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***Pandemic Changing Us:
A Comparison of Changes in Trust and
Cyberpolitics, among European and American
countries***

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Abstract

- The coronavirus pandemic may have had a strong impact on social trust.
- Somehow, the pandemic turned the planet into a “laboratory”; demonstrating how, in the face of an external shock, important and sudden changes can occur (when altering or modifying) our reliable references.
- This research paper seeks to identify the changes in trust towards the media that occurred between 2019 and 2021, by comparing nine countries: four Latin American, the United States, and four European countries.
- Changes of trust in news, came together with changes in cyberpolitics’ uses and ideological polarization, for analyzed countries

Research Questions

RQ1: How is the use of cyberpolitics related to trust in media?

RQ2: Are there differences in trust for the USA, Latin American and European countries, before and after the pandemia?

RQ3: How does ideological polarization affect the relationship between cyberpolitics and trust?

Methodology

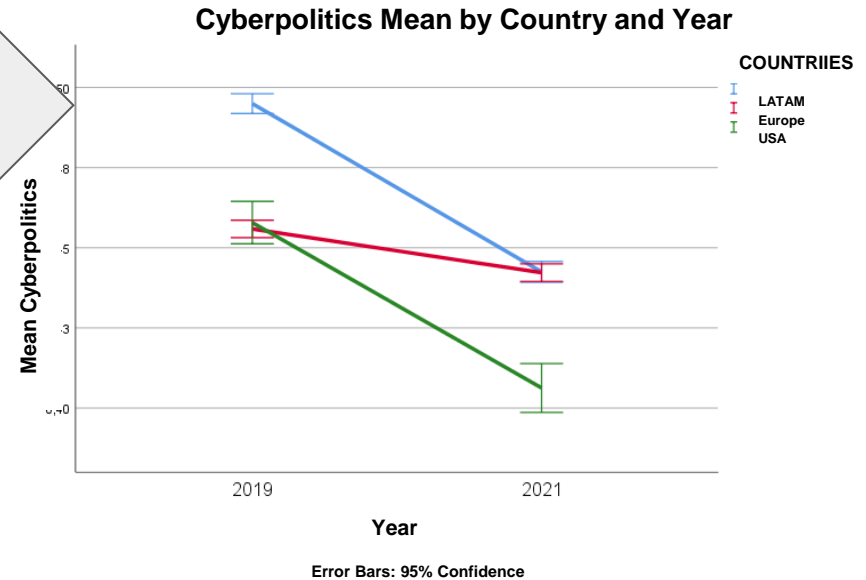
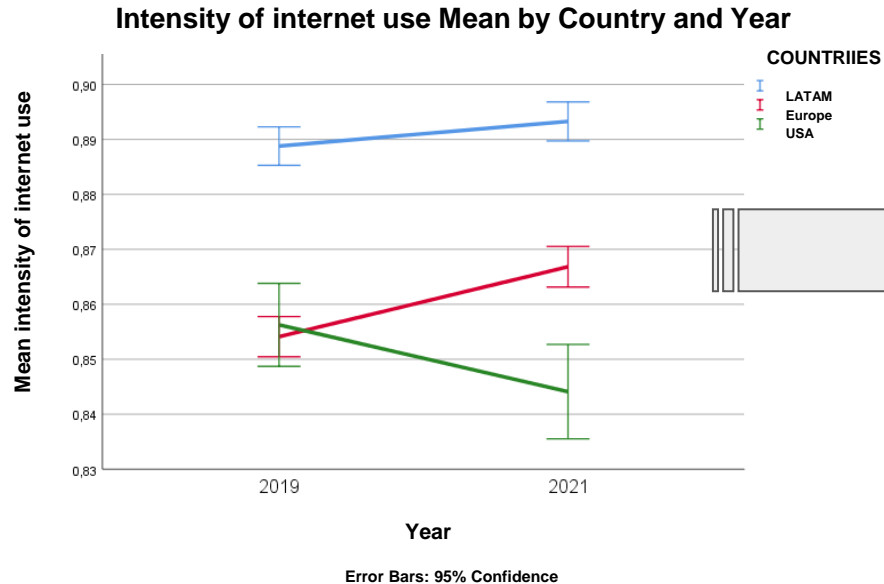
Using questions from DNR (Digital News Report. 2019, 2021), 3 indexes were built on a scale of 0 to 1

1. **Cyberpolitics** through two dimensions: infopolitics (level of news consumption in the media) and cyberactivism (level of participation in communication platforms).
2. **Trust in News** (measured by individuals' perception of trust in news in general)
3. **Ideological polarization** (derived from political self-positioning)

These indexes allowed a comparison, through a mean difference test between the nine countries, before and after the pandemic, in order to weight the changes observed.

Findings

Intensity of internet is up, but cyberpolitics is down...



As for the US the difference might be explained because of the electoral year

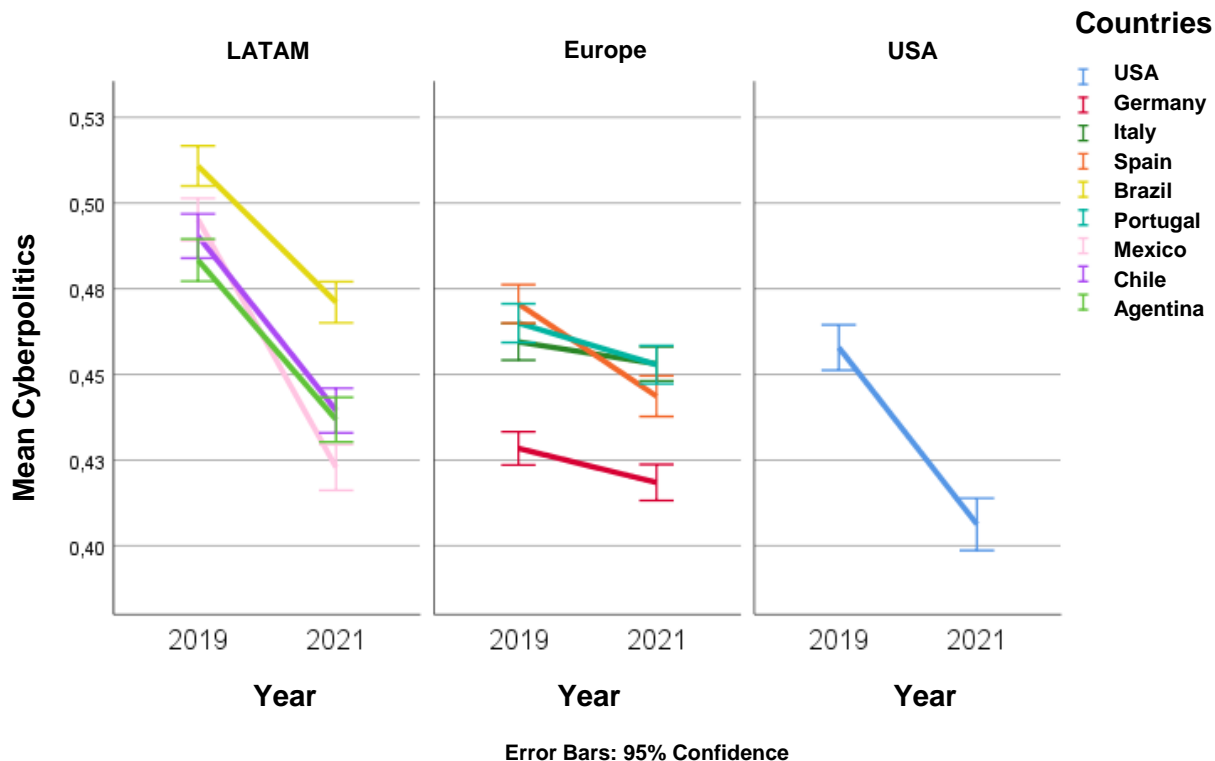


Findings

Drop in cyberpolitics is observed for every country (2019 vs 2021)

More marked in the USA and Latin America (5%*). For Europe was 2%

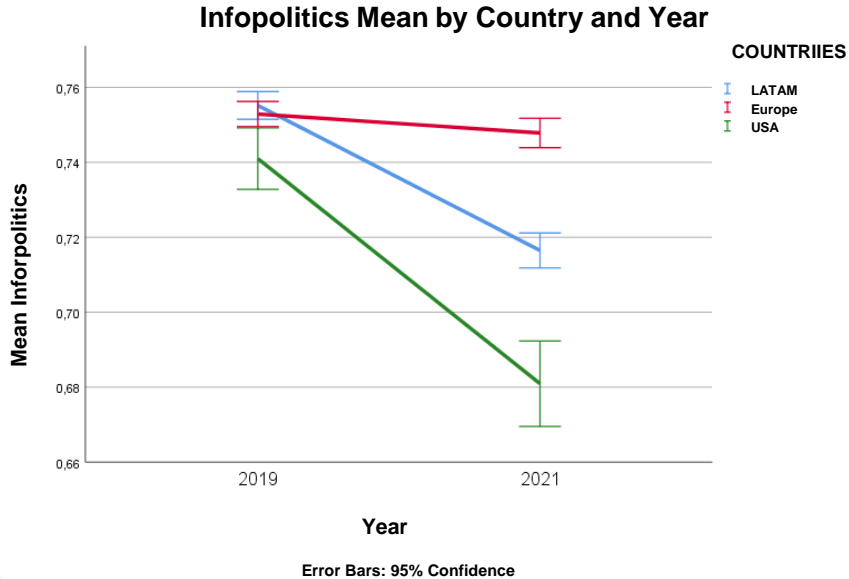
Cyberpolitics Mean by Country and Year



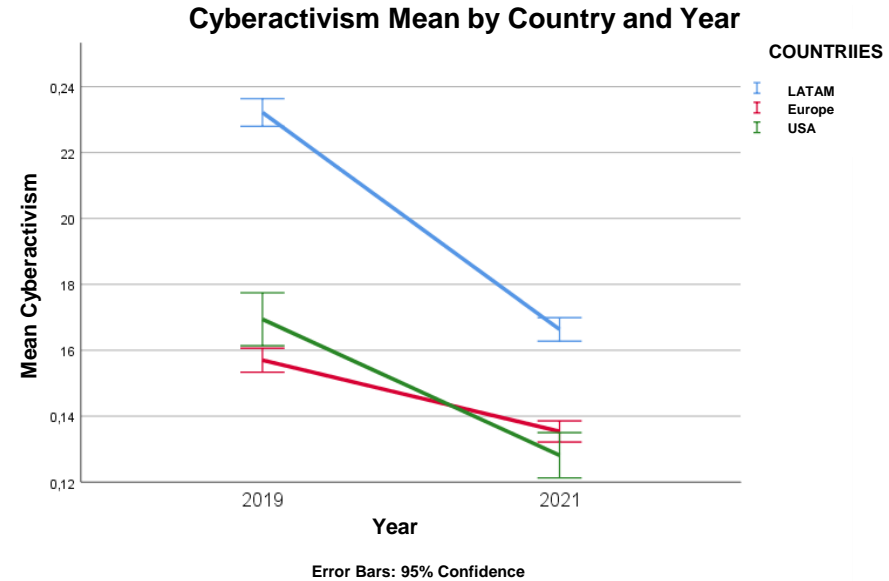
Findings

Cyberpolitics is falling everywhere... but most in cyberactivism than infopolitics

Infopolitics



Cyberactivism



Findings: Trust in news is falling

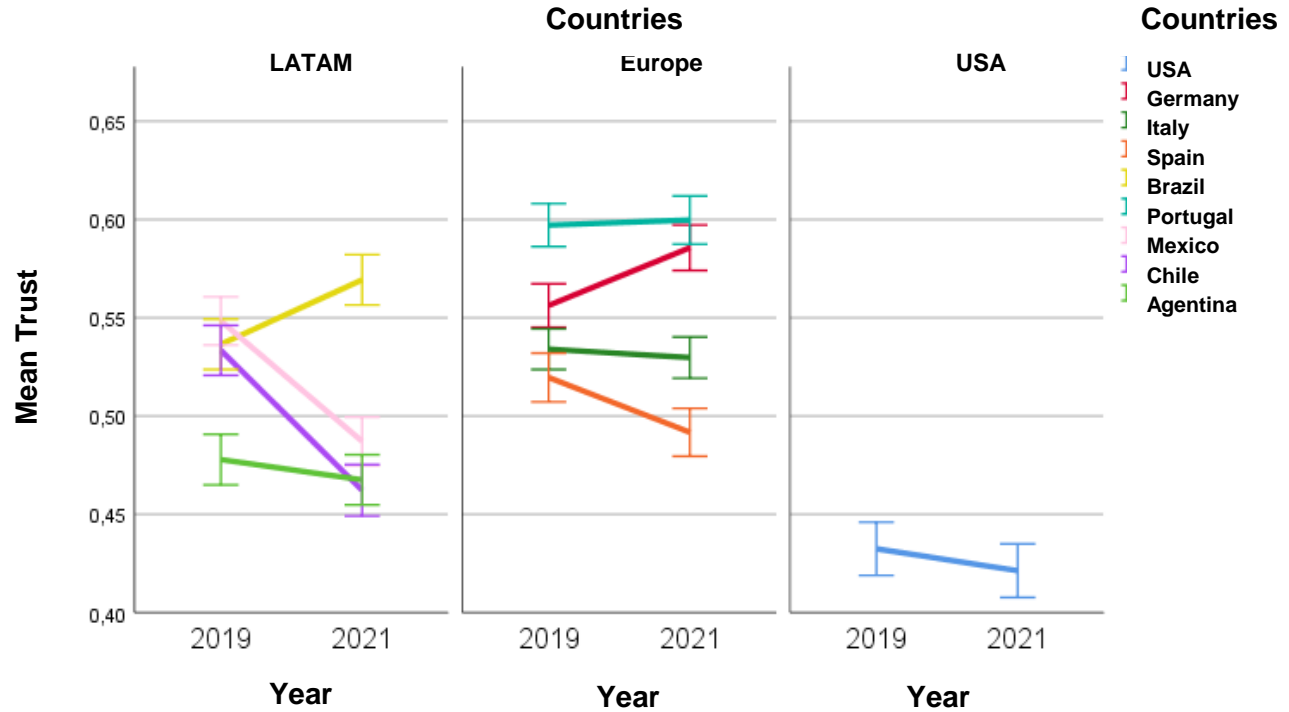
Trust in “News” by Country and Year

I think you can trust most news most of the time

6 out of 9 countries
dropped their trust in news
(2019 to 2021)

More intense in
Chile and
Mexico (6%),
and Spain (3%)

US very low
levels in 2019 to
its lowest



Error Bars: 95% Confidence



A categorization

More Trust

Less
Cyberpolitics

**OLD FASHION
TRUSTED**
High Trust,
Low Cyberpolitics

TRUSTED 2.0
High Trust,
High Cyberpolitics

More
Cyberpolitics

**OLD FASHION
SUSPICIOUS**
Low Trust in Media,
Low Cyberpolitics

SUSPICIOUS 2.0
Low Trust in Media,
High Cyberpolitics

Less Trust



Country position by categories (2019)

More Trust

OLD FASHION TRUSTED
High Trust,
Low Cyberpolitics



TRUSTED 2.0
High Trust,
High Cyberpolitics



Less
Cyberpolitics

More
Cyberpolitics



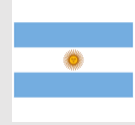
OLD FASHION SUSPICIOUS
Low Trust,
Low Cyberpolitics

USA



SUSPICIOUS 2.0
Low Trust,
High Cyberpolitics

Argentina



Less Trust

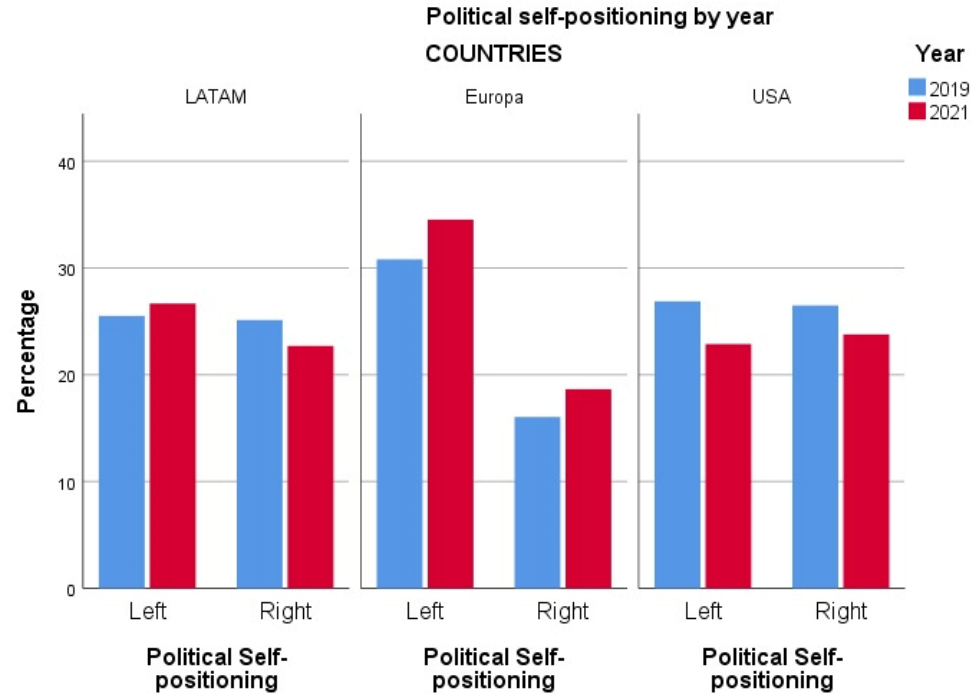


Findings: ideological polarization

Pospandemia showed an increase ideologization in Europa, both left and right.

For Latin America ideological change benefits leftists ideologies.

The US showed a decreased ideologization, both left and right, moved to the center (Median Voter)



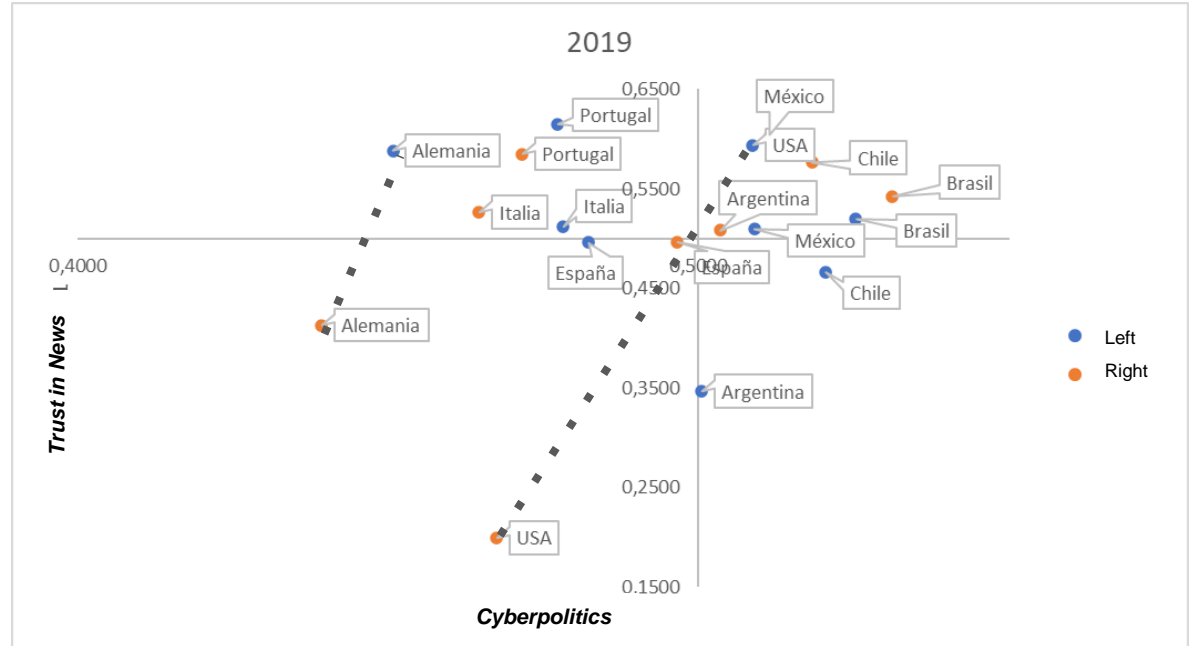
Findings: Ideology matters...

There is not uniformity intra countries

Similar behavior between different ideologies for Italy, Portugal, Brasil.

Middle distance for Spain, Mexico, Chile, Argentina

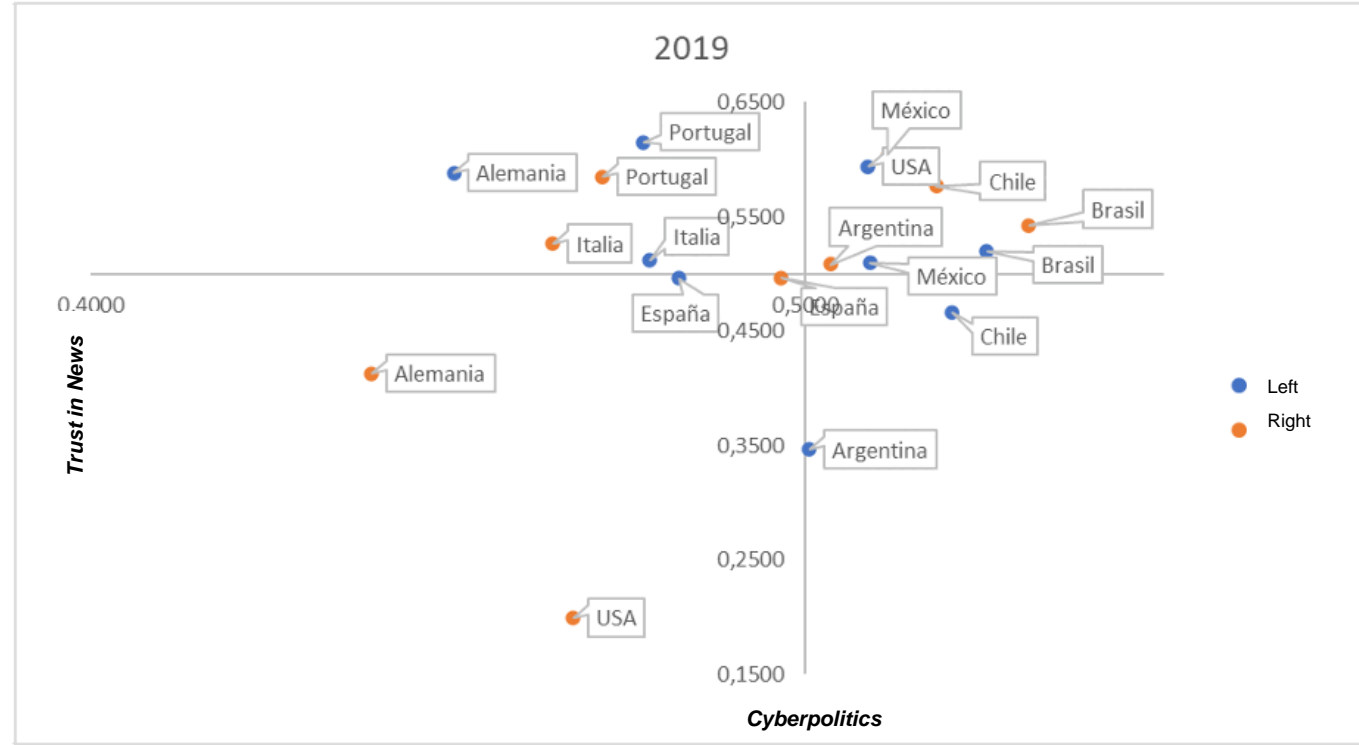
Long distance between levels of trust and cyberpolitics for leftist and righties in the USA and Germany



Findings: Trust, cyberpolitics, and polarization

Moving toward OLD FASHION zone is a common pattern (with or without trust in media)

Hypothesis: Burn out?



Conclusions and practical implications

1. Between 2019 and 2021 there was a significant recession in the use of cyberpolitics, for analyzed countries.
2. A drop in trust in news, also was noticed for selected countries. 6 out of 9 countries dropped their trust in news (2019 to 2021)
3. These changes occurred together with changes in ideological polarization, observing an increase in leftist self-positioning for Latin Americans, an increase of ideological polarization (both left and right) for Europeans, and a centrifugation of the American voters.
4. A categorization of countries, based in their levels of trust in news and cyberpolitics was made: *Confident 2.0*, *Confident Old Fashion*, *Distrustful Old Fashion* and *Distrustful 2.0*.
5. There are countries with strong internal differences in their levels of trust in media, depending on ideology (i.e. Germany and USA). It implies a risky situation, since trust in media is needed to effectively implement public policy health

Thanks!!!



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