



More in
Common

Understanding the impact of social media and smartphones

US, UK, France and Germany

May 2024

Key insights

Methodology: More in Common conducted nationally representative polling of more than 8,000 people across the US, UK, France and Germany, between 29 April and 2 May 2024 by More in Common with Dynata.

Across all four countries, people are concerned about their smartphone use, and want the government to do more to regulate social media companies.

Concerns about young children's social media use are particularly potent - with people very worried about the impact on people under 15.

Smartphone usage is highest in the UK and the US, and support for policies to reign in the use of social media is highest in France and the UK.

The public strongly support a range of policy measures to limit the harm caused by social media - chief among them banning social media for under 15 year olds.

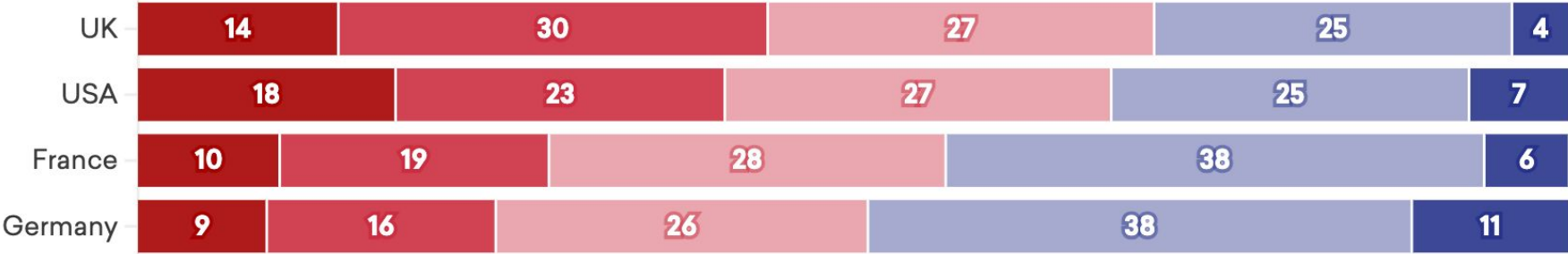
In each of the countries, there is significant common ground between left and right voters for regulating social media.

Phone habits are entrenched in all four countries

Many people rarely go an hour without looking at their phone

Thinking about a normal day, how long do you usually go without looking at your phone?

- Less than 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes but less than every hour
- Around 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours but not all day
- All day

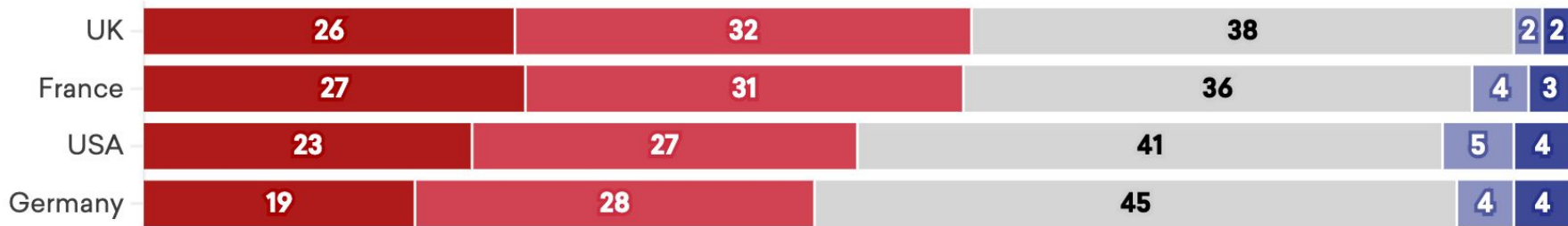


People are unsatisfied with the time they spend on their phones

People are generally unhappy with the amount of time they spend on their phone

Thinking about the time you spend on your phone, do you think...

- I spend far too much time on my phone
- I spend a bit too much time on my phone
- I spend the right amount of time on my phone
- I spend too little time on my phone
- I spend far too little time on my phone

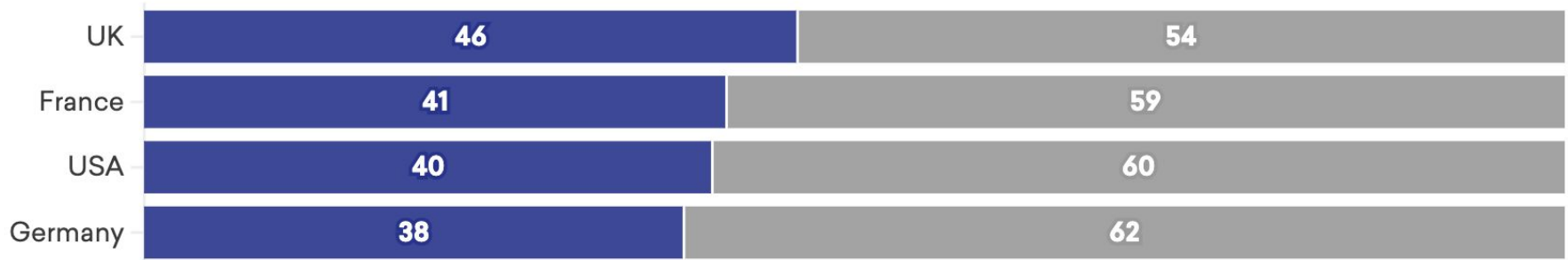


Parents are struggling with their children's social media usage

Many parents struggle to limit the amount of time their children spend on their phones

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- I struggle to limit the amount of time my child(ren) spend on their phones
- I find it easy to limit the amount of time my child(ren) spend on their phones



Is social media a force for good or bad?

While many have no strong view, people tend to think that social media is bad for society - apart from in Germany

Do you think social media is a good or a bad thing for society overall?

● A good thing overall ● Neither a good thing nor a bad thing ● Don't know ● A bad thing overall



People are most concerned about impact on children

In all four countries, there is a strong sense that social media is harming children

Do you think social media has a positive or a negative impact on the lives of children aged under 15 overall?

● Positive impact ● Neutral ● Don't know ● Negative impact

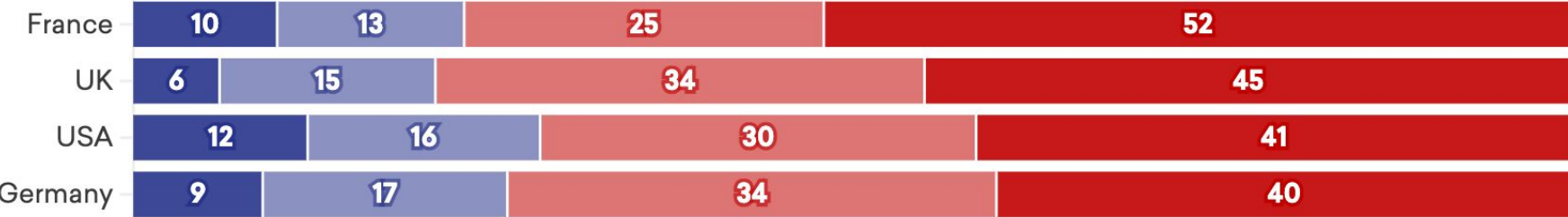


Are the dangers of social media exaggerated?

Very few people believe that the dangers of social media are exaggerated

Please use the scale to indicate which comes closest to your view, where 1 means you fully agree with the first statement and 4 means you fully agree with the second statement.

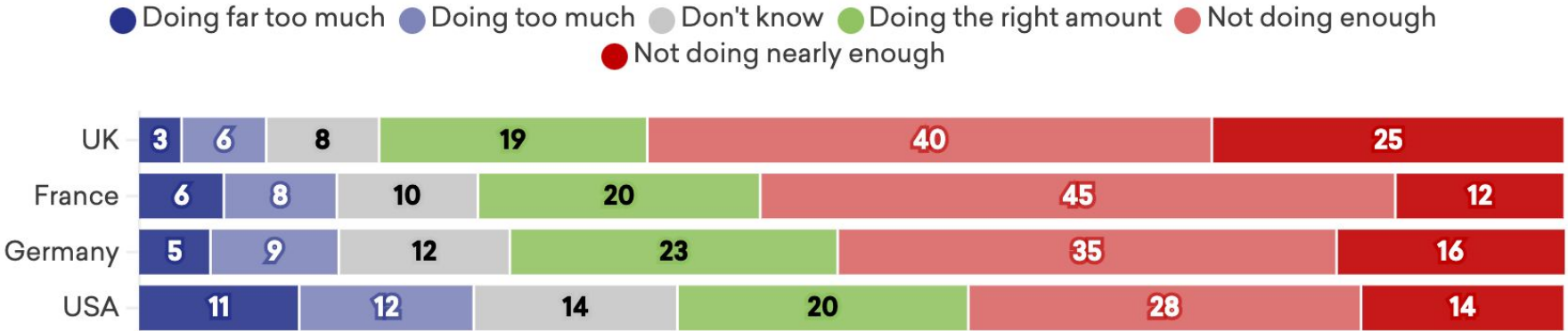
● 1 - I think the dangers of social media are often exaggerated ● 2 - ● 3 -
● 4 - Not enough attention is paid to the dangers of social media



Strong bipartisan support for more government regulation of social media

In each country, people tend to think that the government is not doing enough to regulate social media

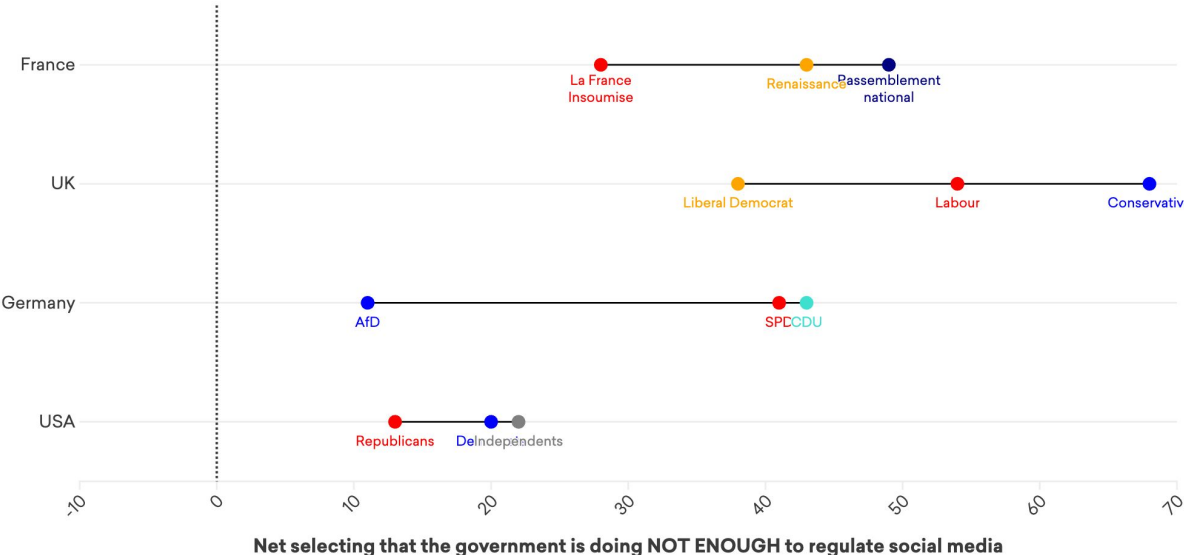
What is your view of the regulation of social media platforms, like Facebook, TikTok and YouTube? Is the government...



Support for regulation of social media is high across parties

In all four countries, there is cross-party support for regulating social media

What is your view of the regulation of social media platforms, like Facebook, TikTok and YouTube? Is the government doing too much or not enough?

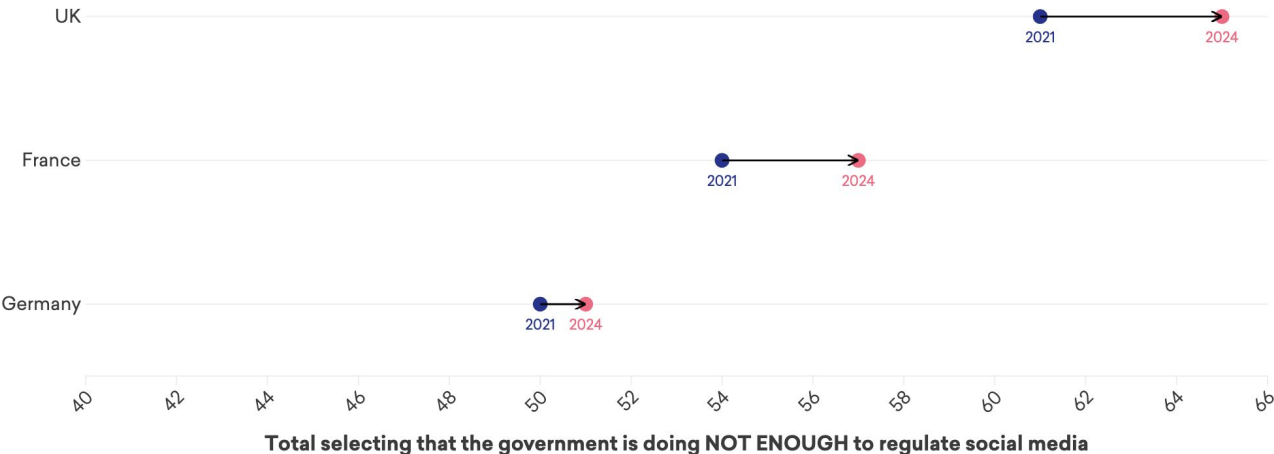


Source: More in Common, May 2024 • Net scores calculated by subtracting "Too much" answers from "Not enough" answers

Support for regulation of social media has increased since 2021

Support for regulating social media has increased since 2021 in the UK, France and Germany

What is your view of the regulation of social media platforms, like Facebook, TikTok and YouTube? Is the government doing too much or not enough?

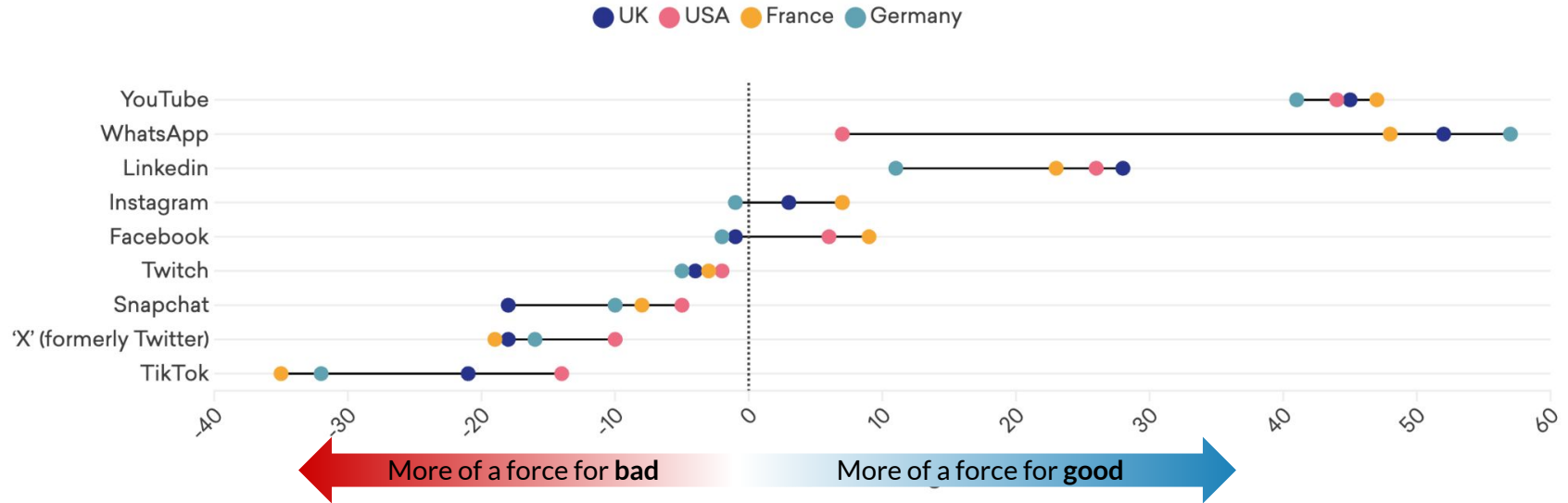


Source: More in Common, December 2021 and May 2024 • Total scores calculated by adding "Not enough" answers to "Not nearly enough" answers
Question not asked in the US in 2021

Perceptions of different platforms differ

Not all apps are equal - people are more positive about YouTube and WhatsApp than they are about X and TikTok

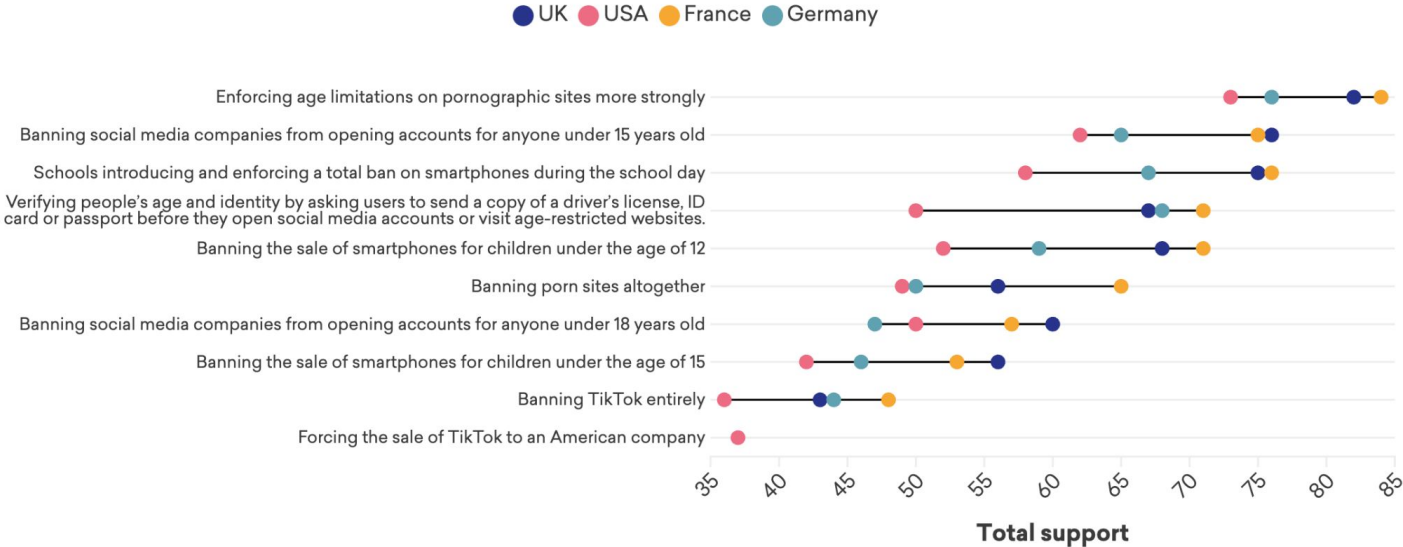
Do you think the following platforms are generally a force for good or bad in the this country today?



Strong support for a range of policies on social media

Strong support for a range of policies, such as banning social media accounts for those under 15

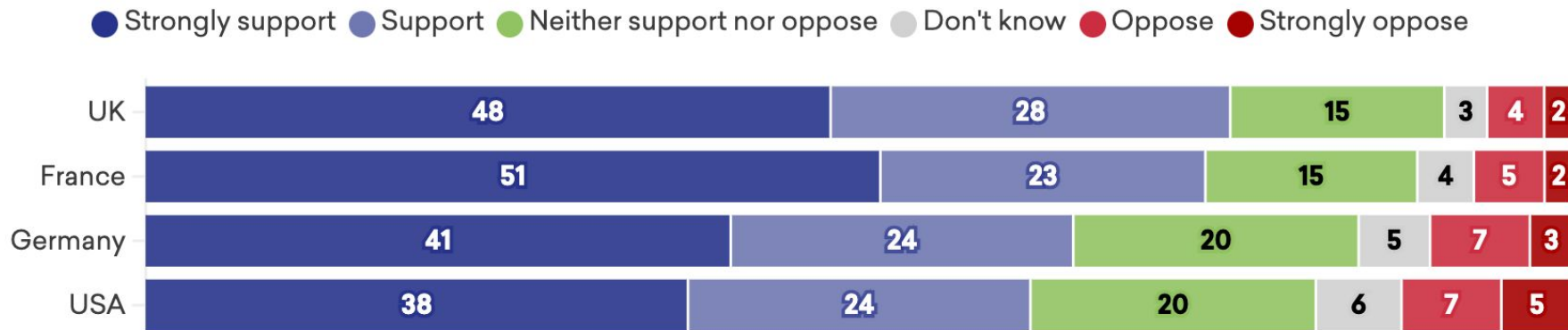
Some governments have proposed the following measures. Do you support or oppose these?



Banning social media for under 15 year olds is among the most popular policies

High levels of support for banning social media for under 15 year olds across countries

To what extent do you support or oppose these policies? [Banning social media companies from opening accounts for anyone under 15 years old]



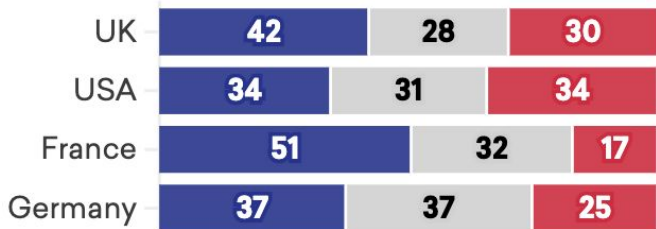
Many wish social media had never been invented

People are more negative about social media and Tiktok than they are about smartphones in general

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

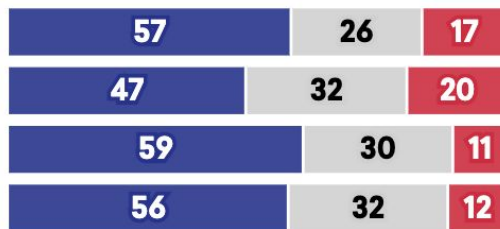
I would prefer to live in a world where social media was never invented

I believe the world is better off because social media exists



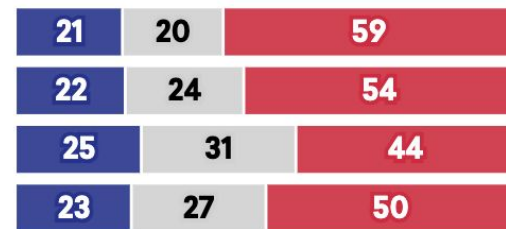
I would prefer to live in a world where TikTok was never invented

I believe the world is better off because TikTok exists



I would prefer to live in a world where smartphones were never invented

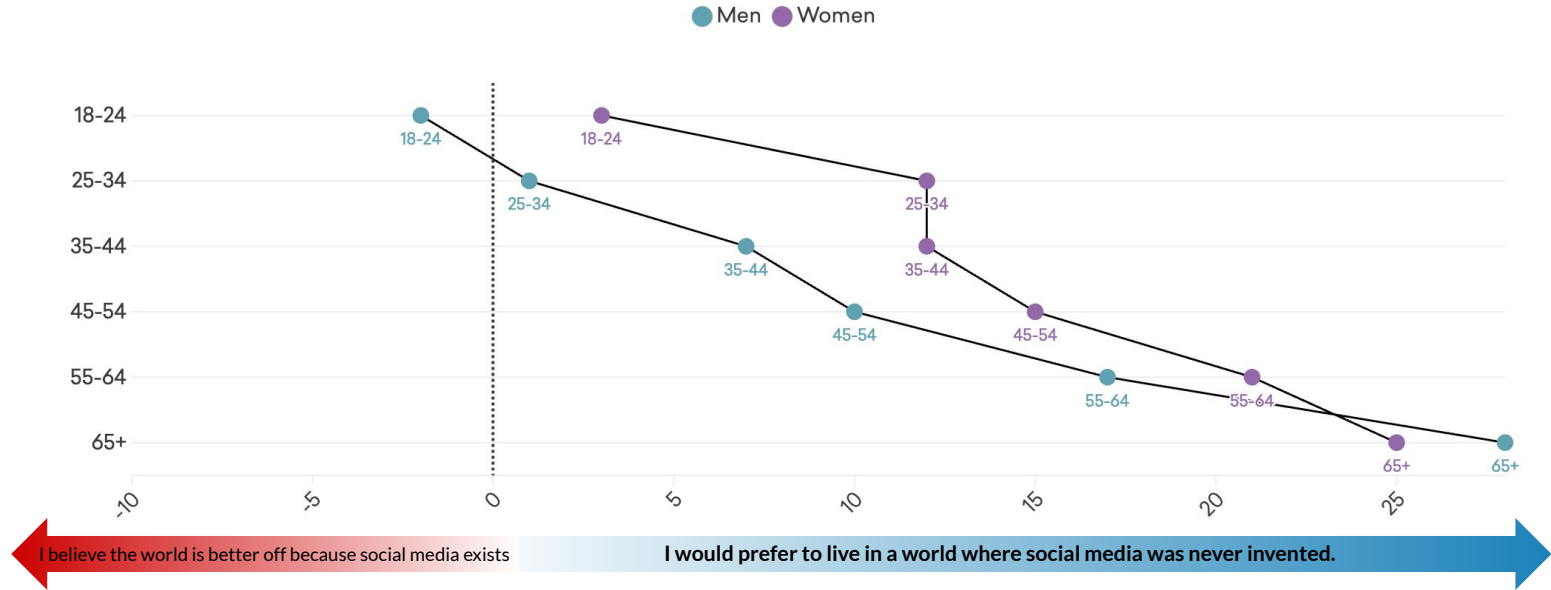
I believe the world is better off because smartphones exist



Notable gender and age differences - with women more likely to prefer a world without social media

Young men are the only group who think the world is better for having social media

And women are more likely to believe that they would rather live in a world without social media



Further information:
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