

**Luminate**

Building stronger societies

# Youth and Democracy in Latin America

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This report is the product of the research coordinated by Esther Solano and Camila Rocha, with the collaboration of Agustín Prol, Guadalupe Passadore Tomasi, Santiago Vanderstichel, Sofía Mosquera and Erick Melo. Questions can be directed to [luminatelatam@luminategroup.com](mailto:luminatelatam@luminategroup.com).

## Introduction

The Centre for the Future of Democracy at the University of Cambridge, which assembled into a single database surveys from 160 countries that had been done over five decades, recently reported that since 2015, younger generations have become increasingly dissatisfied with democracy in a “post-democratic” context. In addition, they report the emergence of a “populist wave” (both left and right), which may signal a possible change in political trends (Foa et al., 2020).

Foa and Mounk (2019), using quantitative data, argued for the need to distinguish between democratic *apathy* (skepticism about democratic institutions, low electoral participation, low interest in politics) and democratic *antipathy* (active support for illiberal movements hostile to pluralist institutions). Apathy would be more likely in societies where youth do not face open discrimination whereas in societies where youth face systematic social exclusion, apathy has become antipathy. The authors consider that civic education would remedy this by transmitting the values of liberal democracy and teaching the history of democracy and totalitarianism. This supposes that young people’s democratic apathy and antipathy result from their lack of historical and political knowledge. Weber (2013), who also draws on quantitative data, considers that political antipathy towards democracy is higher among young men than among women.

Quantitative studies have shown a tendency for the younger generations to be negative about the political system. Qualitative methodologies have been able to show that new generations are interested in political issues and support democracy even if young people are distrustful of the political system. It would therefore not be appropriate to describe attitudes among youth as “apolitical” or “apathetic,” but rather as “engaged skepticism” of political parties and professional politicians who are distant from citizens, albeit politically engaged in issues

more local, immediate and “post-material” (Henn et al., 2002).

These different results reflect different methodologies. By listening to how young people themselves define politics, and by considering their perceptions and feelings of marginalization from the political system in the face of an exclusionary political culture, qualitative methods make it possible to broaden the notion of “the political” (O’Toole, 2003).

Political apathy could be understood as “alienation from the political system”, that is, the disconnection of young people from conventional political processes (Sloam, 2007). Rather than blaming youth for their feelings, disenchantment, frustration and, ultimately their aversion to formal politics therefore, these can be linked to their perceptions that professional politics is closed to young people and that politicians are cynical, self-interested, and unreliable (Henn and Foard, 2012).

Similar conclusions were also found in the European context. Pfaff (2009) uses quantitative and qualitative methods to conclude that participation in youth subcultures fosters political socialization and has a positive impact on the democratic political culture of young people in Germany. European youth want to engage politically and to participate in democratic life but they feel frustrated and betrayed when they realize that mainstream politics excludes and ignores their needs and interests. This draws them towards other forms of political participation beyond voting, such as civil disobedience, dissent and critical protest (Cammaerts et al., 2014). Consequently, certain authors focus less on the individual deficit of young people’s values than on political, structural, social, and material barriers to their participation in politics (Edwards 2007; Martin 2012). Political scientist Pippa Norris (2002) argues for a reinterpretation of the disconnection of young people from the party system and electoral politics. She uses the notion of a “democratic phoenix”,

that is, a flourishing, continuous reinvention of political participation in non-electoral, non-institutionalized and more horizontal forms (Sloam 2014; 2016).

In addition to the North American and Western European contexts, the democratic attitudes and values of young people in former Communist countries has also been a constant concern. Survey results do not differ from those previously reported. Marzęcki and Stach (2016), for example, using quantitative research, concluded that democracy is an important value for young people in Poland, but that they

appreciation of democracy and low levels of civic and political engagement. This was not for lack of social capital (Putnam's classic explanation), but because they understood that Mubarak's political regime was corrupt and authoritarian and that if any participation in political parties or street demonstrations would lead to repression or imprisonment. It was from the transnational change in the structure of political opportunities (with the first Arab Spring in Tunisia) that young people were able to transform their pro-democracy political attitudes into political activity in the streets and on social networks (Sika 2012).

## **Young people's profound lack of belief in and mistrust of the institutions of today's real democracies might not therefore necessarily mean that they do not adhere to or are not committed to democratic values.**

are experiencing a deep crisis of confidence in the parties, the politicians, and the political elites. They argue that young Polish people justify their passivity by their perception that citizens cannot have an impact on politics unless the possibility exists that bottom-up initiatives can produce social change. By contrast, Franc et al. (2018), used mixed methods to interpret the political cynicism of young people in Croatia in their perception that professional politicians are corrupt, boring, incomprehensible and distant from the lives of the people. They conclude that young Croatians show strong support for the democratic system but are somewhat ambivalent: some support autocratic claims that democracy is blame for social inequality. Such behavior was read from categories such as "critical citizens" or "dissatisfied democrats", which considered such criticism of social inequality to be a democratic potential rather than an anti-democratic force.

Research on youth and democracy in the Middle East has been heavily influenced by the 2011 Arab Spring phenomenon. In a study of pre-2011 Egypt, one author found a divergence between young people's positive

Hoffman and Jamal (2012) also used quantitative data to analyze patterns of political attitudes and behavior. They concluded that the causes of the Arab Spring were connected more to transnational political opportunities to protest than to grievances against the political regimes of the Arab world. After all, average young people, the major protagonists of the protests, were more supportive of political Islam, happier with the regimes, and more optimistic about their economic future than other age groups. However, the authors found that Arab youth are more likely to protest and less likely to vote, once again demonstrating that youth prefer unconventional forms of politics.

A quantitative survey of the electoral participation of young people in Chile concluded that prospects for democracy are far from promising, given the growing age disparity: 90% of older people vote whereas fewer than 30% of people younger than 30 votes. Moreover, among young voters, the rich voted at much higher rates than those who are poorer (Corvalan and Cox, 2013). Another mixed methods study sought to explain an apparent paradox between Chile's good objective indicators (political-democratic and economic)

and the high degree of subjective discontent among young people, as evidenced by massive student protest movements in 2006 and 2011, the result of a gap between expectations and reality. Those born after Pinochet's dictatorship understand themselves to be the "fearless generation", which is to say, without fear that their protests would destabilize democracy.

Finally, Gillman (2018) proposes that, unlike the literature on youth based on surveys, qualitative studies based on focus groups allow for a more complex, complete view of citizens' attitudes towards democracy. Where surveys show a record low level of support for democracy in Latin America, the focus groups carried out by the author with young Ecuadorians led to the conclusion that these young people are strongly committed to democratic freedoms albeit skeptical of the institutions that would ostensibly guarantee them. It is therefore necessary that the process of democratization not be restricted to formal political institutions and for it to have a social dimension. Considering the recent international debate on the relationship between youth and democracy in the 21st century, it would seem important to extend the notion of politics beyond institutional politics (formal, conventional, professional, partisan, electoral, in short, traditional) to include extra-institutional, non-institutionalized, non-electoral, alternative, and local forms of politics.

Young people's profound lack of belief in and mistrust of the institutions of today's real democracies might not therefore necessarily mean that they do not adhere to or are not committed to democratic values. If we consider only the meaning that young people attribute to democracy vis-à-vis the possibilities of conventional and alternative forms of political participation in their own national political systems, we can assess how much risk "democratic disconnect" poses for the future of democracy (Foa et al., 2020).

Finally, two major trends can be identified in the literature: quantitative research that uses the concepts of political culture and political socialization (a culturalist strand of political science, based on Almond and Verba; Putnam; Inglehart; Norris, etc.) or *social representation* to a lesser extent (part of Moscovici's social psychology); and qualitative research that uses different concepts such as *subcultures* or *youth*

*cultures* (inspired by the British cultural studies of Hall, Willis, etc.) or *subjectivity* or *political subjectivation* (a multidisciplinary approach in which Rancière's and others' political psychology and philosophy are central).

The first methodology uses surveys to measure individual values while the second seeks to discern intersubjective meanings through multiple data collection techniques including interviews, focus groups, observation and life stories. Quantitative research that treats political culture generally, such as the psychological attitudes of individuals towards the political system, tends to yield pessimistic views of young people as apolitical, apathetic, skeptical and cynical, attitudes that would endanger democracy. Exceptions exist, however, such as the studies favoring dialogue in Pippa Norris' work, contrary to fellow political scientist Robert Putnam. Qualitative research that addresses culture in its collective heterogeneity – of subcultures around broader scopes than the political system, including ways of life, consumption styles and/or resistance practices, for example – tends to produce more optimistic assessments. Young people are actually interested in politics and committed to democratic values, but perceive the political system to be closed, distant and corrupt. When they want to act politically, they seek something other than traditional politics – parties and elections within institutions – such as alternative forms of politics, including confrontational collective action outside institutions. Qualitative research is more sensitive than quantitative research and does not hold young people responsible for survey results. It seeks, rather, to interpret their experiences, practices, and values based on their conceptions of the world. The current study has adopted such a perspective.

### **Research Methodology and Technique**

The qualitative methodology used here allows for a more profound and nuanced understanding of the values, opinions, and feelings of the people interviewed. By contrast, public opinion studies or surveys, are based on questionnaires requiring positive or negative and/or agree or disagree answers to sentences. They do not allow for qualitative inconsistencies, contradictions or complexities that cannot be reduced to simple scales or typologies.

Qualitative research techniques such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and ethnography are predicated on establishing bonds of trust and empathy between interviewers and subjects. Discussions are typically conducted with fewer people and require more time than surveys. The great advantage in analyzing collected data is that the methodology facilitates inductive reasoning where the assumptions guiding the elaboration of the research project provide only a partial basis for the conclusions, whereas, in the deductive

cell phone apps such as Google Meet or Jitsi Meet. In addition to using gender, income, and prioritizing respondents' regional diversity, selection was also made on the basis of political criteria. Three large groups were formed; Group 1 included supporters of a country's main right or center-right leadership; Group 2 included country supporters of the main left or center-left leadership, and Group 3 included people who did not identify with the main political options and/or did not vote in previous elections.

## Sixty in-depth interviews, were conducted with triads of people aged 16-24 organized into age and gender-homogeneous groups, and based on a semi-structured questionnaire and free user-friendly digital platforms on computer.

reasoning used to prepare and analyze quantitative research, the premises provide a definitive basis for the conclusions.

This project used ethnographic mini focus groups or triads designed to increase empathy between interviewer and interviewees and to reduce possible tensions among them. Triads are groups of three gender-homogenous people who already know one other. By contrast, the focus group traditionally used in market and electoral research involves an interviewer holding a discussion in a neutral, controlled environment about a specific topic or topics with a group of approximately 10 people who do not know one other.<sup>1</sup>

### Research Design

Thirteen triads were organized in Argentina, 12 in Colombia, 18 in Brazil and 17 in Mexico reflecting the population size and greater regional diversity in the latter two countries. Sixty in-depth interviews, usually lasting for two hours, were conducted with triads of people aged 16-24 organized into age and gender-homogeneous groups, and based on a semi-structured questionnaire and free user-friendly digital platforms on computer or

### The semi-structured questionnaire addressed nine topics:

1. Information consumption
2. Influencers
3. Other means of communication
4. Politics and information
5. Distrust and false news
6. Democratic participation
7. Political parties and representation
8. Trust in institutions
9. National politics

Research results highlighted the empirical findings in each country, national specificities, and the specificities of contemporary youth; recommendations were made based on the final results of the investigation. The decision to quote interviewees in the report reflects the fact that they more completely synthesize the broader trends identified throughout the investigation. These quotes include the interviewee's gender, age, political profile and region.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Leny A. Bomfim. Grupos focais: conceitos, procedimentos e reflexões baseadas em experiências com o uso da técnica em pesquisas de saúde. *Physis* [online]. 2009, vol.19, n.3, pp.777-796.



# Argentina

## Context

To understand Argentine political positions requires understanding the importance of Peronism for more than seventy years. Since Juan Domingo Perón joined the national government in the mid-1940s, ideological positions have been structured mostly around the affinity with his political movement. Beginning in 2003, with the arrival of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in the Argentine government, Peronism was revitalized as the antagonism against it.

While anti-Peronism (or anti-Kirchnerism) is organized primarily around the figure of Mauricio Macri and his alliance, *Together for Change*, after his time in government in 2015 and 2019, some people said that they no longer feeling the alliance represented them. New opposition figures such as the Libertarian Party, have emerged, and seem to be distinguished by being known in youth political culture.<sup>2</sup> Where the left is mainly organized in Kirchnerist Peronism terms, the minority includes different, small electoral parties.

## 1. Information consumption

All people interviewed use social networks. Instagram and WhatsApp are mentioned most often and used for entertainment and socialization with friends, family and fellow students highlighted. The participation in and ranking of humorous content, memes and videos stands out in most of the interviews. Specific interests also emerged such as cooking recipes, animals, television series, and sports, among others:

*"I do not share issues about politics because I do not like it when they start to argue instead of accepting each other's position"*

(Woman, 23 years old, Peronist / Kirchnerist, NOA)

Although most of the young interviewees mentioned that they looked to the networks for relaxation, they also access political content and news about current events, and saw the

networks as a privileged source of information because they are more pluralistic and diverse than traditional media and easily accessible; Twitter and YouTube stand out in this regard.

*"Social networks are where you can access faster, sometimes you have no time to listen to the radio or watch TV."*

(Woman, 23 years old, Peronist / Kirchnerist, NOA)

*"On Twitter, all the information that I can have is basically concentrated, but on Instagram it is more for acquaintances and I do not have a lot of extra information."*

(Male, 21 years old, Indefinite, NEA)

*"There is more content on YouTube. Not everything appears on Instagram because there are also private profiles and well, it is a longer process. If I want to find it faster, I have to go to YouTube and look for the word I want to know about and then the video appears directly. Or something related."*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

However, when it comes to validating information or delving into specific topics, Google searches and traditional digital newspapers are used because they are perceived to offer more rigorously handled information. Most people only share content and do not generate their own.

*"I look for what comes up in the moment, if there is something that I want to know from out of nowhere or if I see something, for example, on Twitter or Instagram and I want to verify it, I search Google in the news section."*

(Woman, 21 years old, Peronist / Kirchnerist, NEA)

*"I've often seen current memes that I do not understand and have to Google. There I see the news."*

(Male, 21 years old, Indefinite, NEA)

A paradox arose in the use of social networks during the pandemic. Although young people used them a lot to connect with other young people, entertain themselves, and learn about the pandemic, the infodemic, confinement,

<sup>2</sup> This political group formally brings together two parties that stood for the current year's legislative elections. Avanza Libertad obtained only 5% in the PASO of the Province of Buenos Aires with a list headed by economist, José Luis Espert. La Libertad Avanza was presented in the City of Buenos Aires, and headed by economist, Javier Milei. It obtained almost 14%; this was the first time that the party had participated in elections. Whereas the two economists appear widely in media coverage on television programs, the second strongly dominates social networks, especially on Twitter.

and information overload created anxiety, uncertainty about the future, which, along with the tragic news about the pandemic, the environment and femicides, created some distancing and prudence (abandonment of “toxic” social networks such as Twitter, abandoning groups, spending less time).

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*“I got tired, all this pandemic, climate change makes you sick, it generates anxiety, you end up bombarded with things and get really bad, you go into a depression because of everything that is happening, the uncertainty about the future, not getting a job. So I quit. I got lost in the discussion and got tired. I read about feminism and things that were happening, but lately I hardly even read any news.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, Peronist / Kirchnerist, NOA)

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Finally, the consumption of information about the cryptocurrency market emerged as a hobby fundamentally among people identified with the right wing and particularly with the Libertarian Party. We consider this relevant, since the liberal ideas that circulate are later reproduced politically among consumers of this kind of information.

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*“One of my hobbies, in quotes, is watching the cryptocurrency market. So, sometimes due to the blue dollar and inflation in some cases, and the taxes they put here, it is a little more difficult to buy because they usually buy with pesos or dollars. Well, the value of the peso of a virtual dollar is guided by the weight of the blue dollar. So, they do generate a very high rise in the dollar, or in taxes as that changes things somewhat, or a lot. Therefore, I see no taxes and a balanced economy as best for me. And that’s why I went more to the right.”*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, AMBA)

## 2. Influencers

None of the interviewees gave evidence that influencers were central in their consumption of social networks. A controversy arose around the role of these figures as, on the one hand, a waste of time or empty consumption or, on the other, sources of useful information on certain topics.

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*“I specifically don’t follow many influencers because I don’t like them. If I follow people with a lot of followers, they are considered influencers, they can be singers or things like that. I do not like the content of the influencers. Let them talk about such banal*

*topics, always advertising things and showing recommendations. I don’t know, I don’t swallow the content.”*

(Woman, 21, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NEA)

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However, in most interviews, the figure of Santi Maratea, an Argentine influencer who conducts various campaigns on the networks to collect funds to benefit social causes, stood out. All who knew him well or less well shared his spirit of solidarity and honesty.

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*“I started to follow Santi Maratea for his collections, but I don’t follow many famous people.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, CENTRO)

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*“Lately, I have gotten hooked on Santi Maratea with the collections, I think he is the one who I see most in the stories...I find what he raises interesting... you can help from home with a payment link, and you are collaborating on a great cause. I find the collection campaigns interesting.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Antikirchnerista / Antiperonista, CENTRO)

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Interviewees who identified with the Libertarian Party appreciated the approach of network figures such as Emmanuel Danann, Javier Milei and Álvaro Zicarelli, politically incorrect influencers whom they trusted because they tell the truth and provide data and not opinions.

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*“I usually watch videos with my partner about Emmanuel Danann, I love it because he says things the way it has to be. There is also a youtuber called El Dolarcito who is very against this government and says and shows things.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Libertarian Party, NOA)

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*“Milei brings a different content to previous ones that have been given over the years. So, for that, Milei can do something different. I believe that he looks at the data and does not say things when he has nothing more to say. I believe that with the data he says, ‘Well this is happening here and here and this is supposed to happen.’”*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, AMBA)

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We believe that these figures, who have no institutional or political responsibilities, can espouse an incorrect and even aggressive discourse that can attract a certain sector of youth. At the same time, there is a belief that opinions are based on knowledge and objective data. Similarly, among those interviewed who

## Argentina

embrace feminism or environmentalism, well-known network figures such as Malena Pichot (a reference for feminism) or Enrique Viale (a reference for environmentalism) were named as central because they refer to these issues.

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*"I follow Male Pichot to find out about feminism."*

(Woman, 21 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, CENTRO)

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*"More than anything on Instagram, I follow Male Pichot, we love her. I also follow a lot of accounts about eating disorders, which inform me a lot and give me the space to learn new things, although there are nutritionist influencers, and vegans who change your attitude and patterns... 'Online mami' is a fat activist; this is great since other bodies are beginning to be shown... that kind of influencer."*

(Woman, 18 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronist, NOA)

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*"I don't choose it, but if I see that politicians are showing up on Facebook, I see it there."*

(Woman, 20 years old, Libertarian Party, NOA)

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However, we consider it interesting to highlight young people's consumption of traditional media through digital platforms such as fragments of television programs on YouTube or newspaper news through their social media accounts.

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*"I really like what comes from La Nación, the part from Jonathan Viale, who is very critical of the government. Perhaps in very crude form, but still very critical. I see it on YouTube like before going to sleep."*

(Male, 17 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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*"I don't watch TV. I watch 100 Argentinos Dicen but I watch it on YouTube."<sup>3</sup>*

(Woman, 22 years old, indefinite, CUYO)

# In most cases, political content is consumed on social networks. However, a general consensus exists around the active search on traditional media for specific content.

### 3. Other means of communication

In the vast majority of interviews, youth stated that they did not listen to the radio or watch television. In many situations, there are no television in their homes and when they do have them, they primarily watched series and movies on digital platforms: Netflix and YouTube stood out. Parents look more at traditional media, and they informed the youth about the information being provided there. Similarly, youth did not read the newspapers on a daily basis but valued them as a place to look for information on a specific topic or event.

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*"Around there, I get Infobae advertising and read it. News advertising appears and I enter if I'm interested."*

(Woman, 23 years old, Libertarian Party, NOA)

### 4. Politics and information

In most cases, political content is consumed on social networks. However, a general consensus exists around the active search on traditional media for specific content. This was reiterated regarding COVID-19 information. Many people interviewed stated that they got information from newspapers at the beginning of the pandemic. This was also true regarding news that moved them such as femicides, violent situations or natural disasters.

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*"We became more connected due to the health issue."*

(Woman, 21 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, CENTRO)

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3 <sup>100 Argentinos Dicen</sup> is a question and answer broadcast by Channel 13, an open national channel.

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*“Yes, zero, nothing TV, I think the last time I watched TV was at the beginning of the pandemic to see what happened.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Antikirchnerista / Antiperonista, CENTRO)

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Young people who identified with a particular political position shared more political content in their networks, especially political humor about current news items. However, the majority of young people followed no political figures and political organizations or institutions even less. Interviewees stated that they did not consume or share content that ran counter to their political opinions.

### 5. Distrust and fake news

Those interviewed agree that people do not use social networks correctly. The chief reason is the use of aggressive discourse and the dissemination of false news. On the one hand, political polarization leads to disrespect for differing opinions; on the other, the presence of fake news on the networks was considered dangerous for the development of politics because it is malicious, biased, and shared by credulous people. In many situations, older people are seen as the most common victims of fake news.

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*“I think older people fall a lot [for fake news], actually they all do. But for example, the news, I think they know that they have an audience of older people and can say what they want, let’s say, and fall more into that kind of thing. For example, they say that there are not enough vaccines and people out there believe or think that vaccines are really lacking or that kind of thing. In times of Covid, during the pandemic last year, there was a lot of big fake news and so-called professionals coming out to say things that had nothing to do [with the issue]. I believe that social networks also target an uninformed public. It is easy to retweet, let’s say, and is shared. I think that social networks are a new world for them, what happens there is the truth, let’s say.”*

(Male, 21 years old, Indefinite, NEA)

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Similarly, whereas everyone affirmed the existence of fake news, no one felt or remembered having been a victim of it. However, previously circulated comments about different false news stories were reproduced throughout the interviews.

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*“They were going to do it, I don’t know if it was finally approved, but the idea came up and it is silly that a Menstruation Ministry be proposed. That is totally ridiculous to me. There should not be a Ministry of Menstruation.”*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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It is noteworthy that young interviewees tended to limit the circulation of fake news to social networks and not to traditional media such as television, radio, or newspapers, which led to greater confidence in that information. Consequently, the habit of seeking confirmation of a news item on social networks through traditional media was often confirmed, usually passively; the search was done almost always using Google.

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*“You have to pay attention to whether or not it is logical. Anyway, we all have our chance now, you go to Google and see if it is true or not. Or on the same newscasts you decide whether or not it is true or a scam ... If you are in front of the camera, I do not think you have the face to deceive people who see or listen to you.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Libertarian Party, NOT)

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*“It is rare that they release fake news on TV, but there is a tremendous amount of discussion on TV after that.”*

(Man, 16 years old, Antikirchnerista / Antiperonista, AMBA)

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*“I use Google News because it gives you the opinions of different newspapers, it is not that you get only one newspaper, you get many so you can take a little bit from each one. And YouTube because, well, you can choose a specific topic on your own.”*

(Male, 20 years old, Indefinite, NEA)

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However, trust of certain communication groups varies with the political position of each interviewee.

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*“For me, the common media, which have few owners, give a lot of fake news, especially now with the vaccine, with Covid.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NOA)

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6. Participation

In the assessment of politics, the idea of corruption appeared repeatedly. Corruption can mean theft of public funds, influence peddling, or the use of power for personal interests.

*“In the system in general there is a lot of corruption everywhere, how easy it is for the son of an official to get a job, and perhaps they are not even studying but as ‘the son of’ he has a secure position and job for life. Then there is me, a nobody, I am not the daughter of anybody.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, indefinite, CUYO)

*“Since I was born, I think it is not right. Because where is the justice in cases of corruption? I believe that justice is no longer independent and that this where democracy fails.”*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

This negative view of politics coexists with a perception of free expression. In some cases, political freedoms were perceived as being restricted.

*“Freedom yes, but then you have to defend yourself. You have to defend yourself from the comments. Sometimes it is preferable not to touch on certain things, I feel that now the fact that you support something is more condemned... for example, abortion was a sensitive issue, you can only have an opinion.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

*“In the networks, I can express myself calmly, but one also monitors the friends with whom one shares.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, CENTRO)

Similarly, all interviews gave a very positive assessment of democracy, and strongly criticized the last Argentine dictatorship (1976-1983). Although the electoral process is trusted and valued, interviewees consider that a disparity exists between the hopes and expectations created by campaigns and the changes that these actually make in their personal careers. Some people interviewed consider public demonstrations to have few implications for the development of political life and that social networks divide people politically and keep them from participating for fear of being identified with a political party.

Instead, participation in political causes is heavily marked by current demands such as feminism or environmentalism.

*“In my family, there are issues from different perspectives, but this led them to begin to talk more about these issues. For example, abortion, inclusion and that kind of thing. There are differences, but the issue is on the table now.”*

(Male, 21, Indefinite, NEA)

Finally, several cases pointed out the importance of including young people in places of political decision-making in order to introduce the demands of the new generations, to disseminate a new way of thinking and generating representation.

*“I believe that now more than anything else giving a place to young people a place that did not exist before. For example, that Ofelia Fernández<sup>4</sup> is in the legislature. Kind, young people occupying benches who would have to start doing the young thing. Because out there, many people vote who do not represent youth.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NEA)

7. Political organization and representation

All interviewees were critical about the system of representation, including political parties, unions and their references, in particular, and institutions in general. The need repeatedly arose to have participants in political life be interested in it or see it as a vocation and be trained. Outsider candidates with neither previous experience or training were rejected.

*“I think that young people are on the street a lot, but we need to remove the dinosaurs in power and set the rules.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, CENTRO).

*“Older people do not want to change, they are more conservative. The politicians are all older, they have been there for a thousand years, there is no room for younger, more capable people who understand the problems we are experiencing now.”*

(Woman, 23 years old, Indefinite, CUYO)

4 Ofelia Fernández is an Argentine political activist who, since 2019, has been a legislator for the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires for the national ruling party (Frente de Todos).

## Argentina

In addition, there is a very strong perception of politicians as a privileged class insulated from society seeking only to preserve their interests and remain in power. Politicians are seen as seeking to look good rather than do good. This also holds for the electoral processes, where the least worst choice predominates: that is, a vote for one candidate is a vote against the other.

Most interviewees did not see a left-right dichotomy. Those who emphasized these categories identified with the Libertarian Party and used the idea of the left and communism or socialism to identify negative situations. This is noteworthy because this was not in the general lexicon but was very pronounced here.

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*"I dislike the left more than anything for being the side that leads to communism, which killed a lot of people. And that they follow those kinds of policies, punishing those who earn most. They typically say that the rich should pay for these difficult times. No, this doesn't apply to me."*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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*"Instead of progressing, the left remains stuck and makes rich people poorer. Well, the poor are not going to get rich with the money that the rich give them, so that system does not work. Capitalism, the right wing, came to function in Argentina in 1895, when it was the greatest power in the world."*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

Everyone interviewed was against the religion in political life, even those who actively practice a religion, even if they highlight their religious organization when it comes to social assistance.

### 8. Trust in traditional institutions

Traditional institutions elicit deep mistrust and are perceived as lacking legitimacy. Congress is usually the first to be criticized mainly because of its visibility, compared to other institutions such as the judiciary, which provokes deep mistrust. The same holds for the army and the police. Strikingly, mistrust is usually based on the connection with the current political power rather than on the institution per se.

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*"In Congress, they take a long time to make a decision. Sometimes they listen to the people but sometimes they don't. They make a decision that they think is correct, but they ignore the people."*

(Woman, 23, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NOA).

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Throughout, the interviews suggested a trend around political identities: the politically undefined or anti-Peronists identify Congress and its officials as the main malfunctioning institution. Among Peronists, the criticism is directed mainly at the security forces and the judiciary as a system of parallel power against the people.

**[...] several cases pointed out the importance of including young people in places of political decision-making in order to introduce the demands of the new generations, to disseminate a new way of thinking and generating representation.**

Some young people, mainly those closest to positions on the left, acknowledged these opinions.

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*"I have a partner who uploads things about Milei and stuff all the time. And if you ask him, he doesn't know how to answer you or give his opinion. It is only to oppose the government..."*

(Woman, 18 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NEA)

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*"Nothing happens to rapists. They have them 12 hours maximum and then release them. The same holds for killers, they pay and leave. Judicial Power is very corrupt as are politics."*

(Woman, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, NOA)

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*"The functioning of the judicial system, one of the worst powers in Argentina."*

(Woman, 23 years old, Indefinite, CUYO)

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*"It leaves much to be desired. There are many cases, daily cases, the most common thing we hear is that women have reported and reported. Nothing was ever done. They end up dead."*

(Woman, 21, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NEA)

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When asked about an institution they trust, interviewees gave different answers. The World Health Organization emerged in some interviews for its participation during the pandemic. In others, among those more linked to leftist positions fundamentally, public universities were mentioned. In interviewees closer to right-wing positions, private companies were mentioned and seen as guarantors of efficiency.

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*"I trust private companies because they use their own funds. They are going to use them for their own good, clearly. The public will, at times, spend more than what they are given on things that are not necessary for their management."*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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Given the possibility of proposing improvements to these institutions, interviewees suggested improvements that would better the economy and generate employment, regulate political positions and their privileges, and organize popular consultations.

### 9. National politics

Perceptions of national politics were consistently negative. Mauricio Macri's government was seen as badly managed; Alberto Fernández' mid-term situation also received a negative evaluation. People who identify with their management hold the pandemic responsible but also criticize its management.

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*"I felt very distant from the government during the pandemic." In social media "she shared her disgust about the decisions the president made because they were not the necessary ones."*

(Woman, 19 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NOA)

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*"I think it will be difficult. Precisely because of the pandemic and all that, economically speaking, I think the issue is going to be heavy. At least for a couple more years."*

(Woman, 22, Kirchnerista / Peronista, NEA)

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Those identifying as opponents of the Argentine government discuss the possibilities of Macri and other new figures in the Libertarian Party, which suggests a more individualized political tendency.

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*"For me now, if Milei weren't there, the truth is I think I would vote for Together for Change since I would have no other alternative. So, well, the new alternative is Milei. For me, the government that Macri ended in 2019 was not the best. Not that bad, but something that could have been done a lot better. So that's why it's my second or third option."*

(Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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In most cases, participation, even when low, was around feminism, the legalization of abortion, and environmentalism. These issues are very present in the political imagination of youth. Regarding the protests of December 2001, people interviewed have little idea about what happened, but most were either very young or not yet born.

There was a general opinion about the idea of the "rift", that is, internal fighting among politicians who are removed from solving social problems.

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*"What I most reject about current politics is that over the years they blame each other. For example, this president blames this one, this one blames the other, this one blames another, so no one is going to fix the country and a blame loop is going to unfold including everyone."*

(Male, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO)

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Some authoritarian presidents and former presidents were identified, but all interviewees considered that they headed democratic governments rather than military dictatorships, which could reflect their social condemnation of dictatorship.

Finally, around their expectations for the future, young people share a perception of vulnerability and uncertainty, of a deteriorating Argentine economy further deepened by the pandemic, where the main issues are inflation and lack of jobs. Consequently, leaving the country is evoked strongly as a possible choice to improve living conditions.

## Argentina

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*“I have the opportunity to leave the country, because I have another citizenship. I see it as an opportunity, but I don’t know if it is a reality. I doubt it.”*

[Man, 16 years old, Libertarian Party, CENTRO]

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*“Young people come with another perspective, another mentality and that will help things improve in the future, but economically it is quite uncertain. Abroad, I think we have more economic opportunities.”*

[Woman, 20 years old, Kirchnerista / Peronist, CENTRO]

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*“The future of the country is going to deteriorate. I believe that in the future, I will be in another country.”*

[Man, 16 years old, Antikirchnerista / Antiperonista, CENTRO]

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*“The future of the country is so uncertain that nobody knows what to do, we are all anxious, I think. One hundred years ago, Argentina was the power and Europe was destroyed and now it is the other way around. I hope Argentina does well, but it will be a very slow process that we do not want to experience. And that is what politicians do, they tell you, “we are going to carry out that process, to do well, to put Argentina at the forefront, but I don’t want to live that process, you don’t even know if it’s going to be true or not, you prefer not to believe. The most logical and correct thing is to go to a country, to any country that is healthy.”*

[Male, 24 years old, Indefinite, CENTRO]

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**Perceptions of national politics were consistently negative. Mauricio Macri’s government was seen as badly managed; Alberto Fernández’ mid-term situation also received a negative evaluation.**



## Brazil

### Context

Today's political context is divided between supporters and those who disapprove of the government of President Jair Bolsonaro. This retired far-right military man served for thirty years as a deputy and openly defends the legacy of the military dictatorship, something that is unprecedented in the country's recent history. In 1985, after twenty years of military dictatorship, Brazil once again became democratic. In 1988 a new constitution was approved that included progressive ideas. Between 1994 and 2013, after democratically-elected right-wing President Fernando Collor was impeached, the country enjoyed relative social, economic and political stability as a center-right (1994-2002) and center-left politicians (2003-2016) formed the federal government.

In June 2013, popular demonstrations brought millions to the streets to protest the political system as a whole, causing a sharp drop in the popularity of Dilma Rousseff, then-president of the Workers' Party (PT). Re-elected in 2014, Rousseff's second government suffered an economic and a political crisis regarding corruption (Operação Lava-Jato) and a demand for her impeachment. In 2015 and 2016, protests for her ouster brought millions to the streets, culminating in her impeachment in August 2016. Her vice-president, Michel Temer, a center-right politician with very low levels of popularity, became president. In the 2018 elections, with the arrest of Lula, the country's most prominent popular leader and president from 2003-2010, and the growing conservatism of recent years, Jair Bolsonaro, one of the world's most radical right-wing leaders, was victorious against PT candidate Fernando Haddad. Despite the president's denial of the pandemic, worsening economic indicators and political crisis, Bolsonaro continues to enjoy around 20% of popular support, although more than half the population disapproves of his government.

### 1. Information consumption

Social networks are the primary source for most of the information that is consumed. Almost none of the respondents claim to be in the habit of creating their own more elaborate content (memes, videos), but do claim that they

commonly enjoy others' content. Facebook figures as a less-used network that tends to be associated with older people; Instagram and TikTok are used more for light, humorous content usually from friends and family.

WhatsApp is intensely used, despite great distrust of messages that may contain false news. YouTube elicits less distrust and is also used. News from online sites belonging to large traditional media groups (e.g. *UOL* and *G1*) end up being viewed through social networks or specific surveys to delve deeper into certain topics:

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*"I use Instagram for practically everything — news, researching positions, I follow people in my circle. I watch little television, everything I find out is through Instagram, if I want to know more in depth, I do some research."*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio Grande do Sul)

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*"I just share things to relax on a daily basis, because we are living in a very heavy reality, things to laugh about, even make a joke about reality. Every day, I try to relax on the networks. I want to create content but I'm ashamed, there's a blockade, wow, you see the person and you think he makes really cool videos, it turns out I never start."*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

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*"The real news is on social media, in lives. On Facebook, there are more people who support him (Bolsonaro) and pass on the truth."*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Rio Grande do Sul)

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Finally, during the pandemic, many people avoided news about it and other subjects portraying pain, suffering, and injustice and considered "toxic." The pandemic therefore reinforced the tendency to seek light, humorous content that could make them momentarily remove themselves from the reality of everyday life, seen as "hard and boring." There was a common desire to feel detached from this reality and socialize with others — for young men through online games and for women makeup and fashion classes — even though political content still ended up being discussed. There are also reports of young people using networks to develop entrepreneurship and promote themselves professionally:

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*“Sometimes there are some issues related to the presidency, that Bolsonaro is sick, there is a conversation that ends up generating a debate. When you enter the game, there are room, and participants in each. As soon as you enter the room, we start the game and a debate starts about daily life, some news, you are free to speak and can say, “my day was not very cool.” The person enters into a dialogue, talks and ends up forgetting what is happening.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Brasília)

models of strong, independent women with healthy relationships who do not impose aesthetic standards, and unfollowing female influencers who impose tyrannical standards of beauty after becoming aware of how much these standards cause suffering. In both processes, the women who followed them identify themselves as feminists:

*“In the past, many people talked a lot about aesthetics, makeup, and the body and that*

# Several respondents said they had begun to become more politically aware by seeing comments on the networks of people they followed or influencers whom they liked and with whom they agreed.

*“I use Instagram to promote my music, I show my creation process, post music excerpts, photos, music content in the funniest format in meme, I believe it’s the most effective, easiest, most cost-effective way, because online marketing is very expensive and it is difficult to reach this audience. I also do it alone; my audience is mostly teenagers or young adults. The market is entirely on the Internet, creating a relationship with this audience, creating a daily relationship.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

*would hurt me, bother me, become burdensome. We paid attention to things we shouldn’t, like that girl is thinner than me, she has to lose weight, then Instagram comes on and everyone has a perfect body, a perfect life, which you don’t have and then I stopped following these people and I started following influencers who believe in the same things as me, or people who think differently but have a nice exchange.”*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

## 2. Influencers

Several respondents said they had begun to become more politically aware by seeing comments on the networks of people they followed or influencers whom they liked and with whom they agreed. This process could also be triggered by comments with which they disagreed but that led them to begin to think about agendas about which they had never thought before. Politicization is born of the reaction to others’ comments in interactions with influencers.

A specific form of politicization through influencers has to do with gender issues. The women interviewed experienced through their relationship with makeup or fashion bloggers a reaction that can often lead to empowerment. Such youtubers or makeup bloggers are

*“I would never follow Gabi Brandt because she is very stereotyped, super esthetic, does lipo, several aesthetic things. There are several family scandals, her husband cheats; this adds nothing for me, I like gossip, but it doesn’t help my life.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

*“Julia Tedesco is a makeup artist, I follow them only for makeup, they don’t take a stand on anything. They have content about clothes, colors. Bianca Camargo is also a makeup artist whom I follow on Instagram, on YouTube. They each have a relationship and their lives are separate, and they are partners, I think this partnership is cool, they haven’t lost their essence, they haven’t stopped being who they are, they can fit perfectly into empowered women. They convey the idea that you are beautiful just the way you are. They are ambassadors for Avon, for Marisa, which are brands that welcome the whole world.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Brasília)

## Brazil

Female role models also appear in the conservative religious world with Christian influencers and gospel singers who mix traditional family values and models with forms of female empowerment. The stereotyped model of the submissive religious woman has nothing to do with the far more complex and heterogeneous feminine models that these young women follow on the networks. The reality is that both more progressive and more conservative young people may live from the circuits of traditional intellectual or university feminism but they nurture their own models through the networks. Finally, young mothers also find maternity models online or ways to express their relationship with their children:

*“Isadora Pompeu is a young Christian singer, Izabela Laiza is a Christian digital influencer from the city, Roberta Zuniga is a digital influencer, she is into fitness but favors the traditional family and has values that I share. She is Christian but not religious, will have a picture of bikinis. Izabela is conservative with the type of relationship and it’s a type of choice that I add to my life. They show how God loves, on the street, helping others. And I also like Roberta’s body, she’s very disciplined, has a healthy lifestyle.”*

(Woman, voted Bolsonaro, Mato Grosso)

*“I share my life a lot with my children, my husband, my job, so I feel good when I take a picture in which I look good, I like to share and I want them to see that my children are beautiful, well taken care of, loved... I follow Elida Fernanda, a single mother, she shares a lot in her family, she conveys a lot of truth in what she does and is very funny. Elida Fernanda, is a single mother, I like it, she is a mother who did not let life beat her down, she is a role model, I look up to her a lot because my life was not easy because I also suffered a lot to raise my children.”*

(Woman, voted Bolsonaro, Mato Grosso)

### 3. Other means of communication

Among those interviewed, traditional media and open television networks in particular are closely linked to family, while young people prefer content from platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, and Amazon Prime, among others:

*“I watch a lot with my parents, usually Jornal Nacional, Fantástico.”*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

*“I usually watch TV, newspaper or TV Globo soap opera with my parents, when I’m alone it’s on TV but it’s a series, Netflix.”*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

At moments of great political intensity, such as the 2018 elections, however, few young people had access to printed magazines and newspapers. Considering the political preferences of the interviewees, young people who voted for Jair Bolsonaro reject television more intensely in general, and Rede Globo specifically:

*“I have more access to Facebook. The real news is on social media, live [debates]. Currently on TV there are a lot of lies, like about the Bolsonaro motorcades, and on Facebook there are more people who support him and pass on the truth.”*

(Male, 22 years old, voted Bolsonaro, Rio Grande do Sul)

*“Globo presents fake news, it’s a lie, because it’s against the government. Globo supported the PT.”*

(Male, 24 years old, voted Bolsonaro, Rio Grande do Sul)

## 4. Politics and information

The young Brazilians all say they feel very fearful about the possibility of being deceived through false messages. They claim that notwithstanding the partiality and bias of the hegemonic media, misinformation is most rife in the online environment.

Interviewees consider that content is fallacious when it seems absurd or too fanciful, when it is highly viral, when it comes from an unknown or unreliable source, or when it is shared by a person whose background on the issues is not well known. Everyone says they look at newspapers, websites or influencers from different ideological profiles to verify and compare information, they “Google”, ask people whom they trust (friends who claim to be better informed).

*“When I see that it’s not a very reliable source, a site that I don’t know about or that I don’t trust, I get from people with little confidence in certain types of content, someone I know is uninformed about this subject, I search for information on Google, I see if there is another site reporting about this fact that I trust that and if not, I immediately realize that it is fake.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

## Brazil

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*“In 2018, it was very present. It is difficult to know what is true, so what I do is, in addition to researching a bit over the top, I look at Google, talk to people who understand, who read a lot, that would be my boyfriend, and there is a friend studying for the university entrance exam and who reads a lot.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

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*“Nowadays, recognizing fake news has become difficult. They have been able to innovate, Google helps a lot to filter, but it’s at the beginning of the search, look for another two, three trustworthy sites verified by Google, they offer this security standard, the Metropolis site, Correio Braziliense. I suspect when the information is too fanciful, they are absurd things.”* (Man, voted Haddad, Brasília)

Although traditional media is assessed as lacking transparency, as being biased, as having partisan political interests and thus not entirely trustworthy, it still appears as a “safe haven” from the proliferation of false news on the Internet:

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*“The press is fundamental for the entire information process. In scientific areas it has its validity, compared to sensationalist things. Yes, there are interests behind it. Record (a Brazilian open television network), for example, clearly has its bias. The media will have this issue of interest behind it, which is why it is important that the person seeing this be able to research and not stick to just one source. Most of the political information I follow is the big press sites, G1, Globo, Folha, Gaúcho ZH, Correio do Povo. Notifications can appear or I usually open them myself to follow.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

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*“I believe that traditional media brings a little more support because the Internet is a little vague. Large independent sites with great support and credibility are trustworthy. On TV there is already a filter, on the Internet it depends on the filter, it has everything, it has reliable vehicles, with good reputations, but it is a little harder to know what is coming. On TV, everyone knows who’s behind it, on the Internet you don’t know who’s behind it, fake news rolls out a lot more freely. For example, I’ll get information on the Internet, but from the filter I have of the sites, through G1 (internet news portal linked to Rede Globo), it is more a matter of this than the platform itself.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

## 5. Participation

The majority of those interviewed state that demonstrating is important for democratic health but that they have never, or almost never, gone to a demonstration. The reasons are diverse: feeling unmotivated by this format (seeing street occupations as conflict or riot) because demonstrations are too politicized or partisan, or because they fear violent police reactions or prefer not to create conflict at home. Most left-aligned people support protests, but are not entirely comfortable with this model of engagement for themselves. However, there are those who claim to be right-wing or to have no political preference above all, who tend not to be enthusiastic about demonstrations, which they associate with radicalism, vandalism and riots:

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*“I didn’t (go to demonstrate). I live with my father; he is conservative and against demonstrations in general, he has never gone to a demonstration, because I never created the opportunity for that and also to avoid conflict, I was afraid because I thought I didn’t understand, I wasn’t going to start a fight.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

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*“I’ve participated, but it’s been years, but I didn’t know what the cause was, it was something about students. My friends and teachers were there, but I like it, I think it’s beautiful and takes a lot of courage. My friends explained it to me, and we went. I don’t go any more, I don’t usually go out because of the price of the [public transport] where I live.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pernambuco)

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*“I do food collection with a person I know and have never thought about it much (demonstrations) because I’m on the street, making a fuss. I support it, but for me to go, to be in the middle, no. I could go, but if I were really calm.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pernambuco)

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*“I never took this initiative, but it sure is important, sometimes I didn’t even go because I was afraid, the police use pepper spray.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

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*“I’ve never been left or right, I don’t like the radicalism of the left, the issue of total freedom, oh, let’s go on strike, I don’t like the left, every year there’s a teachers’ strike so it’s a fact that the strikes don’t work.”*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

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Online engagement is usually carried out around concrete causes close to the reality of young people. The cause must be perceived to be “honest”, for the common good — donations of food baskets or clothing, animal causes, reactions against the abuse of women, etc. These are all seen as political actions disconnected from “governmental” or party politics.

In addition, youth also seek to engage in activities and organizations that are transparent, because they are suspicious of large projects or NGOs where there is no control over processes or finances: online engagement occurs when

*that we had a very big influence, now a project for the castration of stray animals, on Instagram a lot of people from far away are interested when we post these things. We had some girls from Maringá who made a giant donation for tampons and our city was the first in Paraná to pass the law to institute tampons in municipal schools thanks to us.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

There tends to be little participation in traditional outlets, such as parties and other political organizations like trade and student unions, or even in government institutions such as City Councils and knowledge and

# The majority of those interviewed state that demonstrating is important for democratic health but that they have never, or almost never, gone to a demonstration.

there is a social cause that meets the criteria of proximity and trust:

*“Every end-of-year my friend’s mother collects Christmas baskets. We advertise on Instagram and make donations. It’s very rewarding. And during those days, it was also very cold and the church staff gave you a sheet, a duvet that you don’t use anymore.”*

(Woman, voted Bolsonaro, Mato Grosso voted)

*“‘I Have Reasons to Believe’ is a page to help, it publishes a lot about people in need of help, it is a transparent page, it publicizes how the money is being used for unemployed pandemic families or for a person who needs an exam.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Alagoas)

*“My way of helping is through sharing, enjoying.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Brasília)

*“For me to get involved in any project, I would have to know that the interest is real, the objective a good one and not taking power or not telling the truth.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

*“I engage most with networks. I did a tampon donation campaign for our city and I can see*

trust of these spaces are lacking. Some university students eventually follow the networks of councilors for whom they voted and from whom they expect authenticity and transparency in communicating with the electorate.

## 6. Politics and representation

Most respondents found it difficult to define the meaning of terms such as “democracy”, “state” and “Congress”. For most, democracy is mainly about freedom, rights and the collective good. However, very few mentioned citizen participation as belong to the democratic process; such an idea used to be something that should be but that is not a reality. The State, on the other hand, figured as a provider of services for the population; there were few references to the State as providing for citizen participation or collective construction.

Democracy, the State, and the congress in Brazil are seen as inherently corrupt, representing only the interests of the elites and politicians and not the population. Social inequality also appears as an impediment to the development of a healthy democracy. Finally, corruption, in its multiple dimensions, appears

## Brazil

as the fundamental cause for the precarity of democracy in the country, regardless of the interviewees' ideology:

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*"Democracy is an equal right for everyone. Freedom of choice, freedom of expression and the role of the population is to know that they cannot do whatever they want without thinking about others, they must think about everyone, not just about me."*

(Woman, no political preference, Santa Catarina)

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*"I'm totally in favor, democracy exists for us to debate, take a stand, but at times we don't really believe in justice, politicians do something wrong and we don't even believe that they will be punished, when you want to remove a president, impeach, whoever is inside pulls strings regardless of whether we are in a democracy."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Brasília)

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*"The State is a complex of things, how am I going to explain, each piece has its reality, the State is the complex of it, it's about taking care of it."*

(Woman, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

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*"Having equal rights, accessibility for all, having more rights, the rights that you should have, that you don't have in an authoritarian government that silences us, democracy comes to give us that voice... a truly democratic regime would have to really be put into practice, the legislation we have, the elite and those who have power have rights... we don't have the democracy we should have, we don't attend to what is on paper... the biggest problem I think is power, the person who has money gets more money, inequality, those in power do not look at the people, they only look at the elite."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

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*"The State is something about territory, power, government, laws, but it doesn't work well because few, very few are fighting for our rights... the ideal State should work like a democracy, with accessible rights, a utopia, putting everything into practice that should be correct, if someone is judged they must be judged in the same way, not because they have more or less... Congress is the place where all politicians meet to discuss Brazil's policies, laws that will be approved, everything that involves politics. In Brazil I believe it does not work because of corruption, so for me, it is not valid. Sometimes good bills are not*

*approved by politics, if they benefit the people but not benefit them so they basically follow their interests.... Brazilian politics should be completely reformed perhaps reducing the number of deputies, There are many people who I don't even know why they are there, they should take everyone out and take in new people, because there are people who have been there for a long time and have done nothing good, just a reform, a new vote, but there should be constant renewal."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

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Interviewees gave examples of democratic countries seen as more egalitarian and/or with quality public services. Democracy and low levels of social inequality thus appear as synonyms for many interviewees:

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*"Countries like Denmark, Holland are very promising for this aspect of democracy, yes, they are countries where social inequality is very low."*

(Woman, no party preference, Santa Catarina)

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*"There are several, yes, Canada is a very democratic place, income is distributed such that people can have quality of life."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

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*"I thought the politics of Norway were very cool, they are a very democratic country, they have all the basic rights for the population, very high-quality education, security."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

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For the most progressive young people, moments of democratic crisis should be resolved with greater popular participation. However, they themselves claim that youth should be more engaged given that they participate little in institutional political processes.

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In this sense, most interviewees propose to strengthen collective organizations without abandoning traditional politics but would fundamentally engage in the former. Greater popular participation also appears important to strengthen democracy:

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*"The solution in times of crisis would be to give more power to the people, more power of choice, in the Congress, for example, in the ministries and also popular participation, I think it's interesting, but then you have to engage young people, mainly, play on the networks."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, São Paulo)

*“Institutions have lost a lot of reliability, credibility, the forces of the State and the collective vision should prevail, I see community actions independent of political parties as offering more solutions. It comes much more from grassroots organizations than from State organizations. I believe that this gives more results than political party organizations.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

*“Strengthening parties will not make people believe more, it would have to be improving citizen participation, but you can’t just abandon traditional politics either, we can’t go to extremes.”*

(Man, voted Hadadd, Bahia)

*“For example, there is a YouTube channel, Luciano Big, to make people more active, for example, leaving a bunch of letters for a deputy, putting pressure on such a project. It’s more practical. They dedicated themselves to investigating the benefits of fuel and found numerous irregularities among the deputies, gathered everything and gave it to the Public Ministry. It’s a great example of popular participation.”*

(Man, voted Hadadd, Brasília)

The great majority of young people were unable to remember which federal or state deputies they had voted for in previous elections but did remember councilors better. In some cases, young people engage in political campaigns for councilors who are family, friends and belong to their churches. In this way, local politics that is closer to everyday reality seems to be a gateway to politics that is more accessible to youth who are not engaged in traditional party politics. Councilors, who have a history of commitment to the poor, revolt against acts of corruption, are active on social networks and promote transparency, are more likely to create political ties:

*“I don’t participate, I’m quite neutral, maybe it’s negligence, lack of interest. There are robbers, you end up frustrated, there was a councilor here about whom I felt confident, I posted it on my Insta, but I knew her character... There are councilors here in the city. Icaro is a very intelligent boy, he has a beautiful life story, his brother died, and he does great things for the city and the mayor. I like the fact that he’s doing good things, he invests in health, schools, he visits schools, he has a project that includes those who are most needy. He doesn’t agree*

*with everything. What he disagrees with he takes to Instagram and puts it up. He voted against a councilor’s salary increase, he imposed his no vote. It’s very important to post, it has a very wide reach, people have to keep up with the issue of social networking, they have to invest.”*

(Woman, voted Bolsonaro, Mato Grosso)

*“I helped the mother of a friend’s girlfriend, her candidacy, here in the city, I always try to help the politician who will always work in the city, for me the party doesn’t matter. If it were someone from the PT, I would vote too, it can be from any party, but if it’s working, ok. She works, I’ve seen the designs. I supported Isnaldinho Bulhoes for deputy, he is from here in the city and he has a great influence on bringing things to the city.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Alagoas)

*“I voted for Ibis, for the mayor, at Maranguape Paulista, he had a very good proposal, a question of asphalt, policing, opening more jobs, I already knew him; he was a great professional.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pernambuco)

## 7. Trust in traditional institutions

General speaking, the entire institutional sphere is viewed with suspicion. NGOs are the best rated organizations so long as they are small, because in the largest ones funds might be diverted, as in universities and the education system in general. Spirituality and helping others are evaluated positively. However, respondents who consider themselves religious but have moved away from the daily practice of faith or who do not identify with any religiosity consider churches to be conservative and “backwards thinking.” For many, religion is linked simply to family ties.

Police are often linked to militias and racism, especially by progressives, while the army is viewed positively by people who voted for Bolsonaro. Justice is seen as colluding with political corruption. Although the dynamics of entrepreneurship are valued, large companies are also viewed with suspicion because they are vulnerable to corruption:

*“A trade union is something that doesn’t fit in my daily life these days.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Brasília)

## Brazil

*“In the family church, my mother, my grandmother and I went along, I attend the parties, but I don’t work there or study the catechism I disagree with many things that they defend there, I like to be close to God, but I don’t need to be there and kind of because it is something familiar, you go there to lighten up, but there are certain opinions that point the finger at people, there is a lot of this thing about women being inferior to men.”*

(Women, no political preference, Rio de Janeiro)

*that do not think about the employee, but there are others that are like a family.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

*“When we are forced to enlist, we learn to trust them (Army), these ideas are introduced. I enjoyed military service, but I got married and couldn’t pursue a career in it. I liked shooting. I would love to go into the woods, to camp outside.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Rio Grande do Sul)

# Most interviewees propose to strengthen collective organizations without abandoning traditional politics but would fundamentally engage in the former.

*“I’m a great supporter of NGOs, especially the smaller ones... With the church I’m very prejudiced, it’s very difficult to find an open-minded church, priests and pastors have a huge influence... My boyfriend left the church because the pastor was extremely homophobic... this business thing is nice, a small thing, but a company, it depends, I’m very small, helping small entrepreneurs, big companies end up getting lost on the issue of values, in sponsorships.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

*“The police are important, but they should be cleaned up because many are corrupt, many are militia, there is also racist thinking...the army ended up getting a little tarnished with Bolsonaro’s attitude of being ignorant and the lack of training for them.”*

(Man, voted Haddad, Bahia)

*“The police are in the same line as the politicians. There is a lot of corruption in the police. They are very prejudiced, they are very aggressive towards poor people. It’s as if the police only served the elite, like politicians. The poor are treated like a stray dog, as if the law only applied to the poor... companies are good because they generate jobs. There are companies that are bad, that are executioners,*

## 8. National politics

Most progressive young people say that there is a lot of tension at home due to more conservative families or parents, making political dialogue and learning very difficult. This family division caused by the current Brazilian political context also contributes to a general perception of politics among interviewees as a constant form of confrontation and division, since they experience politics in their own homes and in social networks this way. These appear as spaces of constant political struggle and permanent aggressiveness. For many, therefore, it is better to remain silent than to express their opinion:

*“I’ve always been a person very much about me, because in my family, my father and sister always had arguments. Afterwards I lived with my boyfriend, he is very politicized and has asked me to be more involved, so I got on Twitter and started to see more things.”*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Paraná)

*“I debate a lot with friends, some people in my family, and I really enjoy listening to teachers’ opinions, I listen with affection. Family, my father has a very different line of reasoning, the majority voted for Bolsonaro and it’s difficult for me, it’s difficult to try to debate...surely for me it*

## Brazil

*would be important to be able to debate with my parents. My grandmother told me about her experience with other presidents, I think it really adds up. I think it would be very nice to talk to my parents about this."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Brasília)

*"We talk to each other, like us here, friends, a circle of friends or a family circle, because the Internet is a no-man's land."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pernambuco)

For most progressive young people, the most democratic period in Brazil was under the PT, because the party offered more opportunities for the population to access rights. Unfortunately, the involvement with corruption cases meant that it was not fully democratic.

Young Bolsonaro supporters have a different interpretation. For them, the PT is deeply undemocratic because it is corrupt and Bolsonaro has come to improve democracy in Brazil. In their view, left or far-left politicians are authoritarian because they are corrupt and do not respect private property. They see Bolsonaro as a democrat because he is honest and respects freedom:

*"In a way, with the PT there was more democracy, with more rights, scholarships... in this government, these are not offered, they are taking away people's education, something to which the PT was committed in a certain way. But no political party is there to really help, no choice is 100% reliable. There will always be something to hide, bribes, Lavajato, those things... But politics is politicking, corruption."*

(Woman, voted Haddad, Pará)

*"When we see an authoritarian ruler, we observe someone who... how can I say it, in Korea the portrait of their leaders is in every house, not here, he was trained in a military academy, but he is not authoritarian, has no reason to think that. Before, he was a very serious deputy and stood on his principles, this is to respect oneself, not to be authoritarian. He came to create a free Brazil, private property, we have Boulos, for example, invading property, this is authoritarianism. On Instagram, Bolsonaro posts positive things, shows his service, renders accounts, is transparent. Boulos, we go on his page and see attacks. Lula is same as Boulos, say who you're with, say who you are. As someone who walks with the*

*people of the Chinese Communist Party, with the people of Cuba, as a person who has ties to these people, who publicly defends the actions of the Cuban government last week against the population, as someone who defends these rulers, are you a democrat?"*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

Several young people who voted for Bolsonaro point out that that his military past makes him intolerant and authoritarian. However, some interpret this authoritarianism positively because the country currently needs rules and firmness, and the democratic regime would not be able to do this in times of crisis. Yet even among the young people who voted for Bolsonaro, some reject what they perceive as intolerant attitudes and are disillusioned with his government and style of governing. Some argue that Bolsonaro is the best president Brazil has ever had because he is honest and defends the will of the majority:

*"No, he's not authoritarian, it's the way he was... he's military, the way of speaking and expressing himself, and this is a negative point for him, it should be better articulated. He's not authoritarian because he doesn't impose. He is a democrat, he acts for democracy because he sees the will of the majority, as in the case of arming the population."*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

Some young Bolsonaro supporters argue that serious interference from other powers could require authoritarian intervention to protect democracy from abuse. Some young people argue that this should be carried out with the support of the population; others argue that it should be carried out unilaterally by the country's president, who would know when "democracy is at risk". The young people who defend this idea consider the use force to improve, strengthen and to breathe air into democracy to be a legitimate moment rather than a coup or constitutional setback.

The Brazilian military dictatorship is a cause for disagreement among young people who voted for Bolsonaro. For some, freedom of expression is unalienable; they criticize the dictatorial period for not having protected this freedom. For others, in line with the Bolsonaro narrative, a military regime rather than a military dictatorship came to protect the Brazilian people against Communist threats:

## Brazil

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*“Democracy is freedom of expression, of opinion, the model of our state, respecting constitutional norms, direct elections. Brazil is not fully democratic, but we have a lot of freedom. Absolutely not, because the constitutional model is not strictly followed, there are crimes with impunity, there are interpretations of norms, it is a matter of opportunity for those who are middle class, there is poverty, and opportunities are not the same ... Never say never to a more authoritarian regime, from the moment there was interference among the powers, if the Supreme Court wants to overthrow a president without him having broken a norm or having committed a crime of responsibility, I think that there should be intervention, yes. It would have to be something very obvious to the entire population, we have freedom of expression. The population should certainly be together in the majority. Certainly not a unilateral thing because then it would not be democratic.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Alagoas)

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*“You can’t expose, you can’t have your will, unlike what happened here in the military era, it wasn’t a military dictatorship, it was a military regime, part of the population that was to the left complains that they suffered some abuses of authority, were prisoners, but we have to observe moral and ethical principles, you can’t do anything on the street. The censorship that took place was related to attitudes that did not have much moral value, like it was in a group of people getting marijuana, the police got there.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

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*“If he (Bolsonaro) lost I would think it was a fraud. Closing the Supreme Court, I don’t agree with in the sense of democracy, closing an institution like that is not so democratic, what I really think should be done is to renew judges. These are undemocratic discourses, but discourses that I consider necessary. It doesn’t even need to close, but to change, so that we could choose.”*

(Man, voted Bolsonaro, Brasília)

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**Some young Bolsonaro supporters argue that serious interference from other powers could require authoritarian intervention to protect democracy from abuse.**



## Colombia

### Context

The 1970s were fundamental in the Colombian political landscape. National politics was fueled by international Cold War tensions. Several civil armies were consolidated on the national territory, mostly comprising surviving peasants who formed the resistance of the *La Violencia* 1950s. Motivated by national liberation, and with a socialist ideological foundation, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), among others, popularly known as guerrillas, emerged. Since then, the military objective of the Colombian state, supported economically and militarily by the United States, has been to put an end to the expansion of communism in Latin America and the world.

Cold War logic sustained the conflict until the 1980s. Its demise during the 1990s did not mean the end of armed conflict. In 1984, North American Ambassador Lewis Tambs and the Colombian Defense Minister Gustavo Matamoros coined and promoted the term “narcoguerrillas”, lending an identity to groups like the FARC, depoliticizing the conflict by completely omitting their ideological foundations and emphasizing their economic strategies, specifically drug trafficking. The expansion of drug trafficking in Colombia and border countries, led by the Medellín cartels during the 1980s, provoked more aggressive political strategies against organized crime and therefore against the guerrillas, giving way to the Plan Colombia, an American military investment in the political field aimed at ending drug trafficking. A new nuance – the fight against terrorism – was added to the anti-drug strategy after the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

Plan Colombia created an atmosphere of government distrust among the guerrilla groups, leading to the failure of the first attempt at a peace agreement led by then-President Andres Pastrana (1998-2002). With peace completely discredited, Álvaro Uribe Vélez won the 2002 elections with his main proposals: Democratic Security, or war against terrorism understood in Colombia as the guerrillas and the implementation of the Development Plan,

with its neoliberal thrust. During his term, he managed to get a constitutional reform approved allowing the reelection of a president and was able to run for the presidency again. He won the 2006 elections. During his two electoral mandates, war was exacerbated, military actions were increased, paramilitary groups were promoted and the false positives began (2002-2008).

With a third re-election impossible, Uribe endorsed Juan Manuel Santos for the 2010 electoral period. Santos, who had been defense minister between 2006 and 2009, won the elections on August 7, 2010. In 2012, he broke with *Uribismo*: when the FARC decided to negotiate peace with the government and Santos accepted, he was deemed a traitor to *Uribismo*. From that moment on, Uribe and his party began a campaign to discredit and end the peace process. In the same year, the peace process negotiations began in Havana, Cuba. In 2014, at the end of Santos’ presidential term and with the peace agreement negotiations unfinished, a fierce electoral battle ensued between “peace candidate” Santos, and the new “Uribe candidate”, Óscar Iván Zuluaga. Colombia demonstrated its willingness to end the conflict by re-electing Santos as president. Negotiations were concluded in 2016 and a plebiscite for peace was instituted but constantly undermined by *Uribismo*. Whereas the NO vote prevailed, the peace process was approved by constitutional mandate that same year, allowing FARC members to participate in Colombian state politics.

The 2018 elections were again a point of contention for *Uribismo*. To attract Colombians to its program, its candidate Iván Duque was portrayed as a young figure, with no visible political past who would not betray Uribe’s project. Center candidate, Sergio Fajardo, was the teacher and “neutral” candidate, a former mayor of Medellín. Lastly, the candidate of the left, Gustavo Petro, was known above all for being the former mayor of Bogotá and former member of the guerrilla group, M-19. These three candidates were the first-round favorites. The second round saw a run-off between Duque and Petro; Duque became the new president of Colombia.

During Duque's term, the Covid-19 pandemic arrived. Presidential mismanagement such as the delayed purchase of vaccines and lack of sufficient doses, subsidies to companies and not to low-income people, State abandonment of the health and education sectors, xenophobia against Venezuelan immigrants, very high unemployment rates, and a stagnant economy dissatisfied many Colombians. This culminated in the two-month outbreak known as the 2021 National Strike. Minister of Finance, Alberto Carrasquilla also promoted a tax reform that burdened the middle and lower classes and favored the national elite and national and multinational companies.

### 1. Information consumption

In general, young people constantly consume large amounts of information through their social networks, which become places of socialization, learning, entertainment, discussion and leisure. The specific topics vary greatly but all young people follow topics depending on their personal tastes and motivations. Memes, humorous content, and the new are consumed and shared by all young people on social networks. Memes for young people have a double connotation of satirizing or criticizing politics and allowing many to learn about current politics, and simplifying the banal, so much that there is neither depth nor clarity on what they are talking about.

Other subjects break down along gender lines: sports, soccer, music and video games are highly consumed by the male population while the female population prefers makeup. For young women of all tendencies – right, left and undefined – makeup and clothes were related to political issues such as feminism, feminine empowerment in general and self-love. Young people on the left and undefined tendencies correlate rap music with social and political criticism.

Instagram, Facebook, You Tube, WhatsApp, Twitter and TikTok are the social networks that are most used. Twitter is the most serious for finding out about news and politics: it is felt to immediate, that any controversy will show up on it first, that there is no censorship compared to the other social networks, that people and politicians publish there without filters. It "is an open table for debate." But being so controversial, it is rejected by some young people.

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*"For me, Twitter is to find out what happened to a politician or an important controversy, that's the first place where you find out about things, important people use Twitter."*

(Male, 20 years old, political preference Petro, Cartagena).

Facebook tends to have an informative focus where people search for and share news, "inform myself and inform others" and offer a social and humor network to "interact, react and comment to friends". It is thought that this social network is the favorite of adults, and comments such as "for older people", "for moms" show that it generates some rejection. It also shows the generational differences in how young people manage technologies and appropriate new social networks with far more ease. And finally, in this network, freedom of expression is perceived as limited because comments and publications are censored, especially those related to politics.

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*"Imagine, if you want to publish something they can censor you on Facebook. Post something about the government on Facebook and see what happens to you. The Instagrammers who go against it are taken away."*

(Male, 24 years old, political preference Petro, Cali).

YouTube is used to listen to music, watch documentaries on topics such as science, philosophy and paranormal events, among others. But young Colombians mainly use the network to see Youtubers discuss national politics and current news in a comedy format, "you laugh while you find out." Most frequently cited are La Pulla, Juanpis Gonzales, They Call Me Wally, and Daniel Samper. This shows that young people are interested in the politics or current situation of the country, but that interest goes beyond more traditional forms.

Instagram and TikTok are more associated with entertainment. Instagram is the place to view lifestyles, share personal photos, or catch up on news quickly. TikTok runs videos on any theme, "whatever comes out", "it is so versatile, you find out everything", and especially trends in dance or audio that are replicated as a way of having fun. Some claim that this social network is more superficial because it leaves you with nothing significant.

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*"Well, I like to dance, and I watch videos on TikTok."*

(Woman, 15 years old, political preference Duque, Valledupar).

WhatsApp is used above all “in a personal way” to get in touch with someone and is not necessarily individual but can also be in a group. The most common groups are family and friends, but in general groups of environments that young people frequent (university, work, etc) are formed. The group of friends is more to talk, send funny things, and make dates to go out. The family group is where family members are kept informed and where fake news proliferates the most.

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*“In my maternal family they speak every day by sharing memes or saying hello when someone has a birthday or so and suddenly if something happens like the unemployment situation. And if they post news about the situation in Bogotá on a daily basis, but false news has often been*

artistic content to make themselves known; entrepreneurs, who aim to sell their products; and meme creators who want to amuse the public. The immense work comes without economic remuneration until it becomes well known; many give up.

In general, for content to be liked, it must be novel or different, humorous or about overcoming a life situation (such as getting out of poverty), from a friend or acquaintance, teach something, and be akin to individual tastes. Feigned, cruel, controversial content, animal abuse and abuse of the elderly, discussions without real meaning that seek only to offend along with influencers who criticize the country but take no action to improve it are disliked. There were also sexist comments, such as

## In general, young people constantly consume large amounts of information through their social networks, which become places of socialization, learning, entertainment, discussion and leisure.

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*given, so when anything comes I always look and if I saw that it was a lie I told them that they were not telling them this five years ago or three years ago, that this is a lie.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, political preference Petro, Villavicencio)

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On consumption of campaign information, the majority of young people did not identify. The few who did were interested in products, private companies, or issues such as caring for the environment and personal care.

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*“... By Green, a makeup campaign based on natural ingredients, that does not harm the environment, that does not harm animals for animal cruelty, that campaign is really pleasant.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, indefinite political preference, Bogotá).

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Content is a foundation of social networks, both in terms of creation and consumption. Most young people consume far more than they create, but in general all create “personal content” for their social networks such as photos, videos and stories. Some young people go further: Artists create and publish their own

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“women who do not value their bodies, who are showing off” and LGBTQ + phobic statements regarding disapproval of content.

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*“It disgusts me when they publish that they support people, that is, when they support not what it is against or for, that is, when they are marching, all those things to support LGTBI movements.”*

(Male, 18 years old, indefinite political preference, Villavicencio).

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For the most part, when young people share content they do not feel that they are part of a group but that they are promoting their own interests or tastes.

### 2. Influencers

Famous personalities on social networks are known as influencers and constantly create content for their platforms (social networks). They are an important part of the information consumed by young people on the Internet. A young person follows an influencer because

of the main topic of the content – makeup, sports, entertainment etc. Young Colombians also recognize that, in addition to taste, a bond is created with the individual. That connection is strengthened through the influencer’s personality, authenticity, transparency and projections of a desired lifestyle. The relationship often becomes a place of learning thanks to the influencer’s expertise.

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*“I believe that she is just as transparent as we are. The truth is that we have a personality that when we arrive we do not have to deal with who we are in any way, without obviously running over anyone else, so she is very transparent and very authentic, very dynamic and that’s what I like about her, she seems very cool, just like Aida. At the same time, women are watched who have a very cool expression when they are speaking. I follow a thousand-odd people and I’m trying to remember. More than anything, it is type of training, content, hair, nutrition, clothing, lifestyle that are the most common on my social networks.”*

(Woman, 23 years old, indecisive political preference, Santa Marta).

In general, regardless of the political preference of young people, influencers who are recognized for non-political issues – singers, actors, comedians, among others – who use their platforms to talk about political issues such as the 2021 National Strike or feminism are well received. There is a feeling that this theme will become important thanks to the immense reach of these figures.

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*“Lately I have been watching Aida Victoria Merlano a lot, but she uploads videos making social criticism, when they hate a woman for her sexual freedom, social stereotypes, but that woman speaks very well, she is feminine.”*

(Woman, 19 years old, preference indecisive politics, Santa Marta).

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*“Well, I follow several, Adriana Lucia, I think his name is Alejandro Riaño, Residente, Santiago Alarcon and Julian Arango who are from the small group that was present at the strike. As I understand it, they have all been threatened because they spoke out and are listened to because they are famous, yes then it is easier to hear their voices, what they think and I feel that they transmit ideas very well and have sparked debates, they also share with people so that’s why I like them.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, political preference Petro, Villavicencio).

Politicians are considered influencers for their work. They are opinion-leaders, trend-setters and controversy makers, and are rejected more when they discuss the same political issues as the influencers mentioned above:

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*“Oh yeah, I stopped following Petro. Why, I don’t know, I find that the guy was very controversial. I do not know, I feel that with this issue of the marches (National Strike) it seems to me that he was a person who sent young people or others to march who killed each other, or something, or ended badly, or did not show up, while he was at home unsuspecting, doing nothing, just on Twitter. Because that is what this man has, he is very influential with people. And what he says, unfortunately, people will want to do, if you understand me?”*

(Male, 24 years old, political preference Duque, Barranquilla).

The influencers most welcomed by young people regardless of their political tendency specialize in giving information and news about politics in a funny, mild, or explanatory manner (mentioned above regarding YouTube). In other words, a format designed to hook the young.

Unfollowing an influencer is a statement of disagreement; losing followers means monetary loss. An influencer is unfollowed for causing unnecessary controversy, for changing content form and style when they are very famous so that it loses its quality, or because their actions clash with a follower’s values and ethics.

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*“When he consumes something, indirectly he learns things from the one whom is he using, whom I am supporting because he wins by views, so if he attacks someone, if he does something wrong, why do I have to give views to someone unpleasant.”*

(Male, 20 years old, political preference Petro, Cartagena).

### 3. Other means of communication

Communication media such as radio, television, and newspapers continue to be used but to a lesser extent than the Internet. They are present in the lives of young people largely thanks to their relatives. TV is more present in the lives of young people through older relatives who turn it on to watch the news. However, young people still inform themselves there. Gender preferences: young women watch soap operas and young men watch football or sports and documentary channels such as National Geographic and History.

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*“Television, no. In other words, I watch television, but in my house, they watch, that is, I sit in the living room and see what there is, but then I take the initiative and say I’m going to put on Caracol, I’m going to put on RCN, or whatever, but now I don’t.”*

(Man, 23 years old, political preference Petro, Cartagena).

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The radio is almost exclusively listened to during car travel predominantly at the initiative of relatives, especially parents or grandparents. They mostly listen to music stations and political discussion during morning or evening commutes. Outside large cities, people listen to the radio for local news since the national media tend to focus on big cities and forget the rest.

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*“Well here, very little television too, radio from time to time, like in the mornings. More than anything to inform me of the local area. They talk to you about the situation in Barranquilla or the surroundings, news from here most of all, from the coast.”*

(Male, 21 years old, political tendency Duque, Barranquilla).

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Newspapers are a traditional means of communication that least influence the lives of young people. Of the few newspapers that still reach homes, some are local or regional. Here again, information is provided about places forgotten by the big media.

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*“My mother has a subscription to El Día, the only newspaper she reads here.”*

(Woman, 16 years old, political tendency Duque, Valledupar)

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#### 4. Politics and information

By an overwhelming majority, young people prefer to search and find news online over other media. Young people who are politically right, left and indefinite affirm that newscasts, especially RCN and Caracol, manipulate and hide information, making their media less reliable. According to the young people, they

have a specific schedule and take time to get information, these are merely one source of news and their owner clearly has interests. Internet, however, is the polar opposite: there are endless sources, it is immediate, and there is no limitation of time or content.

Again, the three political tendencies affirm that whereas television generates the most mistrust, they trust small newscasts more, such as *City TV, Canal Uno, Telepacífico and Red+ noticias*. Young people on both the right and left believe far more in international media than in national media when it comes to political issues in the country because their perspective seems more neutral and less politicized than the national media.

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*“Right now I would not know how to explain it, but there are times that a national issue is very controversial, they report what they find convenient, there are some aspects that are important to emphasize but others do not emphasize, I do not know if I am making myself understood. I do not know things like the Tweets that say that they publish that someone did this and the other responds or things like that. It may be that it is somewhat important, but they do not get directly to the point; that they face each other is already very common, but they do not address the problem ... what is the problem then let’s say if Juan Manuel Santos and Uribe had a fight? It is not a piece of news that is discussed, they sidestep the important problem.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, Petro political tendency, Villavicencio).

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The digital format of large national and international journals continues to be a big point of reference, especially for young people with left and right tendencies. Those most mentioned include *El Espectador, BBC, El País, CNN* and *DW*. When these same young people seek news or “Google” they turn to well-known media and also follow them on their

**Again, the three political tendencies affirm that whereas television generates the most mistrust, they trust small newscasts more, such as *City TV, Canal Uno, Telepacífico* and *Red+ noticias*.**

social networks. The vast majority of young people whose political tendency is undefined “Google” without looking for great references or particular pages. There is also a tendency to receive news passively: “what I get on Facebook”, “what the cell phone suggests to me”, showing a lack of interest.

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*“In my case, as I said, political issues are not what I really like to get into. Now, for example, at the beginning of Facebook I read a little about the subject, but that was up to that point and I did not delve further into what was happening.”*

(Male, 21 years old, indefinite political tendency, Villavicencio).

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Thanks to social media, alternative media is becoming more common in the feeds of young people. Those that were very relevant to the National Strike were given more credibility than the traditional Colombian media. *Última hora col*, *Alerta colombia*, *Primera línea* and *La silla vacía* were among those mentioned. For international or Latin American news, the three tendencies all responded that they only find out about trending international news.

As for following politicians and / or parties on social networks, there are three large groups: Group 1: Those who follow no one because they are not interested or because “all are equally bad”; Group 2: those who follow only people who share their political affinities or locale, and Group 3: those who follow the representatives of each tendency in order to remain aware and find out what is going on locally. Regarding people whom they would never follow: Group A would never follow Petro; Group B would never follow Uribe; and C) indicated that they would not stop following anyone.

Right-wing youth, all of whom are in Group 2, only follow representatives of *Uribismo*, the Democratic Center and their respective local mayors. None follow politicians of other tendencies. In other words, this group lives in its political ideology. In addition, they would never follow Petro (Group A) because he is very controversial or because his political ideas resemble those of Venezuela or Cuba.

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*“So, in politics, I follow the mayor of Medellín and the president now.”*

(Male, 18 years old, political preference Duque, Medellín).

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Young people on the left mostly belong to Group 3: they follow a wide range of politicians

on their social networks to themselves including the *Uribistas* and their respective mayors. To a lesser extent, there are those who only follow Petro (Group 2) or who believe that all politicians are bad (Group 1). Young people are more unified on the left because they are part of Group B, Even if they follow *Uribismo* on their social networks, they could never identify with them, because of false positives or because his followers idolize him.

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*“On social media, I follow various politicians and even the president, not because I agree with him but because I am interested in knowing what he is thinking about the country every day, what he publishes and how he sees the situation and what is he thinking. However, I still follow Petro to Fajardo, Mayor Claudia Lopez and then Mayor Felipe Harman, but mostly to inform myself.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, political preference Petro, Villavicencio).

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The undefined tendency is not homogeneous. Unlike young people on the right or left nothing unifies them on a larger scale. There are those in group 3 who would not stop following any politician (Group C). Those who believe that all politicians are equally bad (Group 1) and will not follow *Uribismo* (Group B), follow only mayors (Group 1), but will not follow Petro (Group A).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, uninterested young people began to follow their local mayors because they saw that local politics affected their personal life, for example, knowing whether or not to go to school.

Leaving aside institutional and partisan politics, the vision of young people regarding other types of political actors such as social movements was also explored. Few young Colombians know anything about the existence of social movements. Others are slightly informed by the news that covers movements almost exclusively when marches take place in the big cities, effectively reducing any broader understanding of the movement. From this point of view, young people identify movements such as feminists, peasants, the indigenous *minga*, LGBTQ, Afro-Colombian, the urban movement and the peace movement. These movements produce symbols that are repudiated, generating distance and squelching the interest of young people, such as the densely packed bodies in feminist marches. Or conversely, the movement’s symbols create

an attraction and identification, specifically the folkloric and artistic expressions of the Afro-Colombian movement.

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*“Well, I think of the peasants because they know about politics, they know about the peasants, that’s why there are so many displaced people for saying it like that because they are forced off their lands or, for example, indigenous people and all that basically. No, what one sees on the Internet, the indigenous minga, the movement such as the feminists, the marches. Yes, sometimes when I’m bored, I start to look at the explanations on social networks, I keep looking at the profile, I keep looking at the publications.”*

[Woman, 17 years old, indefinite political tendency, Bogotá].

Young people who feel an affinity with movements do not claim to be part of them because they think they are radical.

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*“With feminism, yes. Feminism, but not radical feminism, which has become all the rage for some time now, I do not identify with that, but I do identify with feminism, which for me shows a logical point of view.”*

[23-year-old woman, indefinite political tendency, Santa Marta].

By contrast, members of social movements such as the Afro-Colombians create ties of identification with other movements such as the indigenous movement because of their historical experience and similar motivation for struggle. Finally, young people who identify with no social movement attribute this to a lack of any experience that links them. As with the example, social movements may not be particularly relevant and present for young Colombians but are seen more as “identifications” than as political forces that can change Colombia.

### 5. Distrust and fake news

One constant debate about social networks concerns the veracity of the information they present. Distrust born in the digital world spreads to traditional media such as radio, TV and newspapers. We see that young Colombians have attributed a second meaning to fake news. Manipulated news on behalf of someone who appears in the traditional media, especially in the news, is also considered fake news.

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*“Hey, I think that everywhere in what they have to see on television, and in anything having to do with social networks, they already publish false news, like in WhatsApp groups where they send a lot of false news, as my partner has said.”*

[Man, 18 years indefinite political preference, Villavicencio].

Young Colombians are very mistrustful of discussing politics on social networks. For the most part, they think that all political positions published on them are based on assumptions, that they lack research on the issues, distort information, and posture. Conclusions from false debates or a controversy reflect a lack of discussion about the ideas and an imposed ideology limited to a rigid political tendency, or useless attacks. A few young people relativize and individualize the good or bad use made of politics on social networks to each person’s level of knowledge about politics or information and their investigative capacity. The most common reaction is therefore to avoid posting about politics to avoid being attacked or getting into pointless discussions. The few that do still publish respond to those who propose a serious debate.

Young people have their own criteria for detecting fake news. Using common sense, searching for the topic on Internet and comparing it with other media, they examine how it is written and whether the information “feels incomplete”. Looking at comments, there is usually some who advises whether it is false. Finally, if possible, they seek someone who was witness to the fact.

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*“The absence of an author, the way it is written, the secrecy of the information, because if it is high-caliber and not corroborated by the mass media, it is information that is not valid, because if the information is important, these media must be reporting it. If that information arrives in a thread that is not supported by a media outlet, one of them is left-thinking even if it is well written.”*

[Man, 23 years old, political preference Petro, Cartagena].

Young Colombians state that if the news story has an author and a purpose that benefits the author or is used as a political strategy in critical moments such as elections or the National Strike to interfere and instill fear and change behavior, then it is fake. A milder notion is that such fake news is created by people with free time, but has no negative impact on society.

*“They play with the lives of Colombians themselves and do things they want to play with people. We can say that they manipulate a lot with this type of thing that is the BPS, help for the elderly that can be said to be for citizens, that they have some control, so the government manipulates a lot of information, for example, with older adults. ‘If this kind of candidate wins, they will remove the BPS, practically adults vote for him out of ignorance, we might say they are not informed about the new politics.”*

(Man, 17 years old, political preference Petro, Cali).

## 6. Participation

Young Colombians attribute enormous importance to voting for the future of the country regarding its well-being. Voting is seen as an opportunity for change, a renewal of policies and proposals and one of the greatest political actions that a citizen can take to “make the will of the people known,” and that stigmatizes other forms of popular expression such as street mobilizations. The majority of young Colombians see democracy as being connected to the vote and the party system.

*(Democracy) “It is like that privilege of being able to choose a president, therefore, that freedom to choose what best benefits one.”*

(Male, 18 years old, political preference Duque, Medellín).

The 2021 National Strike was the only political cause outside of institutional or party politics. Young supporters’ latent fear of being assassinated by the State kept them at home and stopped those in the streets from participating. Support for the strike was common, but the vandalism associated with it was decried.

*“My wife and I lived in the upper part (of the house) and you were afraid when the police and ESMAD passed by, you felt fear because thousands passed, they passed and if I did take part because we went with my wife and my child to try to make a presence, to whistle, to be present. Later no, because you must preserve life...”*

(Man, 24 years old, political preference Petro, Cali).

## 7. Political organizations and representation

The imprecise definition of parties and/or candidates in the ideological political spectrum in Colombia is reflected in the views of young Colombians. The most ideologically radical young woman in the investigation, who repeatedly wanted to prove that she came from the extreme right, showed an affinity for and admired Uribe. This is how she described herself:

*“Well, I think that if you take (I am) the center-right, I think I am in the center-right because my political thinking is slightly more traditional but I am aware that most of our current legal institutions are more of an independent state. Social law, then, you cannot be neutral, you have to agree with the official who, I feel, is more to the left, but I do not categorize myself as center-left but rather as center-right for that reason.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, political preference Duque, Bogotá).

Young people from the right had no problem describing themselves as belonging to this current; they stated their position quickly and concisely, based on an idea of comparison to their vision of the left, which focuses on direct ties with Cuba and Venezuela, which they see as a very real possibility. If a leftist ruler comes to power, “we are going to end up like Venezuela.” All reject the idea of social equality (socialism), which is considered close to the idea of meritocracy.

*“I would not follow Petro, I don’t know, I don’t like his ideologies. The thought of the rulers of Cuba, of Venezuela, if that man comes to power, what a danger.”*

(Male, 18 years old, political preference Duque, Medellín)

Young people from the left do not call themselves leftists; some even mentioned an affinity with an ideological tendency, but there was no concrete statement such as, “I am from the left.” Like the undefined young people, their discourse is “neither from the right nor from the left”, not necessarily related to the center, but rather “outside” the ideological political spectrum. They explain that they are not interested in the political ideology of an individual but in his real, sincere, and transparent interest in making changes for the people. They felt represented by neither side.

*“That is why, as I told you, it should not have to do with what is from the left or what is from the right. Then I would not see myself as such in a game, I would think that the game is the least of it, the people whom you are going to influence and what you are going to do with all your heart because one has to put one’s heart into life, not only because of the heart, but to be transparent. If you are from the right but have a perfectly ordered country, well, blessed God, I mean, if you are from the left, the same, if you are from the center, the same....”*

(Male, 24 years old, Petro political preference)

This non-identification among left-wing youth may result from several factors: 1) The imprecision of the ideological political spectrum in Colombia; 2) the stigmatization of

and peasants, those who care about animal rights, human rights, interest and expansion of access to sectors such as education and higher education, health, work and sports. For young Colombians, physical appearance does not matter because “they are not going to lead a town with their faces.” What matters is that they represent the interests and values of young people.

*“That the position is held by a social leader.”*

(Woman, 17 years old, indefinite political preference, Bogotá)

*“I feel that there is a lack of awareness that a woman can also rise to power if we have gained a lot of ground, there are women in Congress, and thank God there are mayors, there are representatives, there are social*

## Young people who feel an affinity with movements do not claim to be part of them because they think they are radical.

the left by linking it to the guerrillas, making it an enemy and thus legitimizing even death as a step in the extermination of the UP party; 3) the lack of other strong political figures besides Petro as representatives of the left, and 4) a real non-affinity with the proposals of the current political spectrum, reflecting the emergence of a new political positioning of young people.

Several of the young people indicated that they would feel better represented by social leaders who were experienced with political institutions. Among their first observations was that they would feel better represented by a political leader who was transparent, honest, ethical, authentic, innovative, gave thought to and listened to them. They also identified, to a lesser extent, political leaders with good international relations, a person from the town (not from the same rich families that have always been in power). They wanted someone local or from the region they represented, who worked for the common good and quality of life of the Colombian people, and that included more women, Afro-descendants, indigenous people, disabled people, LGBTQ +

*leaders. Tell me, when is a woman going to become president? I hope we are almost there, that’s why we need that change. In these five years, the same things have always happened except for one new thing... If you were reading a news story about an Afro-descendant woman who joined the I don’t remember what freedom struggle, I think it’s good that there are people, not only that there is a woman, but that there is a partner, man and woman, and that they come from people who have fought and suffered... it does not necessarily have to be a woman, it has to be like the small group, the people who have suffered, the ethnic groups, the people who listen to them, look at this happening, in this community this happens, that it is not only for me, not only what happens to me and not to the others, first, me second and third, me and the others can fuck off. And that should not be the case, you have to look further, then I would say that it would be very good for people who represent Afro, ethnic people, people, for example with disabilities, when you have heard that there are people who fight for disabled people, then we need more people than those who have similarly suffered, or have*

*lived similar lives who have that idea and the values that they instill in you at home, including respect as a value, that it is completely sincere, that you do not come to power and now go crazy, you have I don't know how much money, you have people who take care of you and not people who believe you are with God, you need to comply, I feel that the representation of various groups of LGTB is important, ... but I do feel that about the same things that we have gone through with so much force, that they have fought from other countries because there was a lot of racism, sexism too, now also feminism...we must keep the men, however I feel that many things are missing, many representations, but without going to the extreme.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, political preference Petro, Villavicencio).

Young people are unanimous about separating church and State. They see no benefit or logic in their mutual influence as each specializes in different areas. Individually, young right-wing believers welcome candidates with Christian values and maintain their belief in their religion, but mistrust Church institutions involved in such things as the rape of children, and in institutions with double standards. They have seen churches choose candidates for their own benefit even though none of them would carry out the wishes of the churches.

### 8. Trust in traditional institutions

The 2021 National Strike became a point of reference in the political imagination of young Colombians for explaining their mistrust of Congress, the Judiciary, the Army and the Police. No young Colombian participant in this investigation affirmed full confidence in these institutions. The level of distrust of institutions ranges from absolute – among a majority of young people in this study regardless of their political tendencies – to moderate – among those who give these institutions the benefit of the doubt, stating that some of their members look after people’s interests and well-being.

With respect to congress and the judiciary, the majority of young Colombians tend to absolutely mistrust about their decisions,

actions, projects and laws they pass. Young people blame their poor execution on the disconnect between those in political positions and the reality of the people. In this sense, young people tend to individualize structural aspects and to perceive politicians as “disconnected from the people”, instead of identifying the neoliberal austerity measures in the approved projects that provoked the strike, for example. Young people believe that the 2021 National Strike was motivated by the obvious fact that laws were not made for the benefit of the people. Congress is perceived as corrupt; no matter how many bills or how much legislation it passed in favor of the people, it would badly execute them because the implementation budget has been stolen. To a lesser extent, some interviewees had some trust that some projects could benefit Colombians yet claimed to have no knowledge of the most recent projects. Moreover, the justice system was viewed as corrupt because it is inefficient and unequal, i.e., harsher towards poor people.

*“They create policies that are not close to reality, that are not close to what the people need, so I would certainly not be in favor of what they do.”*

(Woman, 17 years old, indefinite, Santa Marta).

Young people with left-wing tendencies distrust the army completely because of false positives; in addition, women with left-wing tendencies add their distrust of violations of vulnerable groups such as indigenous people.<sup>5</sup> Undecided and right-wing youth continue to see the army as a hero in the war against the guerrillas and for control of rural areas. There is no mention of false positives. There is a level of confidence here that tends more to relativize by individuality. All three tendencies totally mistrust the army, which is seen as a corrupt institution that does not protect the people when necessary. Women here point to the rapes committed by uniformed men and to the murder of civilians during the National Strike, which aggravated their mistrust.

*“No. In the police, abuse, criminality, they have to take care of the citizen and do the opposite, they have to set an example and do*

<sup>5</sup> Colombian military forces killed at least 6402 civilians between 2002 and 2008 and presented them as “casualties in combat,” the Special Jurisdiction for Peace reported on Thursday. The number of false positives, as they are known in Colombia, is higher than what had been recognized in the past and shows that under Álvaro Uribe, who rejects the accusations, “78% of the total historical victimization” was registered. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-56119174>

*the opposite. A policeman who goes out to the park and arrests the person smoking marijuana whereas they also smoke. They only take care of people with money. They give them an order and then they follow it, like the one for false positives. Then they don't even serve to do what is necessary."*

(Male, 24 years old, political preference Petro, Cali).

Some young Colombians do believe in institutions and their trust converges around international organizations such as the UN to ensure human rights and the WHO in relation to the pandemic. Their international status gives them greater security. There is no trust in big business.

### 9. National politics

Young people have very superficial notions about political events in the last five years. There is hardly any mention of facts, but many perceptions, which are generally negative. There are many comments such as, "a lot of corruption" and "no good". The 2021 National Strike is exemplified as a test and response to bad Colombian politics that "have only been declining." The plebiscite for peace was voted five years ago yet no young person mentioned this.

*"If it is the lack of ethics and corruption that is seen, if that were not so, the country would be much better. I am not saying that it would be super good either. The problem dates back many years. But corruption does."*

(Woman, 22 years old, undefined political preference, Bogotá)

A couple of young people mentioned some facts about the 2018 presidential elections. One young woman from the right pointed out that she voted for "Duque because he was the anti-corruption candidate." (Woman, 21 years old, political preference Duque). The young man from the left said, "Petro's elections were stolen." (Male, 24 years old, political preference Petro, Cali). Brief comments emerge such as "Duque's mismanagement gives a feeling of backwardness." (Male, 18 years old, indefinite political preference, Cali). Finally, young people mention the diversification of political thought: "There are more political parties and Colombians are ceasing to be clearly on the right." (Male, 21 years old, political preference Duque, Barranquilla).

According to the young people, the 2021 National Strike marches improved national democracy because people were taken into consideration. A few young people are skeptical of this since other "underhanded" actions will continue to be meted out against the people. The strike led many young people to begin to be interested in the country's problems, which generates great expectations for the 2022 elections as a real possibility for change.

*"I think so, because somehow with those protests, the president was able to listen to people's opinions and that is where democracy goes. So, I would believe in the protests if they served in one way or another not to knock it down, they did not reduce it, but they have not taken it out so to speak, they bear it in mind, so at any time they can restore the reform, they will improve it, but they will put it on. So, the protests worked because the people were listened to, they made themselves felt."*

(Male, 24 years old, indefinite political preference, Villavicencio).

Regarding the 2016 plebiscite for peace, those young people who remembered it unanimously assert that there was considerable fake news during that period but do not recall what it was about. Only one young woman from the right remembered the putative use of pensions to subsidize the peace process, amnesty for all crimes without reparation, creating "impunity", and permanent seats in congress for the FARC.

*"Too much, because I have a survival pension since my mother died when I was little and I had to go to Colpensiones, because I had to make updates and most of the pensioners said no to the plebiscite because the pension agreement was going to be eliminated. Peace and that they were lies, if you understand me, I feel that the fake news damaged the plebiscite a lot. What was the fake news about? The most I remember was about pensioners, so I tell you, well, I remember that the old men were going to withdraw their money from the bank and said that their pension was going to be eliminated and I do not know that the fake news did not understand how the peace accords were going to change the world, but then impunity and I don't know and nobody is going to give you anything without getting something in return. There are many others such as the seats [for the FARC] that were going to be indefinite, but in reality, they are*

## Colombia

*going to do it for three terms only, so then they have to fight for the votes and those things people say that the Congress and shouts and I don't know what, well, not really. It is like this."*

(Woman, 21 years old, political preference Duque, Bogotá).

There is a near consensus that politics directly affects the lives of young Colombians: a good future for the country means a good personal future. As the government tends not to invest in sectors such as health, education, housing and there are few job offers, politics is known for a "lack of opportunities". The dim prospect of real change in Colombian politics for the benefit of the people leads young people to think that their only hope for a better future is to go live in

another country, although the National Strike of 2021 gave them a bit of hope and they think that this may change things.

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*"Well, honestly, I see a good future for me, but for the country, I don't know. Well, actually I would like to finish my studies. And go on to do a higher degree elsewhere, like in Spain or Chile, and settle there, but not in my country, no, I don't see it. I see that it is on the right track, but I don't know. I just don't know now how things are going, everything looks a bit cloudy. But it may improve for the young, who knows?"*

(Male, 20 years old, political preference Duque, Barranquilla).

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**The 2021 National Strike is exemplified as a test and response to bad Colombian politics that "have only been declining".**



## Mexico

### Context

To cover the many different political positions, young people were divided into three groups on the basis of how they voted in the 2018 federal elections in order to have a similar profile of their political ideology. The first two groups comprised voters for Andrés Manuel López Obrador (National Regeneration Movement, MORENA) and for Ricardo Anaya Cortés (National Action Party, PAN). The third group was made up of people who had not voted or who had no political preference for either candidate.

The importance of the division was based on the political ideals of each candidate and could be understood as a “left” and a “right” party. However this polarization is “ideal” as the candidates’ proposals do not fit perfectly into a left or right ideology.

Political parties in Mexico are complex, making it difficult to square conceptual categories with candidates and their parties. There is no proclaimed “left” party with a trajectory, interests, groups or programs fit a purely leftist vision. MORENA, led by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, comes closest to trying to “rescue” this political vision.

Moreover, with the secularization of the church and State resulting from the War of the Reform, the terms “conservative” and “liberal” were attributed to groups that preserve the moral values of the 19th century Orthodox Church or who opted for defining the Mexican State outside of Judeo-Christian morality and everything it represents. With the triumph of the liberals, the term “conservative” began to be used as a synonym for archaic, religious, macho, and old, among other things.

### 1. Information consumption

To understand how young people think about politics and position themselves, we must consider the information they consume. Some consume considerable information daily, so the analysis of this dimension of the interviews is divided into information about leisure and recreation, and national and international socio-political information.

For information about leisure and recreation, young people look most at Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube for information:

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*“News appears in my feed. The truth is that I like the news. I’m going to sound very old perhaps, but I do like the news a lot. When it appears, it is something I usually consume.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, without political preference towards any party, Puebla)

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While each of these social networks presents very varied issues, there is a constant: all young males who were interviewed said that in their leisure time and for recreation they watched soccer matches and sports journalism with related news. The young women have no such clear interest but do show an interest in tutorials as a form of recreation.

Almost all interviewees (with the exception of those who do not use social networks much) enjoy comedy – satirical, rapidly consumed memes in which they recognize their environment.

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*“90% of the podcasts that I consume are comedy. They touch on current topics and develop news, but it is minimal, so that you see or listen to it in this case and they are topics where the news is the important thing, if not they simply mention the news and give some developments.”*

(Man, 22 years old, political tendency towards MORENA, Tabasco)

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For the vast majority of interviewees who use the Internet for entertainment, the most consumed and most appealing comment is the need for short-term attention only. Short TikTok videos have become very relevant for youth in their leisure moments.

Regarding national and international, and sociopolitical information, news is accessed from the Internet: at least three-quarters of the interviewees mentioned that both the radio and television help to forge a broader point perspective for understanding their immediate and national environment and, for some, even the international context.

People who use radio and TV for information mentioned that they tune in to a specific channel because they listen/watch at specific times when television programming brings family members together. The radio is used more during travel, especially during work/school commutes.

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*“Sometimes I watch TV, but it’s more like that my dad turns it on and I stay with him for a while listening.”*

(Woman, 24 years old, with political preference for PAN, Guanajuato)

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Young people use Facebook and Twitter most to learn about socio-political issues either through news shared by others or by following official pages and groups.

## 2. Influencers

One of the research topics of interest is influencers – public figures in the digital sphere who create and trend within the collective imagination of a specific population.

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*“Influencers are always the ones who give you the opportunity to do everything, right? In other words, since they are the ones who inform you about everything, you find out about one from them.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, political preference towards the PAN, Mexico City)

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Young people believe that influencers have a more pleasant, satirical way of informing their followers, with which they feel more identified:

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*“They don’t make it as alarming as the news... they say things more like gossip than news.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, without political preference, Mexico City)

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Although the interviewees provided few names, because the influencer were not often well identified, they liked the way they created their content and the image they give.

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*“The attitude and presence of the presenters is what draws attention to see their news.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, without defined political position, Colima)

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What stands out most about influencers is their humor and humorous way of transmitting information, even going so far as to mock very important political figures.

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*“I like his sarcasm that makes fun of everything, for example, there was difficult news but still he makes it a joke, like they make fun of politicians.”*

(Woman, 21 years old, without defined political position, Colima)

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Another source of trust in influencers is the idea that they inform without following a structured script. For many young people, this notion of free information, as a distributor to social networks and a standard political satire, becomes the alternative to the news on national open TV channels, and has the advantage of brevity and immediacy.

## 3. Other means of communication

The traditional means of information dissemination such as newspapers and magazines, to which some young people go for information, are digitized, since their families do not have typically buy the physical objects.

In addition, these interviewees, who are in the habit of reviewing the news in official media, are required to read them for their careers; those accessing these media are mostly undergraduates.

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*“They asked us to inform ourselves about politics in order to be able to participate in classes... they demanded that we do research on social and political contexts.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, political preference towards the PAN, Jalisco)

**Young people believe that influencers have a more pleasant, satirical way of informing their followers, with which they feel more identified.**

The young people were asked to compare news and information in different newspapers; none stood out. However, for news or scientific information, the *UNAM Gazette* (National Autonomous University of Mexico) was preferred because this university is one of the nationally most renowned for scientific findings and for promoting university culture.

Young people equate scientific information with hard data and a specific methodology that touches on social issues. This distinction leads to a greater consensus on where information is taken depending on the degree of credibility and confidence that one has in one or another news source.

### 4. Distrust and fake news

Distrust in journalistic reports and information found on social networks is a constant in the lives of the people interviewed. The abundance of fake news on the Internet has led young people to develop a series of filters to ensure that such news is true, or at least credible from their perspective. They give some factors more weight than others for inspiring confidence in an information medium.

**1) The family and its informational tradition:** the credibility of previous generations and relatives with whom they live daily directly influences whether or not young people question their sources of information. There is a tendency to share family time in front of the TV watching morning and evening news, usually promoted by parents of young people, which generates a kind of automatic credibility about these media.

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*“Well, when I don’t know about something, I ask my parents or my sister who has already studied it to find out if it is true or not.”*

(Woman, 16 years old, without indefinite political tendency, Jalisco)

**2) Relationship with their immediate social context:** a constant among most interviewees is the contrast between what is said in the media and the reality they observe. In addition, depending on the subject, they relied on people having experienced an event to corroborate or deny the journalistic report.

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*“It is somewhat difficult to know which news is true or false if it did not happen in your locality or your state ...”*

(Male, 17 years old, political tendency towards MORENA, State of Mexico)

**3) The history of the medium or information channel giving the reports:** depending on the level of confidence in the two previous points, some young people – because of personal history, academic information or a previous investigation of certain channels and media – choose to discredit some TV channels, radio stations or Internet pages by appealing to the medium’s history of information and disclosure whether cloudy or integrated.

These help explain the filters that Mexican youth apply to inform themselves. All interviewees use them on reports on social networks; Facebook is one of the most used networks for accessing this type of information.

The first filter is the reactions – I like it, I love it, it amuses me, I care, it amazes me, it saddens me and makes me angry. That first contact determines whether or not people lend importance to the report; if it has a lot of funny reactions, for example, it is assumed to be fake. The second filter regards a very polarized opinion. Here, the comments left by users about the news are used and read until the reader finds credibility. If there is still doubt about the news, a comparison is made with other media, such as television, radio, or official pages, among others. Once same information is found in more than one information medium, readers proceed to believe the news or turn to older relatives to resolve doubts about it.

Young people apply filters only with information that is relevant for them and that generates an interest in knowing the truth behind the report. If they are not interested or intrigued by the note, even one that is political or social, they ignore it despite knowing that what they read could be fake news.

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*“That’s why I get informed. In other words, I have the news and according to how interesting it is to me, I begin to inform myself about whether it is true or not. Obviously, it has a basis, right? Something to prove it. Now if it is true or simply not.”*

(Woman, 20 years old, political preference towards the PAN, Mexico City)

Although this whole process generates a sense of approximation about the veracity of the news for young people, it does not yield total and immutable trust, since there is always a possibility of doubt about what is reported given the different sources and pages of information, not to mention the interests and political positions that each represents for the interviewees.

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*“You cannot trust any means of communication 100% because there is no neutrality.”*

(Man, 23 years old, with no defined political tendency, Puebla)

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### 5. Politics and information

Mexican youth consider politics to depend entirely on the party system and democratic representativeness since it is difficult to understand one without the other. In other words, young Mexicans do not clearly discern between talking about politics and talking about political parties. Most of them therefore avoid talking about politics with their family and / or friends or even sharing it on their social networks because in the collective imagination, this would represent support or rejection of a party or a specific public figure, which is not necessarily the purpose of these people.

Interviewees exclude social movements, demonstrations, groups with a nonpartisan or anti-systemic political orientation from the “political” category (even though they are an important dimension that is addressed in the interviews). The informational analysis here is therefore divided into partisan politics and non-institutionalized political practice (although young people do not consider this to belong to the same category as “politics”).

Recalling the division into three political preferences based on the vote, and ignoring the ever-present quarrel between the right (represented by PAN) and the left (represented by MORENA) in the current Mexican population, this study will highlight the most salient factors of each subgroup of interviewees.

The first subgroup refers to those who tend towards MORENA, where the sense of credibility is strengthened by *La Mañanera* (the President’s daily press meetings taking stock of the country socially, politically and

economically. These young people consider this information to be less distorted since the President and his team give the information directly to the media,

The second subgroup comprises those who voted PAN and who normally consume the news from television stations and influencers.

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*“I do not complicate it much and it depends on whether I see that someone shares a story, I will verify a page that is trustworthy to see if it is true. News pages are always current, so if they are there, then it is true. I also use comments a lot, so I get in there and check.”*

(Male, 17 years old, political tendency towards PAN, State of Mexico)

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The third group, comprising people with partisan impartiality or who annulled their vote, is informed more through social networks or alternative information media such as podcasts, YouTube channels, etc.

The analysis of the information on non-institutionalized politics indicates that the three groups opt for social networks as their first contact with non-partisan politics and see them as a space where everyone can opine on more controversial issues such as social movements or the various forms of social demonstrations and organization. It is believed that it is easier on social networks to access thoughts different from the current hegemonic order.

In daily life where social networks are present in the interviewees’ lives, Facebook and Instagram memes and infographics, to mention a few sources, are the main triggers for involving young people with political and social news.

The interest of young people is captured by the conjunction of several elements – rapid consumption of synthesized information, humor and familiarity with references from cinema, television series, and influencers who are nationally and internationally in vogue. This format uses colloquial language and, on many occasions, discourse bordering on the ridiculous combined with some news of political and social importance. This iconographic phenomenon generates interest on any current topic that later leads young people to official and unofficial media.

## 6. Trust in traditional institutions

State institutions – seen as a nexus of relationships between the government and the Mexican population – for satisfying basic needs make trust extremely important in a holistic view of how youth see the State and the current political system.

The official pages of State institutions are considered to be trustworthy sources of information. However, young people are drastically opposed when asked about their trust in the institution per se, since almost none

trust in this State institution because deputies and senators had a reputation of for working very little and the exorbitant sums of money they charge to occupy a seat. There is a shared idea about the corruption in this institution as being driven by personal interests (mainly economic) and the tradition of inherited positions by relatives and *compadrazgos* (political contacts) of those in the position.

The Secretary of Security and Citizen Protection, represented by the police, elicits generalized mistrust. Unlike the Congress of the Union, where distrust is confirmed by news

# The young people interviewed seem to have more respect for the practice of political demonstration than for the ideals of the social movements.

fully trust any institution, except when they have worked in them and have seen internal structure functions in a way they consider good or satisfactory. However, there are reservations even here because these institutions are seen as being susceptible to corruption because of the officials who work in them.

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*“I agree with my colleagues, sincerely I do not trust even my shadow much less than politicians, they are the ones I trust the least, I do not trust institutions, obviously there are good people, bad people, dedicated people, but with sincerity, no.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, political tendency towards PAN, Yucatán)

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Although a couple of institutions in which a minimum of trust was placed were mentioned such as the Congress of the Union, the police and the army were controversial because of generalized responses, two based on the personal experience of the interviewees and one based on indirect perception.

When asked about trust in the Congress of the Union, young people were initially uncertain: a significant number did not know what it was or did not relate it to its legislative exercise. (For the most part, those who were knowledgeable had a minimum level of education and a bachelor’s degree, or a career involving social issues). However, once they understood its function, interviewees agreed that they had no

about it, distrust in the police is nuanced by the real experiences of young people with these public servants, which leads them to reject this body of institutional coercion. Almost all of the interviewees have been victims of some abuse of police power and extortion; those who have not themselves been victims of the police have known people whose testimony helps create their dislike.

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*“Well, I don’t trust the police because sometimes they are the ones who ... instead of helping you, harm you, sometimes they steal what little you have and sometimes you are not the problem.”*

(Man, 22 years old, political tendency MORENA, Chiapas)

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Perceptions of the Mexican army are slightly more complex and differ greatly among interviewees, with responses ranging from absolute fear to respect and admiration. The point of view is basically balanced, however: everyone speaks about the “remoteness” of interactions, taking the police as a point of comparison, since both organizations are empowered to use violence to keep the peace (ostensibly).

There is nonetheless a certain confidence in this institution primarily because the army, unlike the SSP, is present during natural disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. It should be mentioned that corruption in government institutions was never ruled out.

## 7. Political organizations and representation

The analysis of representativeness and opinions about the various forms of representation is an important topic to explore and must be set in the context of mistrust of traditional political parties and institutions, a constant in this study.

Representativeness and how young people understand it in their respective political positions involves understanding their self-perception as multidimensional beings in a conglomeration of lines and axes of social and political thought. The majority of the interviewees feel unrepresented by institutions, political parties, or candidates; this leads us to think of alternative ways for them to get beyond this feeling.

On the one hand, social movements – demonstrations, strikes, closures, etc., – seem to elicit respect for the group's ideologies more for their “courage” in creating these forms of resistance than for the vindication of the ideals. In other words, the young people interviewed seem to have more respect for the practice of political demonstration than for the ideals of the social movements.

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*“If there is a demonstration, it is because there is a conflict that must be resolved... it is not right for people to be branded as unruly if they are not reporting why they are dissatisfied or why they are demonstrating.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, political tendency towards MORENA, Querétaro)

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The vast majority of male interviewees did not feel that they belonged to or represented a movement since they were not part of any; the female interviewees felt that the feminist movement was representative.

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*“I do feel identified with feminism to the point where I say: I know I have support. And how do I identify myself, that is, if something happens to me tomorrow, I know that there are people who are going to scratch, break, scream, to find me, or for justice to be done, or for my mother to go out and look for me and not be alone.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, with no defined political tendency, Puebla)

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A fear of labels when claiming to be part of a movement is based on three issues: (1) ignorance of all of the dimensions of a

movement's action and thought; (2) the idea that belonging to a social movement requires agreement on everything and allows no margin for criticism, and (3) the perception that being inserted or fitting into a social movement limits the multidimensional aspect of an individual's thinking or action.

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*“You must be 100% in accordance with your own ideals or you cannot fit in with them.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, with no defined political tendency, Mexico City)

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For these reasons, interviewed youth opted for supporting specific social and political causes rather than movements (waving nihilism as a flag for not identifying with everything, and being part of many causes with which they agree so as not to limit themselves). The environment, animal rights and philanthropic or charitable actions for the benefit of vulnerable social groups were the most prominent causes.

## 8. Participation

Considering the representativeness and causes in which young people are interested, participation hinges largely on the dissemination of information about the topics that interest them. Even women who felt that the feminist movement represented them, despite the recent rise of mobilizations in the streets, have shown their support only through social networks.

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*“From my trench is what I can support... the least I can do, for my part, is share it with my family... open up a dialogue with people who are close.... I have never gone out to march, or I don't have the voice to make the movement seem bigger... Maybe I do feel like it, but there is the fear of going out and demonstrating and all those things.”*

(Woman, 18 years old, with no defined political tendency, Puebla)

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Voting in elections for political representatives is a form of participation that all saw as legitimate and agreed that it created change and provided guidelines for legitimating representative democracy. They even asserted that it is the most reliable form of social organization for the number of people living in a country.

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*“I do believe that people have to vote.... I believe that whether or not they vote, nothing happens, they do not give the votes to another*

*party but they are wasting an opportunity that could benefit or harm them in the future.”*

(Male, 17 years old, with no defined political tendency, Nuevo León)

### 9. National politics

Interviewees see the political scenario in Mexico as very uncertain (except those who feel represented by MORENA), since the candidates are viewed as insufficiently prepared to occupy the positions they are assigned and insufficiently invested in the people who trust them.

*“MORENA says, ‘The hope of Mexico’ then it should have to gain the trust of the people.”*

(Male, 22 years old, without defined political tendency, Baja California)

Listening to the demands of the youth population is perceived as quite inadequate. Young people believe that something should

that individuals in their daily lives prevent the system from operating as it should.

*“I believe that what is really lacking is for people to change, for people to go out and vote.... I think we lack a lot of responsibility as citizens to improve our country.”*

(18-year-old woman, no defined political tendency, Mexico City)

In sum, young people divide national politics between representatives of public office and individual decisions of the population. The first exercises direct influence through the values and work done in the State apparatus; the second exercises indirect influence by voting, which interviewees consider highly credible for deciding the direction of the country.

An additional important issue that helps justify categorizing interviewees by their vote is that more than half are uninformed about the

## Young people believe that something should be done about making it more important for the government to inform the population about political processes.

be done about making it more important for the government to inform the population about political processes and to generate strategies for surveying the current demands of the young population.

*“We need information campaigns that are broadcast over social networks. That is what we young people occupy the most, as well as on TikTok because it is the new thing.”*

(Woman, 24 years old, with a political tendency towards the PAN, Guanajuato)

Another important belief is that personal corruption is the country’s biggest problem, beyond systemic failures: the solutions proposed by the youth proceed through individualist route of change. Some even go so far as to say that the government *per se* is not structurally or systematically wrong, but

dichotomy of a political left and right. Only a few had a more or less correct idea about this division (mostly those holding a bachelor’s degree or with a career in the social and / or political sphere).

In either case, all agreed that these labels are not currently applicable to Mexican parties whose political proposals are generally perceived to be similar. Young people do not consider that these categories of analysis are important, for the same reason that they do not identify themselves with a right or a left.

*“It is assumed that before they were ‘liberals’ against conservatives but no one wants to be conservative anymore, so they are all liberals.”*

(Woman, 22 years old, with no defined political tendency, Querétaro)

## Country specifics

**Argentina:** there is an appreciation of democracy considering the country's dictatorial past and the actions of human rights movements. The growth of the Libertarian Party (right) draws attention for its connection with young people, social networks, and influencers. It does not fit in with the traditional right, which makes it legitimate among young people with different ideological orientations. Having churches participate in politics is perceived as negative, both by those who claim to be on the left and the right. This was the only country where sharing false news was not immediately linked to political dynamics.

**Brazil:** politics, as a whole, is seen as totally corrupt and outdated. There is a tendency to seek what seems authentic, new, and transparent (accountability) via social networks in politics. The vote for Bolsonaro is defended by those who consider him authentic, honest and "new". Young Bolsonarists even defend authoritarianism and closing institutions to strengthen democracy.

**Colombia:** politics is seen as oligarchical and leaders as being relatively unconcerned with the population and youth. There is a tendency to distrust traditional media, especially channels such as *Caracol* and *RCN*, owned by millionaire families having their own interests. There is a tendency to look for international media to learn about one's country, especially among right-wingers and the politically undefined. There is a willingness to see someone new to politics who comes from the people and actually represents them. "Paro 2021" was seen as a necessary political rebirth of youth, while distrust in the military forces increased because of the deaths caused by repressing protest.

**Mexico:** most respondents except those who voted for Morena (the leftist *Movimiento Regeneración Nacional* party) notice no substantial difference between political leaders from different parties who all have the same proposals and do not keep their promises.

## Specificity of youth today

This study follows international trends in conducting qualitative studies on youth and democracy and presents new information about the behavior of Latin American youth in general regarding the popularization of the Internet, social networks, and streaming platforms in the region.

The study verified that the online consumption of information and entertainment was an abandonment of traditional television, radio and print media programming. Streaming platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, and Amazon Prime gained greater relevance for the consumption of cultural products such as movies, series, and documentaries.

Unlike previous generations, young people today experience an informational "tsunami". And amid network offerings, they prefer to seek content projecting self-esteem and self-improvement, which is humorous and offers things like makeup classes and games. In their own words, these are escapes from news that is permeated by injustices and sufferings.

Regardless of political positions, a huge opening exists for the defense of the struggle against oppression (women, blacks, indigenous people, LGBT+), environmental guidelines and the defense of animals (against animal cruelty, veganism). Among more conservative young people and/or those on the right, this is accompanied by an emphasis on entrepreneurship based on neoliberal subjectivity and the appeal of neo-Pentecostal churches.

Most young people interviewed use social networks (mainly Instagram, TikTok, Twitter) primarily for socialization, personal evolution, information, politicization and engagement; these tasks are interconnected. While chilling out with a funny TikTok video, young people can get notifications on their Instagram accounts about an entrepreneurship video they admire, read a comment about the latest happening at the Parliamentary Commission on Covid, or like a photo of their college friend's breakfast.

That young people perceive the surrounding political reality through networks has several implications. Politics takes the form of news but mainly as commentary, reaction, or debate on a news or event such that young people perceive

politics as being linked to the dynamics of polarization and a bubble effect.

Posting, clicking, and liking are forms of affective bonding. “Posting everyday things” is a way of approaching and looking for identification with others. When young people express themselves politically through networks and receive positive or negative feedback in the form of likes, dislikes or comments, they are constituting a socialization and politicization network.

Cancellation or “unfollowing” is perceived to be a hostile political action by someone who does not know how to deal with what is different. Although many young people spontaneously seek information about politics, the content ends up in their timelines and murals as controversy. The perception that politics equals division/ confrontation is widespread and Twitter is the platform most used by the most politically engaged to be informed about these issues.

Politics also reaches young people mediated through influencers or posts from people who are well positioned online. Several young people began to become politically aware by seeing comments on the networks of those they follow or influencers they liked or with whom they agreed, starting a process of political awakening. Moreover, comments with which they disagreed provoked a backlash prompting them to start thinking about agendas they had never thought of.

The vast majority of young people interviewed could not remember the deputies or the states for which they had voted in the previous elections. City councilors are better remembered however, and cases even appear of young people who have engaged in the political campaigns of councilors because they are family members, friends, or fellow worshippers. The local politics of proximity seem to be a more accessible gateway for these non-partisan and engaging youth. Councilors with a history of commitment, a favorable attitude towards helping the most needy, and who rebel against political corruption or exploitation, and present themselves in the networks are more liable to create political ties.

Young people are not anti-democratic. They defend the importance of the democratic institutional order. For them, democracy is synonymous with freedom of expression,

community involvement, especially online, and transparency. However, previous research carried out in other contexts has shown that they feel absolutely unmotivated to engage in current politics because they perceive politics to be corrupt, violent, alienated from the people, centered on self-interest, inflexible, and not very receptive to having young people participate.

All respondents recognize that it would be important for young people to participate more in politics but hope that other, more motivated, knowledgeable young people will engage politically to change things. Most respondents are afraid to actively and explicitly participate in politics for fear of being caught in the networks of corruption, losing their personality, and even being attacked personally

Most respondents say they are naturally attracted to younger politicians because they share a common ethos and language. This is primarily because they perceive that young people tend to be more “open-minded”, and that if younger politicians are not open-minded, they are behaving like traditional politicians. In this sense, young people expect that political representatives are conservative about life, regardless of their age.

All those interviewed stated that the parties should create more space for young people in positions of power and representation, open direct communication channels with them, and address topics of interest involving education or incorporation into the labor market, among others. Young people also being involved into party life as problematic because they lack funds and therefore options.

Furthermore, young people agree that politics should be presented in a lighter, more flexible and attractive manner. Short, seductive, eye-catching texts, a tweet, “stories” or a light, amusing TikTok video catch their attention in the informational tsunami in which they live. Where polarization and political division lead to rejection and fatigue, interviewees’ turn their attention most to controversy.

Finally, virtually all interviewees emphasize the improvement of education and, above all, of political education as essential for democratic participation. All claim to be aware of their own lack of knowledge about daily political rituals and how the State functions, which also distances them from traditional politics.

## Recommendations

- Support actions with youth by promoting specific channels for youth participation, using language that youth understand/speak and greater online presence.
- Promote programs aimed at young people both in political parties and in other democratic institutions (the judicial system, press, Congress...). Example: Youth Parliament (Brazil).
- Support youth candidacies that are innovative, transparent and use online communication.
- Support agendas that interest youth: environmental struggles, defense of animals, defense of struggles against oppression by gender, race, ethnicity; defense of education.
- Bet on the local sphere: the municipality as a locus of connection between young people and politics.
- Give democracy concrete meaning that is rooted in everyday life
- Bet on political and legal education in the school and university curricula.
- Bet on producing truthfulness and informative legitimacy in traditional communication, but with more direct channels of communication with youth.
- Invest in media that promote young people in newsrooms, in specific information channels for youth that focus on listening.
- Foster formats in which young people can participate in journalism/stories and not take a passive stance as news consumers. Develop new, more dynamic formats.
- Bet on informational education and on the criteria for identifying and deconstructing fake news.
- Invest in easy-to-use, explanatory, summarized, interactive platforms where people can follow the activities of parliamentarians and the evolution of laws and other government activities on issues such as the environment, inequality, women, animals, etc.
- Invest in alternative, local, non-mainstream media, which are part of the reality of young people and where they can assume the role of content producers and engage in the production of news that interests them.
- Foster counter-narratives on corruption.
- Foster discourses promoting the importance of collective action and involve the community in political decisions.

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