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Meta

The State of Social Connections



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Executive Summary

Humans are a social species. Connections with others are essential to people's well-being and mental health. Social isolation is consistently found to be a risk factor associated with key well-being indicators, such as how quickly people heal from physical ailments, how well they maintain cognitive health as they age and how long they live. In short, people need social connections to thrive.

But while academic literature has long validated the importance of human connections, there has been little research that provides representative, multinational data on how connected people feel and how they connect with others. More governments, organizations and companies are turning their attention to understanding the nature and impact of people's social connections, driving heightened interest in, and need for, such research. To address this gap, Gallup, Meta and a group of academic advisors collaborated to design and conduct the State of Social Connections study, which offers a first look at how social connections vary across different geographic regions.

This report describes results from a detailed survey administered through face-to-face or phone interviews with people aged 15 and older in seven countries spanning diverse global regions. It provides an in-depth look at how connected, socially supported and lonely people in different parts of the world feel.

The report also sheds new light on the characteristics of people's social connections, the ways people interact with others, the groups with whom they have frequent contact, and how they connect with others to get support when they need it.

In the wake of social disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most people in all seven countries said they felt connected to others.

However, there were some in each country who did not feel connected to others, pointing to the opportunity for efforts to help improve feelings of connectedness among those populations.

People used a variety of methods to interact with others, from in-person to phone or video calls, to social media. In-person interactions were the most frequent method of interaction, and in most countries studied, a majority of people used at least two methods of interaction daily. People who used social media daily to interact were more likely to have used other methods as well. Findings suggest people used technology-mediated methods in addition to, not instead of, in-person and other interactions.

At least one-third of people in every country studied said they needed support or help in the past 30 days. Most frequently, people said they interacted with others either in-person or through phone or voice calls to get support. Many people in each country also said they used social media to get the support or help they needed, with at least 20% in all countries saying they interacted with others through WhatsApp, Facebook/Facebook Messenger or Instagram to get support. Between one-fifth and one-half of people in all countries said they interacted with friends or family who live far away for support, suggesting an important opportunity for technology-mediated communication.

Many of the factors related to feelings of connectedness, as measured by loneliness and social support, varied across countries. However, some results were more consistent, including the finding that people with larger social networks tended to feel more connected, and people who said they were struggling financially tended to feel less connected to others.

This research contributes to a richer understanding of people's connections, as well as what factors are associated with higher and lower feelings of connection.

The results presented here can be used to inform or expand further research and efforts to provide less-connected groups access to the support they need.

Given the diverse countries included in the research, Meta and Gallup hope this study can help facilitate a better understanding of feelings of loneliness and social support and how they vary across populations, as well as by people's individual characteristics and circumstances. Overall, interventions to help people navigate loneliness and access social support may need to be tailored to people's specific characteristics and localized within their country-specific contexts.

This report scratches the surface of social connections, with all their complexity and nuance. The findings point to the need for ongoing research that explores the nature of human connection to improve people's lives. Meta and Gallup are committed to further research in which many of the insights presented here will be further explored using data collected via the 2022 Gallup World Poll in 140+ countries. A second report detailing results from that phase will be released in 2023.

Data from both phases are being released through Meta's [Data for Good](#) program with hopes that academics, policymakers and organizations across the private and public sectors will leverage the data to better understand not only who feels least socially connected, but also how to approach ensuring they have access to the supportive social connections they need to thrive.

Introduction

Connections with other people, along with a host of other biological¹ and environmental² factors, are essential to people's well-being³ and mental health.⁴ Social isolation is consistently found to be a risk factor associated with key well-being indicators, such as how quickly people heal from physical ailments, how well they maintain cognitive health as they age⁵ and how long they live.⁶ In short, people need social connections to thrive.⁷

Social connection can refer to a general sense of belonging or community, more specific interactions that sustain relationships, and the support or capital people exchange with others.

Interacting with people with whom one has stronger ties, such as close friends and family members, can provide psychological support vital to coping with adversity and boost feelings of purpose and optimism.⁸ Interacting with weaker ties, such as casual friends and community members, can also empower individuals by providing information or economic opportunities to which they might not otherwise have access,⁹ as demonstrated in a recent study that found that people's share of high-socioeconomic status Facebook friends is one of the strongest predictors of upward mobility yet identified.¹⁰

- 1 Dfarhud, D., Malmir, M., & Khanahmadi, M. (2014). Happiness & health: The biological factors- systematic review article. *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 43(11), 1468-1477. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4449495/>
- 2 Cooper, R., Boyko, C., & Codinhoto, R. (2010). The effect of the physical environment on mental wellbeing. In C. L. Cooper, J. Field, U. Goswami, R. Jenkins, & B. J. Sahakian (Eds.), *Mental capital and wellbeing* (pp. 967-1006). Wiley Blackwell. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2009-22507-084>
- 3 Cooper, H., Okamura, L., & Gurka, V. (1992). Social activity and subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 13(5), 573-583. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/019188699290198X>
- 4 *Social connection definition | What is social connection.* (n.d.). Greater Good. Retrieved July 25, 2022, from https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/social_connection/definition; Lieberman, M. D. (2013). *Social: Why our brains are wired to connect*. Crown Publishers; Thoits, P. A. (2011). Mechanisms linking social ties and support to physical and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 52(2), 145-161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146510395592>
- 5 Global Council on Brain Health. (2017). *The brain and social connectedness: GCBH recommendations on social engagement and brain health*. <https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/social-engagement-and-brain-health/>
- 6 Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., Baker, M., Harris, T., & Stephenson, D. (2015). Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10(2), 227-237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614568352>
- 7 Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497-529. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497>
- 8 Penn State University. (2019, November 25). *Feeling loved in everyday life linked with improved well-being*. ScienceDaily. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/11/191125121005.htm>; Jolly, E., Tamir, D. I., Burum, B., & Mitchell, J. P. (2019). Wanting without enjoying: The social value of sharing experiences. *PLOS ONE*, 14(4). e0215318. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0215318>
- 9 Abbott, M., & Reilly, A. (2019, May). *The role of social capital in supporting economic mobility*. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/aspe-files/261791/socialcapitalsupportingeconomicmobility.pdf>; Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2776392>
- 10 Chetty, R., Jackson, M. O., Kuchler, T. et al. (2022). Social capital I: Measurement and associations with economic mobility. *Nature*, 608, 108-121. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-022-04996-4>

While academic literature has long validated the importance of human connections, there has been little research that provides multinational, large-scale, representative data on how connected people feel and how they connect with others. In light of growing concerns about the public health risks associated with loneliness,¹¹ more governments, organizations and companies are turning their attention to understanding the nature of and specific roles that people's connections play in their lives. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers have been particularly interested in the effects of disruption to people's social connections, with a range of studies looking at changes in people's psychological well-being throughout the crisis.^{12,13,14}

To help inform both public and private sector efforts to improve people's social connections, Meta and Gallup have partnered with leading academics and experts on a new research initiative to provide more detailed information on the nature and quality of such connections across global settings.

This report presents results from the first phase of the State of Social Connections study, which included a detailed survey on the quality and quantity of people's social interactions in seven countries spanning diverse global regions. The resulting data provide an in-depth look at how connected, socially supported and lonely people feel in various cultural, economic and technological environments.

They also shed new light on the characteristics of people's social connections, the ways people interact with others, the groups with whom they have frequent contact, and how they use their connections to seek support when they need it.

The report is intended as a high-level overview of the main findings; it does not address all research questions presented by the data. It will be followed by further analyses from Meta and Gallup, and a second report detailing results from a shorter question set about social connections, fielded in more than 140 countries as part of the 2022 Gallup World Poll, will be released in 2023.

Additionally, to facilitate further research and the application of findings to pressing questions from policymakers, academics and nongovernmental organizations, Meta and Gallup are releasing data from the study through Meta's Data for Good program.¹⁵ Data collected as part of the State of Social Connections study can then be widely used to better understand how people in different global environments maintain supportive relationships. Factors related to higher or lower levels of connectedness and social support may also help identify opportunities for interventions that policymakers, nongovernmental organizations and private companies can use to help people bolster and increase the ties they need to live happy, healthy lives.

11 Holt-Lunstad, J. (2018). The potential public health relevance of social isolation and loneliness: Prevalence, epidemiology, and risk factors. *Public Policy & Aging Report*, 27(4), 127-130. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ppar/prx030>

12 Both, L. M., Zoratto, G., Calegaro, V. C., Ramos-Lima, L. F., Negretto, B. L., Hauck, S., & Freitas, L. H. M. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing: Economic, psychological, family, and technological effects. *Trends in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, 43, 85-91. <https://www.scielo.br/jj/trends/a/cZNsN9kYFmd5ZNsgtk4dnYm/>

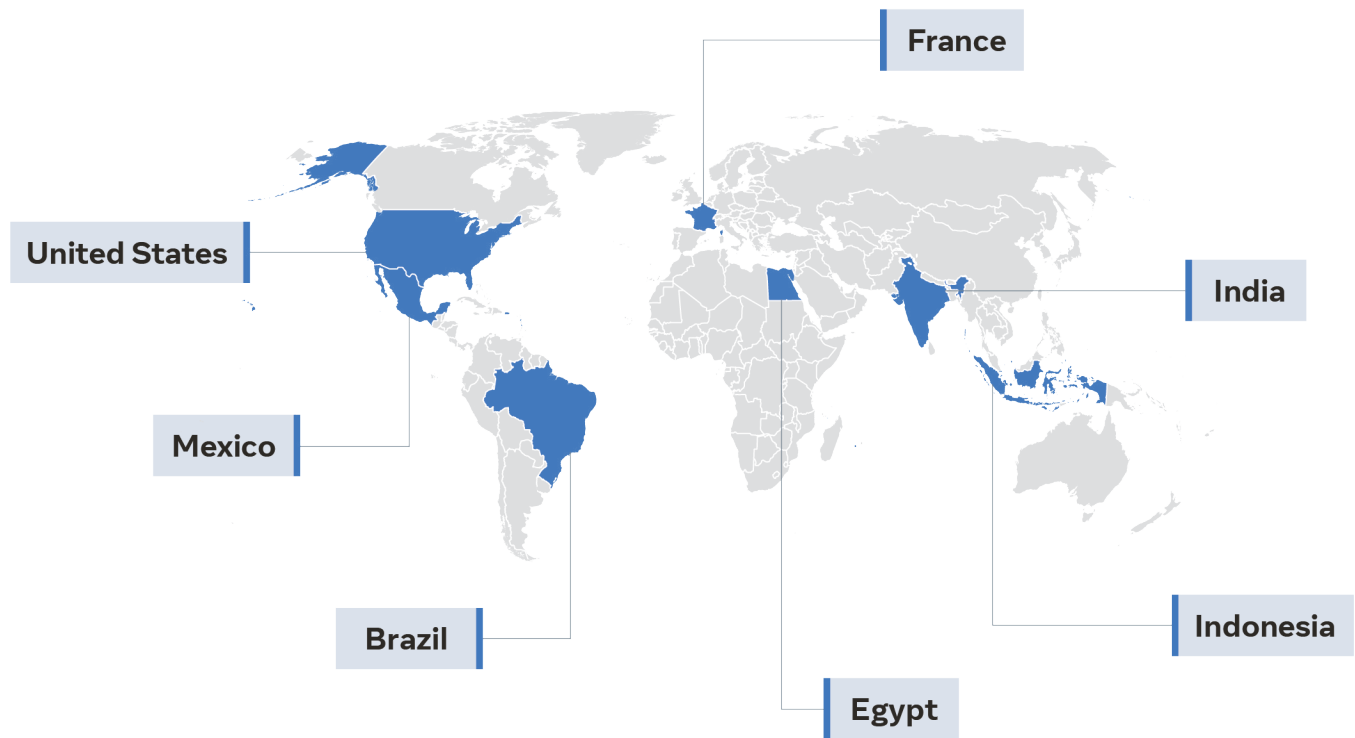
13 *Mental health and COVID-19: Early evidence of the pandemic's impact: Scientific brief*, 2 March 2022. (2022). World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/352189>

14 *COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide*. (2022, March 2). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>

15 Anonymized data is being released in a way that protects the privacy of survey respondents.

Methods

This section provides an overview of the methods used to collect the data described in this report. For a detailed description, please see the accompanying [methodology report](#). Data presented here are drawn from an in-depth survey on people's social connections in seven countries: Brazil, Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States.



Countries selected for this phase were chosen based on the representativeness of languages spoken globally, population size and world region. Meta and Gallup engaged in a collaborative process to design all aspects of the study, including developing the survey instrument and analyzing the data, and incorporated critical inputs at several **key stages**:

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature on social connection — broadly defined and including survey instruments that have previously been used to measure connections — informed the overall study approach, including the major themes and research questions to be addressed, as well as the selection of populations to be studied. In developing the final survey, researchers drew from previous work measuring the quality and nature of people’s social connections, including commonly used surveys on loneliness and social support, such as the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) Social Support Survey.

COGNITIVE INTERVIEWS

Prior to finalizing the questionnaire, Gallup conducted cognitive interviews with 20 participants per major language in each country surveyed. These interviews gathered feedback from respondents on the survey questions, including how they interpreted questions and response options and how easy or difficult it was to understand and answer each question, to ensure the concepts of interest were being captured as intended. The cognitive interviews also tested whether the translations were appropriate and conveyed the intended meaning across languages.

EXPERT CONSULTATION

Throughout the process of designing and conducting the study, including selecting countries, creating the questionnaire and analyzing the results, Meta and Gallup consulted with prominent academic advisors with expertise in one or more areas covered by the survey.¹⁶ Their recommendations were critical to ensuring the study would contribute valuable data and insights to researchers studying social connections, and the analysis reflected experts’ current thinking on the topic.

¹⁶ Meta and Gallup sought expertise from a wide group of academics in early stages of study conceptualization. Academic advisors who provided consultation on a consistent basis for the study included Nicole Ellison, University of Michigan; John Helliwell, University of British Columbia; Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Brigham Young University; Sonja Lyubomirsky, University of California, Riverside; and William Tov, Singapore Management University. Academic advisors were not compensated financially for their time and expertise but were provided opportunities to access privacy-protected study data before it was publicly released and to collaborate with Meta and Gallup on publications.

For the final survey, Gallup interviewed a minimum of 2,000 people aged 15 or older in each country between April and June 2022.¹⁷ Interviews were conducted face-to-face at respondents' homes in Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Mexico, and via landline and mobile telephone in France and the United States. All samples were probability-based and representative of the national population within each country. The data within each country was weighted to minimize bias and project the sample data to its corresponding target population, and all estimates presented in this report take into account the design effect introduced by the complex sampling designs. Assuming a 95% confidence level, the maximum design adjusted margin of error for a country-level percentage estimate ranged from $\pm 2.5\%$ (Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States) to $\pm 2.7\%$ (Egypt and France).^{18,19} For full details on the study methods, including sampling, weighting and analytic approach, see the accompanying [methodology report](#).

The results presented in this report are focused on descriptive statistics and exploratory analyses. Where appropriate, the amount of certainty in specific estimates (i.e., 95% confidence intervals) and model comparisons (i.e., likelihood ratio tests) were used to help identify differences between groups and guide interpretation of results. Effect sizes are also available for interpretation in the methodology report.

To provide an overview of the state of people's connections around the world, this report begins by presenting how connected people feel to others in Section 1. Section 2 explores whom people are connecting with and how they are doing so. Section 3 explores support, examining how many people need it, and from whom and how they connect with others to get it. Finally, Section 4 examines what factors are associated with feelings of connectedness by presenting results from analyses showing who feels more and less lonely and socially supported.

As data collection took place in the spring of 2022, social distancing and other COVID-19 restrictions were lifting in most of the countries studied, according to the COVID-19 Government Response Stringency Index developed at Oxford University.²⁰ Nevertheless, ongoing restrictions may have limited people's ability to interact with others in person — particularly in India and Indonesia, where Stringency Index scores were higher than in most other countries studied during the survey's field period. Results presented in this report should be viewed in this context.

17 All participants provided informed consent to participate. Parental consent was obtained for all those under the age of majority in each country studied.

18 Aggregate data, including country-level weighted estimates with standard errors, 95% confidence intervals and question wording, are publicly available [here](#).

19 All error bars in this report represent 95% confidence intervals and incorporate the effect of weighting, stratification and clustering at the primary sampling unit. This approach is consistent with that Gallup takes for its annual World Poll.

20 *COVID-19 government response tracker*. (n.d.). University of Oxford Blavatnik School of government. Retrieved September 1, 2022, from <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker>





SECTION 1

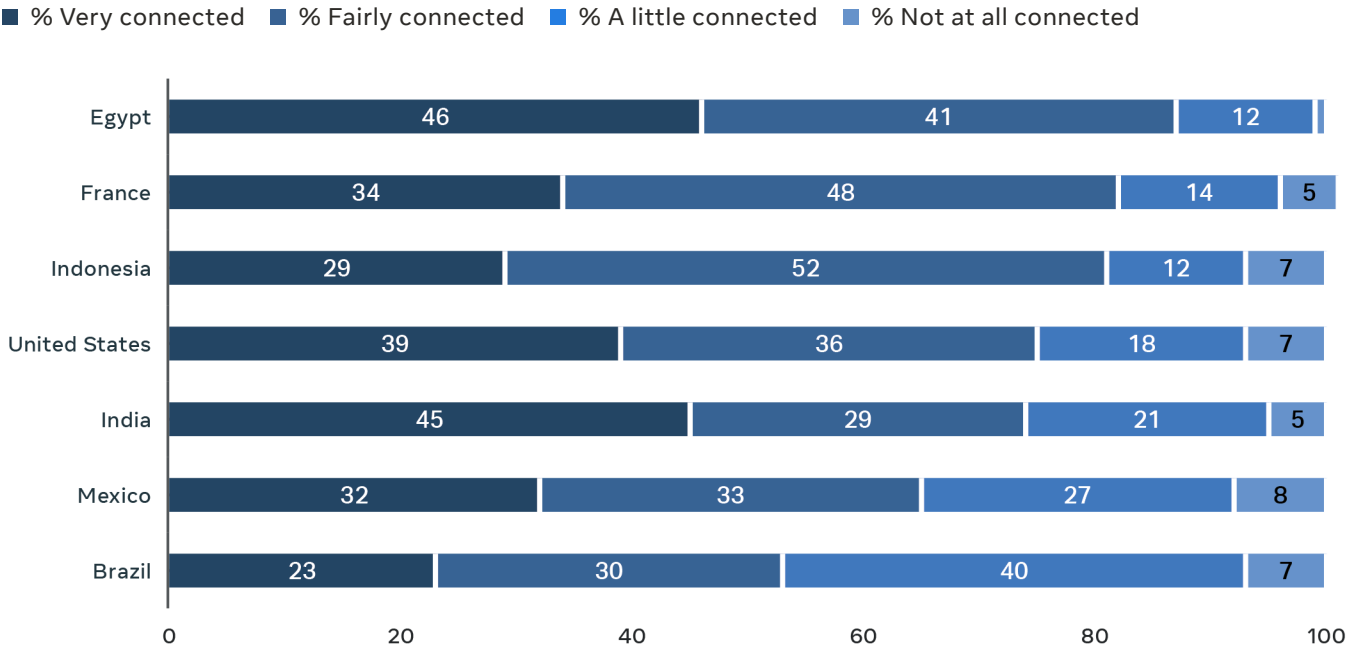
How Connected Do People Feel?

To understand the state of people's feelings of connectedness, the State of Social Connections study asked people: *In general, how connected do you feel to people? By connected, I mean how close you feel to people emotionally.*

In all seven countries, a majority of people said they felt “very” or “fairly” connected to people (as opposed to “a little” or “not at all”). More than eight in 10 people in Egypt (87%), France (82%) and Indonesia (81%) responded this way. However, many people across the countries studied (from 13% in Egypt to 47% in Brazil) said they felt “a little” or “not at all” connected to others.

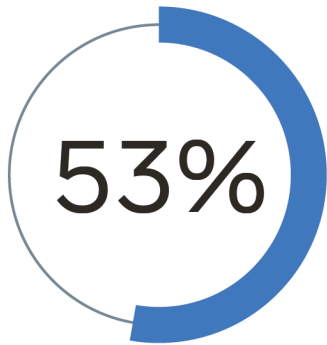
CHART 1: Feelings of connectedness by country

In general, how connected do you feel to people? By connected, I mean how close you feel to people emotionally.
– Very connected, Fairly connected, A little connected, Not at all connected



Due to rounding, percentages may sum to $\pm 1\%$ or may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates. Values under 5% not displayed.

The countries with the lowest percentages of people saying they felt very or fairly connected were Mexico (65%) and Brazil (53%). These relatively low levels of connectedness suggest an opportunity for further study to determine whether this finding holds for other countries in Latin America and what might be driving these lower levels of connectedness. Section 4 of this report explores what factors were related to feelings of connectedness to better understand who felt less connected, thereby identifying potential opportunities for intervention.



The country with the lowest percentage of people saying they felt very or fairly connected was Brazil (53%).



SECTION 2

What Do People's Social Connections Look Like?

In addition to getting a sense for how connected people feel to others, the State of Social Connections study sought to better understand *who* people are connecting with and *how* they make those connections. Specifically, people were asked if and how often they had interacted with people in six categories over the past seven days: friends or family who live near them, friends or family who live far away, neighbors or people who live near them, people from work or school, people from groups they are a part of based on shared interests or beliefs, and strangers or people they don't know.

Who are people connecting with?

More than 65% of people in each country reported interacting with others in at least two of the six categories daily or more in the past seven days. Around 50% of people in Brazil, France, Mexico and the United States reported interacting with three or more categories of people at least daily, with this figure falling closer to 40% among people in Egypt, Indonesia and India.

Across all countries, people were most likely to say they interacted with friends or family who live with or near them at least once per day in the past week, with the highest reported levels in Brazil (78%) and Egypt (77%).

While people in India were least likely to have had daily interactions with nearby friends or family, at 58%, they were among the most likely to say they had interacted with friends or family who live far away (42%).

About a quarter or more in each country said they interacted with friends or family who live far away at least once per day; that percentage rises to more than 40% when looking at those who interacted with far away friends or family at least once in the past week.

TABLE 1: How often people interacted with friends and family by country

How often did you interact with _____ in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	Friends or family who live with you or near you			Friends or family who live far away		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	3	19	78	16	41	42
Egypt	1	22	77	16	61	23
France	6	27	68	11	51	38
India	8	34	58	16	42	42
Indonesia	4	25	72	16	51	33
Mexico	4	29	66	14	51	35
United States	5	22	73	16	53	31

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

The frequency with which people interacted with neighbors or people who live near them showed greater variance. More than half of people in Indonesia (59%), India (57%) and Egypt (55%) said they had interacted with neighbors at least daily in the past week, while less than a third in France (29%) and the United States (26%) reported doing so. People in the United States and France were also more likely than those in any other country to say they “never” interacted with neighbors or people who live near them.

TABLE 2: How often people interacted with people from school, work or neighbors by country

How often did you interact with _____ in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	Neighbors or people who live near you			People from work or school		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	14	38	49	28	19	52
Egypt	4	41	55	38	23	39
France	21	49	29	32	19	48
India	8	35	57	43	29	27
Indonesia	6	34	59	30	34	35
Mexico	12	46	42	20	29	49
United States	22	52	26	26	19	53

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

The percentage reporting daily interactions with people from work or school exceeded 50% in only two countries, with daily interactions being least common in Indonesia, India and Egypt. Notably, fewer women said they worked outside the home in these countries — 62% of women in Egypt, 49% in India and 45% in Indonesia reported being a “homemaker.”

More than half of women in Egypt (66%) and India (55%) said they “never” interacted with people from work or school in the past seven days, compared to 11% of men in Egypt and 33% of men in India.

In all countries except Egypt, at least two-thirds of people said they had interacted with people from groups formed based on shared interests or beliefs in the past week. Within Egypt, 63% said they had no such interactions, whereas people in Brazil, India, Mexico and Indonesia were most likely to say they never interacted with strangers or people they did not know in the past seven days. People in the United States were most likely to say they interacted with strangers in the past week; 36% had done so daily or more, while just 16% had not interacted with strangers during that time.

TABLE 3: How often people interacted with shared-interest groups and strangers by country

How often did you interact with _____ in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	People from groups you are a part of based on shared interests or beliefs			Strangers or people you don't know		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	27	35	37	46	32	21
Egypt	63	25	12	36	45	19
France	18	44	38	32	44	24
India	33	36	29	60	27	13
Indonesia	31	38	29	68	24	8
Mexico	23	42	35	42	36	21
United States	19	47	33	16	47	36

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

How do people connect?

In each country studied, the State of Social Connections study asked people how often they had interacted with others over the past week using each of seven methods: in-person contact, phone or voice calls, video calls, email, text messages, social media and online/video/virtual reality gaming. This section outlines the notable differences in the methods people reported using most frequently.

In all countries except Indonesia and India, more than 60% of people reported using two or more methods at least daily to interact with others, with that figure rising to 80% in the United States, 75% in France and 70% in Brazil.

In-person interactions were the most frequently reported method of connection with others across the countries studied.

Most people in Egypt (78%), the United States (71%), Brazil (67%) and France (63%) reported having in-person interactions at least once a day in the past week. People in Mexico (51%), India (49%) and Indonesia (45%) were less likely to report daily in-person contact, with more than 10% in each country saying they had not had any in-person interactions at all in the past week.

TABLE 4: Methods of interaction used in the past seven days by country: In-person interactions, phone/voice calls and video calls

How often did you interact with people in each of the following ways in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	In-person			Through a phone/voice call			Through a video call		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	6	26	67	17	36	47	38	31	30
Egypt	1	21	78	4	32	65	70	23	7
France	8	29	63	11	42	47	55	27	18
India	15	35	49	16	36	48	54	27	18
Indonesia	12	42	45	22	45	32	38	41	21
Mexico	11	37	51	15	39	46	43	35	22
United States	4	25	71	3	37	59	45	37	18

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

People in two countries — France and the United States — were most likely to say they had interacted with others via email. In the other five countries, most people said they had not used email to interact with people at all in the past week. France and the United States were also the only two countries where more than 50% said they had interacted via text messages once per day or more in the past seven days.

TABLE 5: Methods of interaction used in the past seven days by country: Emails and text messages

How often did you interact with people in each of the following ways in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	Through email			Through text message, instant message or SMS		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	68	18	13	41	23	36
Egypt	97	3	1	84	11	5
France	27	39	34	13	27	60
India	83	8	3	68	15	13
Indonesia	87	9	4	53	27	20
Mexico	60	24	15	30	34	36
United States	27	34	39	10	21	68

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

At least a third of people in all countries surveyed except India said they had interacted with others through social media daily or more in the past week, with daily interactions most common in the two Latin American countries — Brazil (59%) and Mexico (51%). In those two countries, as well as Indonesia, the percentages of people who said they had interacted with others through social media at least daily were higher than the percentages who said the same about any other form of technology-mediated communication, including phone or voice calls.

TABLE 6: Methods of interaction used in the past seven days by country: Social media and online/video/virtual reality games

How often did you interact with people in each of the following ways in the past 7 days? – Never, Only once, A few times, Once per day, More than once per day

	Through social media, for example, [top 5 social media platforms in country] ²¹			Through an online game, video game, or virtual reality game		
	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more	% Never	% Only once or a few times	% Once per day or more
Brazil	19	22	59	83	7	9
Egypt	37	24	40	87	9	4
France	31	27	42	84	8	8
India	57	20	19	82	8	6
Indonesia	35	27	37	86	8	6
Mexico	21	28	51	75	13	12
United States	31	30	38	77	11	12

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

21 The five social media platforms listed in each country included the following. **Brazil:** WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Telegram; **Egypt:** WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter; **France:** WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok; **India:** WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Snapchat; **Indonesia:** WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok; **Mexico:** WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok; **United States:** Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp.

Daily interaction via social media was not associated with less frequent in-person interaction; in fact, people in each country who said they interacted with others through social media daily or more were also more likely to interact as frequently with others in person. More broadly, people who interacted with others daily through social media were more likely to interact with others daily through more of the other methods surveyed (i.e., in-person, phone or voice calls, email, video call, text/instant/SMS message, online/video/virtual reality game).

Online/video/virtual reality games were less commonly used than other interaction methods, though more than 10% in each country said they had interacted with people through such games at least once in the past seven days, and 12% in the United States and Mexico said they had done so daily or more during that time. In most countries, online/video/virtual reality-gaming interactions were particularly common among males aged 15 to 29: More than one-fourth interacted daily or more through such games in Mexico (31%), Brazil (30%), the United States (28%) and Indonesia (26%).





SECTION 3

How Do People Get Support From Their Connections?

The State of Social Connections study aimed to provide more insight into whether and how people interact with others to get social support, which numerous studies have demonstrated is important for people's health.^{22,23,24} This section discusses several aspects of people's help-seeking behavior, including who they reach out to for support or help and the interaction modes they use to do so.

22 Ozbay, F., Johnson, D. C., Dimoulas, E., Morgan, C. A., Charney, D., & Southwick, S. (2007). Social support and resilience to stress. *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*, 4(5), 35-40. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921311/>

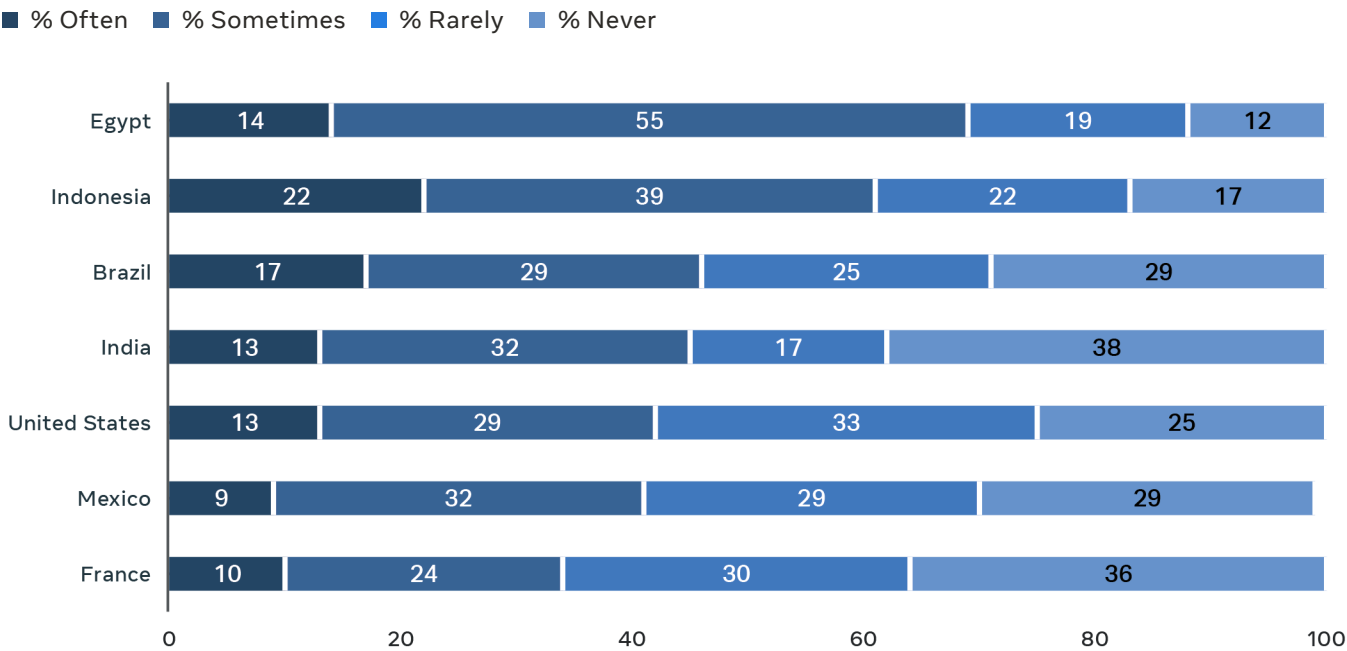
23 *Manage stress: Strengthen your support network*. (2019, October 8). American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/manage-social-support>; Suttie, J. (2017, November 13). Four ways social support makes you more resilient. *Greater Good Magazine*. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four_ways_social_support_makes_you_more_resilient

24 Uchino, B. N. (2009). Understanding the links between social support and physical health. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4(3), 236-255. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.713.8624&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

At least a third of people in all seven countries said they needed support or help from someone “often” or “sometimes” in the past 30 days, with majorities responding this way in Egypt (69%) and Indonesia (61%). Conversely, people in India (38%) and France (36%) were most likely to say they “never” needed help in the past 30 days.

CHART 2: How often people needed support or help in the past 30 days by country

How often did you NEED support or help from someone in the past 30 days? – Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never



Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%. “Don’t know/refused” categories are not shown, but data from these categories are included in calculation of these estimates.

Who do people connect with for support?

In each country, people who said they needed support or help from others in the past 30 days were asked about several groups they might have interacted with to get that support.²⁵

Across countries, more people said they interacted with friends or family who live nearby to get support or help than any other group.

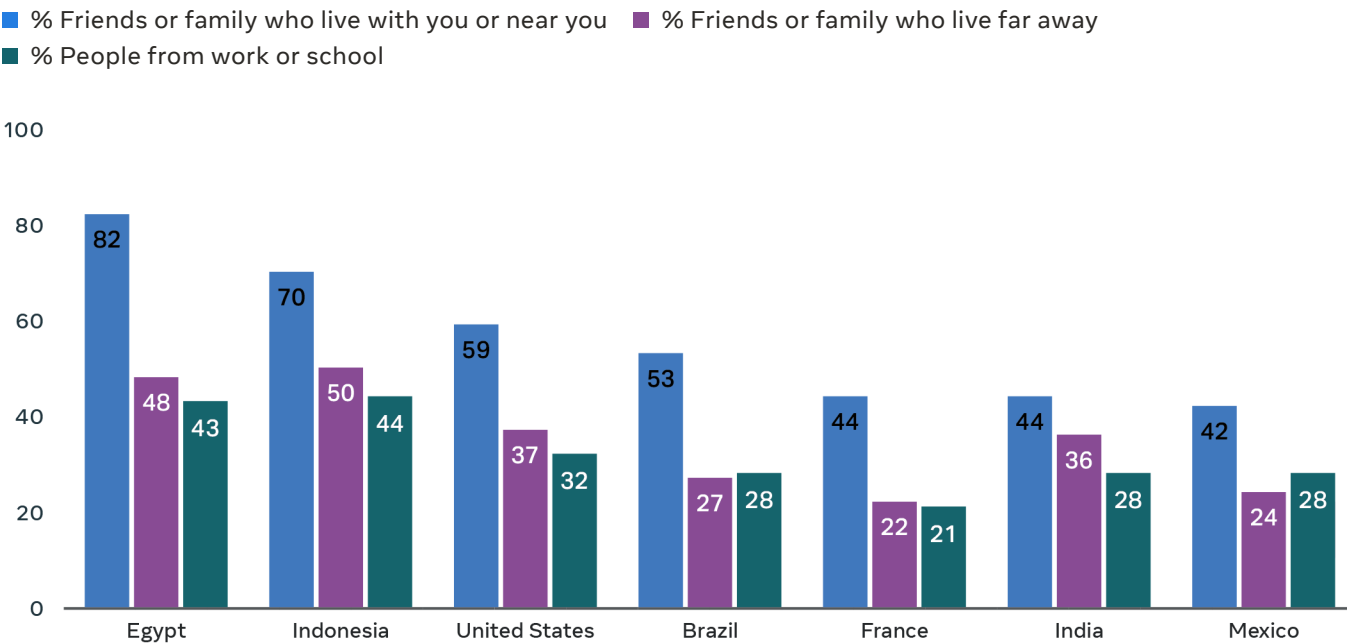
Notably, between one-fifth and one-half of people in all countries also said they interacted with friends or family who live far away for support, suggesting an important opportunity for technology-mediated communication.

Compared with those in the other countries studied, people in Indonesia and Egypt were more likely to say they had interacted with others from most of the groups — including friends or family living close by, friends or family living far away, and people from their work or school.

By contrast, Mexico and France consistently had among the lowest percentages of people saying they interacted with others to get support or help from each group. Just 42% of people in Mexico said they had interacted with nearby friends or family to get support or help in the past 30 days, and 24% had interacted with family members living far away for support or help.

CHART 3: Percentage who interacted with friends, family or people from work/school for support or help in the past 30 days by country

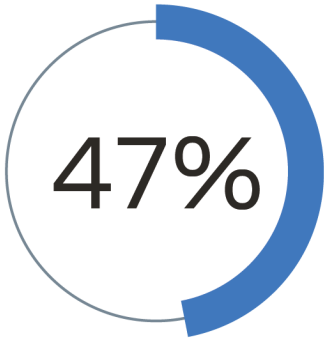
Did you interact with _____ to get support or help in the past 30 days? Percentage 'yes' among total population in each country



25 These questions were only asked of people who said they had needed support from someone “often,” “sometimes” or “rarely” in the past 30 days. However, for ease of interpretability, the results are expressed as percentages of the total population in each country.

More people who needed support or help in Indonesia, Egypt and India said they interacted with neighbors or people who live nearby to get it than those in other countries. This finding reflects the higher frequency of interaction with neighbors overall reported in these countries (page 14).

Indonesia had the highest percentage of people — 47% — who said they had interacted with groups formed out of shared interests or beliefs to get support or help in the past 30 days. Additionally, strangers or people they did not know was the group that the lowest percentage of people said they interacted with to get support or help in all countries except Egypt.

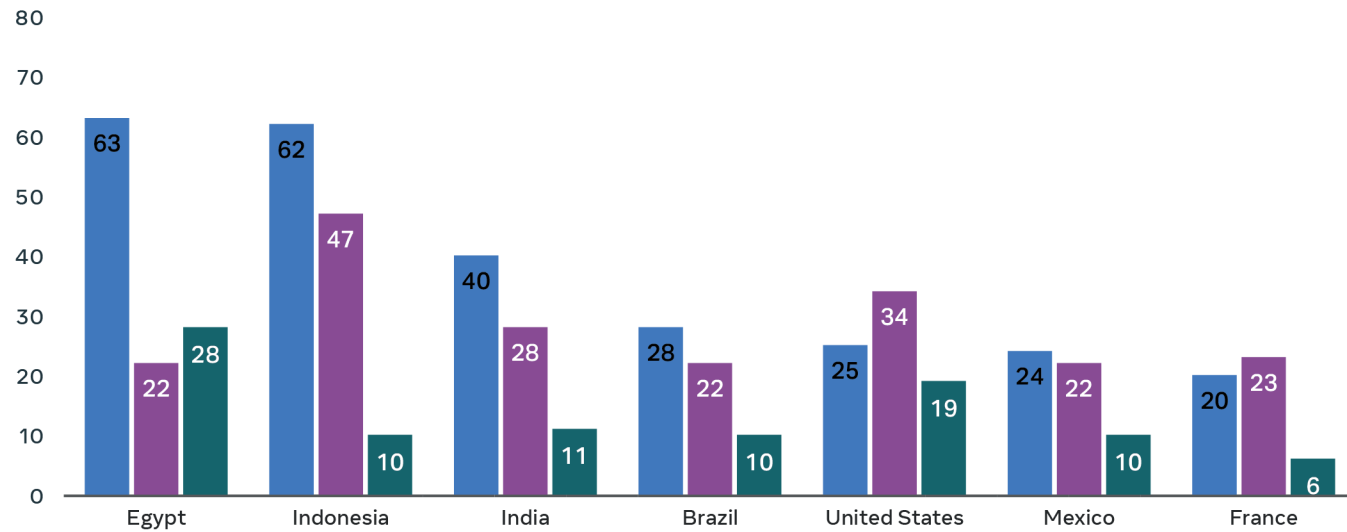


Indonesia had the highest percentage of people — 47% — who said they had interacted with groups formed out of shared interests or beliefs to get support or help in the past 30 days.

CHART 4: Percentage who interacted with neighbors, shared-interest groups or strangers for support in the past 30 days by country

Did you interact with _____ to get support or help in the past 30 days? Percentage 'yes' among total population in each country

■ % Neighbors or people who live near you ■ % Groups you are a part of based on shared interests or beliefs
■ % Strangers or people you didn't know



How do people interact for support?

In addition to the different groups people turn to for support, the State of Social Connections study sought to better understand the different ways people interact with others to get the support they need.

Just as in-person interactions and phone or voice calls were among the most common modes used to interact with others more generally, people across countries used these methods most often to seek support or help.²⁶

Notably, in three countries — Indonesia, Brazil and Mexico — social media was used about as commonly as phone or voice calls to interact with others for help.

Further, more than 40% of people in Indonesia and Egypt had used social media to interact with others for help in the past 30 days. In France and the United States, people were more likely to say they had used text messages to interact with others to get support or help than any form of technological communication except phone or voice calls.

More broadly, in all countries, including those where people commonly used social media to interact with others for support or help (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico), help-seeking through other methods — including in-person interactions and phone calls — was at least as common. This finding suggests that social media tends to expand people’s options for seeking support rather than replacing other forms of interaction.

TABLE 7: Percentage who interacted with others through each method to get support or help by country

Did you interact with people through _____ to get support or help in the past 30 days? Percentage ‘yes’ among total population in each country

	In-person interactions	Phone/voice call	Video call	Social media	Email	Text message/instant message
Brazil	42	31	15	33	7	23
Egypt	82	71	18	45	2	11
France	38	34	8	16	9	28
India	35	37	17	17	5	12
Indonesia	50	45	32	43	7	28
Mexico	25	26	11	25	8	17
United States	55	51	19	17	22	46

26 These questions were only asked of people who said they had needed support from someone “often,” “sometimes” or “rarely” in the past 30 days. However, for ease of interpretability, the results are expressed as percentages of the total population in each country.

Among specific apps or websites,²⁷ WhatsApp was the most commonly used to interact with others for support or help in every country studied except the United States. In the United States, Facebook/Facebook Messenger and iMessage/Apple Messages were most commonly cited, with almost one in five people saying they had used each app or website to seek support or help in the past 30 days. In all countries studied, about 20% or more said they used WhatsApp, Facebook/Facebook Messenger or Instagram for support or help in the past 30 days. This number rose to almost half (48%) in Indonesia.

TABLE 8: Percentage who used each app or website to interact with others to get support or help in the past 30 days by country

Have you used _____ to interact with people to get support or help in the past 30 days? Percentage 'yes' among total population in each country

	WhatsApp	Facebook/ Facebook Messenger	Instagram	TikTok	Google/ Android Messages	Telegram	Twitter	Snapchat	iMessage/ Apple Messages
Brazil	37	9	10	2	5	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Egypt	38	36	8	N/A	3	7	3	N/A	N/A
France	17	11	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	12
India	22	10	8	N/A	6	5	N/A	5	N/A
Indonesia	46	23	15	6	N/A	8	2	N/A	N/A
Mexico	26	14	5	3	6	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
United States	8	18	6	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	19

Categories are not mutually exclusive; respondents were able to select more than one answer.

²⁷ These questions were only asked of people who 1) said they had needed support or help from someone “often,” “sometimes” or “rarely” in the past 30 days and 2) said they used at least one of phone/voice call, video call, social media or text message/instant message to get it. However, for ease of interpretability, the results are expressed as percentages of the total population in each country.



SECTION 4

What Factors Are Related to Feelings of Connectedness?

This section explores what factors relate to people's feelings of connectedness to others. Studying these factors can help identify who may need help to feel more connected.

Drawing on the academic literature, the State of Social Connections study evaluated people's feelings of connectedness by measuring two related but distinct constructs: loneliness and social support. For each construct, a single score was created by combining multiple key survey items to provide more reliable and robust measures for use in statistical modeling.

Separate regression analyses were used to explore how a specific set of theoretically relevant variables relate to feelings of loneliness and support in each country. Analyses included demographic characteristics and subjective attitudes about how people feel about their lives and how they perceive others.

Both kinds of variables (i.e., demographic characteristics and subjective attitudes) have been points of focus in prior research. For example, some research indicates feelings of loneliness may vary by demographic characteristics like age,²⁸ and other work finds that people’s subjective perceptions of their own financial insecurity are associated with loneliness.^{29,30}

Results from models that include only the demographic characteristics are included in the accompanying [methodology report](#). In this section, results are presented from regression models that included **demographic characteristics** and **subjective attitudes**, listed below:

Demographic characteristics³¹

- gender
- age
- marital status
- employment status
- education
- urbanicity
- income
- household composition
- number of friends

Subjective attitudes

- feelings about income
- perception of others as trustworthy or not
- perception of others as kind or not

It is important to note that the regression results reported in this section do not establish any causal relationships — they only enable an exploration of the relationships between a specific set of theoretically relevant variables and feelings of loneliness and social support. Many factors may influence these feelings; thus, simple causal relationships are unlikely. Rather, the relationships may be bidirectional and mutually reinforcing. For example, a negative disposition toward others may make one more likely to experience loneliness, while feelings of loneliness may, in turn, foster more negative perceptions of others. A third variable may also be at play, like depression, that influences perceptions of others and loneliness. Further research will be needed to unpack the complex causal relationships at play among these variables.

The following sections detail results of the regression analyses narratively. Tables with full results of regression analyses, including coefficients and confidence intervals, are accessible via the accompanying [methodology report](#).

28 Luhmann, M., & Hawkley, L. C. (2016). Age differences in loneliness from late adolescence to oldest old age. *Developmental psychology*, 52(6), 943-959. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000117>

29 Diego-Rosell, P., Tortora, R., & Bird, J. (2018). International determinants of subjective well-being: Living in a subjectively material world. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 19(1), 123-143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9812-3>

30 Refaeli, T., & Achdut, N. (2021). Financial strain and loneliness among young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of psychosocial resources. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6942. MDPI AG. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13126942>

31 Demographic characteristics: Gender (Male, Female), Age (15-18, 19-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65+), marital status (married, divorces/separated, single/never married, widowed), employment status (full-time, part-time, homemaker, unemployed, retired, disable and unable to work, full-time student, part-time student), education (elementary or less, secondary/post-secondary, four-year college/college degree), urbanicity (large city, rural/farm, small town/village, suburban), income (quantiles), household composition (living with other adults or not and living with children under 15 or not)

Loneliness

There is growing concern in several countries worldwide about the effects of loneliness. For example, in the United Kingdom³² and Japan,³³ cabinet-level ministries have been created to address loneliness as a public policy issue, and in his 2020 book, *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy addresses loneliness as a public health concern.³⁴

In the academic literature, researchers often define loneliness as the difference between the level of connectedness people have and the level they want or need.

Loneliness is different from objective isolation in that some people can have relatively few social contacts and not feel lonely, while others can have much broader social networks and feel lonely nonetheless.³⁵

In general, however, prior studies have shown that feelings of loneliness are more common among people who have less contact with family and friends or community members, and that loneliness is associated with poorer overall mental health³⁶ and subjective well-being.³⁷

The State of Social Connections study used a three-item version³⁸ of the widely used UCLA Loneliness Scale³⁹ to assess overall loneliness:

- How often do you feel that you lack companionship?
- How often do you feel left out?
- How often do you feel isolated from others?

32 Pimlott, N. (2018). The ministry of loneliness. *Can Fam Physician*, 64(3), 166. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5851382/>

33 Kodama, S. (2021). Japan appoints 'minister of loneliness' to help people home alone. *NikkeiAsia*. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Coronavirus/Japan-appoints-minister-of-loneliness-to-help-people-home-alone>

34 Martin, R. (2020). In 'Together,' former surgeon general writes about importance of human connection. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/05/11/853308193/in-together-former-surgeon-general-writes-about-importance-of-human-connection>

35 Hawkey, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness matters: A theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 40(2), 218-227. <https://academic.oup.com/abm/article/40/2/218/4569527>

36 Kearns, A., Whitley, E., Tannahill, C., & Ellaway, A. (2015). Loneliness, social relations and health and well-being in deprived communities. *Psychol Health Med*, 20(3), 332-44. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4697361/>

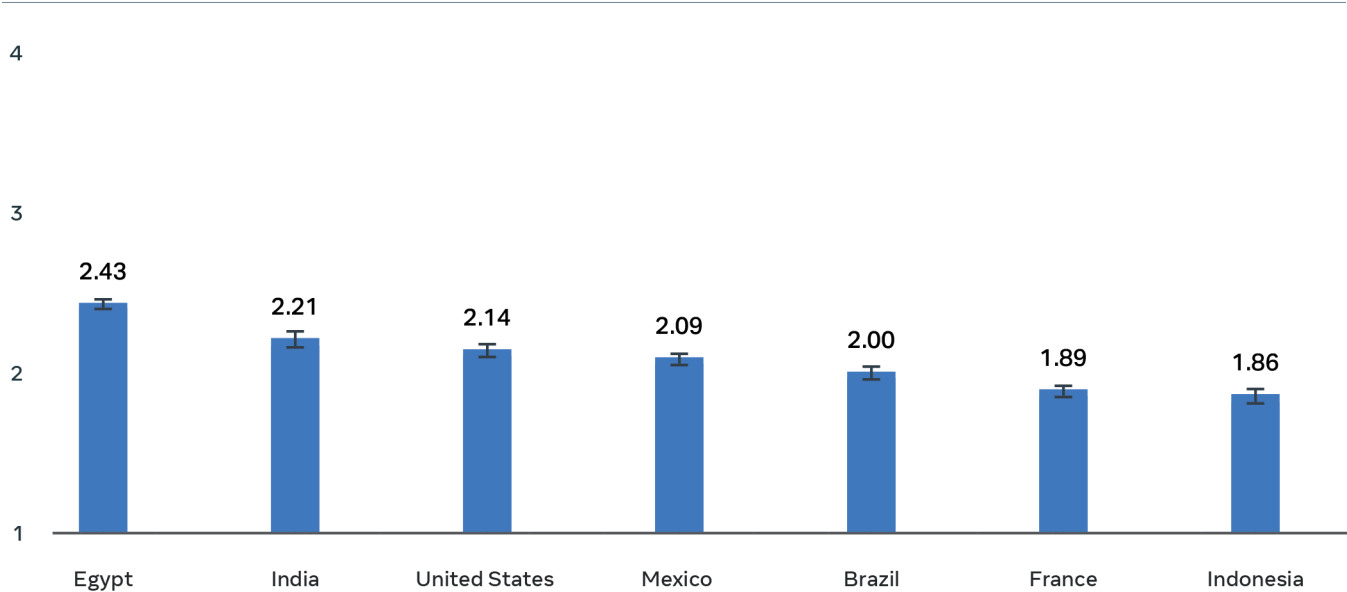
37 Hombrados-Mendieta, I., García-Martín, M. A., & Gómez-Jacinto, L. (2013). The relationship between social support, loneliness, and subjective well-being in a Spanish sample from a multidimensional perspective. *Soc Indic Res*, 114, 1013-1034. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-012-0187-5>

38 Hughes, M. E., Waite, L. J., Hawkey, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2004). A short scale for measuring loneliness in large surveys: Results from two population-based studies. *Res Aging*, 26(6), 655-672. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2394670/>

39 Russell, D. W. (1996). UCLA loneliness scale (version 3): Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 66(1), 20-40. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa6601_2

For each question, people were asked how often they felt that way (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Always). Then, each person’s responses to the three items were used to create a single composite measure of loneliness that ranged from 1 to 4, where values closer to 1 indicate feeling less lonely and values closer to 4 represent feeling more lonely.⁴⁰ Overall, the country-level measures of loneliness ranged from moderate (around the midpoint of the scale) in Egypt to relatively low in France and Indonesia (Chart 5).

CHART 5: Average loneliness scale score by country (1=lowest possible score, 4=highest possible score)



⁴⁰ Loneliness scores represent average ratings on a four-point scale, with “1” meaning people “never” experience each of the three loneliness indicators and “4” meaning they “always” do. Thus, higher scores indicate higher levels of loneliness.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND FEELINGS OF LONELINESS

Overall, there were notable relationships between the number of friends people had and feelings of loneliness in all countries except Indonesia, but the relationships were not always straightforward. In France, Brazil and Mexico, reporting having more friends was generally related to lower levels of loneliness. However, in the United States, Egypt and India, the relationship did not follow the same pattern. In the United States and Egypt, having more friends was, in fact, related to feeling less lonely, but only up to a certain number of friends. Whereas in India, people who reported having two to 10 friends were among the most lonely, even more so than people with no friends. Such findings help highlight that not having friends does not necessarily mean people are feeling more lonely and suggest an opportunity for further research.

There were notable relationships between age,⁴¹ employment status, education and marital status and people's feelings of loneliness in three of the seven countries studied, though these relationships were nuanced and varied by country. For age, people 65 and older in Brazil and Indonesia were less lonely than those aged 15 to 44. Again, in the United States, the relationship did not follow the same pattern, in that people 65 and older were less lonely than those aged 19 to 44 but not much different than the other age groups. In Egypt, France, India and Mexico, there were no notable relationships between loneliness and age.

Regarding employment status, full-time workers in Brazil felt less lonely than people who were unemployed or disabled and unable to work, as well as full-time or part-time students. Part-time workers were lonelier than full-time workers in Egypt. Notably, retired people were no lonelier than full-time workers in any country and were less lonely than people in other employment status groups in India. There were no notable relationships between employment status and loneliness in France, Indonesia, Mexico or the United States.

For education, in Egypt and Indonesia, having secondary or postsecondary education was related to lower levels of loneliness compared with having primary education or less. In Mexico, having a college education, in addition to secondary/postsecondary education, was related to lower levels of loneliness compared to having primary education or less. There were no notable relationships between educational attainment and loneliness in Brazil, France, India and the United States.

Regarding marital status, divorced or separated people in Egypt and the United States felt lonelier than married people; those in the United States who were widowed or had never been married also felt more lonely than those who were married. In France, people who were separated or divorced were the most lonely.

⁴¹ Meta/Gallup explored the effect of age in a number of ways, including a comparison between 15-to-18-year-olds and all other age groups, and a comparison between those 65 years or older and all other groups.

There were no notable relationships between income and loneliness in any of the countries except Indonesia, where people in their country's lowest income bracket (based on their self-reported income) were more lonely than people in the middle income bracket. There were no notable relationships between urbanicity and loneliness in any country except India, where people in rural areas felt lonelier than people in large cities.

While there also tended to be no notable relationships between gender or household composition and feelings of loneliness across countries, there were some exceptions. In Brazil, women felt more lonely than men, while in Indonesia, women felt less lonely. Finally, people in Brazil and France who lived alone were more lonely than those living in households with more than one person aged 15 or older.



SUBJECTIVE ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS OF LONELINESS

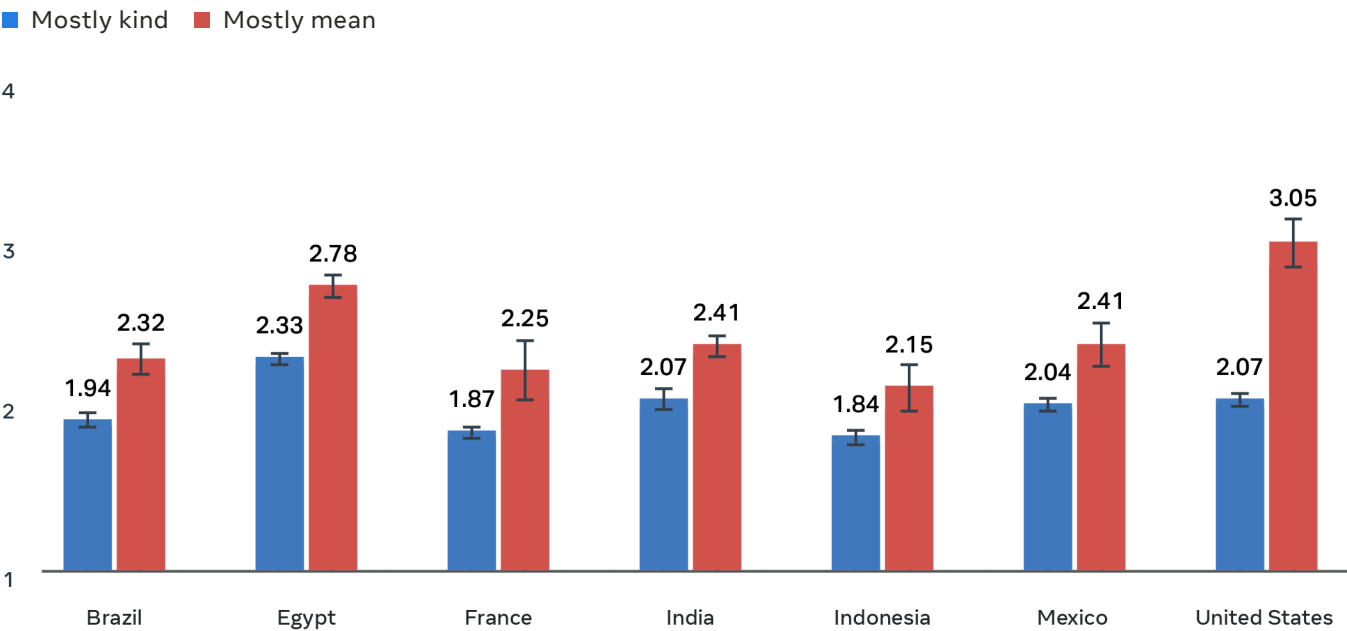
Overall, relationships between people’s subjective attitudes and their feelings of loneliness were mostly consistent across countries.

In all countries except France and India, there were consistent associations between people’s feelings about the extent to which their income was meeting their needs and their feelings of loneliness.

In Brazil, Egypt, Mexico and the United States, people who said they were finding it “difficult” or “very difficult” to get by on their current income were more lonely than those who said they were “living comfortably”; in Indonesia, this relationship held true when comparing people who said they were finding it “difficult” to those who said they were “living comfortably.”

Additionally, those who perceived people as “mostly untrustworthy” rather than “mostly trustworthy” felt lonelier in all countries except India, where there was no notable relationship between perception of others and loneliness. Similarly, in all countries, people who said those they interact with are “mostly mean” felt lonelier than those who viewed people as “mostly kind” (Chart 6).

CHART 6: Average feelings of loneliness by country and whether people view those they interact with as mostly kind or mostly mean





Social Support

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that people need support from others to maintain good physical and mental health.⁴² Social support makes people happier⁴³ and more psychologically resilient⁴⁴ and has been linked to lower mortality rates, especially from cardiovascular disease.⁴⁵ Supportive social relationships also provide people with resources they can count on, such as financial assistance or advice when coping with adversity.⁴⁶

This section explores how different factors relate to people's perceptions of their access to various forms of social support.

The survey for the State of Social Connections study asked people about five specific types of support, including items assessing emotional support like being listened to, and practical support like financial assistance.

Specifically, people were asked to answer **how often the following types of support were available to them** if they needed it (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Always):

- someone to take care of you if you were sick or injured
- someone to loan you money
- someone to listen to you when you need to talk
- someone who makes you feel loved and cared for
- someone to do something fun with

42 Ozbay, F., Johnson, D. C., Dimoulas, E., Morgan, C. A., Charney, D., & Southwick, S. (2007). Social support and resilience to stress. *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*, 4(5), 35-40. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921311/>

43 Lakey, B. (2013). *Perceived social support and happiness: The role of personality and relational processes*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199557257.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199557257-e-062>

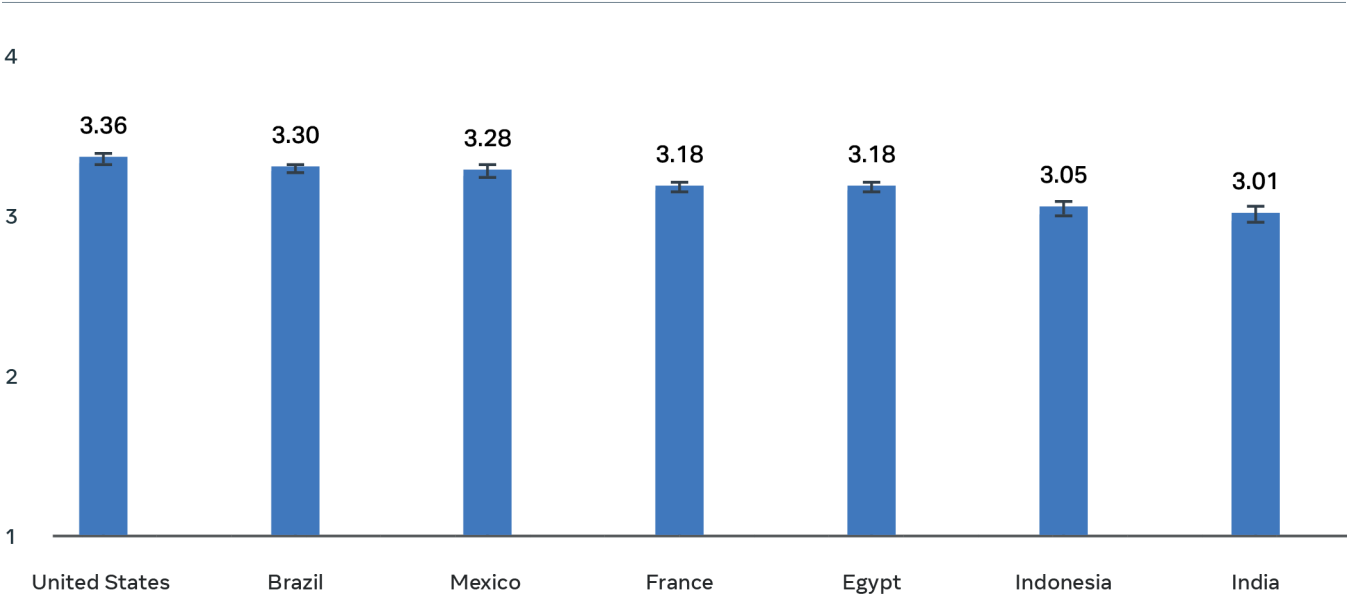
44 *Manage stress: Strengthen your support network*. (2019, October 8). American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/manage-social-support>; Suttie, J. (2017, November 13). Four ways social support makes you more resilient. *Greater Good Magazine*. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four_ways_social_support_makes_you_more_resilient

45 Uchino, B. N. (2009). Understanding the links between social support and physical health. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4(3), 236-255. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.713.8624&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

46 Feeney, B. C., & Collins, N. L. (2015). Thriving through relationships. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 1, 22-28. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4356946/>

For each person, responses to the five items were used to create a single composite measure of overall perceptions of social support that ranged from 1 to 4, where values closer to 1 indicate feeling less social support and values closer to 4 represent feeling more social support.⁴⁷ Overall, the country-level measures of social support were toward the high end of the scale, representing relatively high average access to social support, and ranged from 3.36 in the United States to 3.01 in India (Chart 7).

CHART 7: Average social support score by country (1=lowest possible score, 4=highest possible score)



⁴⁷ Social support scores represent average ratings on a four-point scale, with “1” meaning people “never” have access to each form of support and “4” meaning they “always” have access. Unlike scores on the loneliness scale, higher social support scores are better, indicating more reliable access.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND FEELINGS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Overall, the size of people's social networks was related to their access to social support in all countries.

In general, people who said they had more friends also reported greater access to social support, though more research is warranted to explore the nature of this relationship in different contexts.

Marital status was related to social support in five out of the seven countries studied. In the United States, divorced or separated people and those who had never been married reported less access to support than married people. In Mexico and Indonesia, only those who had never been married reported less access to social support than married people. In Egypt, those who were divorced or separated reported less access to social support, while in India, being divorced or separated was related to more access to social support than being married.

For gender, employment status, education, urbanicity and household composition, there were notable relationships with people's reported access to social support in at least four of the seven countries studied, though again, these relationships were nuanced and varied by country.

Women reported greater access to social support than men in the United States, Mexico, Indonesia and France. In Brazil, Egypt and India, there was no notable relationship between gender and social support. People in Brazil, India and Mexico who said they were unemployed reported less access to social support than those who worked full time. In Brazil, people who said they were a homemaker also reported less access to social support than those who worked full time. In Egypt, those who reported working part time reported less social support than those working full time, and in the U.S., retired people reported more access to social support. People who worked full time did not report notably different levels of access to social support than others in France and Indonesia.



Regarding education, in most countries, people with higher levels of education reported more access to social support. People in Indonesia, Egypt and Mexico with no more than primary education reported less access to social support than those who had attended secondary school or higher. In France, people with at least four years of postsecondary education had more access to support than those with no more than primary education. In Brazil, India and the United States, no notable relationship between education and access to social support was observed.

In Indonesia, there was a notable relationship between urbanicity and access to social support, wherein people who said they lived in rural areas had lower social support scores than residents of large cities. In India, however, those living in small towns or villages reported greater access to support than people in large cities. In France and Mexico, those who said they lived in suburbs felt less supported than residents of large cities. In Brazil, Egypt and the United States, there were no notable relationships between the type of environment people lived in and social support.

In most countries, including Brazil, Egypt, France and Mexico, people living in households with more than one adult reported greater access to social support than those who lived alone. In India, Indonesia and the United States, there were no notable relationships between household composition and social support.

In Egypt and Mexico, people in their country's lowest income bracket (based on their self-reported income) had less access to social support than those in the highest income bracket. In France, those in the second-lowest income bracket reported the lowest access to support. No notable relationships between income and social support were found in Brazil, India, Indonesia and the United States.

By contrast, in all countries except Indonesia, there were no notable relationships between age and social support.⁴⁸ However, in Indonesia, there was a difference between people aged 65 and older and those under age 45 in access to social support.

48 Meta/Gallup explored the effect of age in a number of ways, including a comparison between 15-to-18-year-olds and all other age groups, and a comparison between those 65 years or older and all other groups.

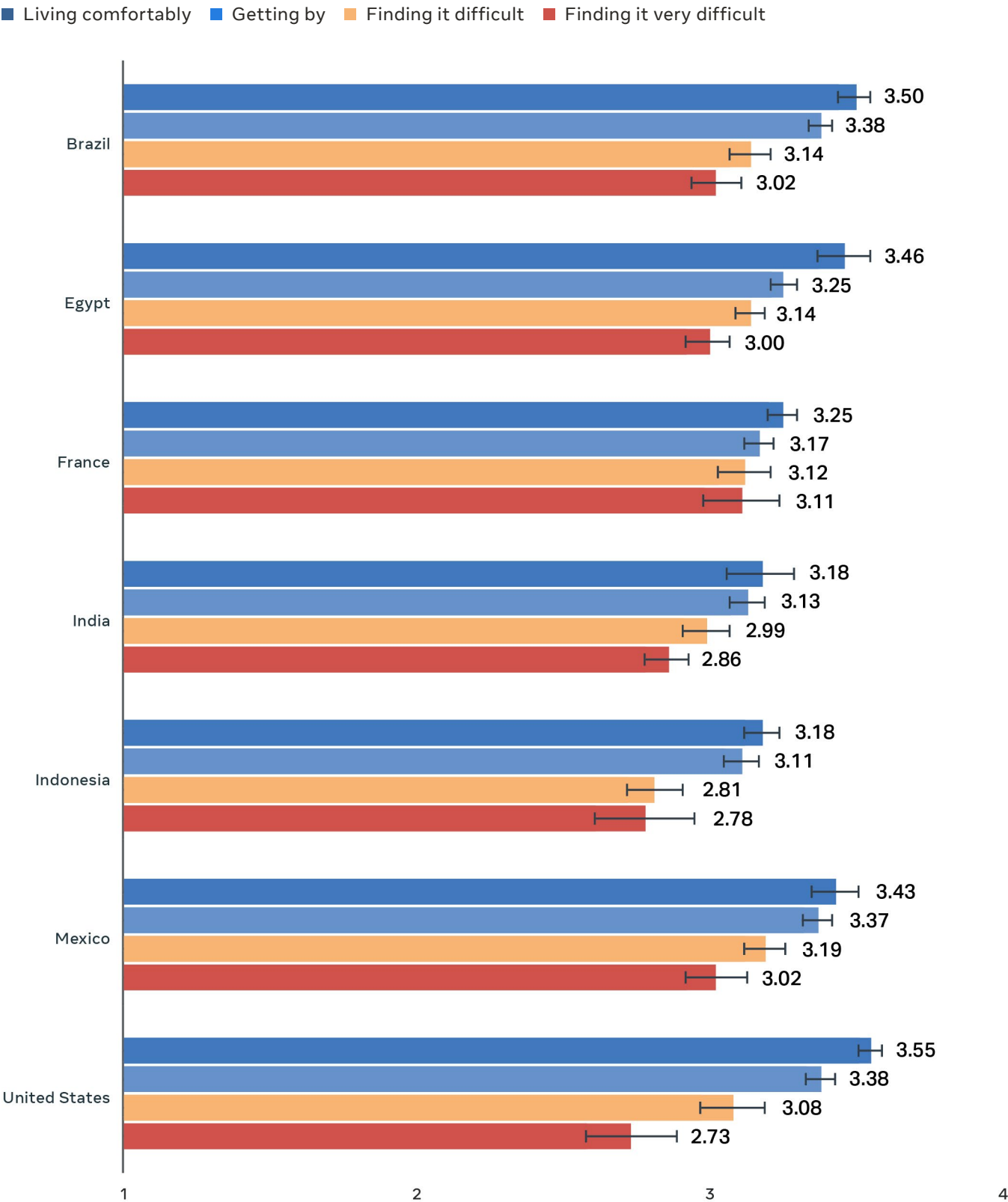
SUBJECTIVE ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Overall, relationships between people's subjective attitudes and their reported access to social support were mostly consistent across countries. In all countries except France, **people who said they were “living comfortably” on their current income reported feeling more supported** than those who were finding it “difficult” or “very difficult” on their current income; in France, there was no notable difference when comparing any of the groups to those who said they were “living comfortably” (Chart 8).

In all seven countries, people who said those they interact with were mostly trustworthy felt more supported than those who viewed people as generally untrustworthy. Similarly, those who viewed people they interact with as mostly kind rather than mostly mean reported greater access to social support in all countries except France, where the relationship between this perception of others and access to social support was not notable.



CHART 8: Average social support score by country and people’s assessment of how well they are doing on their current income



Conclusion

The State of Social Connections study offers a first look at how social connections vary among diverse populations around the world. This initial seven-country study offers evidence that, in the wake of unprecedented COVID-19-related social distancing requirements, people have continued to find ways to connect with each other in-person and through technology in general but also to get support or help when they need it. Nevertheless, findings also suggest that, in every country, some people feel less connected to others and, therefore, may need intervention to help them feel more connected.

Results from this report highlight whom people connect with and how they do so, and what factors are related to feelings of connection. Results from individual countries further highlight specific groups who are particularly likely to experience higher levels of loneliness or less access to support within their specific contexts. This information can help governments, community-based organizations and private companies determine who needs help to feel more connected and access the social support they need to thrive.

The study also offers insight about whom people in each country are most likely to connect with for support or help. Findings on how people interact to get support, including how many people use different types of technology to connect with others, add another layer of insight — particularly as mobile internet service continues to spread around the world, providing new opportunities for people to connect.

Such findings only hint at the potential for ongoing research on the state of social connections to improve people's lives. Meta and Gallup are committed to additional research in which many of the insights presented in this report will be further explored and expanded upon using data collected in 2022 from 140+ countries. Data is being released publicly through Meta's [Data for Good](#) program with the hope that the research will be used more broadly in efforts to help ensure people around the world have the supportive social connections they need.



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