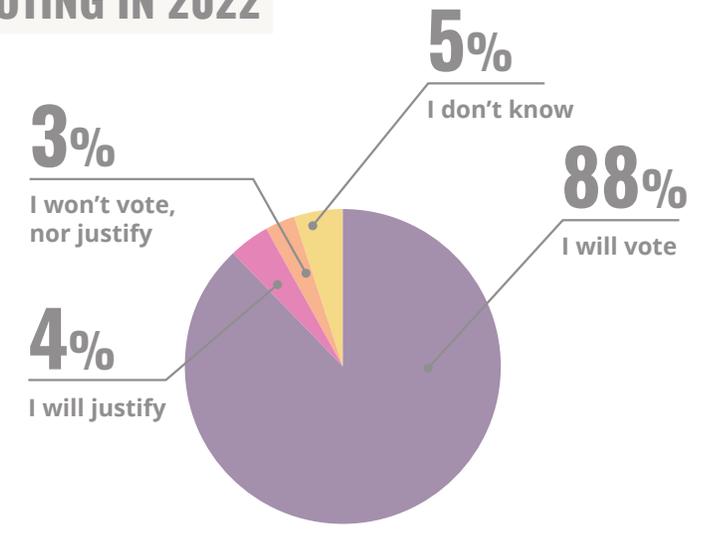
## VOTING IN 2020



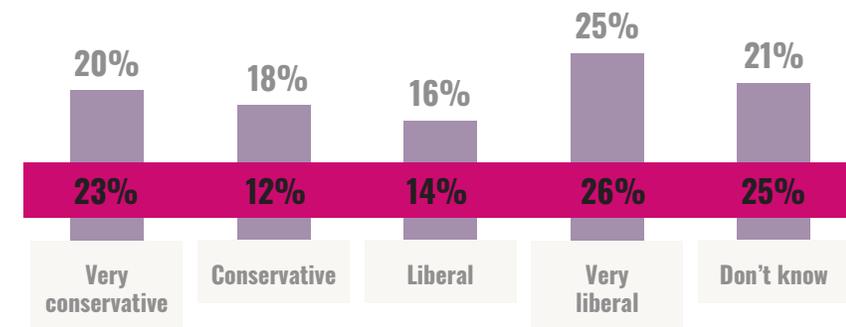
## SIZE OF MUNICIPALITY



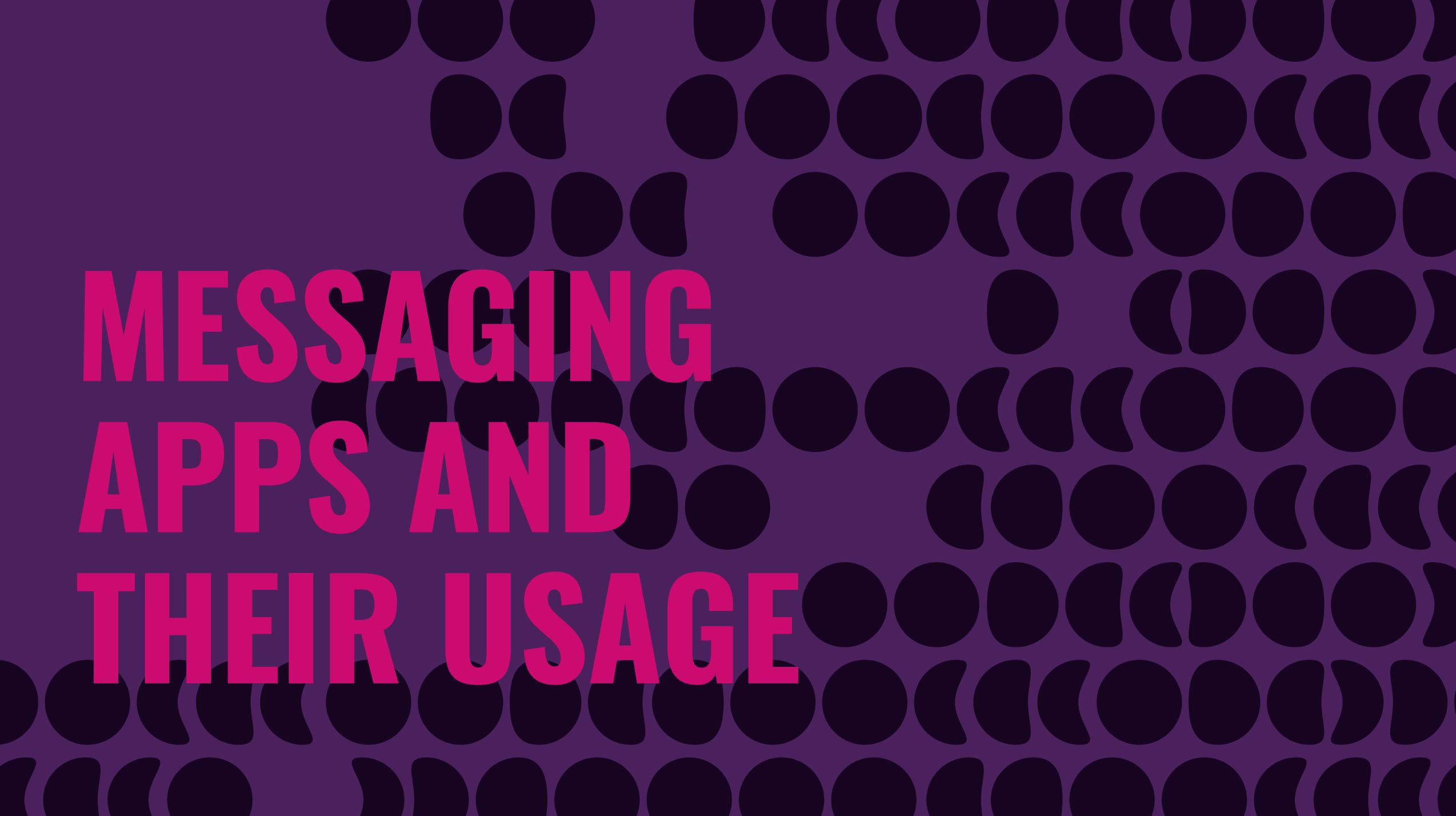
## VOTING IN 2022



## STANCE ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VALUES



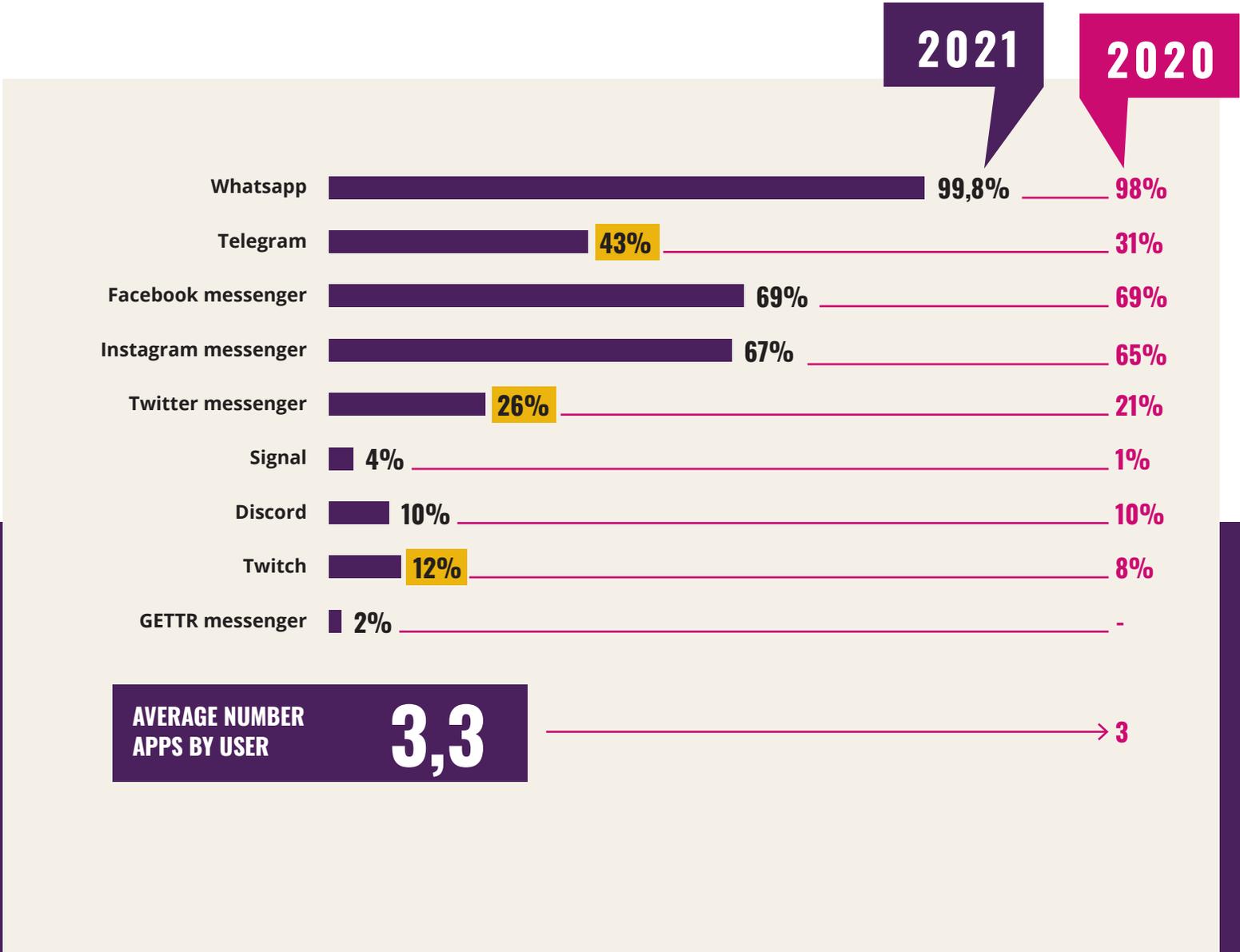
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# **MESSAGING APPS AND THEIR USAGE**

Q9a. Which of these messaging apps have you used in the last month? (RM) | Base 2021: 2.018 | Base 2020: 3109

# MESSAGING APPS USED



2021

2020

WHATSAPP is still the most popular messaging app for all profiles, but the increasing use of other apps is noticeable.

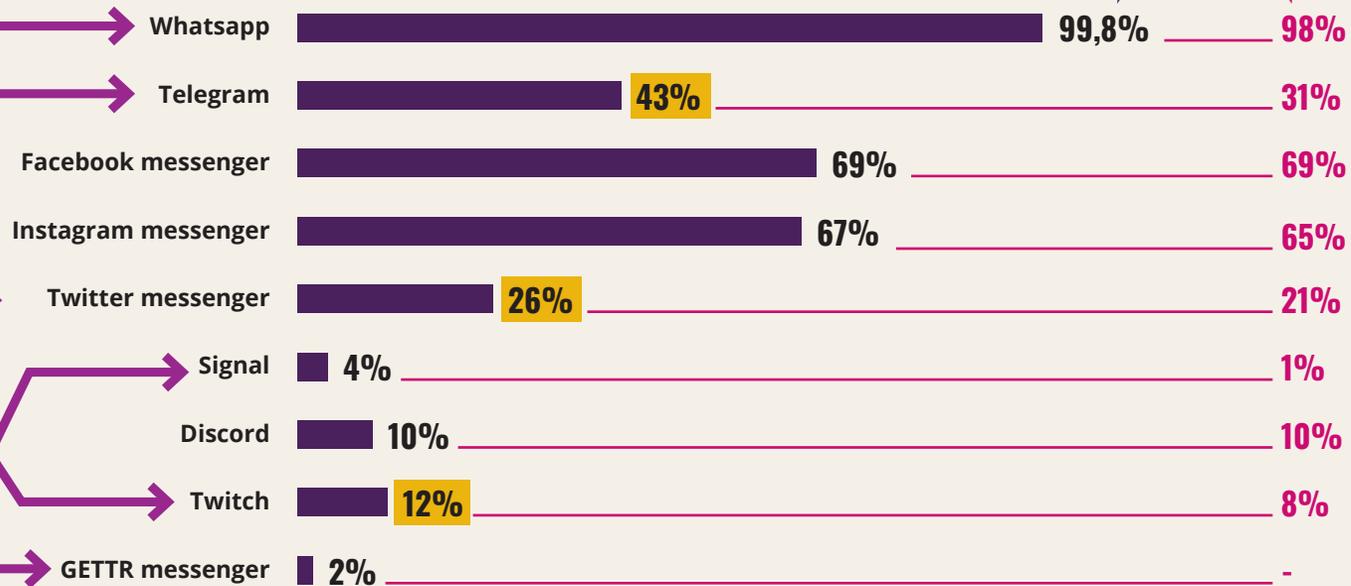
The use of TELEGRAM had a significant increase for all age groups.

TWITTER private messages increased, mainly for age groups over 40yr.

TWITCH is more popular among groups up to 29yr.

There is a slight rising trend in the use of SIGNAL and GETTR, which draws attention as an alternative environment for communication.

THE NOTION THAT EACH APP HAS ITS SPECIFIC USE, AS PERCEIVED IN THE 2020'S SURVEY, WAS REINFORCED, AND IT SEEMS PEOPLE ARE PROGRESSIVELY CHOOSING DIFFERENT APPS ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.



AVERAGE NUMBER APPS BY USER

3,3

→ 3

# THE USES OF WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is part of people's routine and its use seems to be essential to daily communication and to maintain personal bonds. Its use is mainly communicational, but it goes beyond message exchanging: it replaces the telephone, it mediates payments and it works as a virtual customer service, among others.

The feeling of saturation, though, is very frequent. Because of this, there were many comments about the strategies developed to deal with this overload and better manage messages and contents: splitting personal and professional accounts (through WhatsApp Business or a second chip), using different devices, managing hours of use and searching different apps.

Man | 2yr | SP

*"It's hard to say, because WhatsApp is everything. We do everything through WhatsApp. There is the work issue, the company has its own communication channels, but we also use WhatsApp [at work]. And, also, to communicate with family, friends, for shopping, ordering a pizza."*

Man | 39yr | MG

*"For me, everything must be directed. Up to a determined hour, I turn the professional side off, then I pay attention to the family side, mother, father, things like that. Because I had to do this so I don't get lost, don't become a hostage of it."*

Woman | 39yr | BA

*"We can no longer measure the importance of WhatsApp in our lives. We now solve absolutely everything by WhatsApp. And it's very fast. And with the arrival of WhatsApp call, the telephone line became much more idle."*

# THE USES OF TELEGRAM

There are many explanations for the increase in use of Telegram. Some users have migrated after episodes of instability on WhatsApp; others had contact with the platform through suggestions (at work, from influencers, courses, etc.) because of its tools or contents. But even among the ones that have downloaded the app, many of its possibilities of use are still unknown. It is noticeable that new users who expected to find an environment for communication with their contacts ended up leaving the app. Thus, **the main use of Telegram focuses on accessing contents, rather than on communicating, and the app is often used as a search platform.**

Man | 42yr | SP

*“I’ve also used Telegram, but it was at the time WhatsApp was down, so it was a chaos: the guys saying “let’s download it so we don’t get out of touch”. But it was only during that time, and, since then, I haven’t used it.”*

Man | 23yr | SP

*“I think Telegram is a very interesting platform for people to gather information, documents, files. There are many groups on Telegram in which people post full series, full books there, because it’s much easier to do that there than on WhatsApp.”*

Woman | 19yr | PA

*“I’ve known Telegram since before the pandemic. Then, during the pandemic, I started using it a lot to watch films and series, never to talk to people... I hardly ever talk to any of my contacts, but I use it a lot.”*

Woman | 32yr | SP

*“So, I installed Telegram for us to be able to communicate, because her cell phone doesn’t have a chip, so we chat through Telegram, ...”*

Man | 45yr | RJ

*“I like Telegram because it takes up less space of the cell phone’s memory, you know? Data storage...”*

# OTHER APPS, OTHER USES

As seen in 2020, messaging services that are integrated to social media (as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc) end up playing the role of connecting the users to people that are not on their phone books. The usage of such service is not limited to personal communication, but also involve reaching clients, making purchases and other commercial uses.

Other apps, originally designed for gaming or streaming, as Discord and Twitch, have also gained other functions: serving as a virtual and shared working environment, having company along the day, meeting people from different places, among others.

Man | 37yr | SP

*“So, I have WhatsApp, right? But I use a commercial account more often. There’s Facebook, Messenger, I use it a lot to chat with my mother and my relatives. So, I only have their contacts on Facebook, I still don’t have them on the phone”*

Man | 49yr | MA

*“I use a lot [Facebook] Messenger with my commercial group, selling, these things I do, friends from out of state, I use it a lot, from Acre and Rondônia... I didn’t adapt to Telegram, I had difficulty in getting to know it. So, the blackout, the bug on WhatsApp, it didn’t really affect me. Because I resorted to Facebook Messenger...”*

Woman | 30yr | AM

*“The main use of Discord for me is to chat with someone, using headphones. I used to sort of work while talking to someone, the other person working too... There’s a friend, we sometimes joined a channel with his friends and, you know, each on their own working and the friends playing.”*

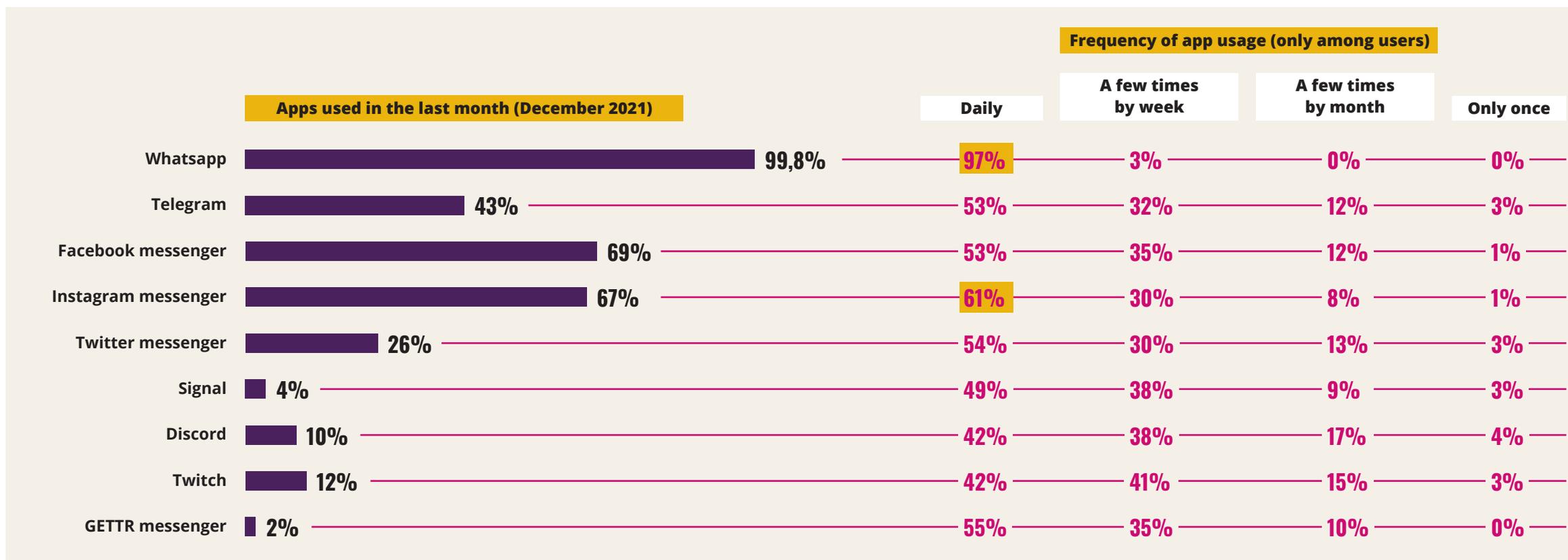
Man | 30yr | SC

*“What I thought was valuable about Discord is this thing of gathering a community, of you being able to create topics, to create rooms with specific topics, and then you have this function of saving those chats that are happening. Accessing an older message on Discord, for example, is much easier.”*

# USAGE FREQUENCY OF MESSAGING APPS

98% of the interviewees declared that they use some messaging app daily. The intensive use of WhatsApp on daily routine is already known. The high percentage of daily use of other apps, however, is noticeable, especially Instagram messenger. Frequent users of Telegram have a high level of education.

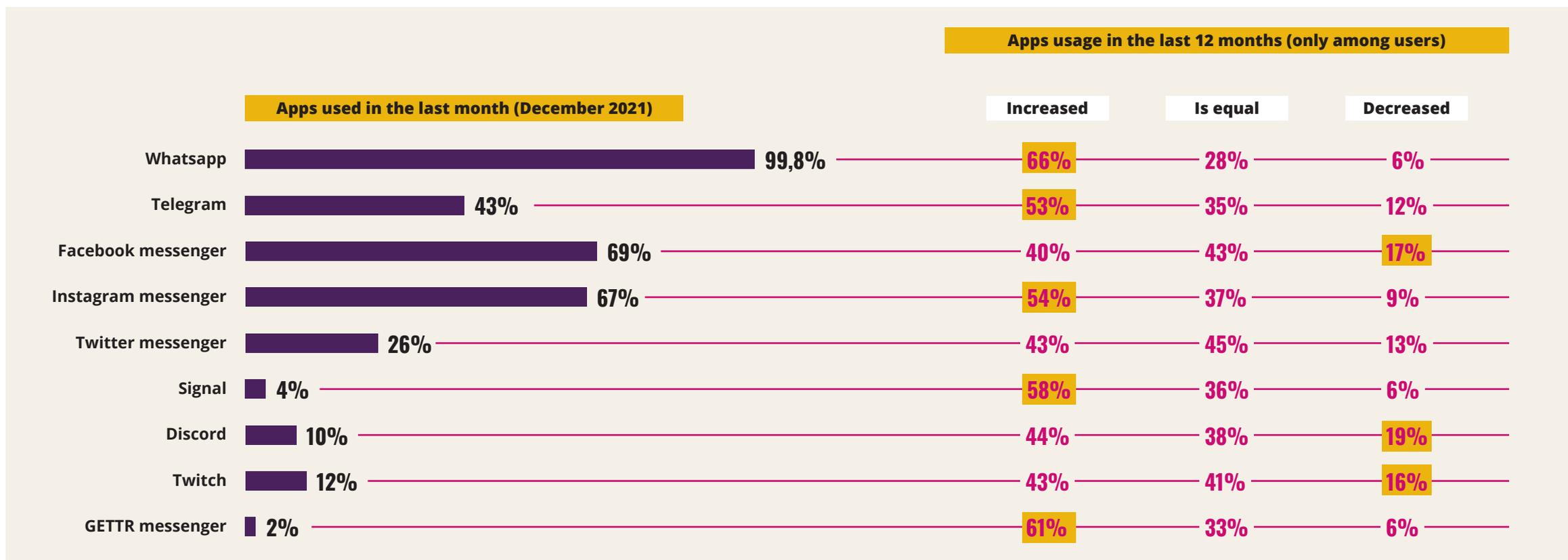
Q9a. Which of these messaging apps have you used in the last month? (RM) | Q9b. How often did you use these apps in the last month? (RU by item) | Total base: 2.018; User base: WhatsApp - 2014, Telegram - 861, Facebook Messenger - 1393, Instagram Messenger - 1353, Twitter Messenger - 521, Signal - 89, Discord - 200, Twitch - 238, GETTR - 49.



# INCREASE IN USE OF MESSAGING APPS

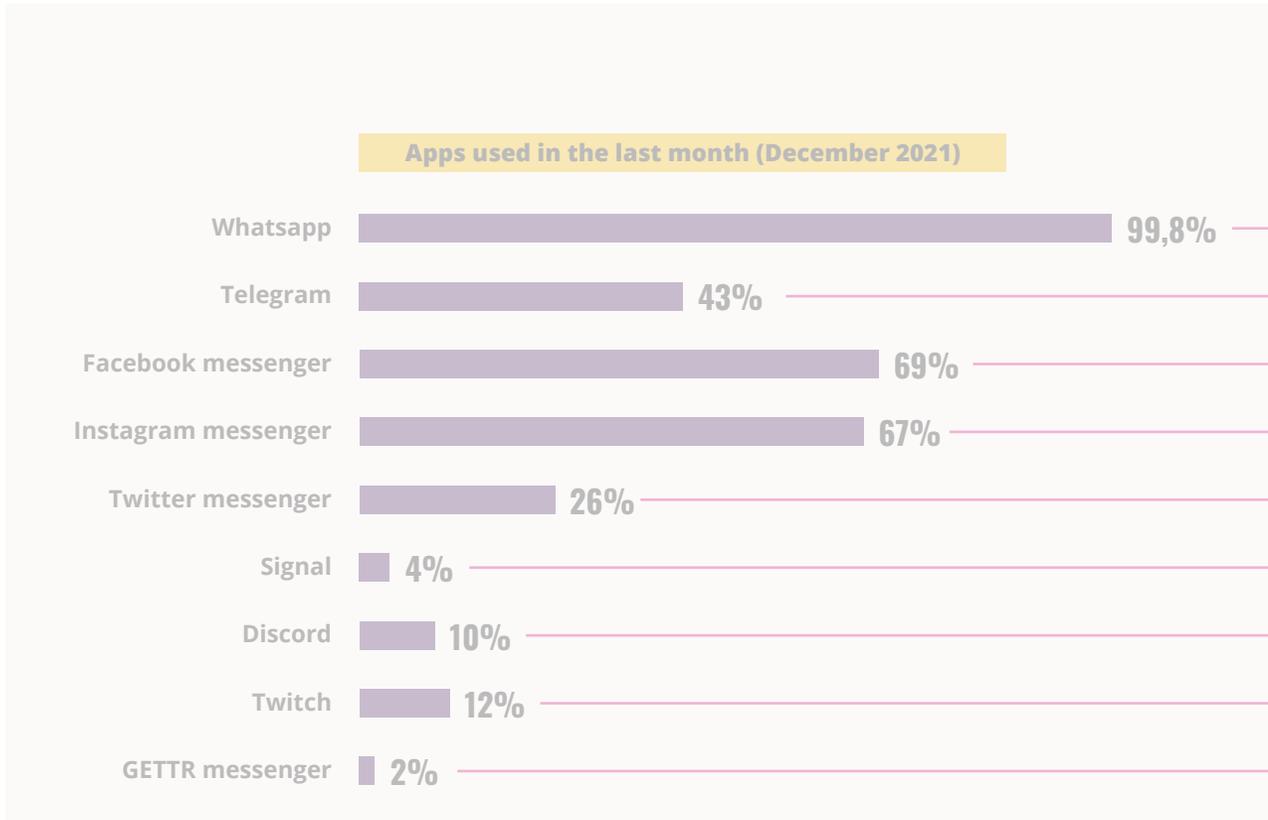
The interviewees' general perception is that they are using messaging apps more frequently: 50% of them declared that they are using at least one app more often than before. This feeling is more present among WhatsApp users. This perception of an increase is followed by frequent comments of a saturated environment, whether by the excess of messages and information, or by the mixture of different life areas. The pandemic seems to have played an important role for the intensification of this perception.

Q9a. Which of these messaging apps have you used in the last month? (RM) | Q9c. Considering the last 12 months, do you believe you are using each of these apps more or less than you did before? (RU by item) | Total base: 2.018; User base: WhatsApp - 2014, Telegram - 861, Facebook Messenger - 1393, Instagram Messenger - 1353, Twitter Messenger - 521, Signal - 89, Discord - 200, Twitch - 238, GETTR - 49.



# INCREASE IN USE OF MESSAGING APPS

Q9a. Which of these messaging apps have you used in the last month? (RM) | Q9c. Considering the last 12 months, do you believe you are using  
WhatsApp - 2014, Telegram - 861, Facebook Messenger - 1393, Instagram Messenger - 1353, Twitter Messenger - 521, Signal - 89, Discord - 200, Twitch



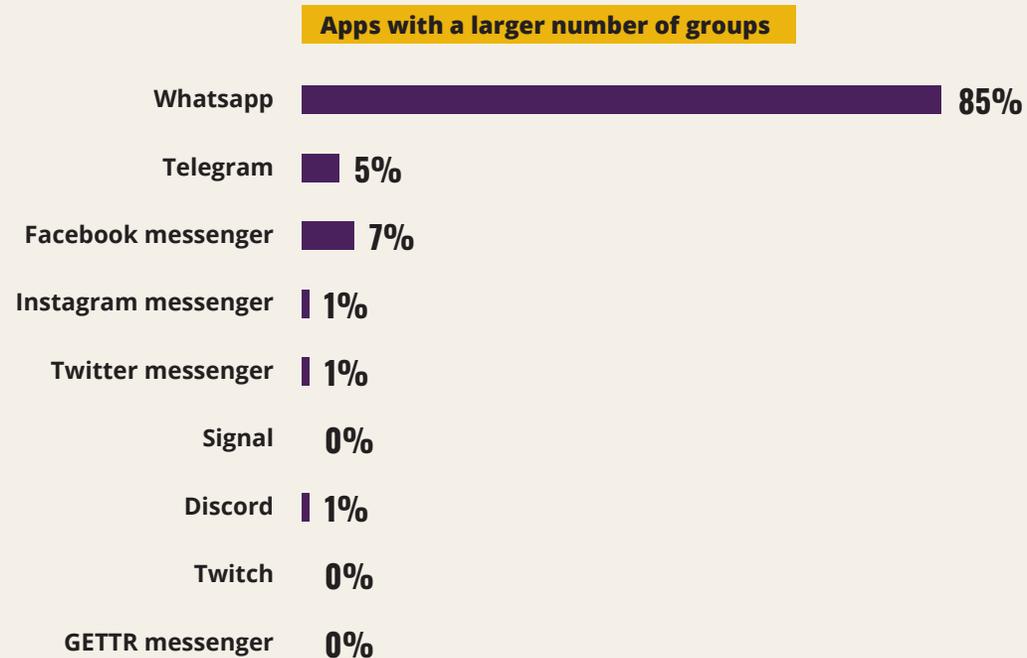
Woman | 28yr | SC

*“There’s something else, getting back to being tired, right? Like, they were coming out of the pandemic, right? Everybody’s still kind of mourning, kind of suffering, kind of isolated.”*

# APPS AND THEIR GROUPS

Even though people also have accounts on other apps and are using them daily, groups are still predominantly used on WhatsApp. Among Telegram users, few are able to differentiate groups from channels\*. Even so, the qualitative survey identified that, on Telegram, channels are more commonly used than groups.

\*On Telegram, there are groups and channels. On groups, the messages are sent by the users, who can comment, share messages, documents, etc. Channels are a tool for public transmission of messages to large audiences, with a limited number of participants, in which the user is only able to comment the posts. Q9d. In which of these apps do you have more groups? (RU) | Base: 2018



**Woman | 45yr | RJ**

*“[Do you differentiate channels from groups on Telegram?] No, it makes no difference, I join them, and when I see, it’s a channel. For me, it works just the same.”*

# APPS AND THEIR GROUPS

Users distinguish the groups they are part of in each app: they know who the people they meet are and what topics circulate in each environment.

Man | 37yr | CE

*“Yes, WhatsApp works better for family contacts, contacts from the study group, friends from previous courses... But Telegram is a more global thing, right? I get in contact with different people, different experiences.”*

Man | 27yr | PE

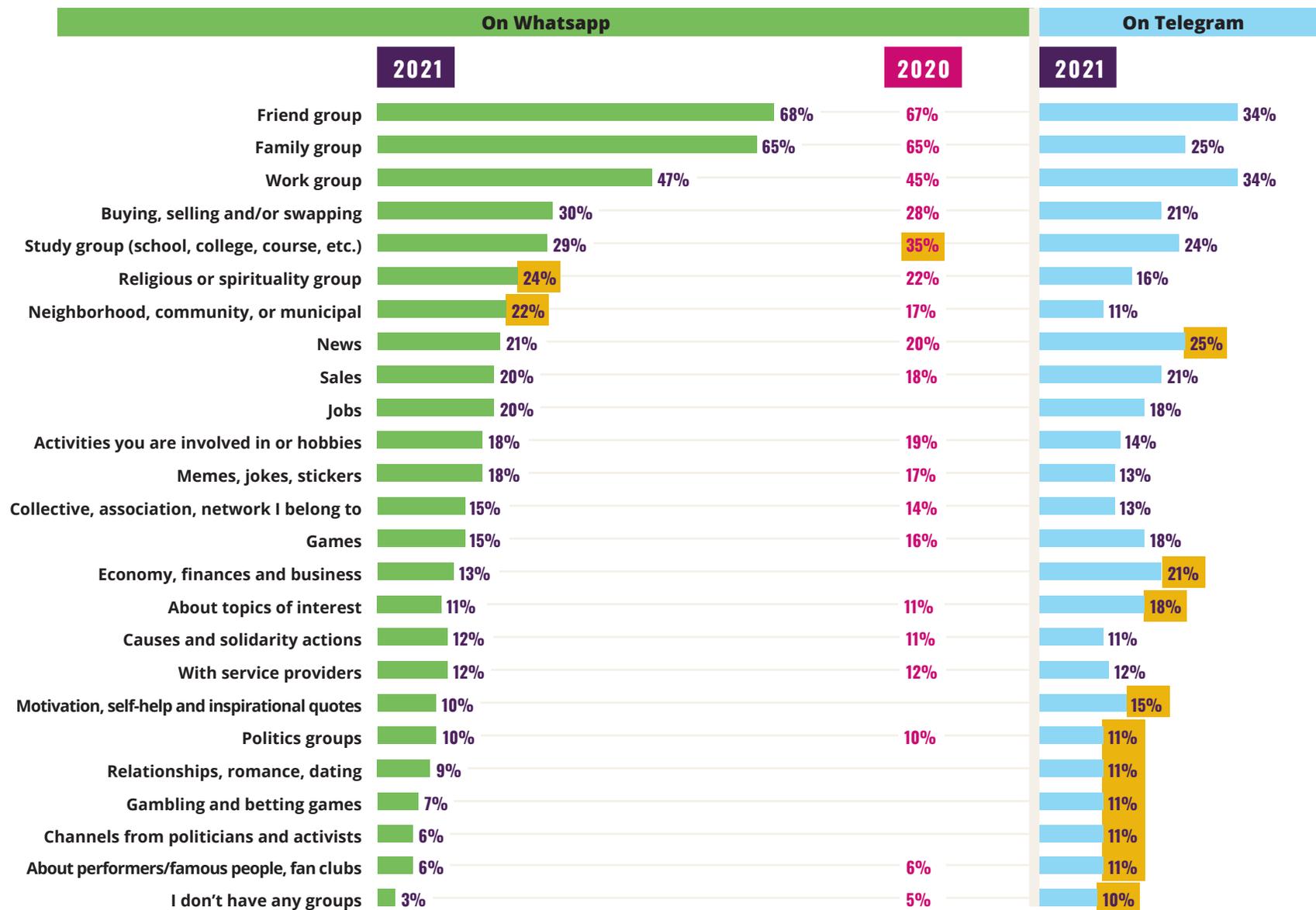
*“Mine is similar, but on Telegram I don’t have many groups. I hardly ever chat with family through it, it’s mostly through WhatsApp. On Telegram, it’s really the classmates, people with shared interests. And the majority of them, I haven’t met personally. On WhatsApp, although I’m in groups, they’re course groups, of family, friends, relatives.”*

Woman | 28yr | SC

*“On WhatsApp, I chat with people who are my friends, we have in common the friendship and the fact that we know each other personally, but there are million different subjects, while on Discord, it’s a common subject and there are lots of different people, that’s the biggest difference between the platforms.”*

# KINDS OF GROUPS

Kinds of groups users participate in (only among the apps users)



Q10b. Which of these groups do you have on your WhatsApp (check as many as you want)? (RM) | Base WhatsApp 2021: 2018; Base WhatsApp 2020: 2671  
 Q10b. Which of these groups do you have on your Telegram (check as many as you want)? (RM) | Base Telegram: 861

# KINDS OF GROUPS

Kinds of groups users participate in (only among the apps users)

- Friend group
- Family group
- Work group
- Buying, selling and/or swapping
- Study group (school, college, course, etc.)
- Religious or spirituality group
- Neighborhood, community, or municipal
- News
- Sales
- Jobs
- Activities you are involved in or hobbies
- Memes, jokes, stickers
- Collective, association, network I belong to
- Games
- Economy, finances and business
- About topics of interest
- Causes and solidarity actions
- With service providers
- Motivation, self-help and inspirational quotes
- Politics groups
- Relationships, romance, dating
- Gambling and betting games
- Channels from politicians and activists
- About performers/famous people, fan clubs
- I don't have any groups

Q10b. Which of these groups do you have on your WhatsApp (check as many as you want)? (RM) | Base WhatsApp 2021: 2018; Base WhatsApp 2020: 2671  
Q10b. Which of these groups do you have on your Telegram (check as many as you want)? (RM) | Base Telegram: 861

In the last 2 years, there are few differences concerning the kinds of groups people have on WhatsApp: there is an increase in neighborhood and community groups, and a decrease in study groups.

Job groups and economy/business groups, not previously measured, were relevant both on WhatsApp and on Telegram.

Family, friends and work groups, the three largest groups on WhatsApp, are less relevant on Telegram.

On Telegram, groups related to individual interests gained prominence: news, economy/business, groups about topics of interest, politicians or artists' channels. Many of those, referred to as groups, are actually channels, which people join in order to receive contents, not necessarily to interact.

# KINDS OF GROUPS

Depending on the group, people react to information in different ways. Trusting the groups' members may influence, for example, their willingness to open links and videos, to read and share news and other contents.

Woman | 61yr | MG

*"I'll tell you, if I count the groups here, I won't have enough fingers and toes. I have groups for buying and selling, family, friends, apart from other kinds of friends, classmates... But I select. Audio, for example, for me to open it, the person must write 'Open it because it's important!'. Videos, for me to open them, it's even harder... First, because of the storage. Then, because my curiosity doesn't go that far, once I opened a video and almost had a stroke."*

Woman | 42yr | RJ

*"I'm also very engaged in neighborhood groups. As we get the news, we share it on the group for everyone to have access. [For example:] 'there's a health center that has a certain vaccine'. We see this news on a reliable newspaper [only then we share it], because before sharing, we have to check whether the news is true or not..."*

Man | 27yr | PE

*"Many times we... I receive them, because I'm watching a content on YouTube, than that ad comes, directing to a Telegram group, I mean, not a group, a channel. Then they send it there, mainly those weeks of events, of courses. So, there I don't have contact with people, I just receive those contents and that information."*

# ELEGRAM GROUPS OR CHANNELS

What appeals to many Telegram users is what they call “lower control” or “lower restriction”. This sense of “freedom” occurs mainly because of the possibility of searching and finding groups or channels, and reaching beyond their known contacts. They feel that surveillance and limitations are less present on the app, since they can look for topics of interest, find spaces to access specific contents and potentially find new contacts with shared interests. Because of their affinity with other members and with the discussions carried out there, questioning shared contents is less frequent on the app.

47%

OF TELEGRAM  
USERS FEEL THEY  
CAN SPEAK OUT  
MORE FREELY  
THERE THAN  
ON WHATSAPP

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I feel that on Telegram I can say things more freely than on WhatsApp] | Base: 2018

Man | 37yr | CE

*“The good part of Telegram is that you’ll say: ‘I want to browse a film group’, then you type ‘Brazil films’, and lots of groups come up... Not on WhatsApp, you’re restricted on the sense that: you only join the group if they invite you.”*

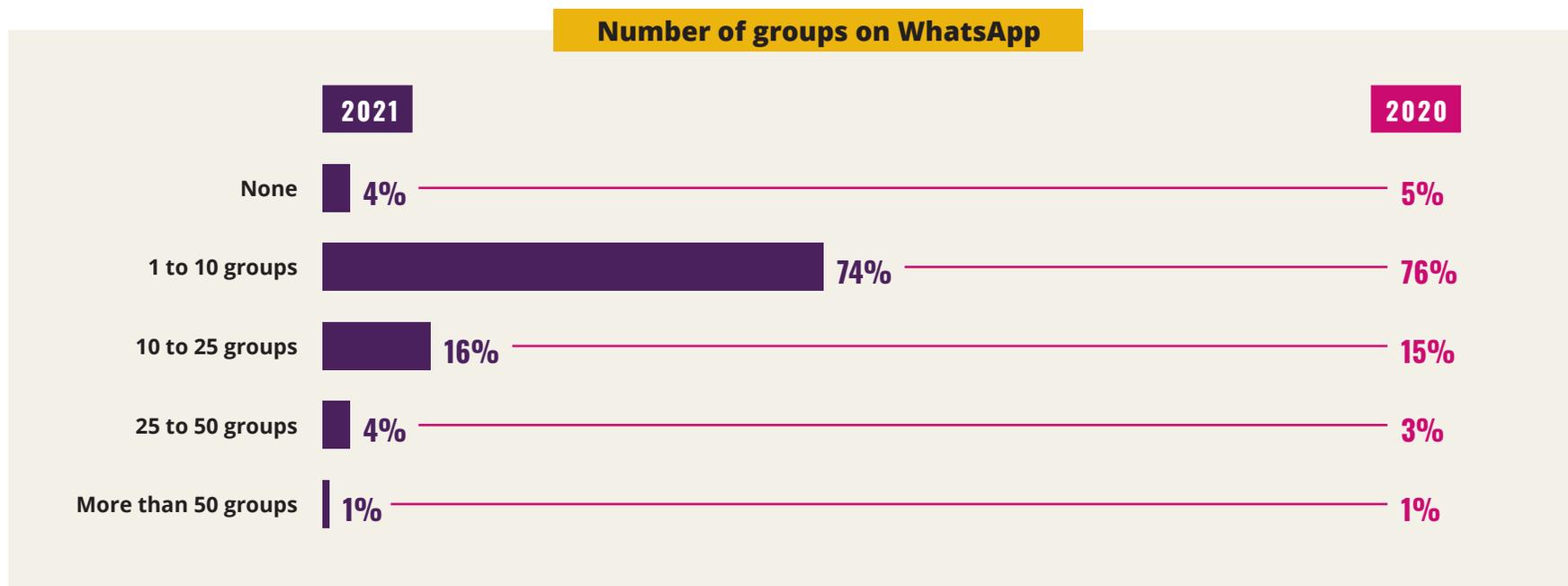
Woman | 43yr | PR

*“The impression I have today is that WhatsApp, it is very restricted, you know? Like, it’s more controlling, we only have access to what someone wants us to. And Telegram, it’s broader... Today, we are not as free on WhatsApp as we are on Telegram. We see that some contents go down, that there is a censorship. Telegram lets you free to look for whatever you want, while WhatsApp, it gives you a restriction on everything. You see what is available there, you know? You’re part of a group of 250 people, but you’re part of what is said within that group. On Telegram, you have the option of searching whatever you want to know, right? The thing is, to tell the truth, you know... I didn’t mean to talk about this, but we end up restricted, they say there is freedom of speech, but we know that there isn’t [freedom of speech after all, right?]. There isn’t this democracy, as they say it, right?”*

# WHATSAPP GROUPS: QUANTITY

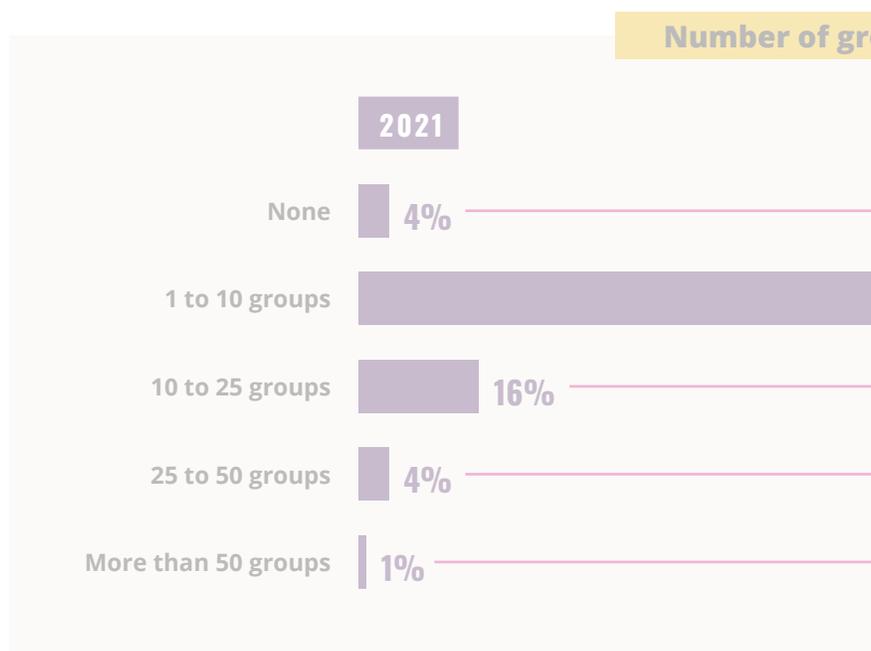
Although the number of groups is not an information respondents can give on the spot, they are more and more concerned about the excess of groups, and are creating criteria to define in which they stay, which they can leave, and to which they pay attention.

Q 12. About how many groups would you say you have on WhatsApp? (RU) | Base: 2018



# WHATSAPP GROUPS: QUANTITY

Q 12. About how many groups would you say you have on WhatsApp? (RU) | Base: 2018



Woman | 45yr | RJ

*"I'm also attached to groups, I can't leave them, it's quiet there and nothing happens, but I'm attached and I stay there."*

Woman | 2yr | SC

*"I cleaned up WhatsApp to, like, delete the work and that bunch of groups, you know? By the way, it's starting to clutter again, with groups. I already want to clean it."*

# WHATSAPP GROUPS: SIZES

Group size influences people's behaviors. Between 2020 and 2021, WhatsApp users' perceptions of group sizes did not change: the larger the group, the less they know the members personally, and, consequently, the less they trust the contents and are willing to interact. The increase in the preference for smaller groups or for personal communication is noticeable.

# 44%

**CONSIDER THAT  
FAKE NEWS ARE  
MORE FREQUENT  
IN LARGE GROUPS  
IN WHICH MANY  
PEOPLE ARE NOT  
PERSONALLY  
ACQUAINTED THAN  
IN SMALL GROUPS  
IN WHICH PEOPLE  
KNOW EACH OTHER.**

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements [I feel safe to talk about politics on WhatsApp] [I feel safe to talk about politics on Telegram] | Base: 2018

Man | 35yr | RN

*“There is a lot of fake news related to groups, right? Unfortunately, there are people who don't see the group as a tool, that should be there to help. If it's for buying and selling, stick to buying and selling. But there are people who start to gossip about politicians, fake news about vaccines and other things, nowadays they are also attacking voting machines.”*

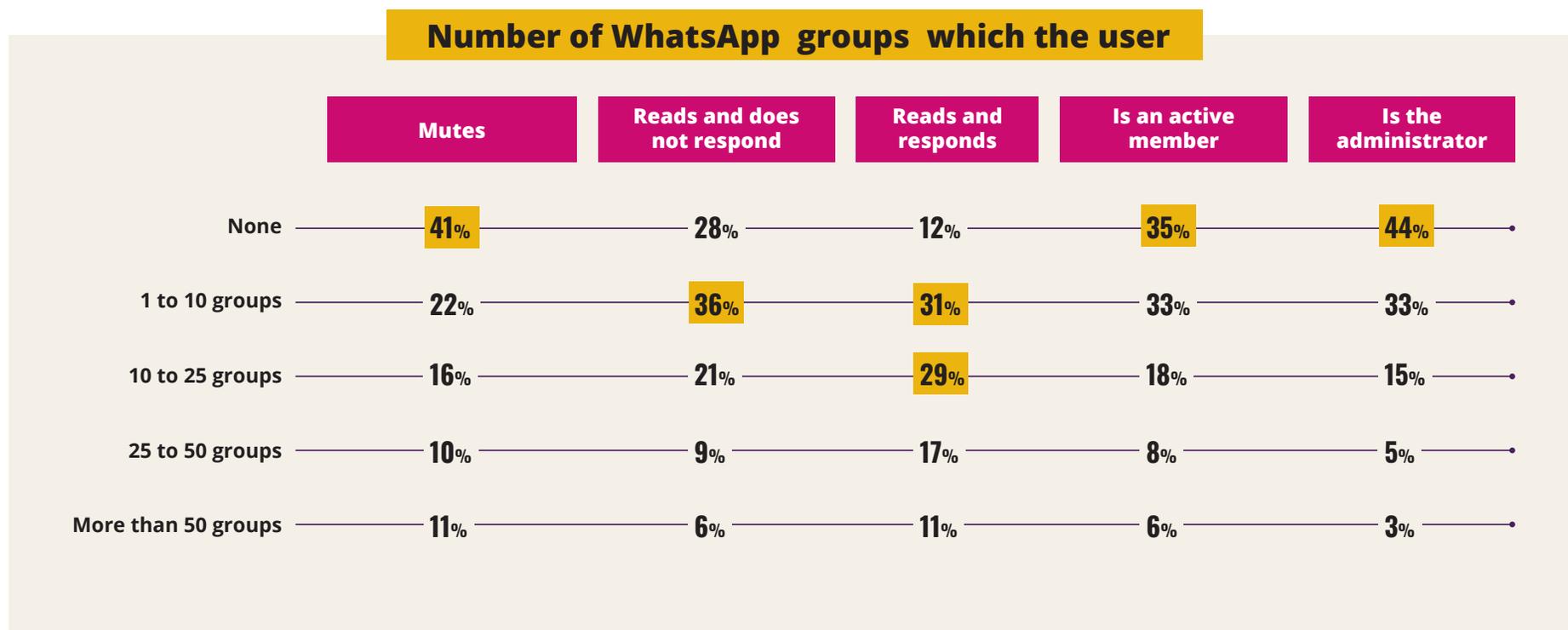
Man | 27yr | PE

*“When it's a more selected group, of friends, family or colleagues who you actually have contact with, for example, from a face-to-face course we took, then I'd comment. But when it's something like, I barely know anybody, I only joined it to follow, then you don't, unless I really have something to say, if not, I think my comment won't make much difference.”*

# WHATSAPP GROUPS: HABITS

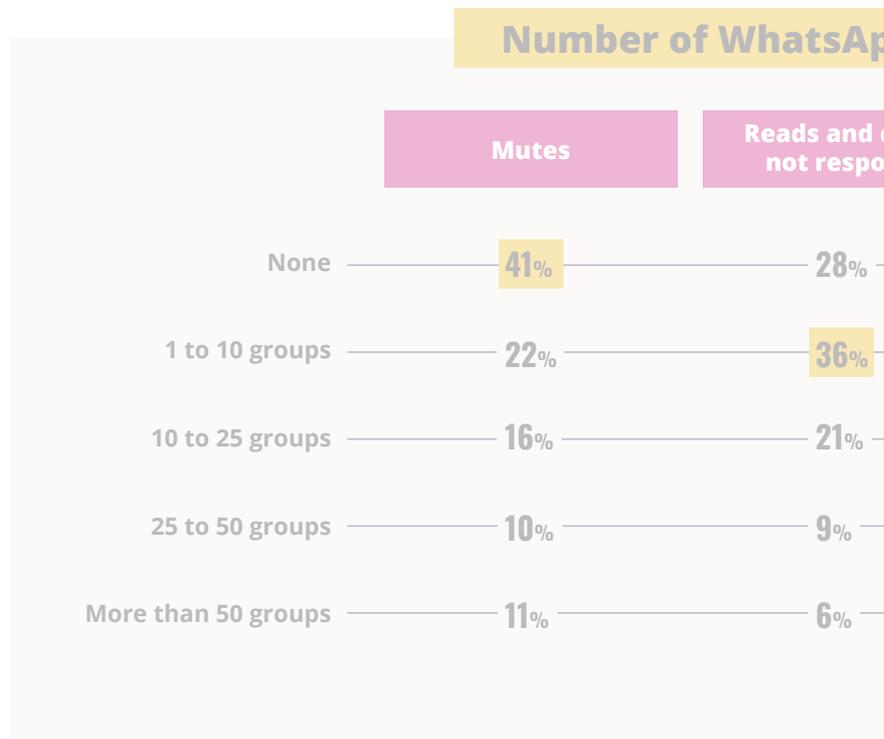
Besides the criteria for permanence, people find strategies to survive and deal with the diverse groups they take part in. 6 out of 10 users admit they mute at least one group, and 7 out of 10 participate of groups in which they are not very active. At the same time, 9 out of 10 declare they actively participate of some group, 7 out of 10 have at least one group in which they are more active, and more than half the users are group administrators.

P12b. How many of these groups do you: Mute (RU) | Read and respond messages (RU) | Actively participate in (RU) | Administer (RU) | Base: 2018



# WHATSAPP GROUPS: HABITS

P12b. How many of these groups do you: Mute (RU) | Read and respond messages (RU) | Actively participate in (RU) | Admin



**Man | 30yr | SP**

*“There’s this postgrad group, for example, that the guys spend all day there talking and I can’t follow. I confess that most of the times I don’t even read it, I just scroll it to clear notifications and move on. The volume is too big, I can’t handle it.”*

**Woman | 30yr | RJ**

*“Then I have this group from work, I work in management. Then there is this group only for work, but sometimes it gets mixed. I have a family group, with only 3 people: me, my husband and my stepson’s relatives. And every group we join is on silent mode, right?”*

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and

# BEHAVIORS ON GROUPS

Depending on the group, people's habits and behaviors will be different. There is not a pattern of interaction and people do not reproduce their social roles within the groups. On groups people feel it is mandatory to be part of, muting and ignoring the group is a more frequent behavior. In fact, the interaction within groups happens according to their interest in the topic or because of their emotional bond with other members.

Woman | 28 anos | SP

*"I myself hate groups... But there are groups that I'm forced to take part of... The company's group, I must be there to follow everything, but that's all. I don't leave the family group because, if I do, they'll say I'm a rebel. So, I don't leave it, I keep quiet, I don't say anything. Sometimes people send something, I interact, but that's all..."*

Man | 35yr | RJ

*"Then, there's the family group. There's one with a bit of gossip, another with some plotting, other with some political debate, then you scroll down, otherwise you get stressed. It's good, but at the same time I think WhatsApp is a little complicated, right? You have to feign madness, otherwise you'll get upset, but I leave it there."*



# COMMUNICATION ABOUT POLITICS ON APPS

# INTERACTION WITHIN APPS: AVOIDING CONFLICT

Comparing the data from the surveys of December 2021 and December 2020 (collected right after the municipal elections), we notice that people are more aware of what they say and share. There is a general feeling of distress, of weariness and animosity, that resulted in a kind of “ethics” to avoid arguments in groups. Aiming at handling this issue, the protocol in some apps as Discord is to warn the members when the topic is controversial (for instance, “Warning: political content”).

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [Each day I'm more aware about what I say in groups] [I avoid talking about politics on the family group to avoid arguments] | Base 2021: 2018; Base 2020: 2671



# INTERACT WITHIN AVOIDING

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

**Woman | 45yr | AL**

*“In my family, it’s either far-right or far-left. There is no in-between. They’ve argued, they’ve left the group, they’ve made up for Christmas, as usual with families, they’ve got back together again, waiting for October to come. So, we get in the mood to see who’s going to argue. In a group like this, professional, we end up being more ethical, right? Although there’s politics, we require some ethics there, right?”*

**Homem | 26yr | RJ**

*“So, this sick person, they can’t take an opposite opinion, and soon you can’t talk, because it’s like trying to discuss with a child. You try to debate, sometimes well grounded, and the person always comes to offend you, yells at you and it doesn’t turn into a debate, it turns into an argument.”*

**Woman | 28yr | SC**

*“Usually, links for news on Discord come with a “trigger warning” and with spoilers, so, if you don’t want to interact with that, you don’t have to.”*

December  
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f “ethics”  
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Base 2021: 2018; Base 2020: 2671

2021

PEOPLE  
ARE MORE  
THEY SAY

58

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2020

0%

# INTERACTION WITHIN APPS: AVOIDING CONFLICTS

In order to improve communication or to avoid distress, some people have adopted practices that surpass the interaction guidelines established by group administrators. There is a greater tendency to pay attention to the tone and content of messages before sharing them: if they attack values or may be offensive to someone, the majority of users prefer to avoid sharing them. In some cases, when it is felt that this implicit rule is not being practiced, leaving the group is the best alternative.

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I avoid sharing messages that might attack other people's values] [When I believe in an idea, I share it even if I know it might seem offensive] | Base 2021: 2018; Base 2020: 2671 responses.



# INTERACTION WITHIN APPS: AVOIDING CONFLICTS

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Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I avoid sharing messages that might attack other members' personal values] | Base 2021: 2018; Base 2020: 2671 responses.

USERS INCREASINGLY AVOID SHARING MESSAGES THAT MAY ATTACK OTHER MEMBERS' PERSONAL VALUES.

2021

64%

57%

2020

2

Man | 37yr | SP

*"... I've left a few groups because of that, you know, like in my field of work, which is security, there are inconvenient people, they send me videos that I don't even accept, as I am evangelical, you know? I don't accept it, my daughter gets my cell phone, my son too, to play, they do a lot of things and end up seeing it.."*

2020

# INTER APPS: CONF

Q18. Please, check whether  
might seem offensive] | Bas

**Woman | 39yr | Bahia**

*“As long as it isn’t something that will hurt anybody’s feelings, because I think it’s only funny when both sides think it’s funny. So, when it’s a funny meme, that really won’t offend anyone, then I share it. But if I notice something derogatory or with a double meaning, I prefer not to share it..”*

2021

improve communication or to avoid distress, some people have practices that surpass the interaction guidelines established by listeners. There is a greater tendency to pay attention to the tone of messages before sharing them: if they attack values or may be someone, the majority of users prefer to avoid sharing them. In when it is felt that this implicit rule is not being practiced, leaving the best alternative.

er people’s values] [When I believe in an idea, I share it even if I know it

21

**EVEN IF THEY BELIEVE IN AN IDEA,  
USERS REFRAIN FROM SHARING  
A MESSAGE IF IT SEEMS OFFENSIVE.**

**37%**

**35%**

2020

# INTERACTION WITHIN APPS: DIALOGUE STRATEGIES

If the predominant behavior of app users is to avoid conflicts, besides fleeing from or ignoring controversy, there are also those who seek strategies to keep dealing with certain subjects without burdening others. To do so, memes, stickers and other humorous messages are frequently used.

P. Por favor, diga se você concorda ou discorda com cada uma das afirmações a seguir. [Acho que mandar mensagens de humor é um bom jeito de falar sobre política sem provocar brigas] Base 2021: 2018 | Base 2020: 2563 respostas

GENERALLY, A FAIR AMOUNT OF USERS CONSIDER THAT SENDING HUMOROUS MESSAGES IS, SOMEHOW, A GOOD WAY TO ADDRESS POLITICS WITHOUT RAISING ARGUMENTS:

30% | 30%

2021

2020

Man | 30yr | SP

*“It’s because it ends up getting mixed... For me, the group’s focus was news, something relevant. But, then, people start discussing baseless things, specially at the political moments we are living now, they start discussing a sticker someone sent and then, geez, it becomes a mess. I don’t have the patience for it.”*

Woman | 45yr | AL

*“Because for us to be funnier on the group, I share them, I like it. I like to receive, to see, to laugh, Brazilians are easy-going, right? I think that’s very nice. Besides, I get impressed with Brazilian’s creativity, like, many of them should have a top job, executive, adman. Nowadays I think memes are funnier than the ads we see on tv.”*

# INTERACTIONS IN FACE OF DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES

This “new ethics” on groups is not only motivated by saturation and frictions, but also by fear of disinformation. People are more suspicious of any content they receive, and see themselves in an environment of constant threat of what they call ‘fake news’.

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I have shared news I found interesting or important without checking their source] | Base WhatsApp: 2018; Base Telegram: 861

Woman | 39yr | RJ

*“That’s because most of the guys on the group end up sharing something that isn’t true, right? It seems they don’t check before sharing. Then, very frequently, friends of mine have their accounts cloned. [...] They click on and share things that weren’t checked and end up falling in links, in scams and have their accounts hacked”*

**PEOPLE DEMONSTRATE CERTAIN CONCERN ABOUT OPENING LINKS RECEIVED THROUGH APP MESSAGES.**

**USERS DO NOT OPEN EXTERNAL LINKS:**

**34%**

**ON WHATSAPP\***

**35%**

**ON TELEGRAM\***

\*Data referring to total users of each app.

**WHAT FAKE NEWS ARE ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS**

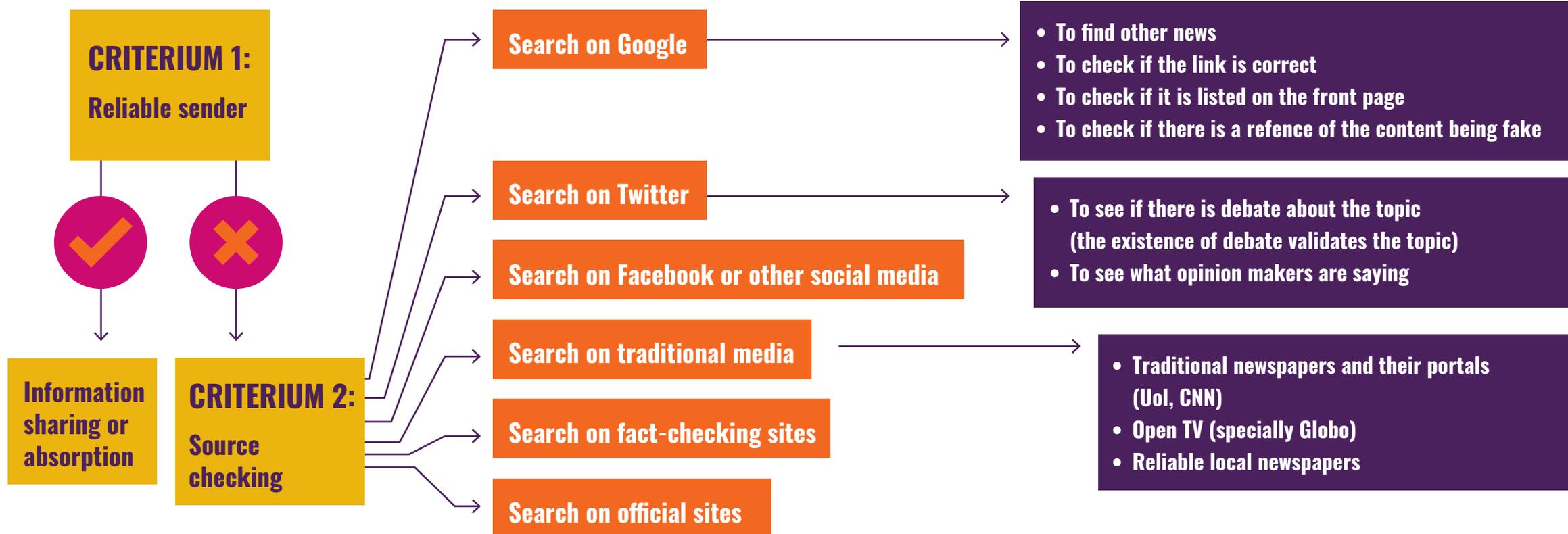
**It is a widespread concept, but, at the same time, it is broad and shadowy. To many, any deceitful or untruthful content is understood as fake news, including viruses, cons, social media profile photos that use filters, etc.**

Man | 29yr | SP

*“Fake News will always be there. Since the world began, there are lies, right? And I don’t see it increasing or decreasing, it’s just that now **there are more outlets for you to look for your truth.** The truth is a subjective thing, and there’s not much to debate with the person. Sometimes there’s a fact happening there, and you tell the person “do you see what’s happening?” The person doesn’t see it as truth.”*

# INTERACTIONS IN FACE OF DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES

It is well settled to respondents that fake news are a real problem and, in order to deal with this scenario, people have their own criteria to check and share information.



# INTERACTIONS IN FACE OF DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES

It is well settled to respondents that fake news are a real problem and, in order to deal with this scenario, people have their own criteria to check and share information.

**Woman | 39yr | RJ**

*“When I see someone posting something on the group I get suspicious. That’s my first attitude. I see some information, I google it, and it says it’s “fake”, then I write down ‘guys, it’s a virus’. So, they get a hint, right?”*

**Man | 49yr | PA**

*“You see that his account on Twitter is there, with date and time, and that it was on his profile, from his iPhone, right? So, there’s some reference there, that it can have some authenticity.”*

**Woman | 42yr | RJ**

*“When in doubt, I google it, I watch the Jornal Nacional [TV news], but I don’t click on anything related to politics, I think it’s almost a... I think there’s a very high percentage of fake news.”*

**Woman | 61yr | MG**

*“Just a caveat... I don’t click exactly because I don’t really trust [radio station] Jovem Pan. Now I’m observing where it came from, it came from Jovem Pan, and for being specifically Jovem Pan, maybe I wouldn’t share it...”*

**Man | 28yr | AP**

*“I followed [the program] Terça Livre, from Jovem Pan, right? I think it’s a very interesting channel, their kind of journalism, and I try to enter a dialogue, right? Here we take this very seriously, the dialogue, you know? Talking to people that have the same line of thinking.”*

**Woman | 32yr | SP**

*“So, I would share a well known site... Here in Sorocaba, we have the newspaper Cruzeiro do Sul, very well known, and the site that we use a lot, “Isto é”, as well as UOL... I think I would only share it if it came from these, otherwise I would screenshot it and post on my status.”*

# INTERACTIONS IN FACE OF DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES

Aside from protecting themselves from fake news, people consider it important to also fight them. For that reason, when they receive news, it became an automatic response to check their source, even though there is variation to what can be considered a “reliable source”. There still are, however, people who pass on news without any kind of checking: sometimes it happens by impulse, for willing to be part of a debate or to share an update; other times, sharing happens because the personal system of values determines the importance and urgency of the theme and the reliance on source.

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I have shared news I found interesting or important without checking their source] | Base 2021: 2018; Base 2020: 2671.

ALONG THE PERIOD OF AN YEAR, THE SELF AWARENESS IN RELATION TO SHARING MESSAGES INCREASED.

PEOPLE ADMIT HAVING PASSED ON NEWS THEY FOUND INTERESTING OR IMPORTANT WITHOUT CHECKING THE SOURCE:

2021

42%

2020

30%

Woman | 30yr | AM

*“Many times it’s that uncle or aunt from the family group, that shares without reading or just skims through it... Then, there’s a commotion on the group, lots of people believing it, nobody really stops to say ‘let me read these news here’”*

Woman | 28yr | SC

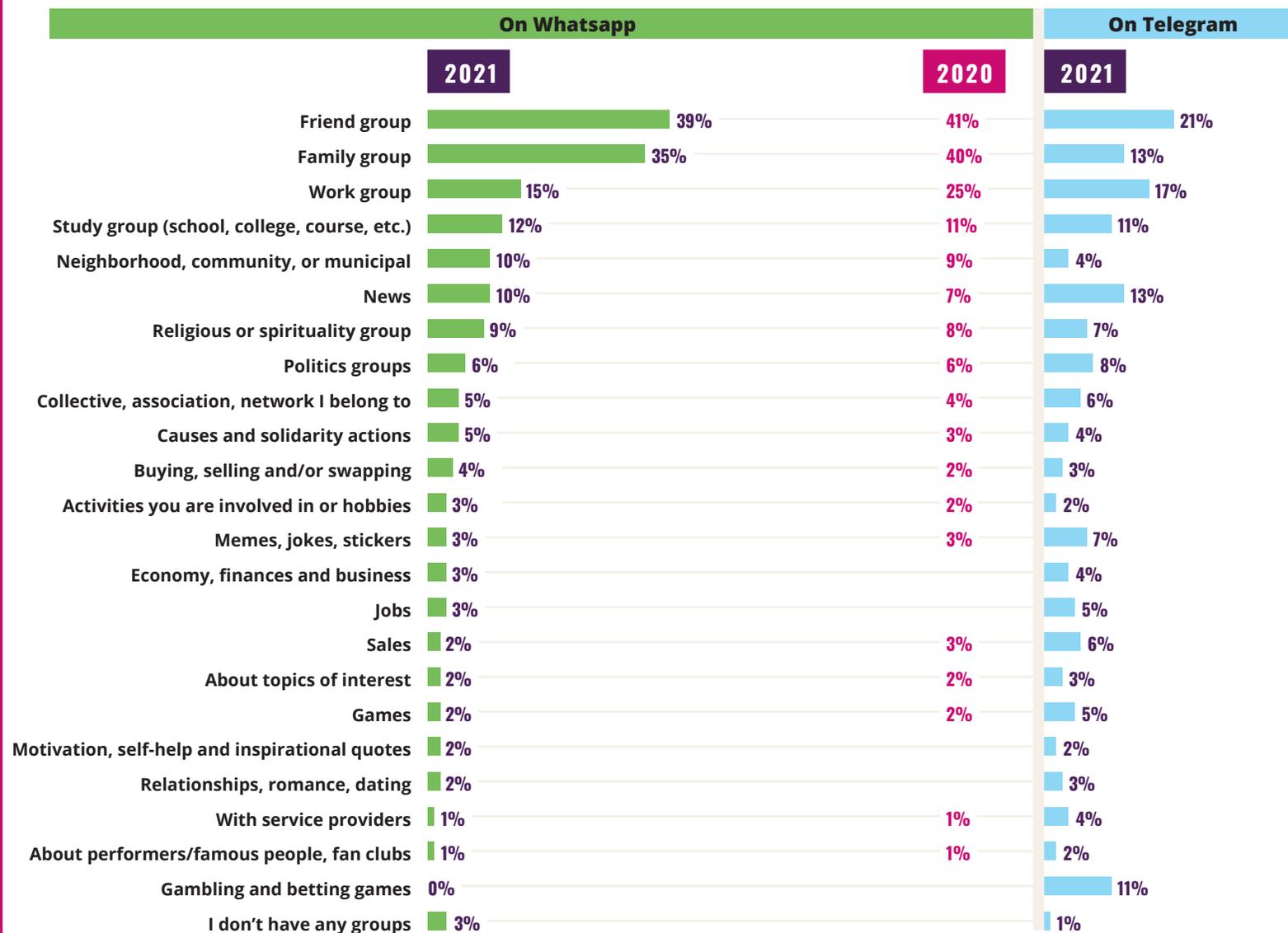
*“My friends would share it because of the headline’s impact, they wouldn’t have this attention, because we sometimes don’t see the source, right? And then, it would create a discussion about having to search to check if it’s really truth, to look for other sources, etc”*

# COMMUNICATION ABOUT POLITICS ON GROUPS

- In general, WhatsApp groups keep the same position on both editions.
- Meme and gambling groups are more frequently mentioned on Telegram.
- It is worth highlighting the relevance of religious groups among evangelical protestants.

\*The data from 2020 were weighted to allow comparison between years. Q14c. And what are the WhatsApp groups in which discussions about societal issues, such as defense of family, racism, deforestation, etc., appear the most? Check up to 3 alternatives. | Base WhatsApp 2021: 2018; Base WhatsApp 2020: 2671 Q14e. And what are the Telegram groups and channels in which discussions about societal issues, such as defense of family, racism, deforestation, etc., appear the most? Check up to 3 alternatives. | Base Telegram: 861

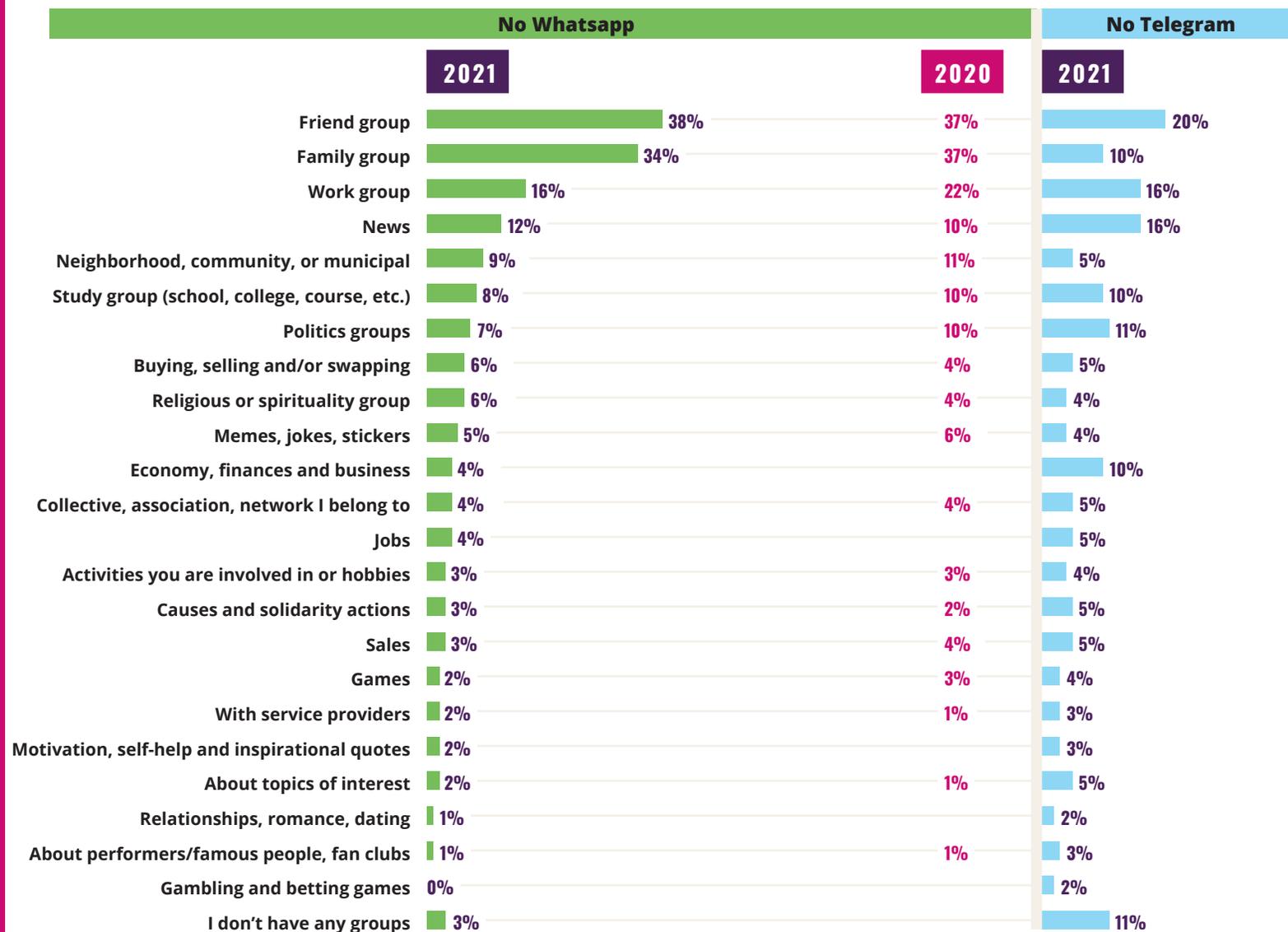
Groups in which societal issues are more frequently discussed



# COMMUNICATION ABOUT POLITICS IN GROUPS

- Between 2020 and 2021, the groups in which news about politics appear are still the same.
- It is noticeable that groups about economy and finances are often mentioned by Telegram users.

Groups in which news about politics, politicians and the government appear more frequently



\*Data from 2020 were weighted to allow comparison between years.  
 Q14a. Of the groups you participate in on WhatsApp, which are the ones in which news about politics, politicians and government appear the most? Check up to 3 alternatives. | Base WhatsApp 2021: 2018; Base WhatsApp 2020: 2671  
 Q14d. Of the groups and channels you participate in on Telegram, which are the ones in which news about politics, politicians and government appear the most? Check up to 3 alternatives. | Base Telegram: 861

# COMMUNICATION ABOUT POLITICS IN GROUPS

Although most of the users have contact with news and information about politics on their groups, not all of them feel safe or at ease to interact about this topic.

Q18. Please, check whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. [I feel safe talking about politics on WhatsApp]; [I feel safe talking about politics on Telegram] and [I follow current political issues (as the Supreme Federal Court, voting machines, etc) through Telegram channels] | WhatsApp base: 2018; Telegram base: 861

Woman | 39yr | RJ

*“I think the last elections [2018] were very tense for everybody. Friendships were broken, families grew apart. Shooting, punching and bombing, seriously. We stopped following each other on social media, people excluded and blocked friends, so I think today people are more at ease, avoiding this kind of discussion, because on the last elections it was really heavy.”*

THE FEELING OF SAFETY RELATED TO TALKING ABOUT POLITICS IS THE SAME FOR BOTH APPS:

41%

FEEL INSECURE ON WHATSAPP\*

40%

FEEL INSECURE ON TELEGRAM\*

\*Data referring to total users of each app.

53%

OF TELEGRAM USERS FOLLOW CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES (AS THE SUPREME FEDERAL COURT, VOTING MACHINES, ETC.) THROUGH PLATFORM CHANNELS.

Man | 29yr | SP

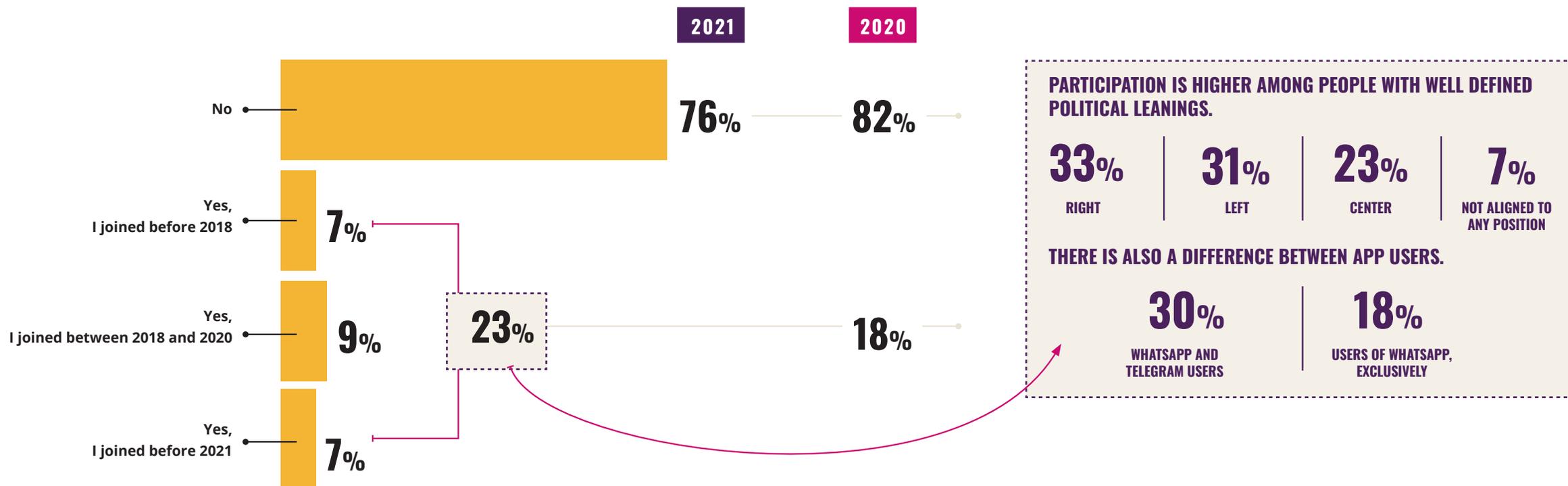
*“Yes, in fact, politics is in every group, there isn’t one that keeps quiet. And I’m there only observing. I’m less participative than I was before, things got more aggressive. They don’t want to keep on the field of ideas, they want to destroy you in any way, so I opted for keeping to my own now. I’ve already got my opinion, I have a north to follow.”*

# PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Even in a saturated environment, in which people avoid arguments and build strategies to keep the dialogue, there is an increase in the percentage of respondents that take part on politics groups. This can be explained by the fact that people have started to debate more among their peers.

Q22a. Do you participate in any WhatsApp group that aims to discuss political issues? (RU) | Base: 2018

Participation on WhatsApp groups aiming at discussing political issues







# **THE 2022 ELECTION ON MESSAGING APPS**

# BEHAVIORS TO JOIN GROUPS ABOUT THE 2022 ELECTION

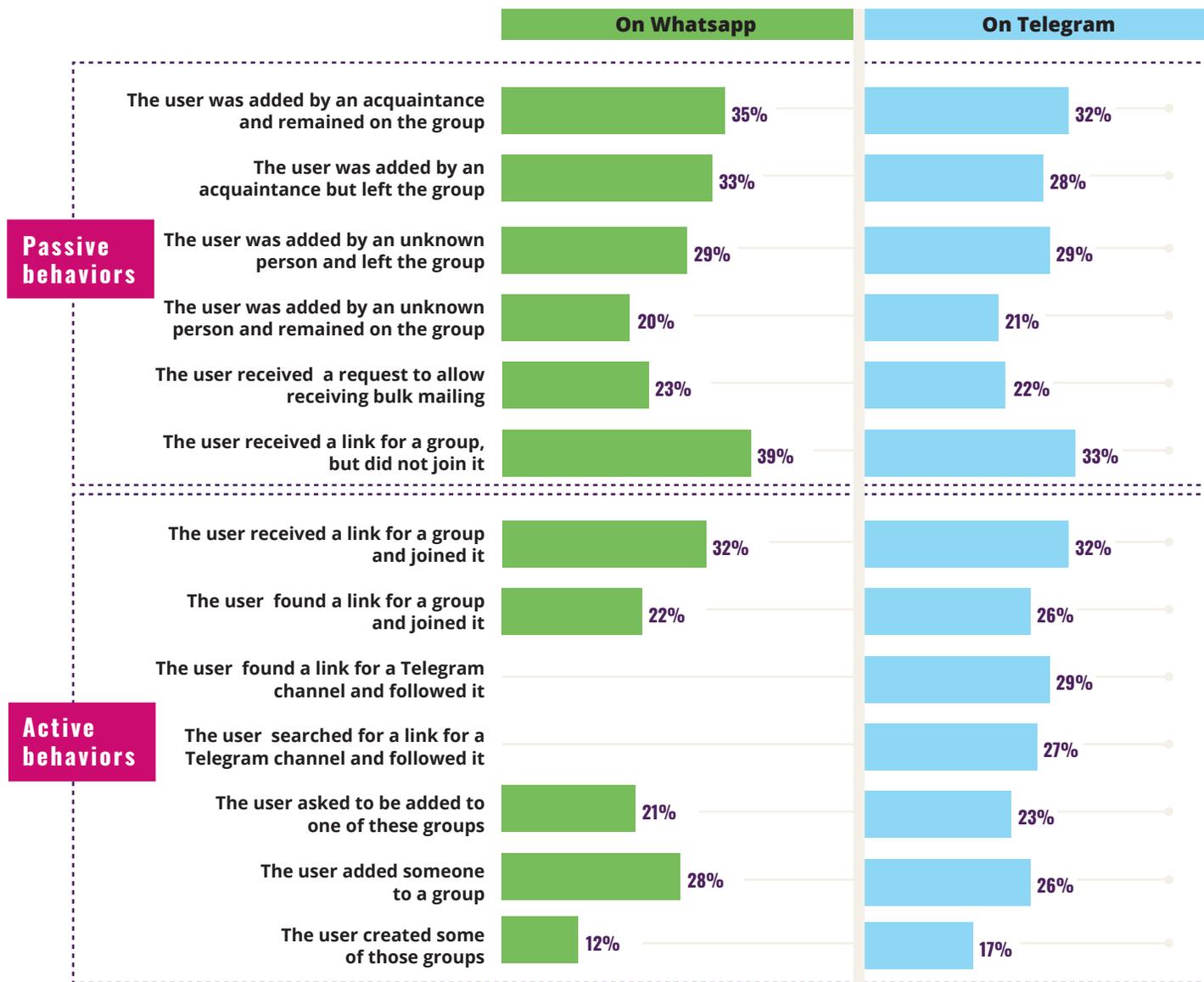
In general, there aren't any significant differences between Telegram and WhatsApp users in relation to joining groups which debate the 2022 presidential elections.

On Telegram, an active behavior in searching groups or channels is predominant.

The percentage of respondents who affirm having created groups is higher among the ones identified as right-wingers. This occurs both on WhatsApp and on Telegram.

Q16a. Considering WhatsApp groups that have dealt with the 2022 presidential elections in the last 2 months, you: (RM) | Base WhatsApp: 2018  
 Q16B. Considering Telegram groups and channels that have dealt with the 2022 presidential elections in the last 2 months, you: (RM) | Base Telegram: 861

Participation on WhatsApp and Telegram groups discussing the 2022 presidential elections, between October and December, 2021 (by total number of users of each app)



# BEHAVIORS TO JOIN GROUPS ABOUT THE 2022 ELECTION

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Q16a. Considering WhatsApp groups that have dealt with the 2022 presidential elections in the last 2 months, you: (RM) | Base WhatsApp: 2018  
Q16B. Considering Telegram groups and channels that have dealt with the 2022 presidential elections in the last 2 months, you: (RM) | Base Telegram: 861

Participation of  
between Octo

Passive behaviors

Active behaviors

Man | 35yr | RN

*“Yes, a congressman. He sent it, I wonder how he got my phone number. So, I answered ‘hey, pal, don’t take it badly, but if you send me another message like that, I’ll have to report you, because you’re anticipating the electoral campaign’. Right? Even though there are others there, already campaigning, but it’s annoying, it’s a nuisance, you don’t even know the person and, out of the blue, they sent you an invitation to vote for them, right?”*

Telegram

32%

28%

29%

33%

32%

30%

29%

27%

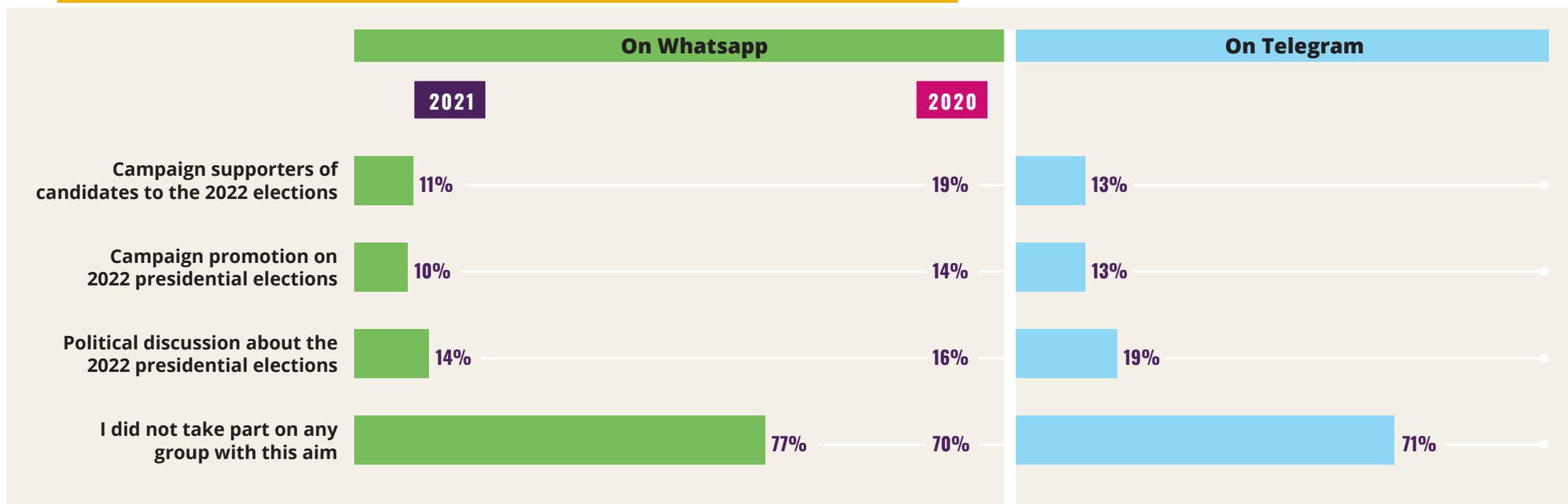
30%

# GROUPS WITH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE 2022 ELECTION

At the end of 2021, groups supporting and promoting campaigns were already present on the apps. Participation of this kind of group is higher among Telegram users.

Q13a. Reflecting upon the last 2 months, have you participated in any groups on WhatsApp created for: (RM) | Base WhatsApp: 2018  
 Q13b. Reflecting upon the last 2 months, have you participated in any groups or channels on Telegram created for: (RM) | Base Telegram: 861

## Participation on WhatsApp and Telegram groups, between October and December, 2021, created for:



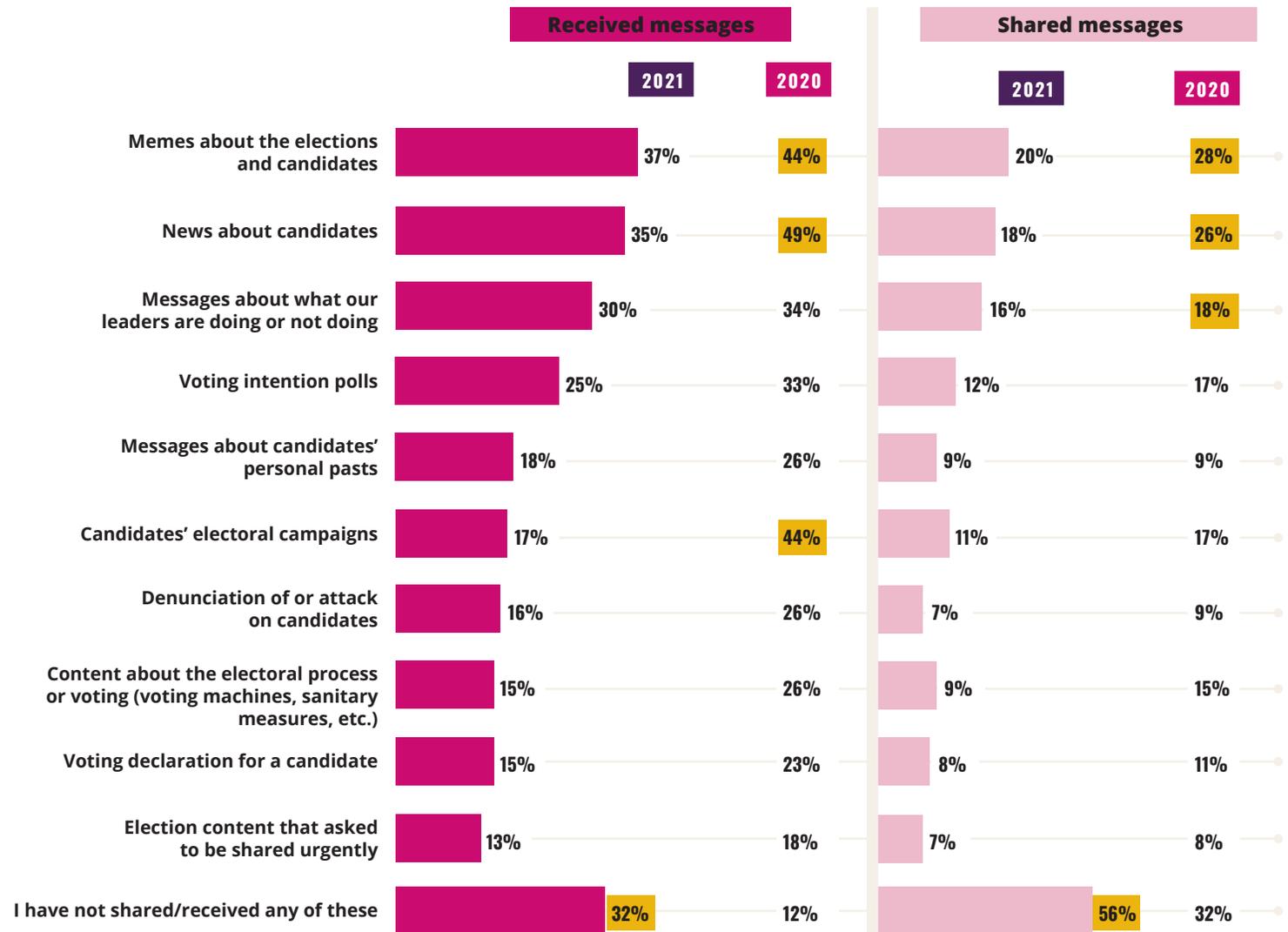
# RECEIVING AND SHARING MESSAGES

A year before the elections, two thirds of the respondents affirmed having received different kinds of messages about the 2022 presidential elections. This proportion is even higher among residents of state capitals. Memes still stand out as the most shared political messages.

People still share less than receive.

Q17a. Which of these types of messages did you receive from someone about the 2022 presidential election? (RM) | Q17b. And which of these types of messages did you share about the 2022 presidential election? (RM) | Base 2021: 2018 | Base 2020: 2617 responses

Fluxo de mensagens sobre as eleições presidenciais de 2022 (dados de dez.2021)

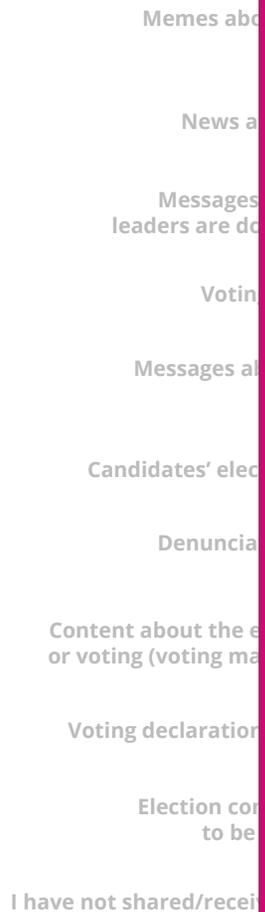


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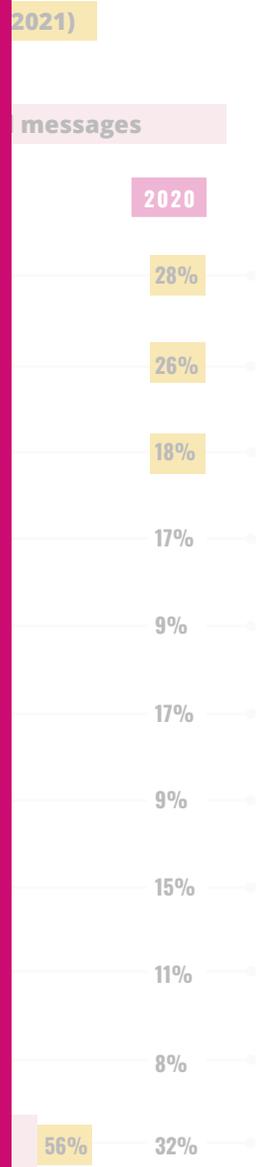
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Q17a. Which of these types of messages did you receive from someone about the 2022 presidential election? (RM) | Q17b. And which of these types of messages did you share about the 2022 presidential election? (RM) | Base 2021: 2018 | Base 2020: 2617 responses



Woman | 19yr | PA

*“I think I probably wouldn’t receive it, because the people I have on WhatsApp are not very connected to politics, and the ones that are don’t send it because they know I don’t follow politics. So, I probably wouldn’t receive it from anybody and wouldn’t share it with anybody.”*



# RECEIVING AND SHARING MESSAGES IN THE 2022 ELECTION

In a pre-electoral period, multiple behaviors are seen in relation to political content. Some people opt not to access political messages; others, receive, read, but do not share them; others might share specific topics; and others build strategies to increase the confidence in what they are sharing, using their own voice to legitimize and credibilize the topic and the message.

**Woman | 28yr | SC**

*“I avoid this kind of group [of political news] like the plague, because there’s a lot of fake news. It’s a lot of unnecessary controversy. I don’t have space or memory to deal with this kind of news and things like that, if I want to see something about politics, I actively go after it.”*

**Woman | 39yr | RJ**

*“So, I want to share something with the guys, but, before, I write my text, I never use someone else’s text to share content, because it would seem fake to me. So, to give authenticity to what I’m doing, I myself write it in my own words.”*

# CONCLUSION

Messaging apps are not the protagonists of information dissemination, even though they have a specific position on the chain of access, consumption and distribution of information. These apps are still in close relation to other media, from the traditional ones (open TV), to social media seen as important to disseminating messages (Twitter). Still, Telegram has an increasing space for content distribution.

**We can identify a simultaneous and contradictory movement in the behavior of group interactions: on the one hand, there is an increasing retraction of users on WhatsApp, who are seeking to interact with smaller groups, with acquaintances and people with shared interests; on the other hand, the use of other apps, such as Telegram and Discord, shows a tendency to seek to break the bubble and look for a kind of “renewal” of interactions.**

# CONCLUSION

The political environment is reflected on the way people use WhatsApp. They are saturated with information and political controversy, and look for safe groups to express their opinions.

**The feeling of suspicion in relation to all kinds of contents lead users to create their own checking strategies, resorting to external sources to verify authenticity before sharing an information, political message or even a link. These dynamics result in WhatsApp being seen as a channel for sharing information, which reliability is built through other platforms or relations.**

In opposition, on the use of apps such as Telegram and Discord, there is a tendency to open the horizons and strengthen communities, to have access to new contents and interact with people from “outside the bubble” with shared interests.

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