

Civic engagement on Instagram

A qualitative study of how Instagram is experienced as a platform for civic engagement

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Media
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Abstract

Within the last year, people have used Instagram as a platform to show solidarity for Ukraine, support Pride and fought for womens rights in Iran by sharing content on their profile. It's clear that Instagram functions as a platform where people spread information and awarness in our society.

This kind of action is already well known on platforms such as Facebook, where people update their profile picture with a flag or statement. For younger people, it's more common to share a story on Instagram, which is only visible for 24 hours. It's both interesting and necessary to look into how and why people use Instagram as a platform for civic engagement.

Previous research have focused on political activism on social network sites, but when it comes to social engagement on Instagram there are several gaps in the research that should be investigated. The exciting terms for this kind of action online are not clear enough, and some, such as slacktivism, is used in a negative way. This way we risk losing important aspects.

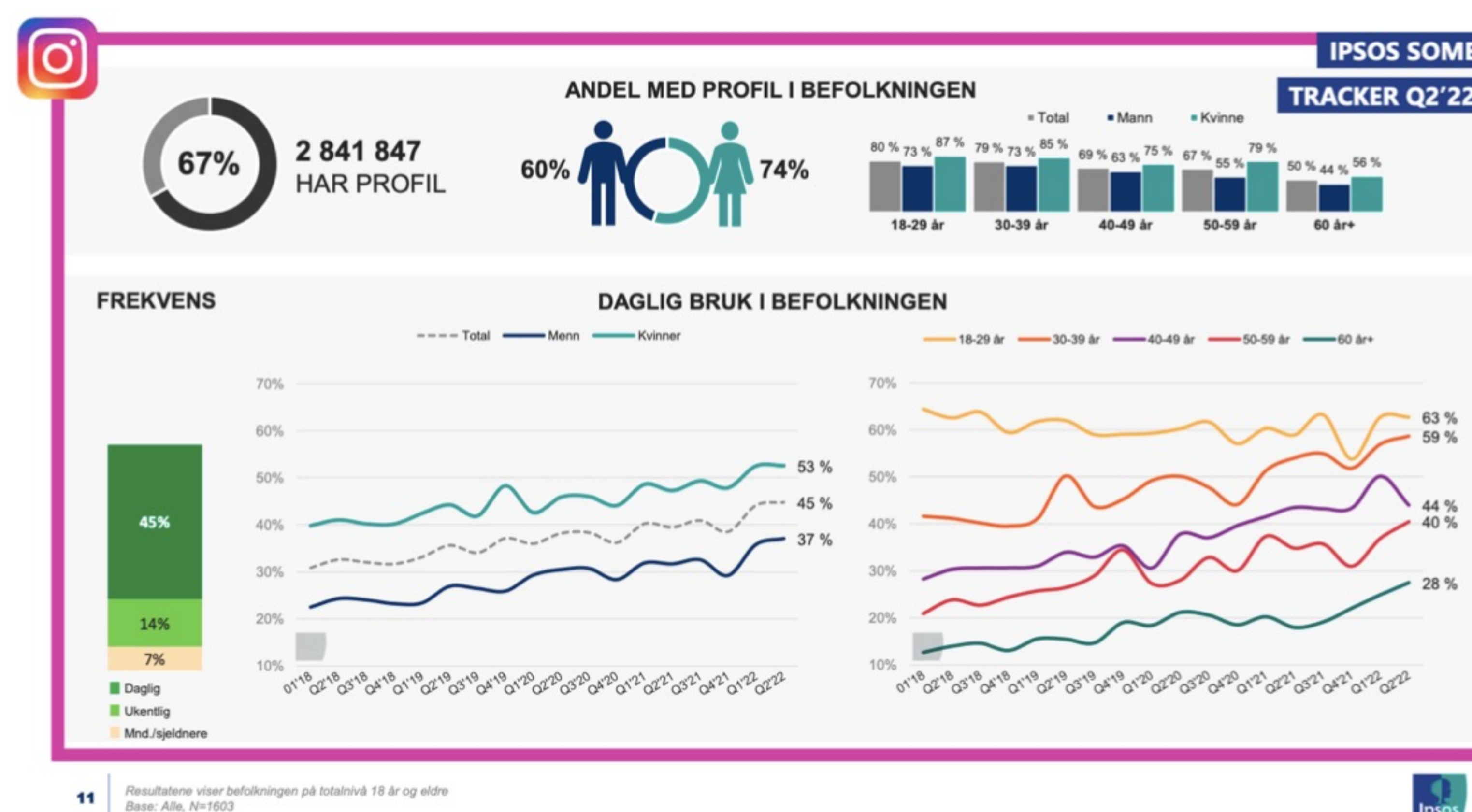
Research question

1. How is Instagram experienced when it comes to facilitating for digital civic engagement?
2. What is the percieved value of such engagement?
3. Are there conventions that limit civic engagement on Instagram?

Method

In my master thesis I will conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews with 12-15 chosen informants. It will be a requirement that the informants uses Instagram on a daily basis, and have used the platform for civic engagement within the last month. After completing the interviews I will invite some of the informants to to do a group interview to discuss one or more given cases.

Informants will be recruited using the snowball method in own networks. I will attempt to have an even gender balance among the informants, but as there is a larger proportion of women who both have an Instagram profile and who use the platform daily, it is natural that there will be a predominance of women.



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