# News consumption and political behavior among high school students after the 2019 Chilean social upheaval

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# Motivation: High school students' prominent role in Chilean politics



| Participation in demonstrations **before** 18 October 2019 (%) | Participation in demonstrations **after** 18 October 2019 (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No | Yes, once | Yes, several times | **Total** |
| No | 56.5 | 8.3 | 2.7 | 67.6 |
| Yes, once | 9.0 | 8.0 | 3.2 | 20.2 |
| Yes, several times | 1.8 | 2.5 | 7.9 | 12.2 |
| **Total** | 67.3 | 18.9 | 13.9 | 100.0 |

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# Our research question
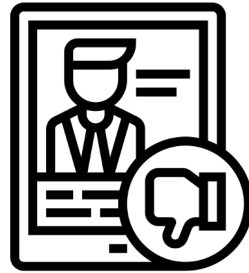
## Video-malaise

(1) Exposure to the news media could turn off citizens: foster mistrust of government, dissatisfaction with regime institutions, and thus civic disengagement (e.g. Patterson 1993);
(2) TV entertainment saps social trust and associational activism (e.g. Putnam 2000).
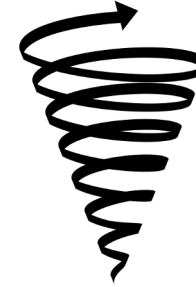
## Virtuous circle

(1) Prior political interest and knowledge stimulates exposure and attention to news (Norris 2000);
(2) exposure and attention to news strengthens political activism (Norris 2000).

**Research question: Do new digital platforms foster civic engagement and political activism among high-school students in Chile?**

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# Our survey

**Universe**: High school students, **between ninth and eleventh grade**, from all socioeconomic backgrounds, living in the urban areas of Santiago and the Valparaíso-Viña del Mar conurbation.

**Sampling frame**: Students, **between ninth and eleventh grade,** from schools with 75+ students across the three levels. Schools: 742; Students: 150,057. Source: 2020 Registry of Enrollments and Schools, Ministry of Education.

**Sampling method**: Respondents were selected by a stratified, probability sampling with oversampling of schools.

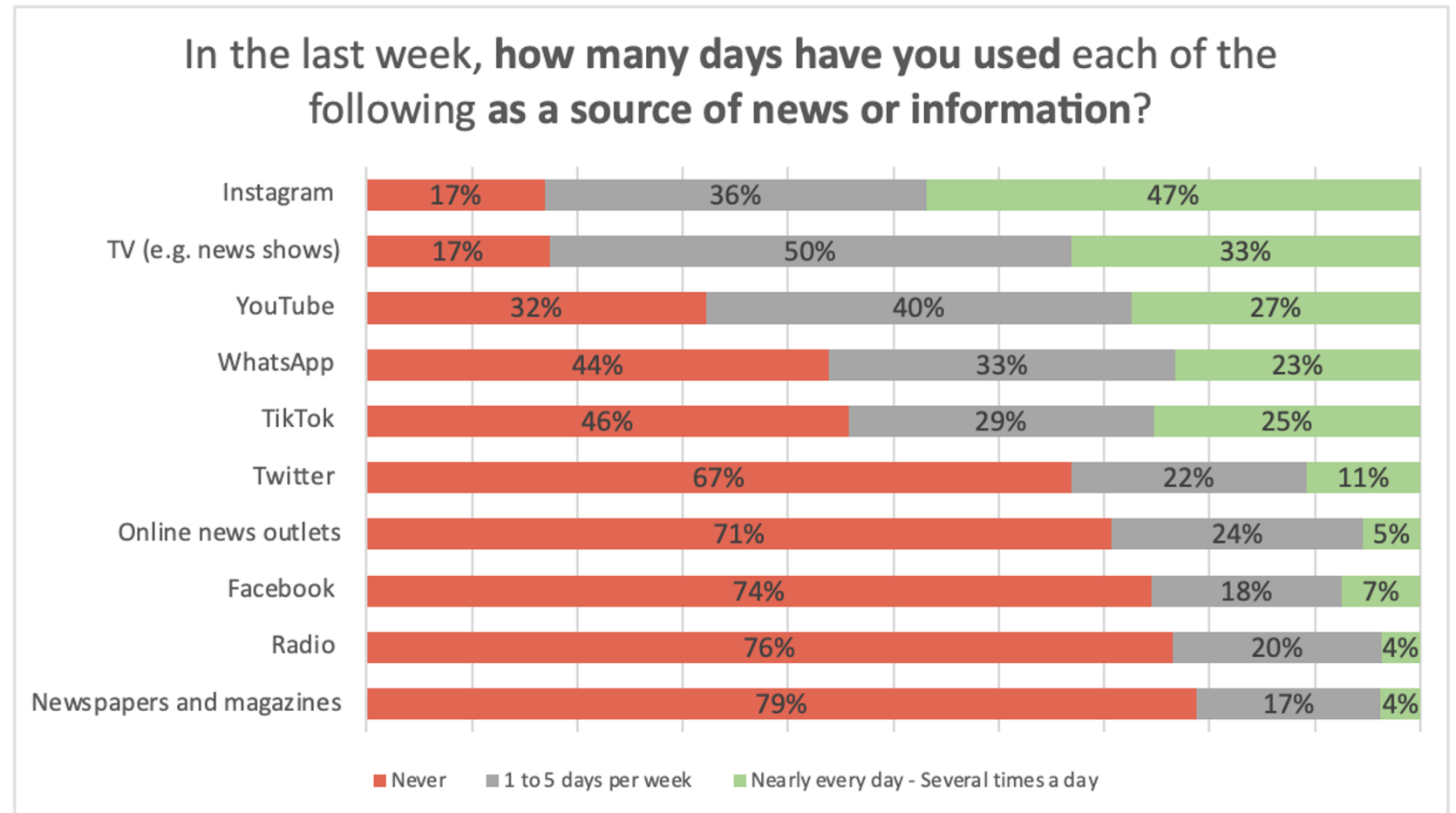**Mode of interview**: CAWI.

**Fieldwork**: April to September 2021.

**Resulting sample**: Schools: 29; Students: 2,684.

**Response Rate**: 11%

**Consents**: active for schools' principals; passive for students' parents.

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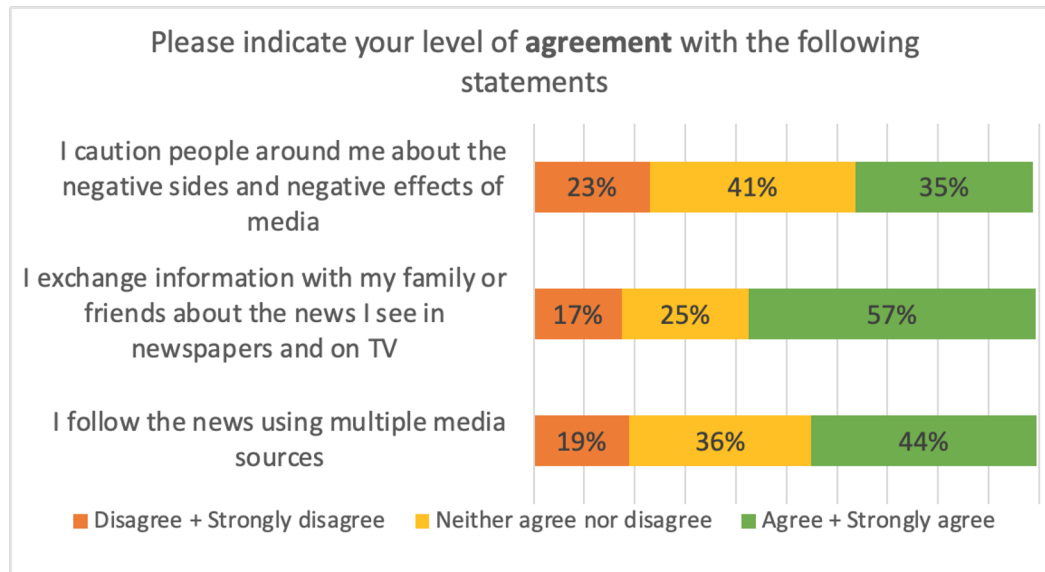# Frequency of news consumption across media outlets and digital platforms

- **Instagram** is the most frequently used source overall
- **TV** is the most common of traditional media sources
- Most traditional media are among the least used: **radio, print media**
- **Facebook** is the least used social network



In the last week, **how many days have you used** each of the following **as a source of news or information?**

| | Never | 1 to 5 days per week | Nearly every day - Several times a day |
|---|---|---|---|
| Instagram | 17% | 36% | 47% |
| TV (e.g. news shows) | 17% | 50% | 33% |
| YouTube | 32% | 40% | 27% |
| WhatsApp | 44% | 33% | 23% |
| TikTok | 46% | 29% | 25% |
| Twitter | 67% | 22% | 11% |
| Online news outlets | 71% | 24% | 5% |
| Facebook | 74% | 18% | 7% |
| Radio | 76% | 20% | 4% |
| Newspapers and magazines | 79% | 17% | 4% |

■ Never  ■ 1 to 5 days per week  ■ Nearly every day - Several times a day

# Other independent variables: literacy and trust



## News literacy

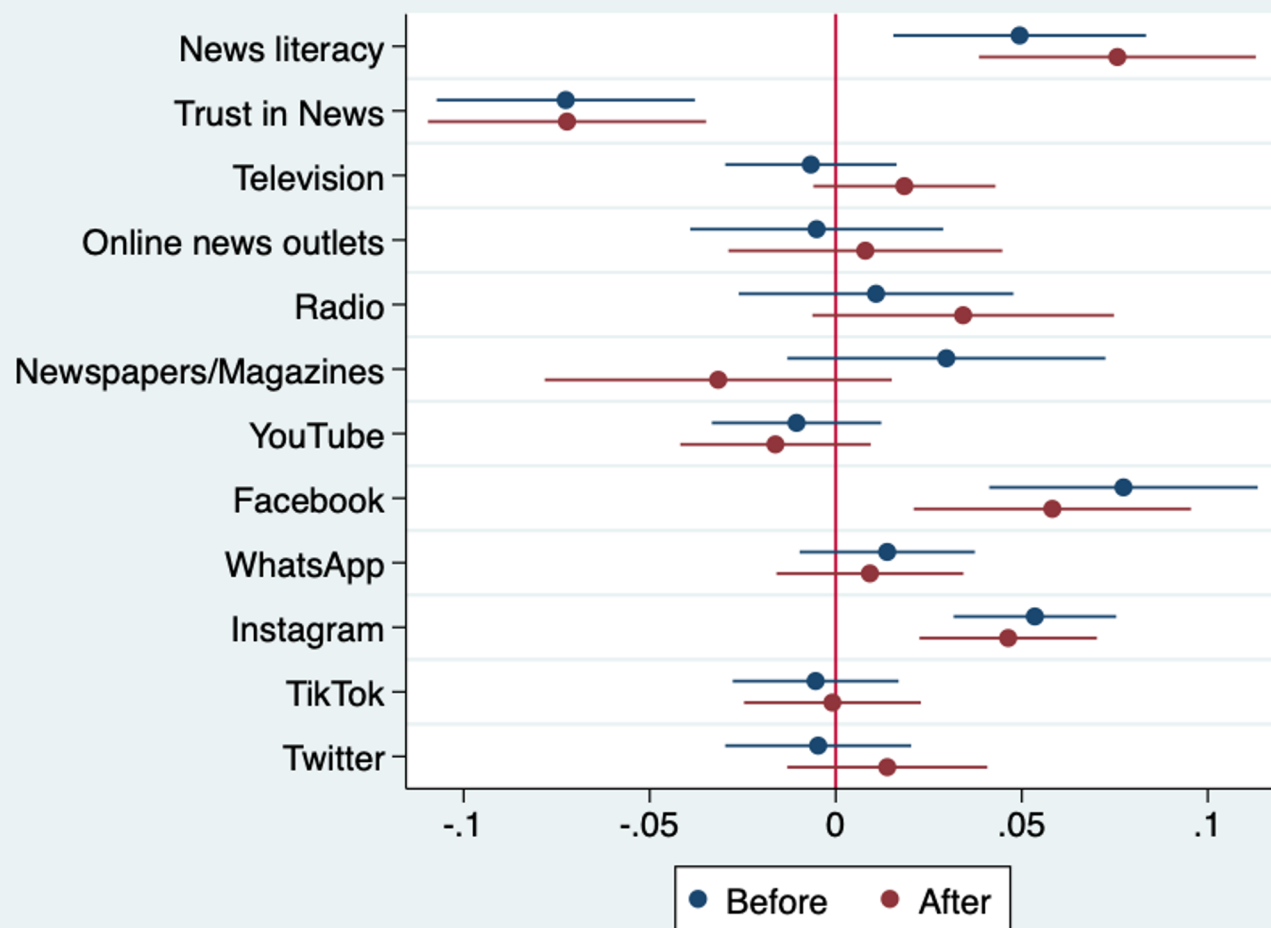- Construct from Jones-Jang et al. 2021
- Cronbach's alpha: 0.68

Please indicate your level of **agreement** with the following statements

| | Disagree + Strongly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree + Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|
| I caution people around me about the negative sides and negative effects of media | 23% | 41% | 35% |
| I exchange information with my family or friends about the news I see in newspapers and on TV | 17% | 25% | 57% |
| I follow the news using multiple media sources | 19% | 36% | 44% |

## Trust in news

- Construct from Lee et al. 2019
- Cronbach's alpha: 0.69

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statementes. **Most of the time...**

| | Disagree + Strongly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree + Strongly agree | Don't know/No answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The media in my country is independent from undue influence from businesses | 37% | 34% | 10% | 19% |
| The media in my country is independent from undue influence from politics or the government | 44% | 30% | 14% | 12% |
| I believe most news can be trusted | 33% | 41% | 23% | 3% |

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# Participating in demonstrations before and after 18 Oct 2019



**Dependent variables:** frequency of participation.

**Linear models using robust standard errors.**
→ Results are similar using linear multilevel models.

**Controls:** sex, grade level, socioeconomic status (SES), region, type of school.

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# Forms of online political engagement
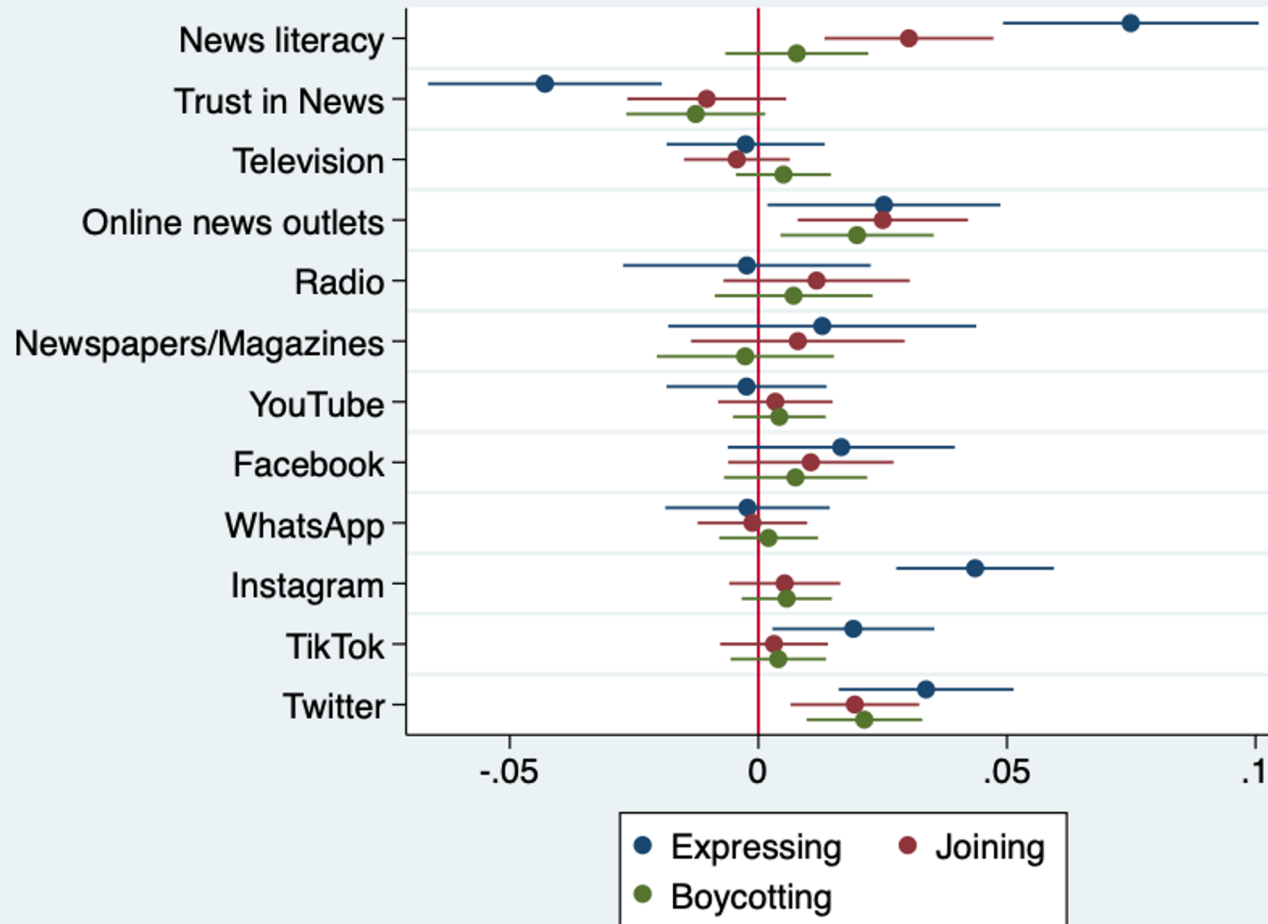


**Dependent variables:**

> In the last 12 months, have you engaged in any of the following activities? (% "Yes")
>
> Expressing your opinion about a topic of public interest through social media — **36%**
>
> Joining political, community, or citizen causes in social networks — **12%**
>
> Participating in boycotts or rejections through social networks — **7%**

**Linear models using robust standard errors.**
→ Same control variables.
→ Results are similar using linear multilevel models.

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# Future political behaviors
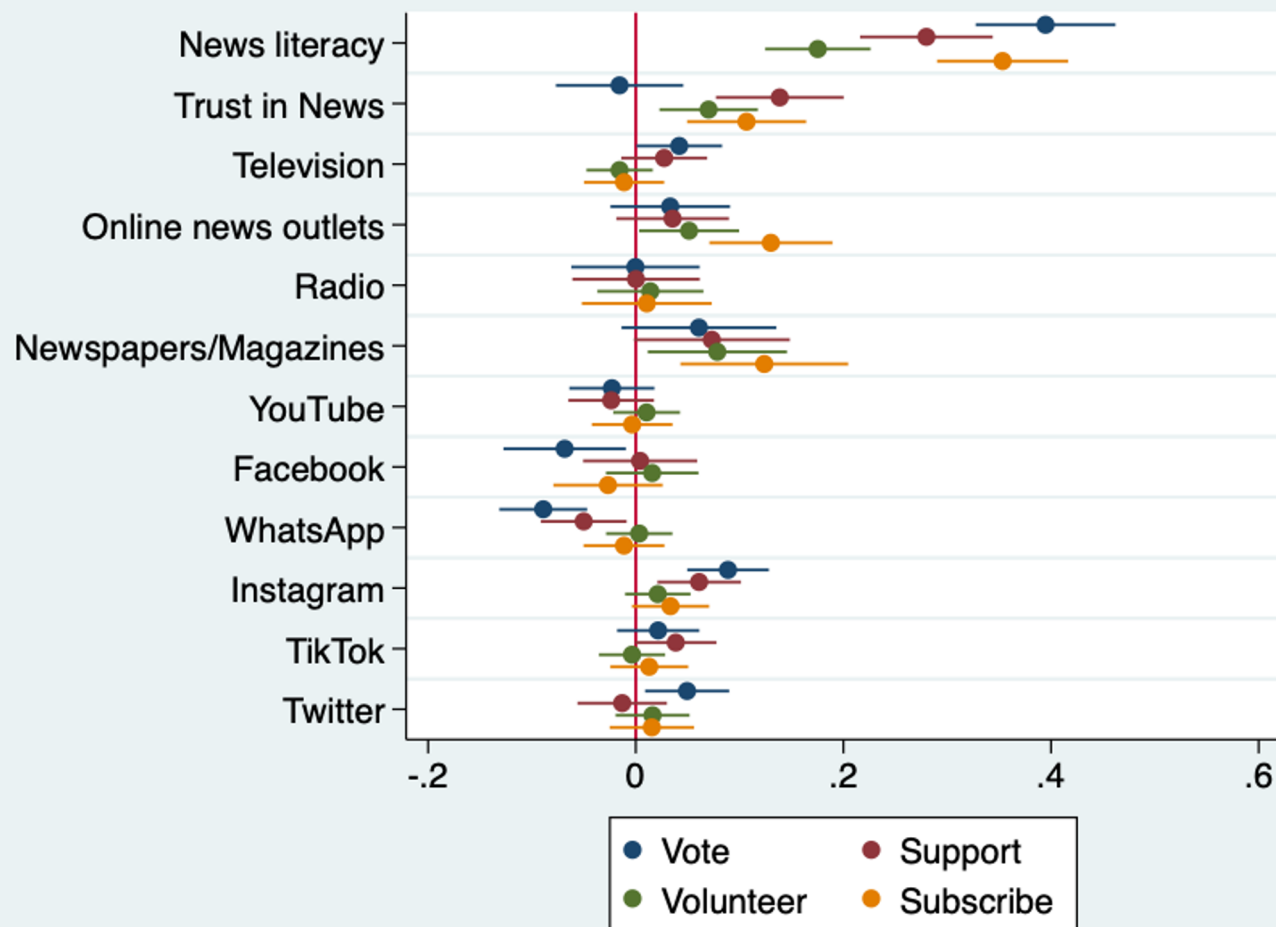


## Dependent variables:



When you are over 18, how likely are you to participate in the following activities?
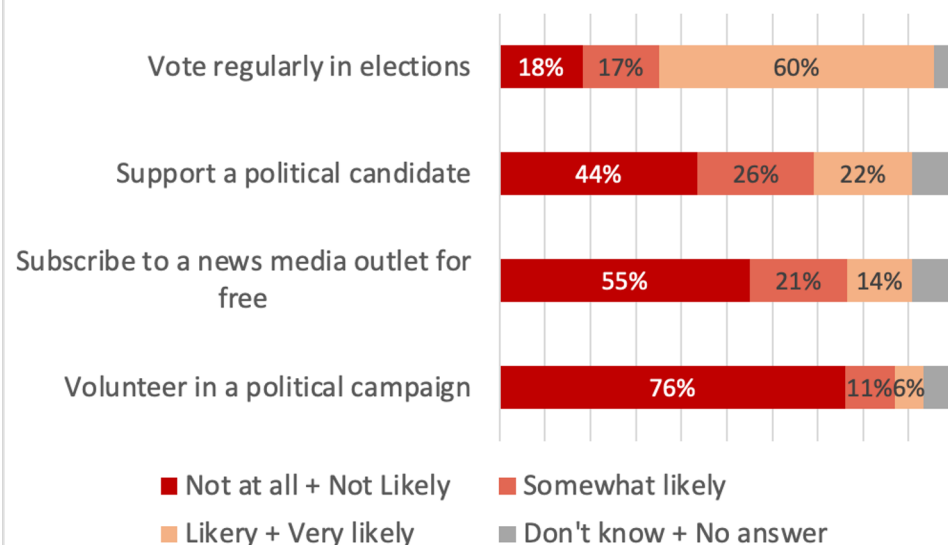
| Activity | Not at all + Not Likely | Somewhat likely | Likely + Very likely |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vote regularly in elections | 18% | 17% | 60% |
| Support a political candidate | 44% | 26% | 22% |
| Subscribe to a news media outlet for free | 55% | 21% | 14% |
| Volunteer in a political campaign | 76% | 11% | 6% |

- Not at all + Not Likely
- Somewhat likely
- Likery + Very likely
- Don't know + No answer

## Linear models using robust standard errors.

→ Same control variables.

→ Results are similar using linear multilevel models.

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# Preliminary conclusions

Is it video-malaise or virtuous cycle among high-school students in Chile?
**It depends.**

| Behavior | Video-malaise | Virtuous cycle |
|---|---|---|
| Past participation in demonstrations | |  |
| Expressing opinions online | |  |
| Joining online causes | |  |
| Boycotting on social networks | |  |
| Voting in elections (future) |  |  |
| Supporting a political candidate (future) |  |  |

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