

I tweet, then I vote. The effect of media consumption and the use of social networks on electoral participation in Chile, 2009-2013

Tuiteo, luego voto. El efecto del consumo de medios de comunicación y uso de redes sociales en la participación electoral en Chile en 2009 y 2013

Tuiteo, logo voto. O efeito do consumo de mídia e uso de redes sociais na participação eleitoral no Chile em 2009 e 2013

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ABSTRACT

The growth of social networks has fueled the perception that its use positively influences political participation. Using national polls, we assess the effect of traditional media consumption and the use of social networks on electoral participation in Chile between 2009 and 2013. Although the strongest determinants of electoral participation are institutional, socioeconomic and sociodemographic, media consumption also has a positive impact on turnout. When analyzed separately, both traditional media consumption and social networks use have positive effects on the predisposition to vote. But when we concurrently assess the effect of media consumption and use of social networks, the latter does not have a significant effect on electoral participation or the willingness to vote among Chileans.

Keywords: electoral participation, vote intention, media consumption, social networks use, Chile.

RESUMEN

El crecimiento de las redes sociales ha alimentado la percepción de que su uso influye positivamente en la participación política. Con encuestas nacionales, evaluamos el efecto del consumo de medios tradicionales y el uso de redes sociales sobre la participación electoral en Chile entre 2009 y 2013. Aunque los determinantes más fuertes de la participación electoral son institucionales, socioeconómicos y sociodemográficos, el consumo de medios también afecta la disponibilidad a participar. Al analizarlos por separado, el consumo de medios tradicionales y el uso de redes sociales tienen efectos positivos sobre la predisposición a votar. Pero cuando se evalúa en conjunto el consumo de medios tradicionales y el uso de redes sociales, desaparece el efecto del uso de redes sobre la participación electoral de los chilenos y sobre la predisposición a votar.

Palabras clave: participación electoral, predisposición a votar, consumo de medios, consumo de redes sociales, Chile.

RESUMO

O crescimento das redes sociais tem alimentado a percepção de que a sua utilização tem um efeito positivo sobre a participação política. Por meio dos censos nacionais, avaliamos o efeito do consumo de meios de comunicação tradicionais e o uso de redes sociais na participação eleitoral no Chile entre 2009 e 2013. Apesar de as determinantes mais fortes de participação eleitoral serem institucionais, socioeconômicos e sociodemográficos, o consumo de mídia também afeta o nível de participação do eleitorado nos pleitos. Analisando separadamente, o consumo de mídia tradicional e o uso de redes sociais têm efeitos positivos sobre a disposição de votar. Mas quando avaliadas conjuntamente, desaparece o efeito do uso de redes sobre a participação eleitoral dos chilenos e sobre a predisposição de votar.

Palavras-chave: participação eleitoral, vontade de votar, consumo de mídia, consumo de redes sociais, Chile.

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Although there are many variables that affect electoral participation, the attention of scholars has tended to focus on institutional variables, such as voting compulsion, electoral rules, and socioeconomic or sociodemographic characteristics of the population. But growing evidence in recent years shows that media consumption also influences electoral participation (Arriagada & Navia, 2009; Holgado, 2003; Sajuria, 2013). The rapid expansion of the use of social networks has led many to try to measure the effect of participation in social networks on the availability to vote in elections. In Chile, after the adoption of a system of automatic registration and voluntary voting in 2012 –and a subsequent drop in electoral participation– the number of studies assessing the determinants of participation has multiplied (Contreras, Joignant & Morales, 2016; Martínez, Santos & Elacqua, 2012). These studies mention media consumption and the use of social networks as potential factors that may affect participation. The adoption of the voluntary vote makes Chile an excellent case study to evaluate the effect of media consumption and social networks on the willingness to vote in an election.

With data from national surveys conducted between 2009 and 2013, we investigated whether the consumption of the media and social networks has influenced electoral participation in Chile. We also evaluated whether the adoption of voluntary voting had an effect on the way in which media consumption and the use of social networks affected electoral participation. In what follows, we briefly discuss the determinants of participation and present the effects of media consumption and the use of networks on participation. After presenting our research question and hypotheses, we analyze what has been studied in Chile on the determinants of electoral participation and on the effect of media consumption and use of social networks on participation. Finally, we present our data and discuss the methodology, with the limitations associated with this type of analysis.

DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

Electoral participation varies for different reasons (Franklin, 2004). One of the determinants is related to ideology and political inclination. People are influenced

by variables of long, medium and short term when deciding their vote (Bartels, 2011). Voters who define their ideology from long-term variables, such as ethnicity, religion, and social class, presumably always have similar patterns of electoral participation –they always vote, or they always abstain from voting. Political predispositions are reinforced through interaction with like-minded people. That is, the social structure conditions the vote. The socialization processes affect in the medium term the political preferences and predisposition to vote. There are also short-term variables, associated with the economic vote, that influence preferences and presumably the willingness to vote.

Institutional design also affects participation. Changes in electoral laws and in the composition of the population have immediate effects. A system of proportional representation encourages electoral participation, because citizens feel that their votes are more significant (Lijphart, 1997), but less decisive than in a majority system (Blais, 2008). The type of election and its level of competitiveness matter. In presidential elections there is more participation than in municipal ones (Blais, 2008). If there is high competitiveness, more people will vote because they will feel that their vote is decisive (Franklin, 2004). The type of democracy and the level of mobilization of people also matter. Participation is greater if democracy is well established. People who belong to interest groups or militate in political parties, vote more. Finally, people participate more when there is party cohesion (Franklin, 2004).

On the other hand, educated people easily understand political issues, which lowers the cost of voting (Mata, 2013) and causes the educated to vote more (Lijphart, 1997). Education is supposed to instill civic values, but countries with better education have low voting percentages (Franklin, 2004). The socioeconomic group (GSE) is also positively related to participation, since lower-class people have less capacity and time to devote and learn from politics (Lijphart, 1997). Gender matters too. Latin American women historically have participated less (Pachón, Peña & Wills, 2012). Romero (2001) emphasizes that the space of politics has historically been considered as a masculine space. As people get older, they vote more. This behavioral change occurs between the ages of 25 and 30, as people enter the labor market, where they begin to worry about issues such as taxes and/or retirement (Sierra,

2007). For young people, voting has never been a part of their social habits, but for the elderly it is so important to vote that they stop doing it exclusively for loss of mobility or health problems (Goerres, 2008).

Social or cultural habits matter: electoral behavior in the first election after people meet the minimum voting age is decisive for future elections (Franklin, 2004). In addition, citizens are rational and vote only when something motivates them (Bartels, 2011). Also, turnout will depend on the voting day, the weather, and unforeseen situations (Franklin, 2004).

THE CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA AND NETWORK USE AND THE INFLUENCE IN THE FORMATION OF OPINIONS

Along with the mass consumption of media in the twentieth century, the influence of the media on political processes grew. The information that people receive through the media influences their electoral preferences and their decision on how to vote. The media give certain status to public affairs (Kinder, 1998) and organize issues hierarchically at their convenience (Monzón, 1996) from, for example, ideological or commercial interests. Media consumption is quite high, which may influence the opinion of citizens (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The agenda setting process consists in transferring relevance to certain issues that the media considers important, and then to show them to the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The media do not tell us what to think, but they do have influence on what we think about (Cohen, 1963). There are three types of agenda: governmental, media and public. The media agenda is fairly homogeneous with the governmental, and both predominate over the public one (Valenzuela & Arriagada, 2011).

Among the theories on the influence of the media on the formation of opinions and perceptions of the people, those of "direct effects" (Lasswell, 1938) and "limited effects" (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944) stand out. In the first, the media "inject" information directly and instantly to the audience, being considered as omnipotent and omnipresent (Monzón, 1996); that is to say, what is exposed by the press directly affects what citizens think and how they think it (Page, 1996). In the second, the audience is not manipulated because

it chooses which media to listen to and considers who is reporting to select the information delivered and form an opinion (D'adamo, García & Freidenberg, 2007). Political opinions are a mixture of selected information from what is heard in the media, and predispositions formed from childhood through processes of socialization. These are unstable because they change according to the context (Zaller, 1992). Media consumption can have two effects: one is to change the opinion and another, the most common, lies in deepening, maintaining and reinforcing the opinions (Arriagada, Navia & Schuster, 2010). Generally, the most educated are not passive because they can criticize, filter and discard certain information. In addition, they use different sources to inform themselves and create their political opinion (Norris, 2001). Finally, political knowledge is positively related to media exposure (Zaller, 1992). In addition, all the political information that citizens receive passes first through the media, so political language has to adapt to the language of the media. This leads to the conclusion that all politics is media (Castells, 2009).

Social networks are also important because the political class uses them as a platform to reach potential voters. In addition, both networks and media show electoral propaganda to influence the political perception and participation of the electorate (Rivas, 2012). In this case, online social networks are understood as a communication platform where each participant has a unique profile and interacts with others. All are constantly delivering and receiving information transversely (Ellison & Boyd, 2013).

Other than promoting active participation in the debate on public affairs, the media and networks have been understood as main actors in the political debate; so much so that today not only politicians rule, but also does the media (Natanson, 2010). Television played an essential role in the massification of the first televised debate between Nixon and Kennedy in 1960, because the image, knowing how to talk to the cameras and using the correct language were decisive for the triumph (Druckman, 2003). Political participation, confidence in the political class, and mobilization increase as media consumption increases (Norris, 2001). In the case of social networks, they could promote electoral participation by fostering an egalitarian policy where everyone can participate (Sajuria, 2013). An example

of this, according to Valdez and Huerta (2008), was the influence of the successful digital campaign on Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, where Twitter was first used and there were 9 million new voters. On the other hand, social networks promote the unconventional participation of young people and decrease electoral turnout (Scherman & Arriagada, 2012).

However, traditional media are unidirectional, while social networks are multidirectional. In the case of traditional media, the receiver cannot respond directly to the sender (Monzón, 1996). In social networks, a horizontal and direct communication between citizens and the political class is facilitated (Arriagada & Schuster, 2008). Networks allow candidates to be informed about the opinions of citizens and that the users question, opine and denounce certain actions of politicians, giving rise to a public debate in which all can participate (Ayala, 2014). The political class fears and respects social networks because they facilitate the organization of the electorate (Castells, 2010). Finally, traditional media and social networks have the capacity to modify the conditions of the political game (Gerstlé & Soto, 2005).

In addition, traditional media and social networks can include topics forgotten by the government in the public agenda (Valenzuela & Arriagada, 2011), to represent public opinion and to insert minorities in the debate (Sajuria, 2013). They can also provide truthful and neutral information for citizens to monitor the government (Arriagada & Navia, 2009). They can show debates to the electorate in order to get people to vote (Holgado, 2003). Some authors, however, argue that the media are biased and controlled by minorities, which hinders the delivery of plural and neutral information (Castells, 2010).

The consumption of social networks is increasing in many countries and its effect on political processes also seems to be increasing. In Spain, Twitter and Facebook are the most used networks (Congosto, Fernández & Moro, 2011) and according to ELOGIA (2016), 81% of people between 16 and 55 years old use them, which is equivalent to more than 15 million users. Twitter was a better predictor of the electoral trend than traditional polls (Deltell, Claes & Osteso, 2013). In the 2008 US elections, Barack Obama managed to get young people to vote for him through an extensive use of social networks, and these votes were decisive for his victory (Gonzalez, 2010). In addition, Facebook

is the most used social network (Nielsen, 2011) and, in November 2010, 65% of the winners in the Spanish elections were the best evaluated on Facebook and Twitter (Congosto et al., 2011).

THE DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN CHILE

In Chile, long-term variables that influence electoral participation seem to have lost influence in the face of the growing effect of economic vote (López, 2004), although other studies show that medium-term variables related to political socialization remain relevant (Toro, 2007). The legitimacy of the political system and institutional trust also affect electoral participation (Morales, 2008a).

Some people vote because they promote a quality democracy, others do not vote because they are free riders (Navia, 2004) and there are some who do not participate because they are dissatisfied with democracy (Morales, 2008a). Prerequisites for participation also seem to have an effect. When registration is required, people avoid wasting time and do not vote (Navia, 2004). With automatic enrollment, the costs of going to vote decrease (Martínez et al., 2012), but when it was established in Chile, the number of voters dropped nevertheless (Contreras et al., 2016). In fact, the adoption of automatic registration and voluntary voting led to a 65% increase in the electoral roll, but electoral participation decreased by 17% in municipal elections in 2012 compared to 2008 (Bargsted, Valenzuela, De la Cerda & Mackenna, 2013).

The levels of uncertainty about who will win and electoral participation are positively correlated (Navia, 2004). The low participation in the 2013 presidential elections can be explained in part by Michelle Bachelet's enormous advantage in pre-election polls. In addition, the presence of an incumbent candidate and the level of competitiveness of the previous election also have an effect (Contreras & Navia, 2013). The level of mobilization of people is also positively related to the willingness to vote (Toro, 2007). In Chile, young people participate in politics, but opt for less conventional forms and a smaller percentage do so through voting (Scherman, Arriagada & Valenzuela, 2012).

Abstention tends to focus on the less educated (Bargsted et al., 2013). The higher the levels of education, the more people vote (Martínez et al., 2012). In Chile,

the comparison between a district where 70% of people have more than 12 years of education and another where that figure only reaches 13.3%, showed a difference in participation in the 2013 presidential elections of 12% (Lagos, 2013). Electoral participation is stratified (Luna, 2011), as educated and high socioeconomic groups vote the most (Díaz, 2014). The voting average of the upper class exceeds by 6 points that of the lower class (Observatorio Político Electoral, 2012).

Gender also matters. Chilean women are more conservative in voting, although gender solidarity predominates over ideology. An example was the 2005 presidential election, when Michelle Bachelet won a high percentage of women's support (Morales, 2008b). The lesser political involvement of Chilean women is due, among other things, to lack of time and low levels of information (Bachmann & Correa, 2012). Therefore, the determinants of electoral participation in Chile are similar to those that have generally been identified in other countries.

THE EFFECT OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CHILE

According to previous studies on the electorate in Chile, consumption of media and social networks influences the formation of opinions, because the audience (receiver) tends to listen and follow characters (emitter) who think likewise (Fábrega & Paredes, 2012). Afterwards, what is said in the media ends up influencing what the public expresses (Arriagada & Schuster, 2015).

The media agenda addresses and inserts new issues in the public and governmental agenda (Valenzuela & Arriagada, 2011). Social networks are the top generators of the agenda, specifically Twitter, which has been used by many candidates to make their opinions on specific topics known (Fábrega & Paredes, 2012). It is also used as a tool for campaigning before and after election day (Vergeer, Hermans & Sams, 2011). When posting something in Twitter, politicians aspire to its appearance in traditional media and its installation in the agendas minutes later. In addition, for politicians and citizens, it is now easier to know what they think of each other, because there is a direct dialogue and thematic inclusion is more effective (Fábrega & Paredes, 2012). Social networks also make it easier for the electorate to be informed about politicians during

non-electoral periods (Arriagada & Navia, 2009). The multi-directionality of networks, in addition to promoting a more transparent, simultaneous and direct relationship, diminished the distance between the political class and the electorate. Thanks to the virtuality of networks, citizens have been able to communicate, question and confront the political class without costs and influencing real life (Fábrega & Paredes, 2012).

The type of media or social network and the type of information that the recipient consumes and shares are variables that are closely related to the type of political participation in Chile (Valenzuela, Arriagada & Scherman, 2012). For example, television consumption promotes increased presidential approval and reduces political expression, while the consumption of newspapers and social networks reduces approval and increases expression. Finally, network consumption reduces institutional trust, while newspapers and television promote it (Arriagada & Schuster, 2015).

Although only those interested in political issues consume political information through the media (Arriagada & Schuster, 2008), depending on the type of media and the content consumed, consumption influences the formation of perceptions and the type of participation (Scherman & Arriagada, 2012). Television was essential to promote participation in the 1988 plebiscite through the "YES" and "NO" electoral campaigns (Arriagada & Navia, 2009). Social networks promote unconventional participation, because they reduce organizational costs and quickly massify information (Valenzuela et al., 2012). In addition, 45% use them for information and 25% for debate. Finally, those who use Twitter are the ones who vote the most (González, Azócar & Scherman, 2010).

According to the National Television Association's (2014) annual report, television was used by 99.2% of the population in 2013. Despite the figures, it is believed that the Internet and social networks came to replace the traditional media (García, 2015). Chile is one of the countries that most uses social networks like Twitter and Facebook, and is even above 10% of the average regional use of networks (Rivas, 2012). In 2009, the presidential campaign of Marco Enríquez-Ominami began its massive use in politics. In municipal elections in 2012, the networks were better used and, finally, all the candidates used them intensely for the 2013 presidential election (García, 2015).

Social networks have been used by Chilean politicians to make themselves known to potential voters,

as a complement to their campaigns (García, 2015) and to improve their public images (Sierra, Ortiz, Alvarado & Rangel, 2014). Most politicians use the networks. Among them, 18 of 22 ministers, 87 of 120 deputies and 27 of 38 senators (Fábrega & Paredes, 2012). In any case, having high popularity in social networks does not imply achieving good electoral results (García, 2015). Being present in networks is essential, but not enough to win an election, since how the networks are used matters a lot. Examples of this were the 2013 presidential elections, where the candidates who used them the most were the least voted (García, 2015). Social networks are seen as an opportunity for politicians to re-engage citizenship with politics, since digital activism could influence different types of participation (Somma, 2013).

QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

With public opinion polls, we evaluated the effect of media consumption and social networks on electoral participation in presidential elections in Chile between 2009 and 2013. Based on the theoretical discussion and the case of Chile, we have developed two hypotheses:

- H1: The consumption of traditional media positively affected electoral participation in Chile in the presidential elections of 2009 and 2013.
- H2: The consumption of social networks positively affected electoral participation in Chile in the presidential elections of 2009 and 2013.

METHODOLOGY

We seek to evaluate the effect of media consumption on electoral participation. This type of study always presents problems of endogeneity, since the causal direction is not clear. It could be that the people who vote consumes media or that the consumption of media induces the people to vote. Our problem is similar to that reported by Fábrega and Vega (2013) in their research on the relationship between television rating and Twitter activity, where they reduced this methodological difficulty through the study of a single television signal and variations of a single rating. They used the only event that is transmitted simultaneously by all

national media and forms a single signal, the *Teletón*. While the endogeneity problem does not completely disappear, they argue that Twitter's effect on rating is less significant.

In this study, we also face another problem. Between 2009 and 2013, rules governing electoral participation in Chile changed. In 2009 there was a system of voluntary registration and mandatory voting, while in 2013 the system of automatic registration and voluntary voting was in effect. This leads to think that the effect of media and network consumption in 2009 was indirect, because it required people to be registered to vote. By 2013, the effect could already be direct. In addition, social networks were also less used in 2009 than in 2013.

Our dependent variable is electoral participation and, depending on the survey, it is measured based on two indicators: predisposition to vote in the next election and participation in the previous election.

There are two independent variables of interest, consumption of traditional media—radio, newspapers and television— and consumption of the social networks Twitter and Facebook. Depending on the surveys, these variables are operationalized in different ways. In some cases, they refer specifically to the consumption of media to acquire news, and in others they talk about media consumption in general. For purposes of the results, a relevant distinction is that some surveys ask about consumption of social networks and others, about Internet consumption. We chose the latter, since there are no other surveys that specifically ask about social network consumption.

We used the surveys of the Social Sciences Research Institute of the Diego Portales University in 2009 and 2013 (UDP2009, UDP2013), the Survey of the Public Studies Center of 2012 (CEP2012) and two surveys of the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program in 2012 and 2015 (UNDP2012, UNDP2015). The UDP2009 survey interviewed 1302 people who represented 70% of the country's population, and the UDP2013 survey had a sample of 1,200 people, who represented 73.6% of the country's population. The CEP2012 survey had a sample of 1512 people who represented all the regions of Chile. The UNDP2012 survey interviewed 2535 people representing all regions, and fieldwork was conducted between June and September 2011. Finally, the UNDP2015

survey had a sample of 1805 cases that achieved complete national coverage and the fieldwork was conducted between August and October 2013. The five surveys interviewed people older than 18 years, worked at 95% confidence, and used probabilistic, randomized and stratified sampling.

Our dependent variable is electoral participation. The UDP2009 survey asks if people would vote in the 2009 presidential elections if there were automatic registration and voluntary voting, while UDP2013 inquires about predisposition to vote in 2013 when automatic registration and voluntary voting already existed. The CEP2012 and UNDP2012 polls asked for electoral participation in the previous presidential elections of 2009. For the 2013 elections, they asked about predisposition to vote. Finally, the UNDP2015 survey, actually conducted at the end of 2013, only asked about willingness to vote.

The UDP2009 survey asked (# 31): If in the next election vote was not mandatory, would you vote? In UDP2013, the question (# 53) was: Will you go to vote in the next presidential election? Both surveys ask for willingness to vote in case of voluntary voting. In the CEP2012 survey of July and August a question is asked for each presidential election. The first (#TE3P08) is: Will you vote in the next presidential election in 2013? The four response options—yes, probably yes, probably no and no—were recoded in two, yes and no. The second (#DDP23) is: Did you vote in the last presidential and parliamentary election of 2009? The UNDP2012 survey asked two questions, one for each election (2009 and 2013). The first (#156) is: Did you vote in the last presidential election? And the second (#157): If registration was automatic and the vote was voluntary, what are you most likely to do in the next election? Finally, the UNDP2015 survey asked only for predisposition to vote in 2013, as follows (#106): In the upcoming presidential elections that will be held in November this year, what are you most likely to do? For all five surveys, all responses were recoded into two options, yes and no. Those who did not vote, were not going to vote or did not answer received value 0, while those who indicated that they voted or expressed their willingness to do so received value 1. We have dichotomously separated those who vote from all the rest.

Our independent variables are consumption of traditional media and consumption of social networks. It should be noted that in all the surveys there was a question about media consumption with the goal of

reading news, except in the UDP2009, where there was a question on media consumption in general. UDP2013 and CEP2012 were specific and asked about consumption of political news. On the other hand, only in the UDP2009 and UDP2013 surveys there was a question about Internet consumption, and in all other surveys, questions were asked about social network consumption.

In the three questions (#TE1P01) of CEP2012 about media consumption frequency, there were three options for response: never, sometimes and frequently. The UDP2009 and UDP2013 surveys included four questions on frequency of consumption of television, newspapers, radios and the Internet and/or social networks (#49 and #31). The UDP2009 had six response options (never, less than once a week, 1-2 days a week, 3-4 days a week, 5-6 days a week, everyday). In contrast, UDP2013 had five response options (everyday, sometimes a week, sometimes a month, rarely, never). UNDP2012 asked three questions about frequency of consumption (#68 and #138) and each had five response options (never, 1 to 3 times a month, 1 time a week, several days a week, everyday) and UNDP2015 (#13) asked five questions about consumption with four options (very often, fairly often, rarely and never).

In all five surveys, we have recoded the consumption scales into three values. Those who do not consume have a value of 0, those who consume sometimes have a value of 1 and frequent consumers have a value of 2. However, differences in the response options between UDP2009 surveys with UDP2013 and between UNDP2012 with UNDP2015 could lead to distortions in the frequencies of consumption, even after our recoding. On the one hand, UDP2009 asks for consumption within a week, while in UDP2013 the options refer to daily, weekly and monthly consumption. Something similar, but less exaggerated, occurs with UNDP surveys. In 2012 it asked about monthly, weekly and daily consumption, while for 2015, the response options are quite general and allude only to the frequency level.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The 2009 and 2013 UDP surveys reflected people's low interest in participating in the elections. In 2009, when the vote was mandatory, The surveys inquired about the willingness to vote in case the vote was voluntary. In 2013, there is a question about the willingness to vote with automatic registration and voluntary voting.

In both years, a majority says they are willing to vote –59% and 66% respectively–. In fact, the actual participation was lower than what the respective surveys reported, showing that there are people who say they are willing to vote but do not vote.

The CEP2012 survey inquired about electoral participation in the 2009 presidential elections and the willingness to vote in 2013. In both questions, the percentage of those who indicated that they already voted in 2009 or who will vote in 2013, 61.2% and 76.6% respectively, is higher than those who say they will not vote, although the number of people who are predisposed to vote is higher than the number of people who voted in 2009. Again, the number of people who voted was lower than that reported in the survey.

The UNDP2012 survey questioned about electoral participation in 2009 and the willingness to vote in the elections to be held in 2013. In turn, the UNDP2015 survey (conducted at the end of 2013) asked about the willingness to vote in the November elections of that year. The percentage of people who said they voted in 2009 (68.3%) is greater than the percentage that was willing to vote in 2013 (59.5%). As the UNDP2015 survey was conducted only weeks before the 2013 election, the greater interest in participating in the survey (67.2%) is understandable compared to the results of the UNDP2012 survey.

Regarding media consumption, the UDP survey reported that, in 2009, TV consumption was higher than all other media (76.6%), followed by radios, with

Year and type of survey	Consumption variable	N	Min	Max	Average	Standard deviation
UDP2009	Television	1302	0	2	1.70	0.591
UDP2009	Newspapers	1302	0	2	0.83	0.797
UDP2009	Radio	1302	0	2	1.34	0.794
UDP2009	Internet	1302	0	2	0.73	0.855
UDP2013	Television	1200	0	2	0.92	0.768
UDP2013	Newspapers	1200	0	2	0.8	0.770
UDP2013	Radio	1200	0	2	0.64	0.715
UDP2013	Internet	1200	0	2	0.49	0.682
CEP2012	Television	1512	0	2	0.68	0.658
CEP2012	Newspapers	1512	0	2	0.64	0.701
CEP2012	Social networks	1512	0	2	0.25	0.566
PNUD2012	Television	2531	0	2	1.92	0.346
PNUD2012	Newspapers	2531	0	2	1.05	0.802
PNUD2012	Social networks	2531	0	2	0.64	0.850
PNUD2015	Television	1805	0	2	1.73	0.492
PNUD2015	Newspapers	1805	0	2	0.9	0.809
PNUD2015	Radios	1805	0	2	1.12	0.826
PNUD2015	Twitter	1805	0	2	0.3	0.657
PNUD2015	Facebook	1805	0	2	0.58	0.840

Table 1: Descriptive data of the variables of interest

Source: Own elaboration based on data extracted from surveys UDP2009, UDP2013, CEP2012, UNDP2012 and UNDP2015.

54%. The consumption of newspapers and the Internet is similar, around 25%. In 2013, there was a drastic drop in average media consumption. TV consumption is still higher than other media consumption, but the average consumption fell from 2009 to 2013 (1.7 to 0.92). Also with a different question, there are lower levels of Internet consumption in 2009 than in 2013. Unlike 2009, in 2013 there is more consumption of newspapers than of radios.

The CEP2012 survey also inquired about media consumption, with options for responses different from those of UDP. The trend is maintained: people consume, on average, more television than newspapers. In turn, the consumption of social networks is lower than that of traditional media. The UNDP2012 survey also

uses different questions, but with an average of 1.92, the trend continues for television to be more consumed than newspapers (1.05). On the other hand, the consumption of social networks is the lowest, with an average of 0.64.

Finally, in the UNDP2015 survey, the questions and answers were different from those of the previous survey. Television was the most consumed media (75.5%), followed by radios and newspapers, 39.3% and 29.5% respectively. Social networks take the last place, specifically Twitter, since the consumption of Facebook exceeded it by 11%. It is highlighted that, on average, the consumption of social networks increased compared to previous surveys, since more than 30% consumed them frequently.

Variable	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013
	M1 Newspapers	M2 TV	M3 Radios	M4 Internet	M5 All	M6 Newspapers	M7 TV	M8 Radios	M9 Internet	M10 All
Gender (Woman: 0)	-0.014 (0.034)	-0.003 (0.033)	0.003 (0.033)	-0.004 (0.034)	-0.024 (0.034)	-0.040 (0.026)	-0.046 (0.026)	-0.045 (0.027)	-0.039 (0.027)	-0.051 (0.026)
SEG	0.055** (0.017)	0.070** (0.016)	0.069** (0.016)	0.047** (0.018)	0.042* (0.018)	0.046** (0.017)	0.046** (0.016)	0.050* (0.017)	0.053** (0.017)	0.043** (0.017)
Age	0.0434** (0.013)	0.041** (0.013)	0.042** (0.013)	0.061** (0.015)	0.056** (0.015)	0.105** (0.013)	0.102** (0.013)	0.103** (0.013)	0.110** (0.013)	0.102** (0.013)
Reads newspapers	0.072** (0.018)				0.057** (0.019)	0.091** (0.018)				0.024 (0.026)
Watches TV		0.083** (0.023)			0.065** (0.023)		0.109** (0.017)			0.077** (0.025)
Listen to radios			0.030 (0.017)		0.012 (0.018)			0.096** (0.019)		0.040 (0.027)
Consumes networks				0.056** (0.019)	0.040* (0.019)				0.073** (0.020)	-0.014 (0.027)
Constant	0.379** (0.036)	0.272** (0.052)	0.370** (0.042)	0.390** (0.037)	0.250** (0.056)	0.433** (0.031)	0.411** (0.032)	0.445** (0.031)	0.457** (0.031)	0.407** (0.032)
F	12.162**	11.249**	8.577**	9.900**	8.930**	25.827**	28.755**	25.142**	21.981**	17.365**
R2	0.036	0.034	0.026	0.031	0.048	0.080	0.088	0.078	0.069	0.093
R2-adjust	0.033	0.031	0.023	0.028	0.042	0.077	0.085	0.075	0.066	0.088
N	1212	1220	1217	1179	1177	1072	1072	1071	1071	1068

Table 2: OLS models on predisposition to vote in presidential elections 2009 and 2013. UDP polls

** The correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral) * The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration based on data extracted from UDP2009 and UDP2013 surveys..

INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

We performed OLS linear regressions with data from the five surveys. The independent variables are consumption of television, radio, newspapers and Internet/social networks, whereas the dependent variable of interest is the electoral participation, with the two indicators above mentioned. All regressions include, as control variables, socioeconomic group, age and gender. We report data separately showing the effect of different types of media consumption and then reporting the combined effect of all types of consumption.

Table 2 presents the results for the UDP2009 and UDP2013 surveys. Controlling for other variables, the consumption of each media, with the exception of radio, has a positive and statistically significant effect

on the willingness to vote in the 2009 presidential elections. These data confirm the hypotheses # 1 and #2, which suggest that the consumption of media and social networks positively affects the willingness to vote in Chile. When we include all media as a whole, the consumption of newspapers, television and social networks has a positive and significant effect on the willingness to vote.

In the UDP2013 survey, controlling for other variables, the consumption of each media separately, including radio consumption, has a significant and positive effect on the predisposition to vote in the presidential elections of 2013. Then, from the data, we confirm both hypotheses cautiously. We note, however, that when analyzing the consumption of all types of media, only

Variable	Electoral participation in 2009				Willingness to vote in 2013			
	Model 1 Newspapers	Model 2 TV	Model 3 Social networks	Model 4 Media and networks	Model 1 Newspapers	Model 2 TV	Model 3 Social networks	Model 4 Media and networks
Gender (Woman: 0)	0.015 (0.020)	0.017 (0.020)	0.022 (0.020)	0.016 (0.020)	-0.006 (0.021)	0.001 (0.021)	0.000 (0.021)	-0.007 (0.021)
SEG	0.059** (0.018)	0.064** (0.017)	0.070** (0.018)	0.057** (0.018)	0.051* (0.019)	0.056** (0.019)	0.057** (0.019)	0.043* (0.019)
Age	0.294** (0.010)	0.293** (0.010)	0.299** (0.010)	0.297** (0.010)	0.088** (0.010)	0.086** (0.010)	0.098** (0.011)	0.095** (0.011)
Reads newspapers	0.056** (0.015)			0.16 (0.021)	0.062** (0.016)			0.013 (0.022)
Watches TV		0.065** (0.015)		0.045* (0.020)		0.070** (0.017)		0.047* (0.022)
Consumes media			0.054** (0.019)	0.029 (0.020)			0.083** (0.020)	0.059** (0.022)
Constant	0.022 (0.025)	0.012 (0.025)	0.025 (0.025)	0.006 (0.026)	0.546** (0.027)	0.533** (0.027)	0.539** (0.027)	0.523** (0.028)
F	233.192**	237.568**	232.969**	157.173**	24.736**	25.383**	26.181**	18.968**
R2	0.383	0.387	0.383	0.387	0.062	0.063	0.065	0.071
Adjusted R2	0.382	0.385	0.382	0.385	0.059	0.061	0.063	0.067
N	1109	1113	1104	1103	1420	1423	1416	1414

Table 3: OLS models on electoral participation in 2009 presidential elections and electoral predisposition for presidential elections in 2013. CEP2012

** . The correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral) . * . The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration based on data extracted from CEP2012 survey.

Variable	Electoral participation in 2009 (2012 UNDP Report)				Willingness to vote in 2013 (2012 UNDP Report)				Willingness to vote in 2013 (2015 UNDP Report)					
	2009	2009	2009	2009	2013	2013	2013	2013	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015
	M1 Newspapers	M2 TV	M3 Social networks	M4 All	M5 Newspapers	M6 TV	M7 Social networks	M8 All	M9 Newspapers	M10 TV	M11 Radios	M12 Twitter	M13 FB	M14 All
Gender	-0.044** (0.016)	-0.032* (0.016)	-0.033* (0.016)	-0.038* (0.016)	-0.028 (0.019)	-0.015 (0.019)	-0.017 (0.020)	-0.024 (0.020)	-0.013 (0.022)	-0.009 (0.021)	-0.013 (0.022)	-0.012 (0.022)	-0.014 (0.022)	-0.016 (0.022)
SEG	0.056** (0.013)	0.074** (0.013)	0.084** (0.014)	0.071** (0.014)	0.083** (0.016)	0.104** (0.016)	0.098** (0.016)	0.081** (0.017)	0.005 (0.020)	0.012 (0.020)	0.019 (0.020)	0.011 (0.020)	0.007 (0.021)	-0.009 (0.021)
Age	0.179** (0.006)	0.178** (0.006)	0.170** (0.007)	0.168** (0.007)	0.075** (0.007)	0.075** (0.007)	0.081** (0.008)	0.079** (0.008)	0.079** (0.008)	0.076** (0.008)	0.076** (0.008)	0.083** (0.008)	0.083** (0.009)	0.083** (0.009)
Reads newspapers	0.040** (0.010)			0.048** (0.011)	0.053** (0.013)			0.054** (0.013)	0.048** (0.013)					0.025 (0.015)
Watches TV		0.088** (0.023)		0.084** (0.023)		0.046 (0.028)		0.044 (0.028)		0.105** (0.022)				0.095** (0.023)
Uses networks			-0.035** (0.011)	-0.041** (0.011)			0.032* (0.014)	0.024 (0.014)			0.029* (0.013)			0.004 (0.014)
Uses Twitter												0.050** (0.018)		0.018 (0.022)
Uses FB													0.033* (0.014)	0.021 (0.018)
Const	0.300** (0.020)	0.159** (0.048)	0.357** (0.021)	0.163** (0.050)	0.365** (0.024)	0.315** (0.058)	0.374** (0.026)	0.255** (0.060)	0.506** (0.025)	0.370** (0.043)	0.517** (0.027)	0.525** (0.024)	0.526** (0.026)	0.347** (0.044)
F	243.6**	244.3*	230.5**	162.4*	37.4**	33.3**	31.6*	24.7**	26.8**	29.4**	24.3**	25.3**	23.2**	15.7**
R2	0.279	0.279	0.277	0.288	0.056	0.050	0.059	0.058	0.057	0.061	0.052	0.054	0.050	0.067
R2 Adj	0.277	0.278	0.275	0.286	0.055	0.049	0.048	0.056	0.055	0.059	0.049	0.052	0.048	0.063
N	1829	1832	1728	1727	2081	2082	1990	1988	1446	1461	1458	1446	1448	1425

Table 4: OLS models on electoral participation in 2009 presidential elections and electoral predisposition for presidential elections in 2013. UNDP2012 y UNDP2015

** . The correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral) . * . The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration based on data extracted from UNDP2012 and UNDP2015 surveys.

television consumption has a significant effect on the willingness to vote.

Table 3 reports the results with the CEP2012 survey. The consumption of television, newspapers and social networks had significant and positive effects on participation in the 2009 presidential elections. By 2013, the consumption of all media and networks had a significant and positive effect on the willingness to

vote. We validate hypotheses #1 and #2 for 2009 and 2013. The analysis that groups all variables showed that, in 2009, only television consumption had significant effects on electoral participation. In the predisposition to vote in 2013, the consumption of social networks and television had significant and positive effects, which partially confirms hypothesis #1 and completely confirms our hypothesis #2.

Table 4 shows the data for the surveys UNDP2012 and UNDP2015. The consumption of each media separately had significant and positive effects on the electoral participation in the 2009 presidential elections. In turn, the consumption of newspapers and social networks had a significant and positive effect on the willingness to vote in 2013. Then, for 2009 and for 2013, hypothesis #1 is accepted partially while hypothesis #2 is fully accepted. The models that group all the variables of media consumption show that the consumption of all media had positive effects on the participation in 2009, whereas regarding the predisposition to vote in 2013, only the consumption of newspapers had significant effects.

In the UNDP2015 survey, the separate consumption of traditional media, Facebook and Twitter had a positive effect on the willingness to vote in 2013. We then confirm hypotheses #1 and #2. The analysis that grouped all variables showed that only television consumption had a significant effect on the willingness to vote in 2013, partially confirming hypothesis #1.

All the surveys that asked for electoral participation and willingness to vote in a voluntary voting situation showed that the consumption of social media and social networks had significant and positive effects. The use of separate social networks had significant and positive effects in all surveys, except in UNDP2012, in which it had significant but negative effects. On the other hand, when studying the consumption of social networks in

conjunction with the consumption of other media, the networks are no longer significant in most surveys. It could be speculated that the consumption of social networks does not cause changes in electoral behavior, but it only reinforces the willingness to vote, or not to do so. That is, people who consume networks – but also consume other media – are not more likely to vote than people who do not consume them.

Table 5 summarizes the effects of the variables of interest in the five surveys reported in tables 2 to 4. The consumption of television, newspapers and social networks has significant positive effects on electoral participation and on willingness to vote. The effect of radio consumption is less clear, either because it is not significant or because it was not included in the surveys. At the same time, the consumption of social networks shows significant positive effects in four of the five surveys, except in the UNDP2012 survey, where network consumption has a significant negative effect on electoral participation. This effect could be explained by the low use of social networks (0.64 on average). After all, Twitter and Facebook are relatively new networks and their use has been heavily massified in recent years, but less than in 2009 and even in 2013. In addition, the effect of network consumption was not direct, as the those registered had to vote compulsorily in 2009 and many users of social networks, especially the youngest, were not registered to vote in 2009. The only survey that specifies the consumption of social

Independent variables	Surveys and election year						
	UDP2009	UDP2013	CEP2012 (2009)	CEP 2012 (2013)	PNUD 2012 (2009)	PNUD 2012 (2013)	PNUD 2015 (2013)
Newspapers consumption	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
TV consumption	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Radio consumption	+	+					+
Use of social networks	+	+	+	+	-	+	
Use of Twitter							+
Use of Facebook							+

Table 5: Effects of consumption of traditional media and social networks on electoral participation and willingness to vote, 5 surveys analyzed (2009-2013)

** . The correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral) . * . The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration based on data extracted from UDP2009, UDP2013, CEP2012, UNDP2012 and UNDP2015 surveys.

networks, UNDP2015, conducted at the end of 2013, shows that the consumption of Twitter and Facebook has significant positive effects on the willingness to vote in the next presidential election.

CONCLUSION

In order to measure the effect of media consumption and social networks on electoral participation and on the willingness to vote, we used the UDP2009, UDP2013, CEP2012, UNDP2012 and UNDP2015 surveys. All of them asked by frequency in the consumption of media and of social networks. Some asked about Internet consumption and others asked for different social networks. Several asked specifically for consumption of political news and others for consumption in general. Since each survey had different response options, we recoded media consumption into the same three options: never, sometimes, frequently. The recoding reflected certain distortions in the consumption frequencies, which were manifested in drastic differences of consumption between one year and another.

The increase reported by surveys in the willingness to vote (although not reflected in the effective electoral participation rate) could be due to two circumstances: the change to automatic registration with voluntary voting and/or the increase in media consumption. But since both things happened concurrently, we cannot distinguish which event affected the higher predisposition to vote that people declared to have in 2012 and 2013 compared to 2009.

Separate consumption of each traditional media – television, newspapers and radios – has positive effects. When the consumption of all traditional media is analyzed altogether, it almost always has a positive effect on electoral participation. The autonomous effect of the use of social networks on the predisposition to vote also tends to be positive. But when evaluating the overall effect of traditional media consumption and use of social media, traditional media consumption remains positive, but the use of networks loses its significance. Given these results, we could speculate that the consumption of networks does not influence the decision to vote, but only reinforces the willingness to vote for people who, in general, consume traditional media and use social networks. From this, we test hypotheses #1 and #2. Consumers of traditional media and more frequent social networks users presented

higher participation rates and more predisposition to vote. But we cannot confidently suggest that this greater predisposition is explained by the consumption of media. It could well be that the people most interested in voting are also the people with more interest in consuming media.

In order to obtain more robust results, it would have been ideal for surveys to inquire about the intensity of consumption of each traditional media and social network use, but separately. In general, most surveys ask about the frequency of traditional media consumption, but there are few surveys that inquire into the intensity of individual consumption of social networks like Twitter and Facebook. In the surveys analyzed for this study, only the UNDP2015 survey asked for specific consumption of each traditional media and use of social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. This scarcity could be due to the relatively recent penetration of social networks and the interest of the conductors of surveys to investigate the effect of the use of different networks on electoral participation or interest in politics is only beginning to develop.

However, there is sufficient evidence to assert that the use of traditional media and the use of social networks had positive effects on the declared turnout for presidential elections in 2009 and on the willingness to vote in presidential elections in 2013. But since consumption of traditional media seems to have a greater effect than the use of social networks, we suggest that the use of networks rather reinforces the predisposition to participate that the different types of voters already have.

As the theory sustains that the consumption of traditional media has positive effects on political participation, it should not be surprising that the data for the case of Chile confirms that people who consume more traditional media are more inclined to vote. But unlike traditional media consumption, which is understood as unidirectional, the use of social networks, while being multidirectional, encourages other dimensions of political participation, not just electoral participation, which is associated rather with a unidirectional type of participation. Thus, while the use of social networks may have positive effects on electoral participation, its most direct effects should be evident in other forms of political participation, ways that allow multidirectional interactions and that promote participation beyond the exercise of voting.

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