

Young Voter Trends: Chilean Youth Shift Towards Right-Wing Candidates

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A volatile, hyper-connected, and decisive electorate: this is how Chilean youth votes today, representing nearly one-third of the electoral roll and showing an increasing inclination towards right-wing candidates, in line with a global trend.



Original article: [El voto joven ya no es rebelde ni progresista: crece la preferencia por la derecha](#)

Today's youth constitute nearly one-third of the electoral roll; unlike other voter groups, a significant portion makes their voting decisions in the last weeks or even on the day of the elections. Most young people gather political information through social media, particularly TikTok, where political content is consumed visually, emotionally, and rapidly.

One defining characteristic of the voting behavior of Chilean youth is its volatility, with close to half of them making their decisions at the last moment, complicating the ability to project their preferences. According to sociologist Juan Pardo, young

voters «are not committed to any candidate» and quickly change their preferences, as he mentioned in a conversation with El País.

Candidates have adjusted their campaigns to the language of social media, utilizing short videos, dances, and trends. They have understood that these platforms shape the political behavior of younger generations. In this context, Generation Z is emerging as a decisive player in the upcoming elections.

Marco Moreno, director of the Center for Democracy and Public Opinion at UCEN, stated to El Mostrador that the youth vote increasingly relies on digital strategies and the emotional component of messages.

Social media has become a fundamental component of campaign strategies, requiring candidates to adapt to these new electoral tactics.

Various polls have attempted to reveal the behavior of young voters in the country. One of them is the 'Ciclos UDP & Feedback' survey from October of this year, which indicated that Jeannette Jara led with 24.8%, while José Antonio Kast (10.6%), Franco Parisi (8.1%), Evelyn Matthei (3.7%), and Marco Enríquez-Ominami (1.3%) followed behind. At that time, it was noted that more than half of the youth had no clear choice: 25% were undecided and 21% did not respond.

Another survey, conducted by AtlasIntel, questioned young people between the ages of 18 and 24. The results showed that the republican candidate José Antonio Kast was the most favored among youth, with one in three selecting him as their candidate. Furthermore, the survey indicated that support for Kast decreases with age, while that for Jeannette Jara increases among older voters.

Contrary to common assumptions, an increasing number of young voters are opting for right-wing and far-right candidates, challenging the traditional notion of the 'rebellious spirit' and progressive ideals typically associated with this age

group. This trend is not unique to Chile; it is being replicated in various parts of the world.

In line with this, a study published in the *Journal of European Public Policy* — conducted by researchers from Humboldt University, the London School of Economics, the University of Amsterdam, and academic Toni Rodon from UPF— confirms that this political shift is not an isolated case. The research shows that youth support for right-wing and far-right parties has steadily increased in Europe over the past few decades, reaching unprecedented levels in the 2024 elections.

The study reveals that voters aged 16 to 29 are more inclined than older generations to support right-wing and far-right options, consolidating a political shift that is especially pronounced among young men but reflects a broader generational trend. The authors suggest that this increase in youth votes for radical right may intensify in the future, as political preferences formed in youth often persist into adulthood.

The research analyzes 35 years of data from the European Election Studies, encompassing 27 countries and approximately 25,000 voters. Through Age-Period-Cohort models, the researchers conclude that the rise of the right among young people is not a transient effect but a generational pattern with potential lasting impacts on European democracies. They also noted that economic factors, cultural shifts, perceptions of competition in the labor market, and the role of social media contribute to this growing inclination.

One example where this phenomenon was observed was in the 2024 United States elections, where Generation Z displayed an unexpected shift towards the right. In fact, Donald Trump drastically reduced the Democratic advantage gained in 2020, achieving his best results among young voters since 2008.

According to a panel from the Ash Center (Harvard Kennedy School), this change can be explained by three main factors: disenchantment with democracy and institutions, economic and immigration dissatisfaction, and a media ecosystem dominated by right-wing influencers.

Analysts suggest that many young people perceive the Democratic Party as disconnected from their needs and too immersed in conventional politics. In contrast, conservative rhetoric is viewed as bolder, confrontational, and critical of the established system.

Another country where the far right recently won is Argentina. Here, the youthful shift towards the right is evident both in studies and recent electoral trends. In fact, research from the Universidad Austral de Argentina showed that 60% of millennials (aged approximately 12 to 27) identify with right-wing policies, motivated by economic concerns, demands for stability, and expectations for a more efficient state. This pattern coincides with the rise of forces like La Libertad Avanza, which primarily garners support from men under 30.

Analysts attribute this phenomenon to dissatisfaction with traditional politics, the spread of libertarian and conservative discourse on social media, and frustration over a lack of job opportunities and housing. Although these sectors remain minority in Congress, their ability to engage a disenchanted youth electorate and address issues like security, meritocracy, and tax reduction has established them as a growing public influence.

The youth's turn towards the right appears to be a lasting phenomenon rather than a fleeting one, representing a political realignment that crosses borders. From Chile to the United States and Argentina, studies and electoral results indicate that new generations —especially young men— are seeking answers outside traditional politics, drawn to discourses that challenge the status quo, promise order, and provide concrete economic solutions. Frustration with missed opportunities,

institutional distrust, and the influence of social media are shaping a more skeptical voter willing to change their preferences swiftly.

If this inclination solidifies, the next elections could herald a turning point. International evidence warns that political preferences formed in youth tend to endure, suggesting a potential lasting displacement in the electoral landscape. Generation Z —once seen as the driving force of progressivism— may evolve into a group that catalyzes a new political cycle, one where right-wing and far-right ideologies continue to expand their base among the youngest voters.

Fuente: [El Ciudadano](#)