



DIRECTORIO  
LEGISLATIVO

FORTALECEMOS  
LAS DEMOCRACIAS  
DE AMÉRICA LATINA

STRENGTHENING  
DEMOCRACIES  
IN LATIN AMERICA

AUGUST 1, 2022

# Image of Power

REPORT ON PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL RATINGS IN LATIN AMERICA  
MAY - JUNE 2022



# Executive summary

Colombia will have a leftist president for the first time in its history. This has fed talk of a "pink tide" sweeping the region similar to in the early 2000s, with Petro's victory following the pattern of election results in Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Honduras - and with Brazil possibly next in line, as suggested by the pre-election polls. However, recent research suggests this trend cannot be reduced to changes in the political preferences of the electorate.

While the below estimates by Latinobarómetro show the number of left-leaning voters increasing over the period 2013-2020 in Colombia, Honduras and Peru, in Bolivia and Brazil the numbers kept relatively constant, while dropping in Chile. Rather, for that last country, and for Ecuador, what stands out is the rise in those not identifying with any political position at all.

The data also show that those saying they are either 'not very' or 'not at all' satisfied with their country's democracy rose in Bolivia, Costa Rica (to 3 out of 4 people in 2020), Chile, Colombia (to 4/5), Honduras (8/10), Ecuador, and Peru (9/10). The sharp drop in satisfaction levels in Brazil between 2016 and 2018 and then gradual rise coincides with the

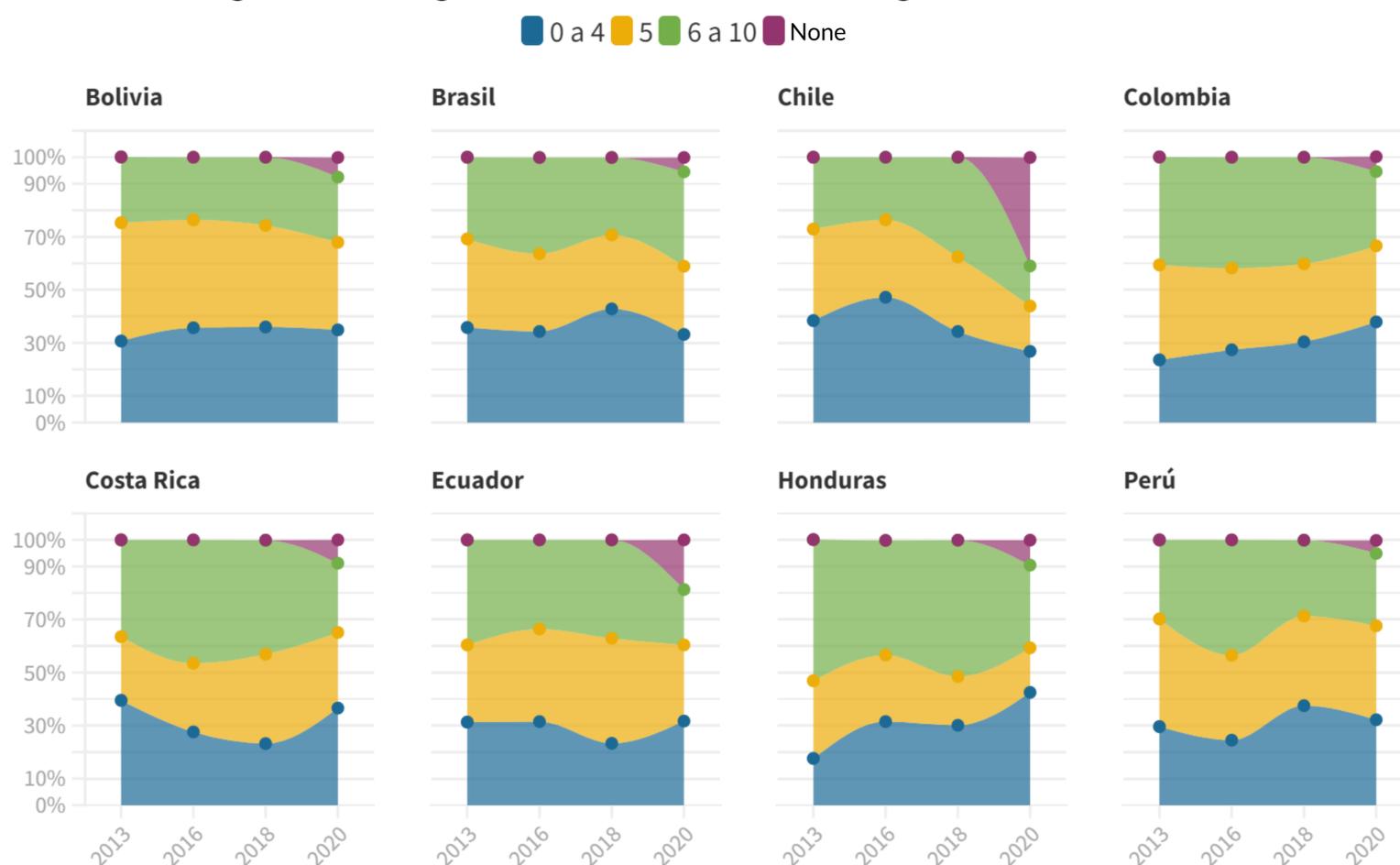
impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and subsequent Temer government, and then raised expectations in the early stages of the Bolsonaro administration.

Overall, the data suggest that the swerve to the left owes more to governments failing to deliver on expectations for raised life-quality than to any defined change in the ideological stance of voters. Instead, citizens' dashed hopes appear to have spawned a clamor for something different to those in charge and, especially, for something new.

This is evident from recent second-round elections in the region that have pitted candidates trying to outvie each other's 'renewal' credentials (Colombia, Chile, Peru) and from the emergence of radical fringe figures such as Rodolfo Hernández in Colombia, José Antonio Kast in Chile, and Rodrigo Chaves in Costa Rica, all of them symptoms - on the other hand - of the crisis of the institutionalized channels of representation.

The challenges this presents for governance are profound: the electorate's thirst for change demands visible, urgent responses amid bleak economic prospects and rising food insecurity and crime. In such contexts, delivering on voters' expectations - which are

Figure 1: Ideological location on a left (0) - right (10) scale, 2013 to 2020.



Source: Latinobarómetro (2013, 2016, 2018, 2020)

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also very diverse – leaves governments with little margin for error, a symptom of which is how the approval ratings of new presidents are tending to drop significantly in the months after they take office.

Nor is the bigger, global economic and political picture doing the region’s freshly elected governments any favors. Struggling with rising interest rates, energy shortages and volatility, and spiraling food prices, the world is very different to at the start of the millennium. Back then, the broader context allowed for increased public social spending as a way to cement public backing, and saw the leftist governments frequently club together exercising strength in numbers. Today, opportunities for doing this and incentives for regional integration are much reduced.

In sum, while parallels can be drawn with the 2000s insofar as it was voter intolerance with the governments of the day that ushered in change, there is very little about that period – marked by buoyancy not by clouds of recession – that tallies with the present context.

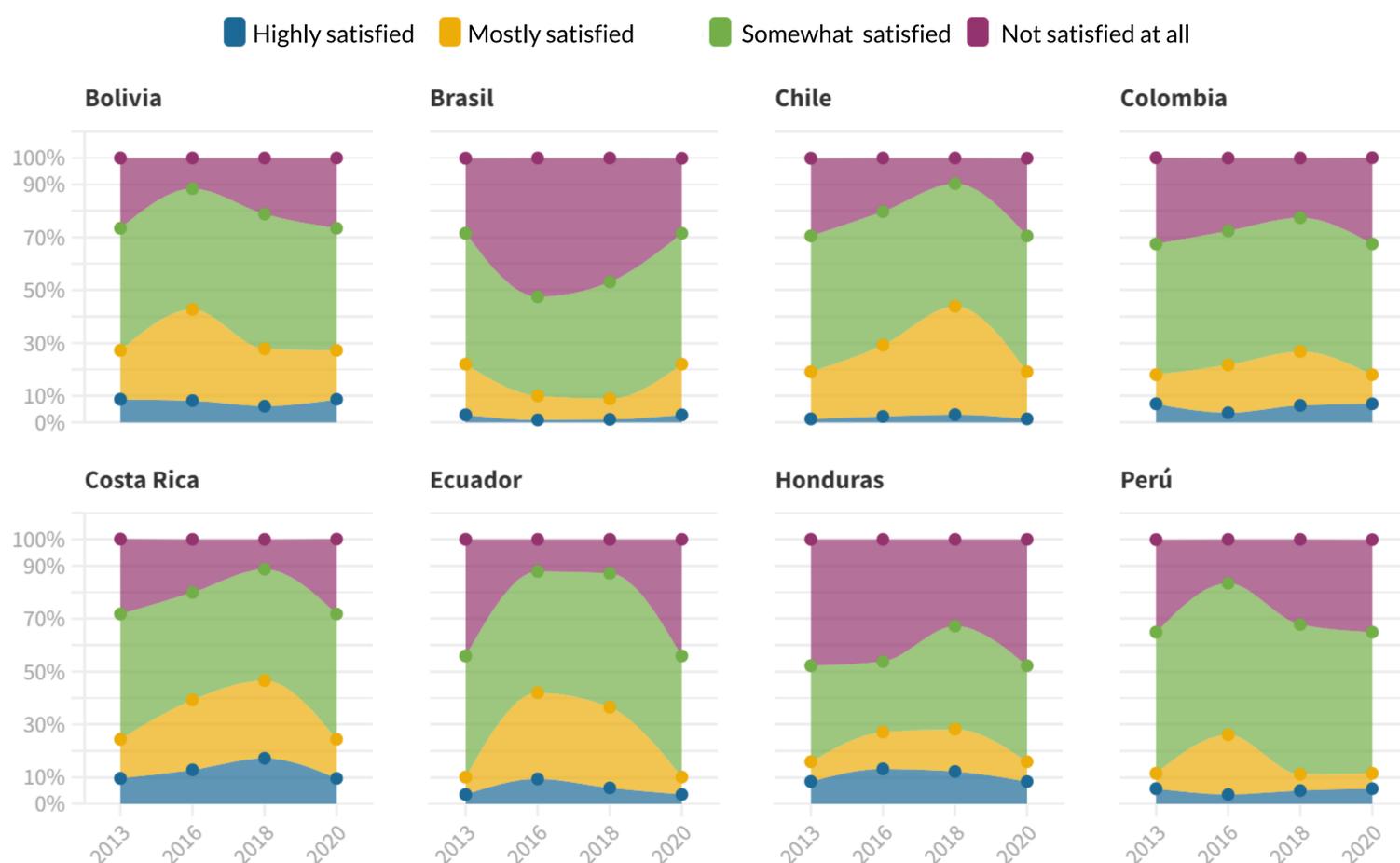
Which, in some respects, makes analyzing, tracking and predicting the fortunes of this resurgence of the left all the more fascinating – and important.

Events in the Andean countries suggest these and other regional governments may be in a so-called ‘liminal’ phase: on the threshold between what’s ending, what’s being left behind, and what’s new if not yet realized. Thus these countries may hold clues as to what is in store for Colombia. This special module of this issue focuses on this country, starting with an article by [Laura Wills Otero](#), Professor of Political Science at Universidad de los Andes, on how Colombia’s elections mark a break from the norm and possible scenarios going forward.

## What is going on elsewhere in the region?

**The political and economic crisis is deepening in Argentina** and the President finds himself increasingly isolated within his own coalition. In view of the failure of the policies to face the acceleration of inflation (which has already reached 64% annually or 36% so far this year), the devaluation of the peso, the shortage of Central Bank reserves and the fiscal cut that the government committed itself to undertake before the

Figure 2: Satisfaction with democracy, 2013-2020



Source: Latinobarómetro (2013, 2016, 2018, 2020)

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IMF, in the space of two months there was a string of key cabinet resignations including that of the Minister of Economy Martín Guzmán, which ended up forcing a complete restructuring of the economic team. The figure appointed to lead this new team, the President of the Chamber of Deputies Sergio Massa, demanded conditions that would ensure his ability to exercise a centralized management of economic policy. Thus, the Ministries of Economy, Production and Agriculture and the unit that coordinates relations with international credit organizations were duly brought together. The heads of the Federal Agency of Public Revenues and the National Bank were also replaced. However, the new minister did not succeed in gaining a foothold in the strategic Energy Secretariat, which will remain under the control of a man close to Vice-President Cristina Fernández.

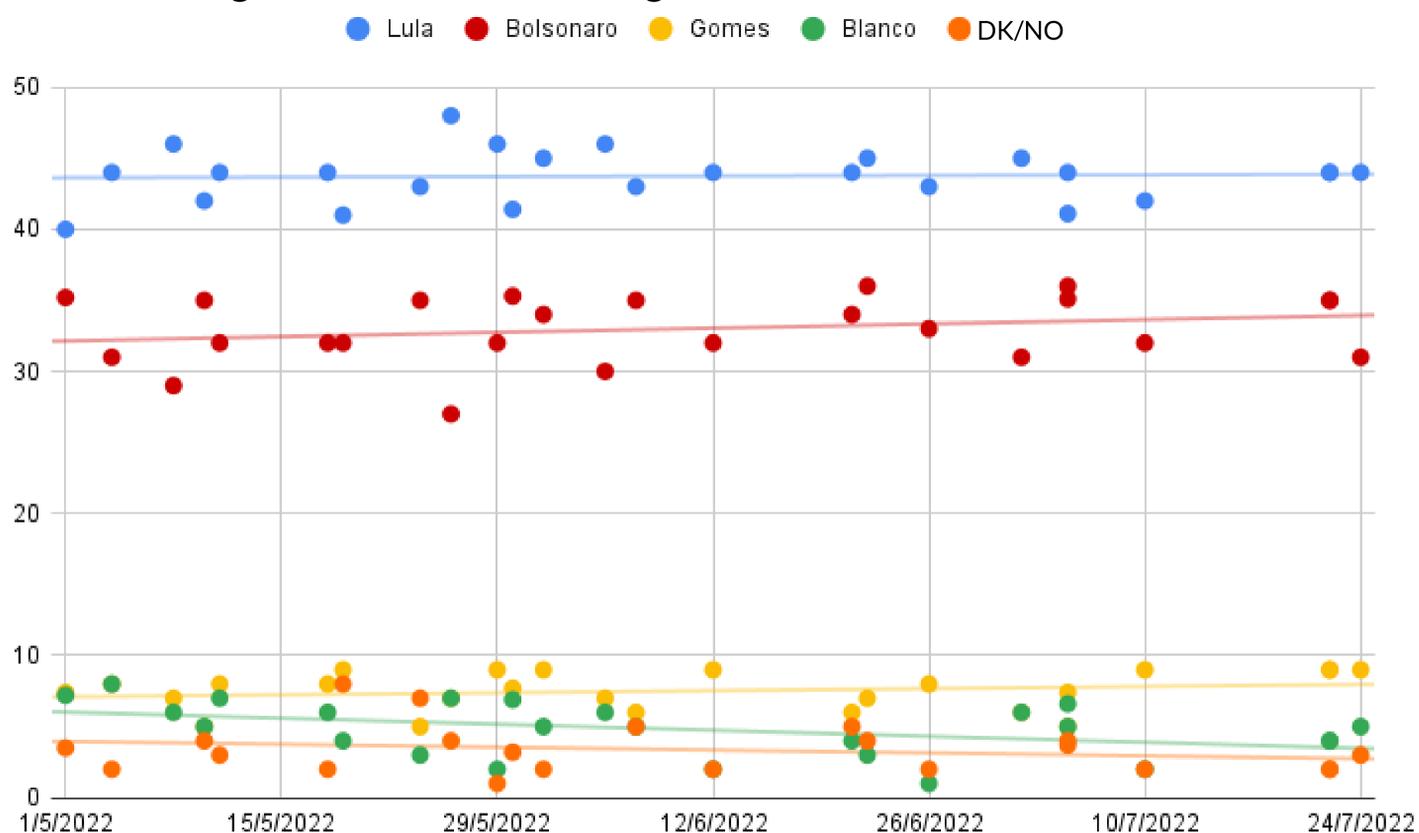
The chairmanship of the central bank has also remained unchanged. The concept of a "super minister of economy" is not entirely new in Argentina, though how this amassing of powers will play out is hard to predict in a context of weak and overshadowed president.

**In Brazil**, the presidential tickets of Lula da Silva, of Gerardo Alckim and Jair Bolsonaro, and of Walter

Braga Neto have now all been formally announced. **Lula** continues to lead the polls for the October general elections with an average voting intention of 44%. Some polls even predict that he **could win the first round**. Bolsonaro remains stable at around 33% and has seen a bounce in popularity following favorable employment figures and the launch of social programs and economic aid for poorer citizens. Even though analysts agree that the economic agenda will be decisive in this election, the latest polls also show that Bolsonaro has a "glass ceiling" that will most likely limit his growth possibilities: unlike before the 2018 elections, today only 1 in 5 women say they would vote for him. All in all, the biggest uncertainty surrounding the elections is whether, should he lose, Bolsonaro will recognize them, having repeatedly cast doubt over the reliability of the electronic voting system - most recently in a meeting with regional diplomats in Brasilia.

**In Mexico, the June local elections confirmed MORENA's political strength.** Between 2021 and 2024, MORENA went from having none of the 32 state governorships to dominating in 20, in addition to two that are controlled by its allies PVEM and PES. The remaining 10 are distributed among: PRI (which in the same period went from holding 14 to just three); PAN (down from 11 to five) and Movimiento Ciudadano (which gained two having had none). PRD, which until

**Figure 3. First round voting intention (stimulated scenario)**



Source: Author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between May-June 2022. To see the sources: [click here](#)

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2021 governed 5 districts, was left out. Thus, the race for the 2024 presidential election could well resemble an internal MORENA race in which there are already several names being discussed – the head of the Mexico City government Claudia Sheinbaum, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ebrard and the Secretary of the Interior Adán Augusto López. Another figure with political ambitions but, of late, less close to the president is the head of MORENA in the Senate, Ricardo Monreal.

## On July 6, the campaign for the referendum on Chile’s new constitution officially began and the stakes are high for the country, and for Boric.

Several prominent figures in local politics have already made their positions clear. Former socialist president Ricardo Lagos published a letter where he stated that the new constitution is "far from being able to call upon [not inclusive of/responsive to] the great majority of citizens". Michelle Bachelet, on the other hand, has expressed her support for the new proposed constitution. Citizens will have the last word on September 4 and may, as things stand, choose to reject it.

According to an Activa survey, voter intentions align closely with citizens' ideological stance and, in particular, with their support for the present government: 90% of those who support Boric and 75% of those who identify themselves as of the left say they will vote to approve the new constitution; 88% of those who oppose the administration or

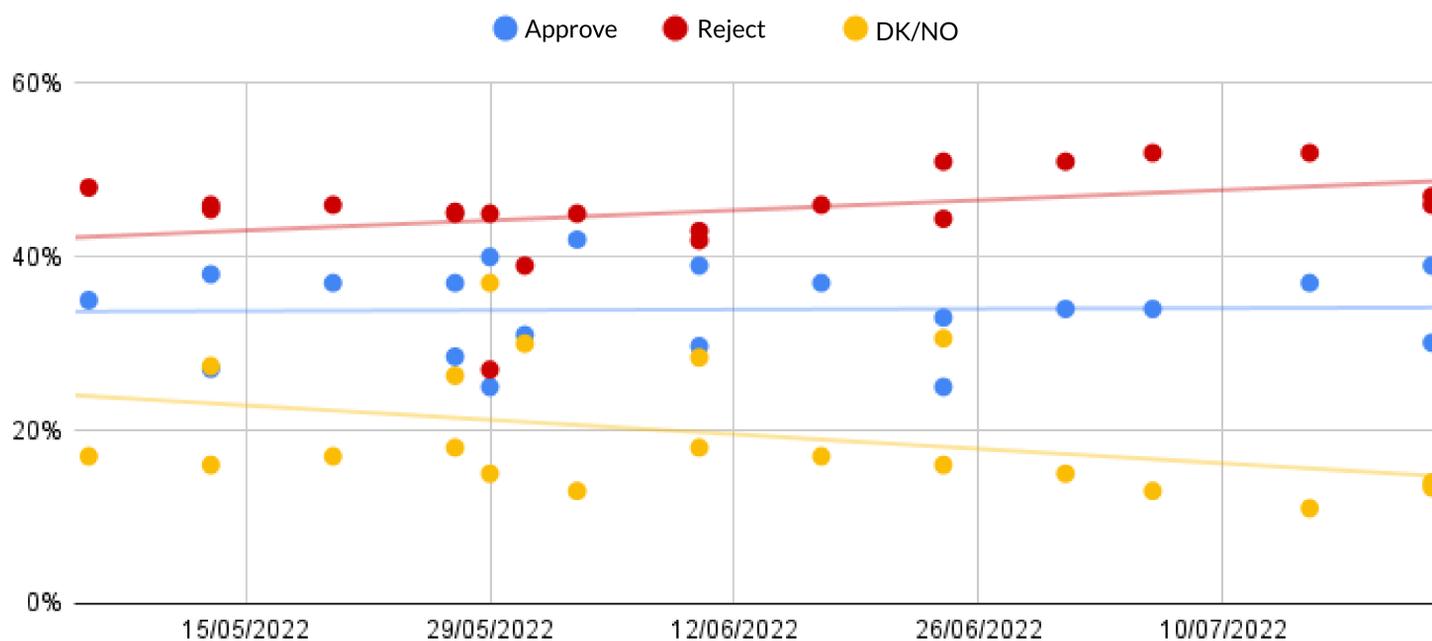
consider themselves right-leaning say they will oppose it.

**Image of Power** is a bimonthly monitoring of presidential image based on the compilation of public opinion polls from multiple sources in 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean by the research team of Directorio Legislativo. The methodology is detailed in the "Methodological Notes" at the end of this report. The presidential approval data presented in this report do not express the opinion or institutional position of Directorio Legislativo.

## What else will you find in this issue?

- Presidential Approval Rankings May-June 2022
- Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022
- Evolution of presidential approval May-June 2022
- **Special module: Colombia and the Andean region**
  - The presidential election of Gustavo Petro in Colombia: a genuine turn to the left? By Laura Wills Otero
  - Colombia in Andean key: governance challenges in liminal times
- Methodological notes

Figure 4. National plebiscite voting intention estimates



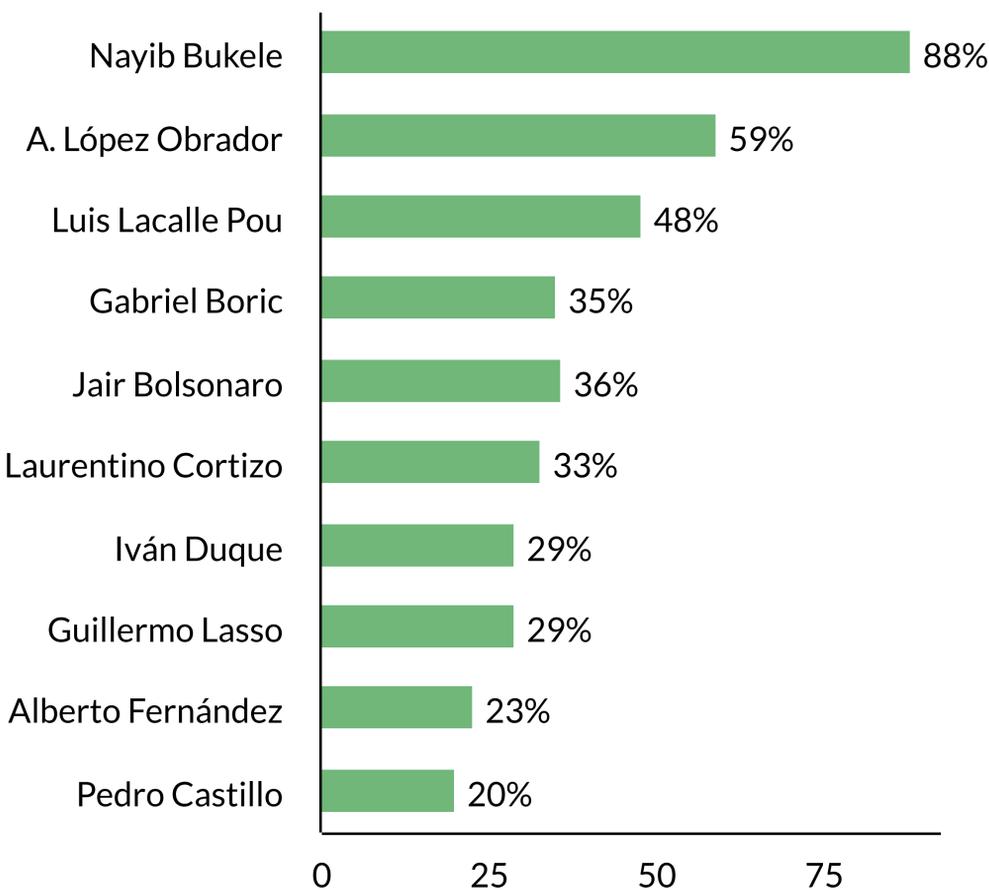
Source: Author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between May-June 2022. To see the sources: [click here](#)

# Presidential Approval Rankings

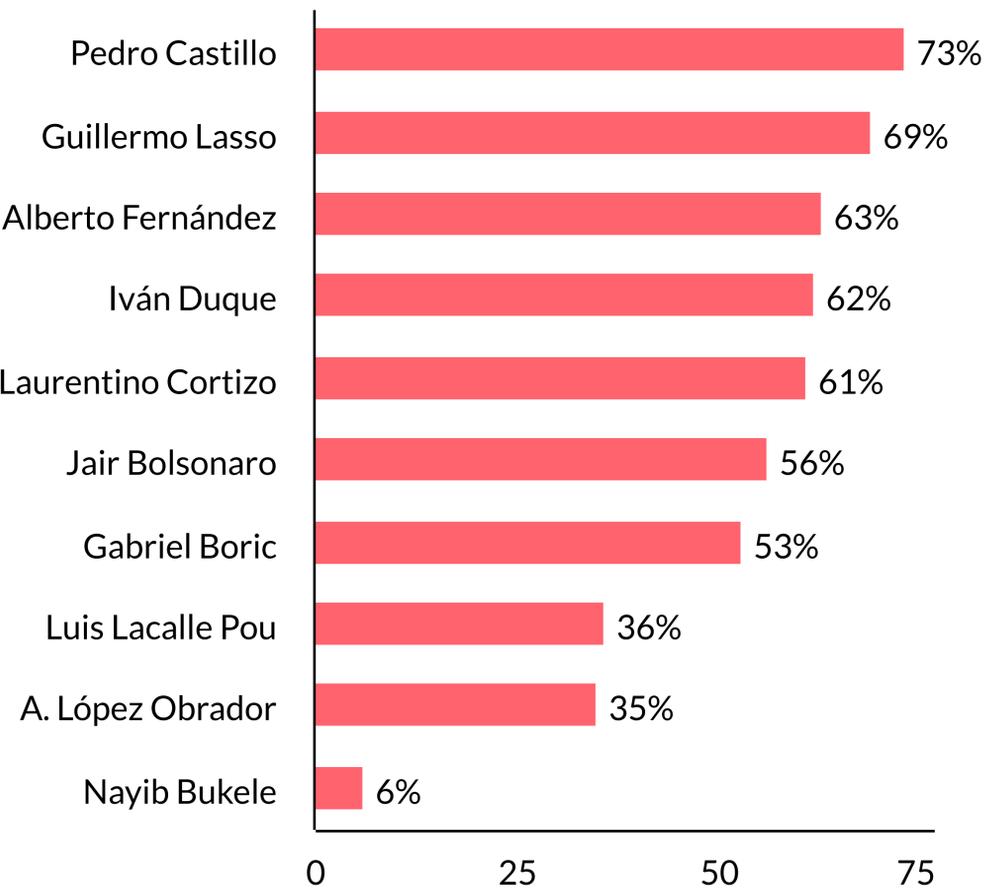
May - June 2022

These rankings include cases where a minimum of three measurements are available over the study period from at least two different sources. Unclear answers ("neither approve nor disapprove" or "regular") are not counted.

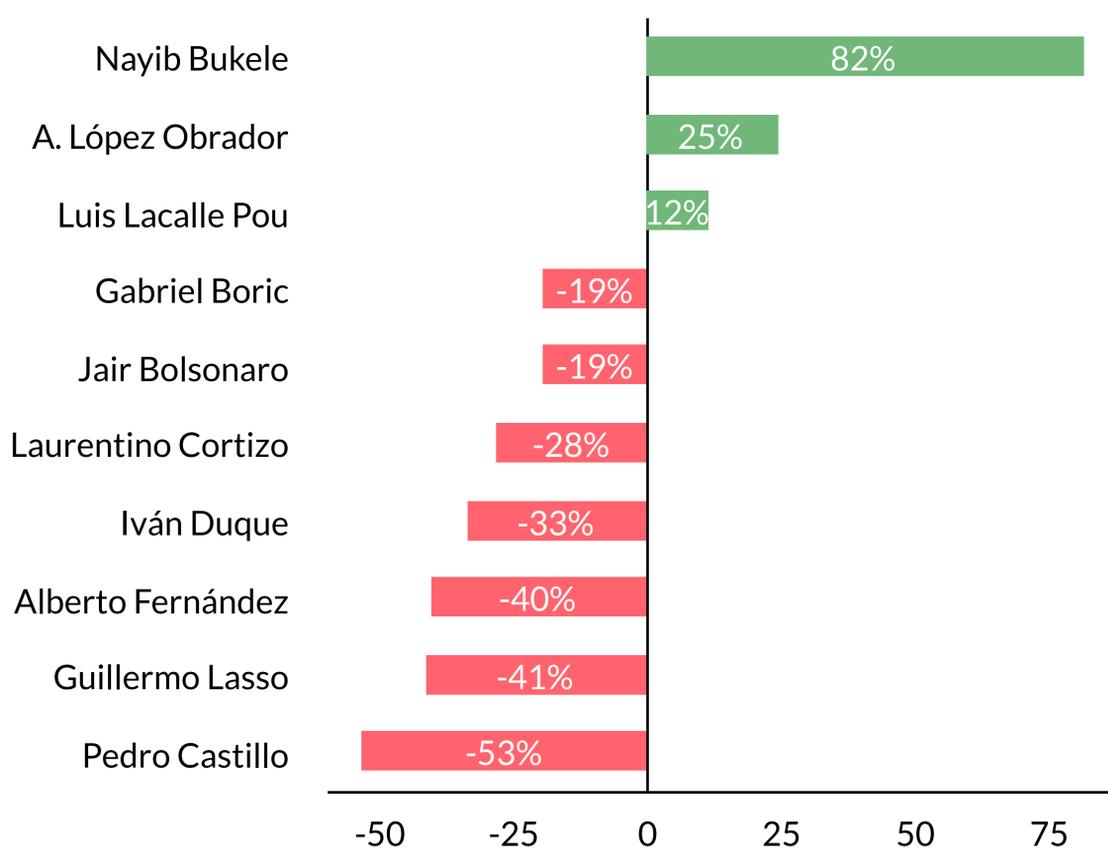
Approval %



Disapproval %



Net approval (approval % - disapproval %)

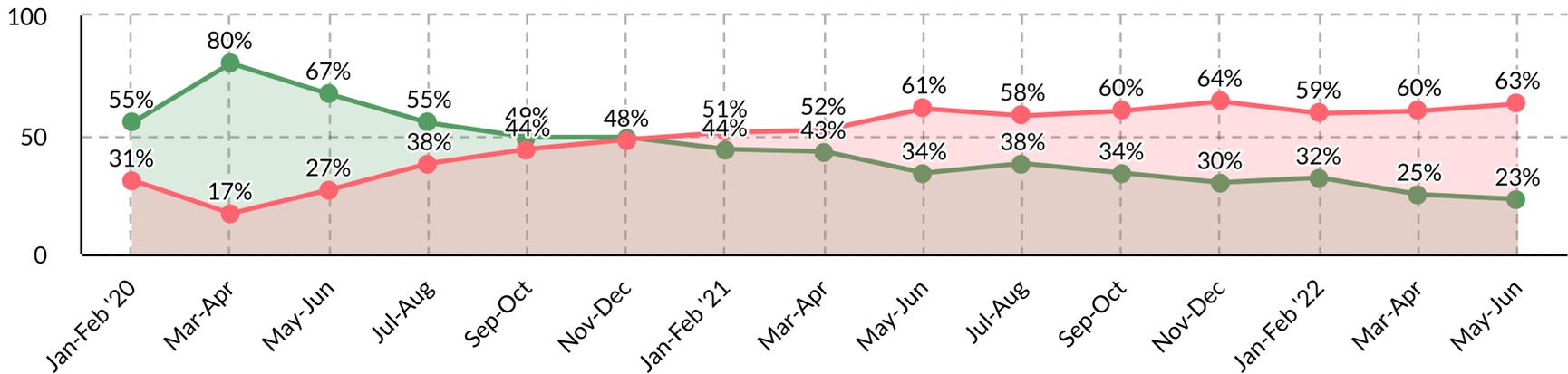


Source: Author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between May and June 2022. To see the sources [click here](#).

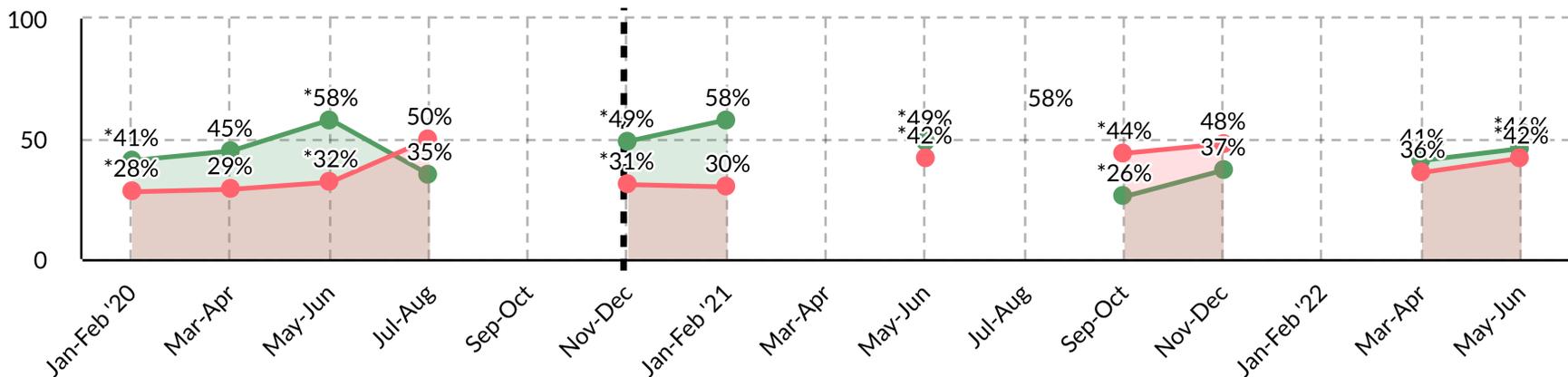
# Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022

Positive  
Negative

### Argentina: Alberto Fernández

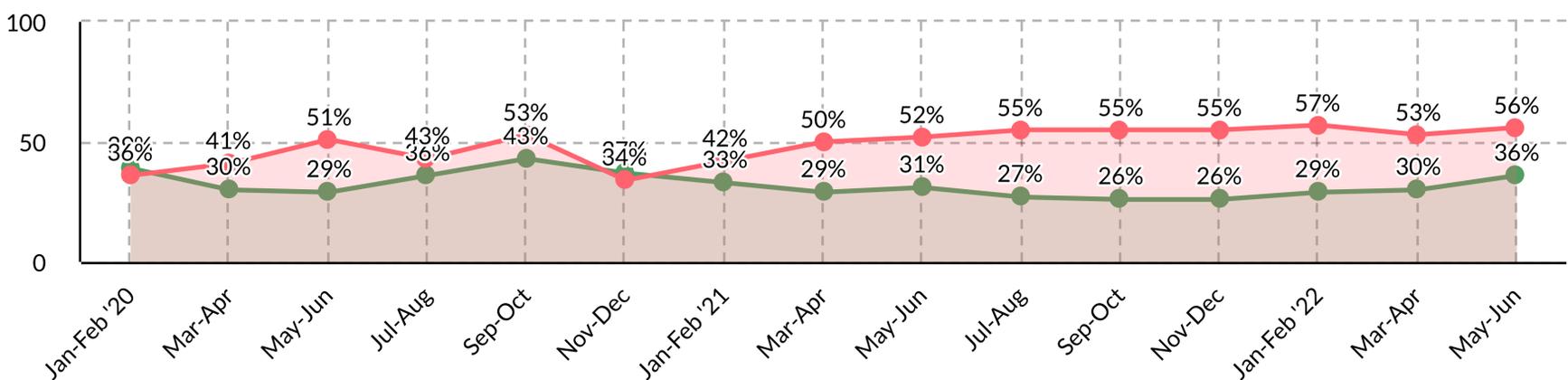


### Bolivia: Jeanine Añez | Luis Arce

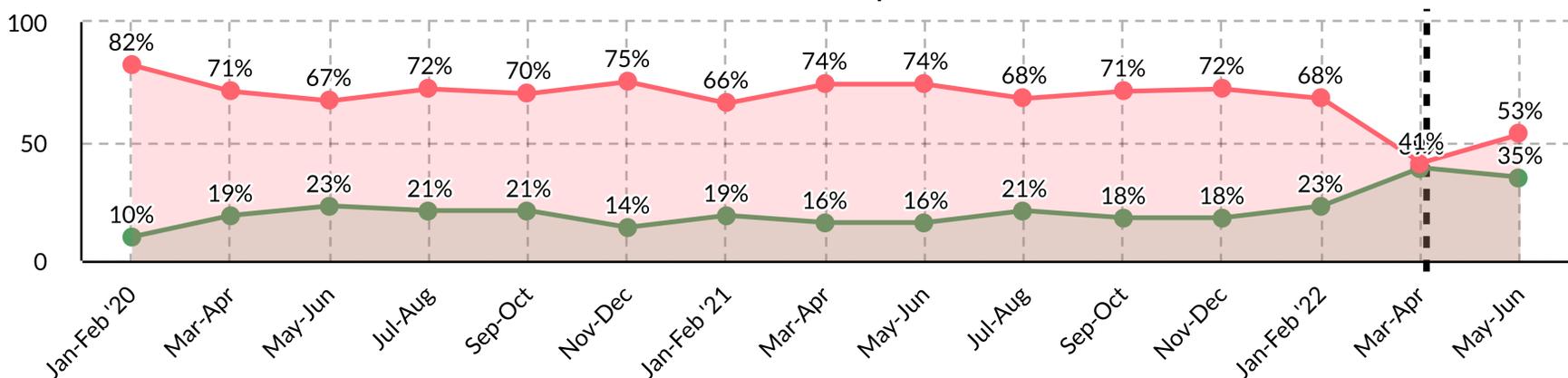


\*Arce took office Nov. 8, 2020

### Brazil: Jair Bolsonaro



### Chile: Sebastián Piñera | Gabriel Boric



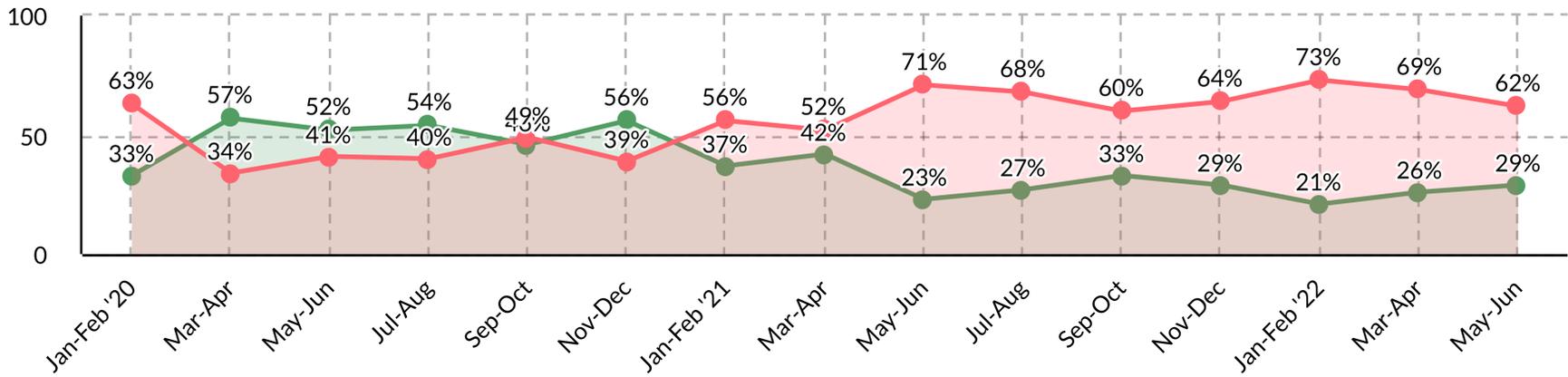
\*Boric took office Mar. 11, 2022

Source: author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between January 2020 and June 2022. (\*) Based on a single data source. Vertical dotted lines indicate the change of government. To see the sources: [click here](#)

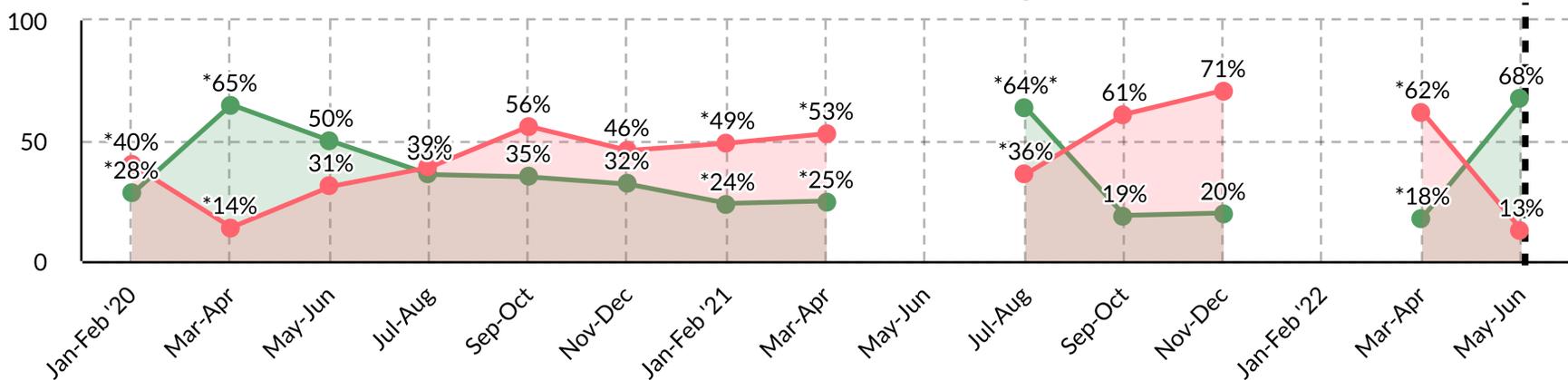
# Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022

Positive  
Negative

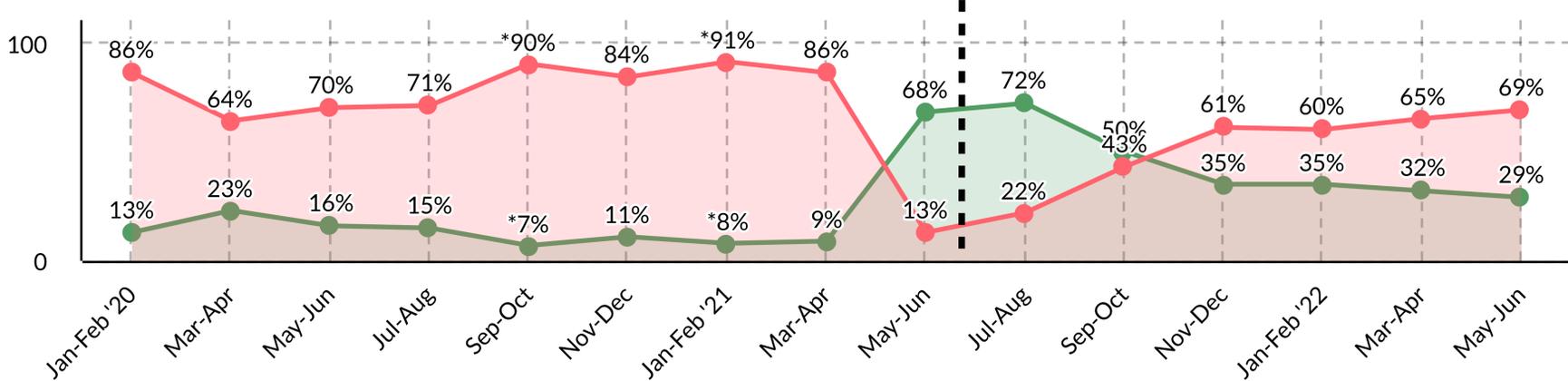
Colombia: Iván Duque



Costa Rica: Carlos Alvarado | Rodrigo Chaves

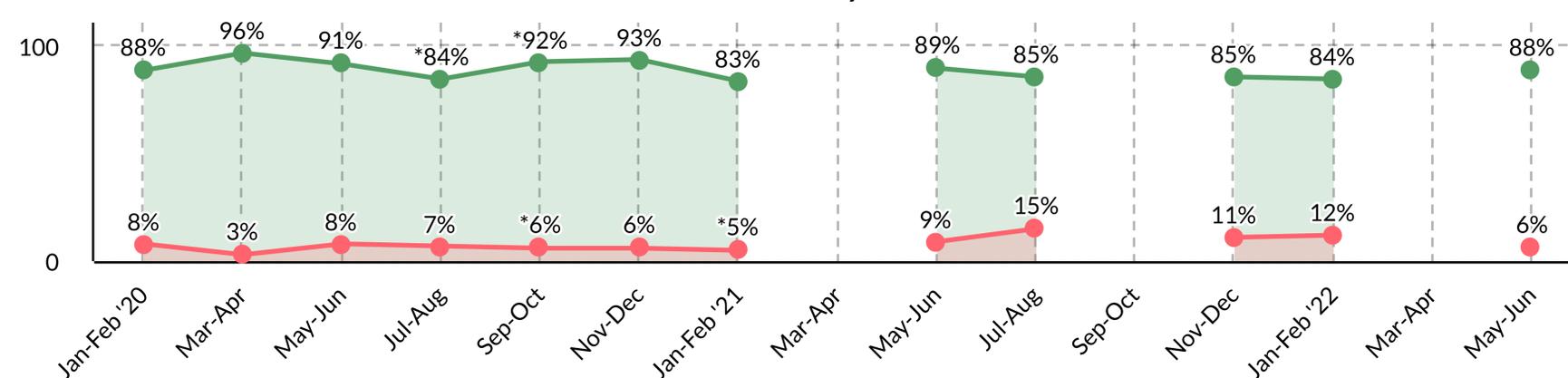


Ecuador: Lenin Moreno | Guillermo Lasso



\*Lasso took office May 24, 2021

El Salvador: Nayib Bukele

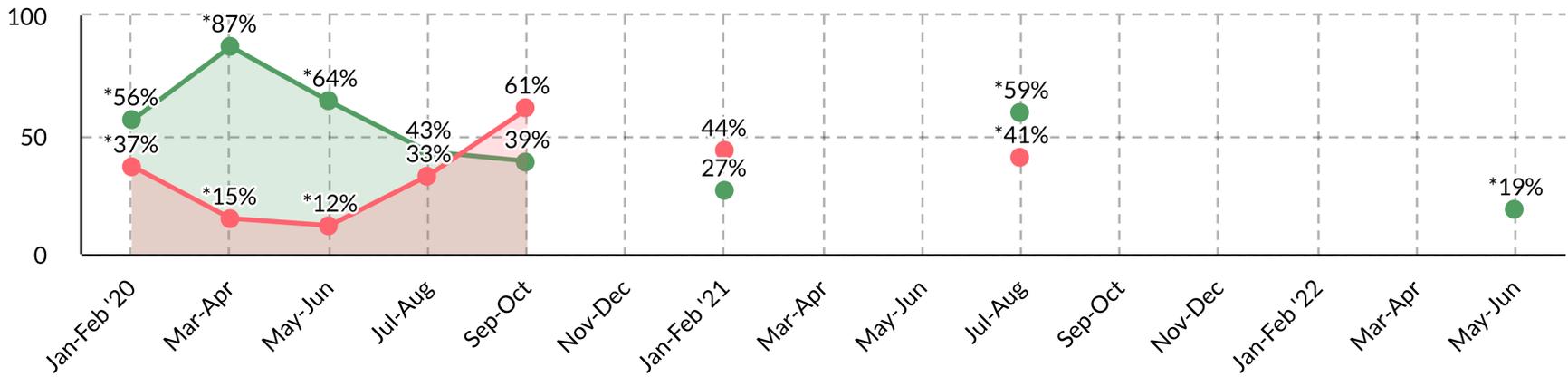


Source: author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between January 2020 and June 2022. (\*) Based on a single data source. Vertical dotted lines indicate the change of government. To see the sources: [click here](#)

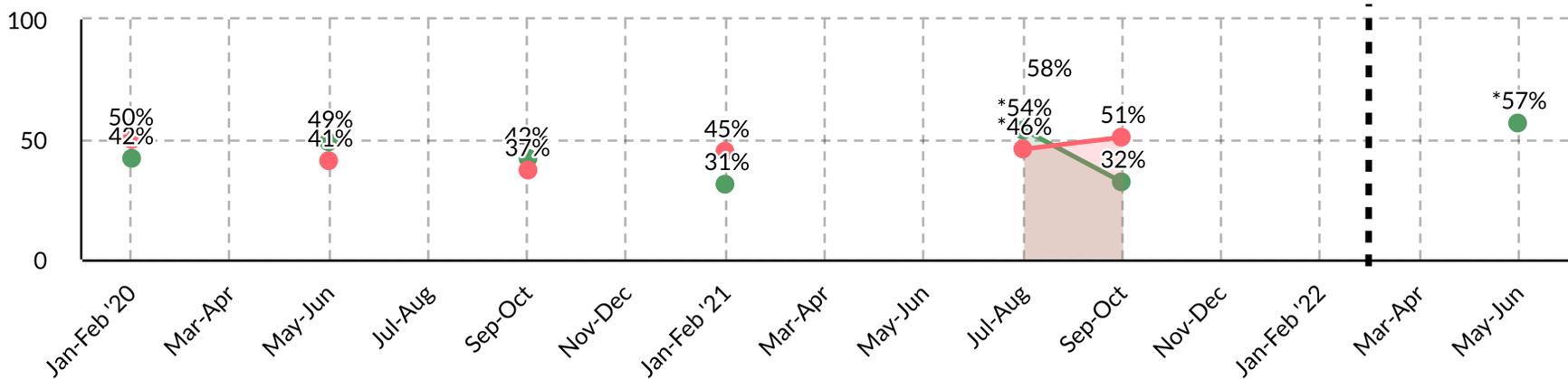
# Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022

Positive  
Negative

## Guatemala: Alejandro Giammattei

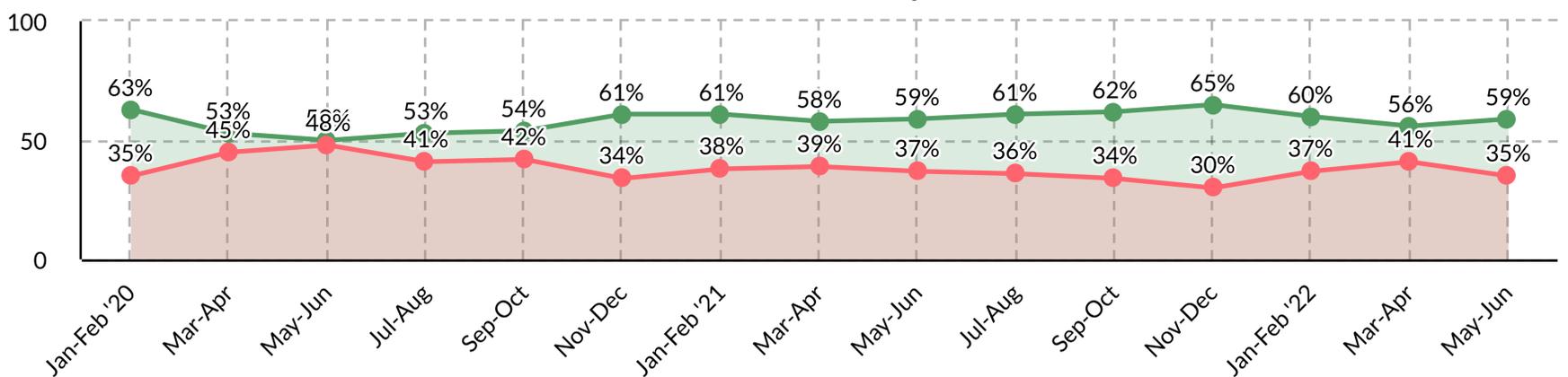


## Honduras: Juan Orlando Hernández | Xiomara Castro

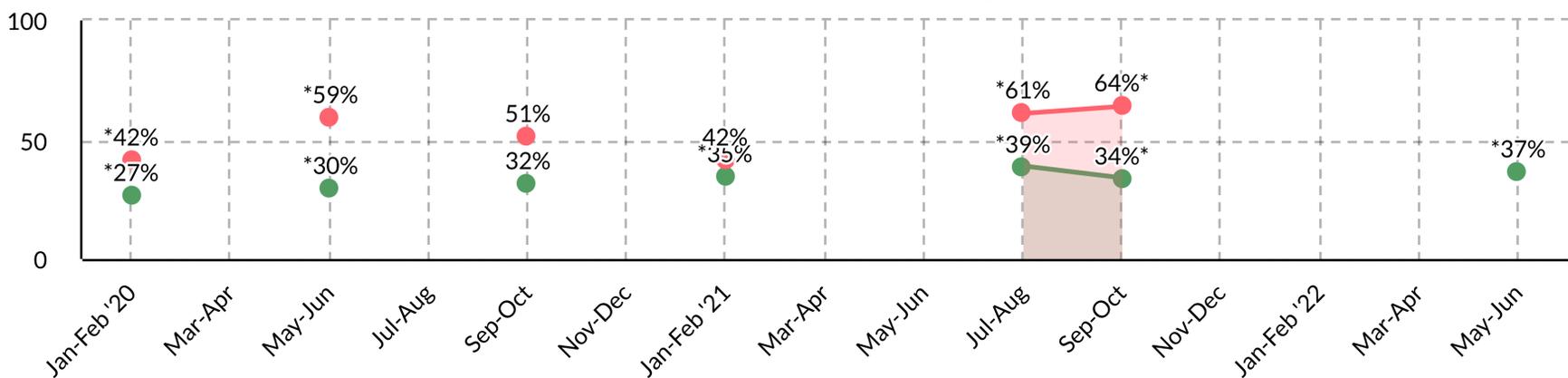


\*Castro took office Jan. 27, 2022

## Mexico: Andrés Manuel López Obrador



## Nicaragua: Daniel Ortega

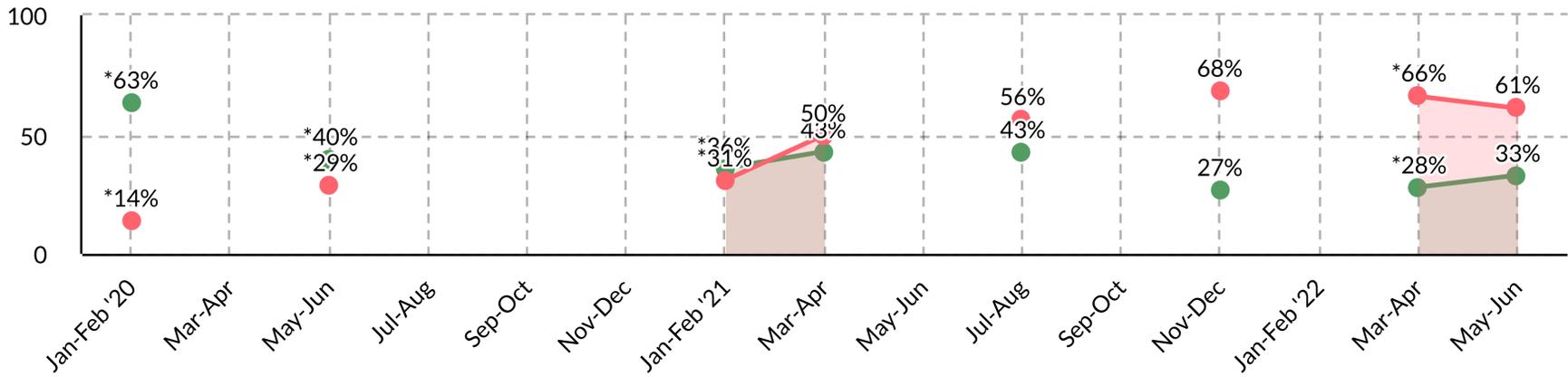


Source: author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys carried out between January 2020 and June 2022. (\*) Based on a single data source. Vertical dotted lines indicate the change of government. To see the sources: [click here](#)

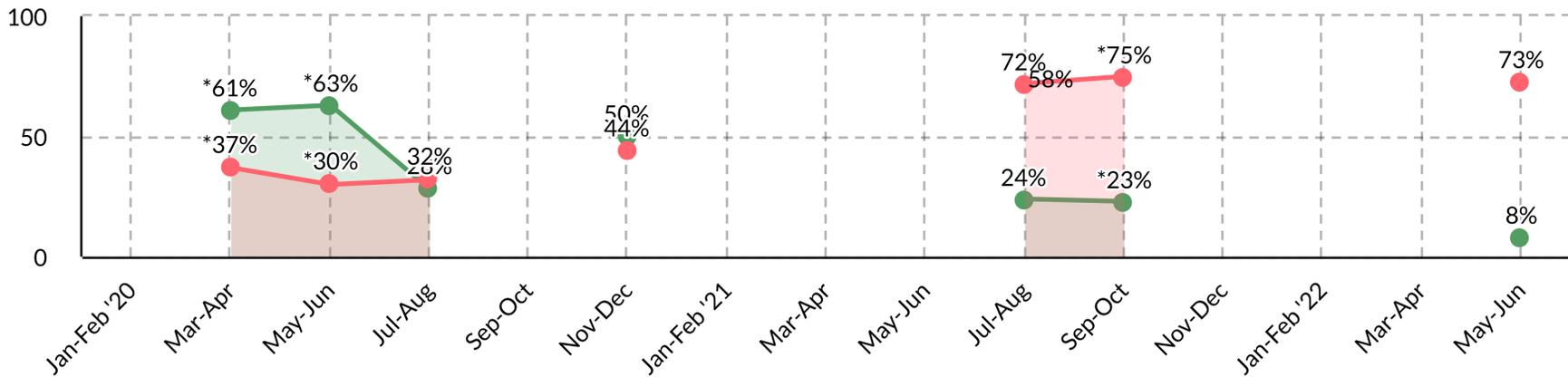
# Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022

Positive  
Negative

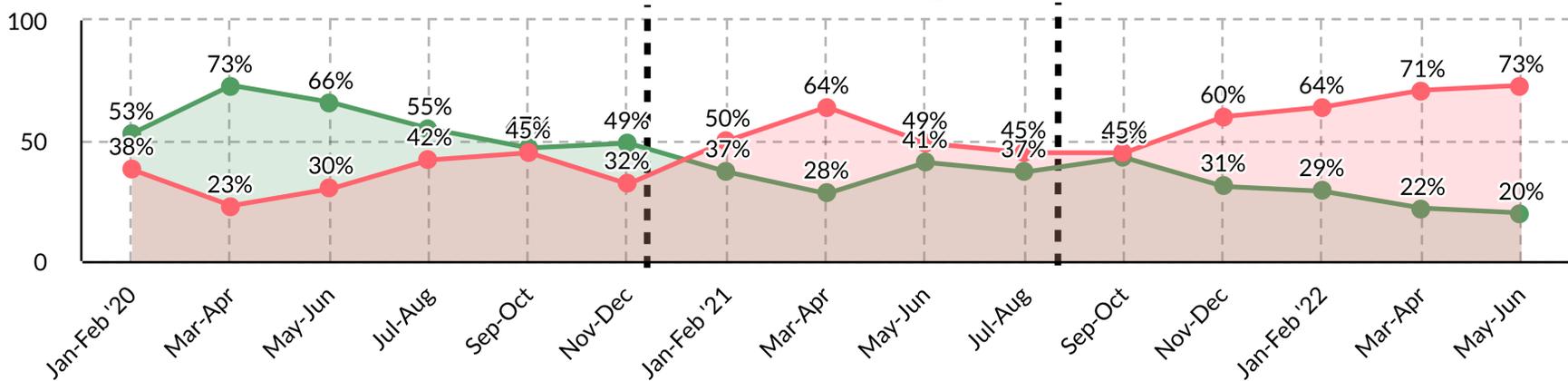
Panama: Laurentino Cortizo



Paraguay: Mario Abdo Benítez

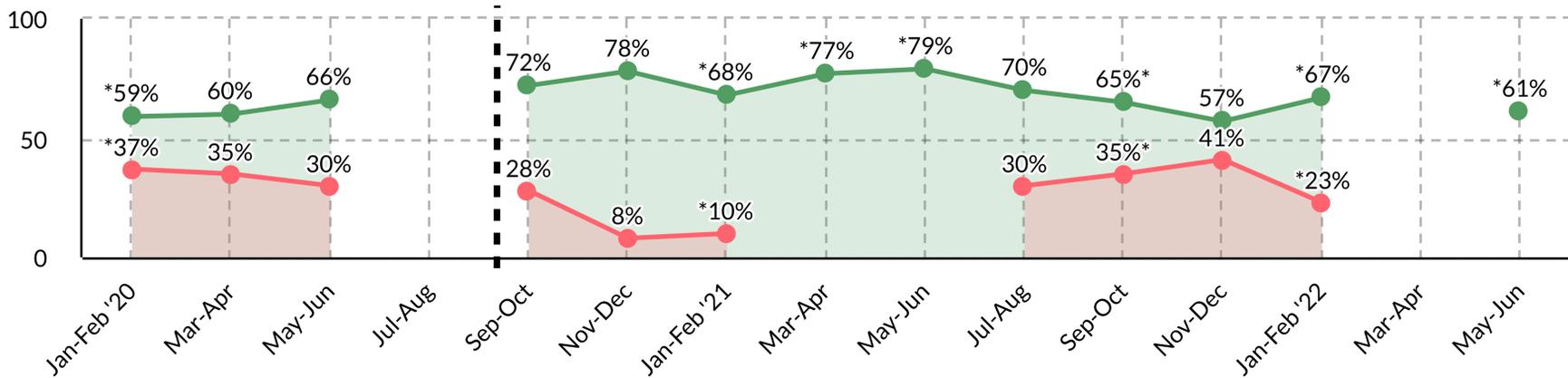


Peru: Martín Vizcarra | Francisco Sagasti | Pedro Castillo



\*Sagasti took office Nov. 17, 2020 until Jul. 27, 2021. Castillo took office Jul. 28, 2021.

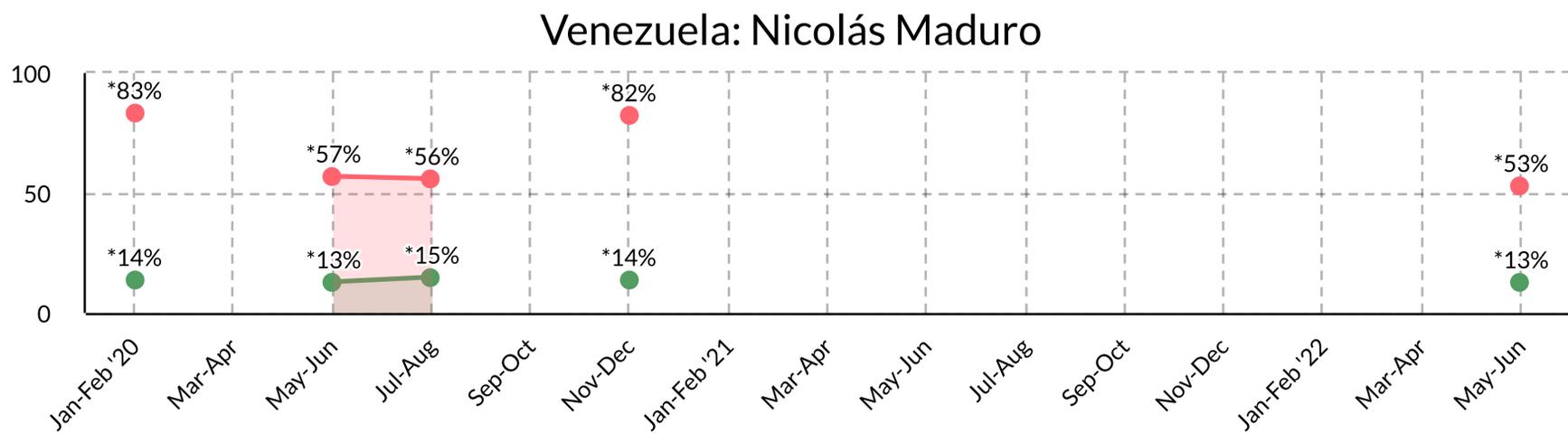
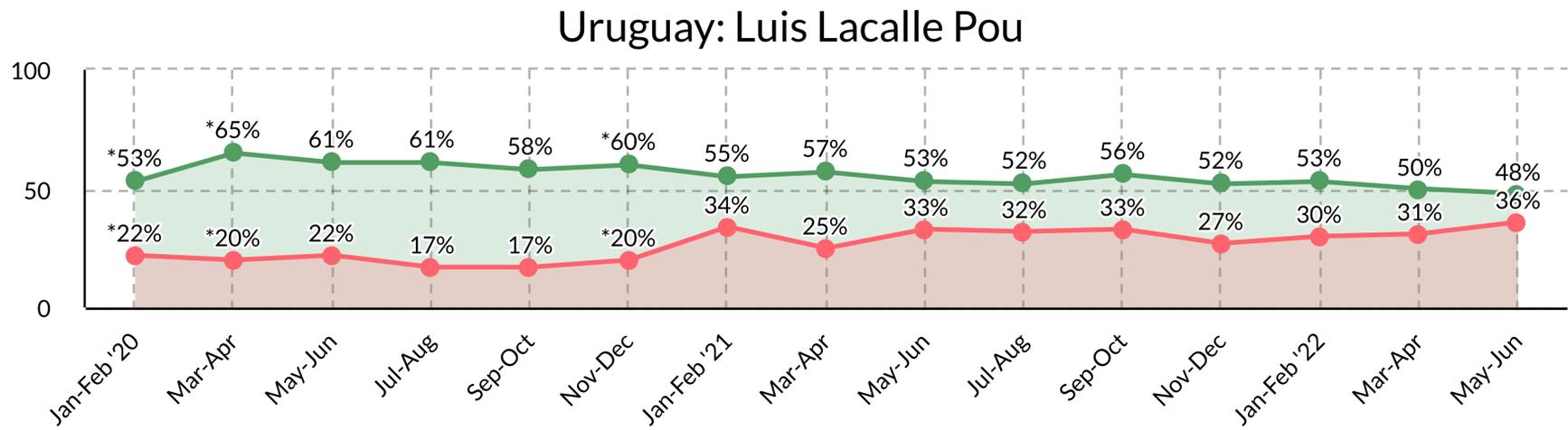
Dominican Republic: Danilo Medina | Luis Abinader



\*Abinader took office Aug. 16, 2020.

# Evolution of presidential approval in Latin America 2020-2022

Positive  
Negative

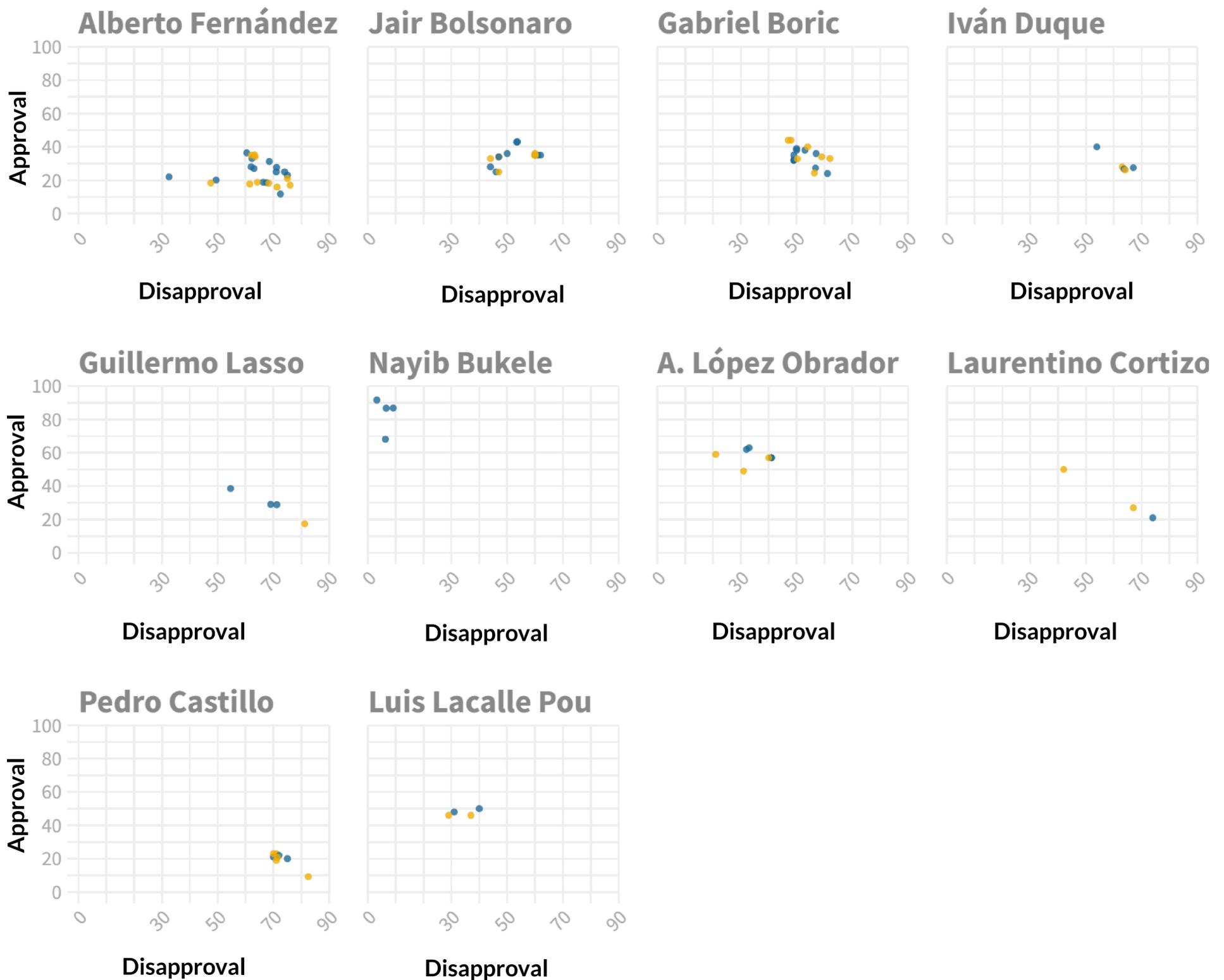


## Evolution of presidential approval May-June 2022

The following chart shows the evolution of the image (popularity) of presidents throughout the period and the dispersion of the measurements, marked with different colored dots according to the month they were taken. The descending line to the right indicates a fall, while the ascending line to the left shows growth. In the last two months the data shows that approval levels have remained relatively stable throughout the period.

When the data is disaggregated according to the level of approval of the president or the government, it can be seen that in Mexico, Brazil, and El Salvador, the president enjoys a higher level of favorability than the government as a whole. To see the disaggregated data, [click here](#).

Month ● May ● June



# The presidential election of Gustavo Petro in Colombia: a genuine turn to the left?

By *Laura Wills Otero*\*

With just over 11 million votes, or 50.4% of the electorate, Gustavo Petro of "Pacto Histórico" won Colombia's presidential run-off last June 19. The margin of victory over his rival Rodolfo Hernández, from the "League of Anticorruption Rulers", was about 700,000 votes, or 3.13%. With the highest turnout for two decades (58%) and with record high voting numbers, Petro becomes the first president of a leftist ideology and the first ex-guerrilla (from the M-19) to occupy Casa de Nariño, as of August 7. His vice-presidential running mate, Francia Márquez Mina, a social leader and a defender of human rights and the environment and the first Afro-descendant woman to occupy the post, also symbolizes a break from the status quo. Both she and Petro embody a highly significant change.

Historically, Colombia has been governed by parties and politicians representing the center-ground and the right. From its founding in the 19th century until 2002, the traditional parties – the liberals (Partido Liberal, PL) and conservatives (Partido Conservador, PC – alternated in power, save for between 1953 and 1958. In the last two decades, three presidents controlled the country, backed by political forces that, while claiming to be different, were in fact rooted in the country's traditional politics.

More recently, in 2016, another break occurred when, under the government of Juan Manuel Santos, a historic Peace Agreement was signed with the region's most enduring guerrilla group, FARC-EP. The demobilization of former combatants and their integration to party politics; wide-reaching agrarian reform; a comprehensive deal for justice, reparation and commitment to 'non-repetition,' mobilizing millions of victims of the conflict (and their victimizers); a drug policy focused on crop substitution in place of glyphosate fumigation – these were just some of the reforms agreed under the peace agreement. During the last two years of the Santos administration, the implementation of some of these measures began. For example, close to 12,000 former combatants surrendered their weapons and were reintegrated to civilian life. The

Comunes party was created, inaugurated in 2018 and with a voice in the Congress of the Republic. The Special Justice for Peace (JEP in Spanish) and the Truth Commissions were created, with the objective of 'clarifying' the causes of the conflict and its crimes. Locally tailored development programs (PDET in Spanish) were launched across the 170 municipalities most affected by the violence, among other reparatory measures. Despite the progress made, in 2018 Santos was replaced by Iván Duque of Centro Democrático (CD), a party created and led by former president Álvaro Uribe, a staunch opponent of the peace process and its agreement. In his four-year term in government, Duque and his coalition parties in Congress slowed down the legislative steps needed for implementing the pending measures of the agreement. Very little progress was made. In November 2019, what came to be known as Colombia's "social outburst" erupted: thousands of citizens, unhappy with the government and with Congress, took to the streets across the country to protest against this lack of progress and other issues. Young people were very important protagonists. They also protested against the lack of access to high quality education, the high levels of unemployment and the lack of opportunities, among other issues. The security forces were also protagonists. They exercised violence against the civilian population through illegal detentions and assassinations. Hundreds of social leaders, who had no security guarantees, were assassinated after the signing of the Peace Agreement. Social demands, poverty, unemployment, among others, increased and deepened with the arrival of the pandemic in March 2020. The national government declared an economic emergency and issued decrees with the force of law to respond to the most urgent needs. The Congress of the Republic legislated through virtual platforms. It did little political control over the decrees issued. President Duque's unpopularity increased progressively. Mobilizations were reactivated in April 2021, and in the midst of the legislative and presidential electoral campaign of the first semester of 2022, he achieved the lowest level reached by a president: 77% disapproval (Yanhaas, June 2022).

\*Associate Professor and Director of Congreso Visible. Department of Political Science, Universidad de los Andes.

## The presidential election of Gustavo Petro in Colombia: a genuine turn to the left?

Dissatisfied sectors of society aligned themselves with these results. This opened, as never before, a window of opportunity for leaders channeling this nonconformity to consolidate themselves as strong alternatives in both the legislative and presidential campaigns. Gustavo Petro, presidential candidate in 2018, former mayor of Bogota, former congressman, former constituent, and former guerrilla, consolidated himself as the leader of Pacto Histórico, a list that brought together the vast majority of existing leftist parties, and managed to win the highest percentage achieved by forces of that ideological tendency in the history of the country in the Congress of the Republic (about 15%). Subsequently, in the race for the presidency, he defeated the candidates of the center and of the right, as well as Hernández, who reached the second round, also presenting himself as a candidate representing change, and with no ties to parties or establishment politicians.

In the weeks following the June 19 victory, Petro, knowledgeable about the workings of politics, engaged in dialogues with several of the political parties that were his opponents during the electoral campaign. Among them, the PL and the PC. He reached agreements - which will include perks or positions in the state bureaucracy -, that allow him to put together a majority coalition that will provide him governability, and that will support him in the processing of the most urgent initiatives he raised during the campaign: a tax reform that will collect taxes that will allow him to promote his social agenda; the comprehensive agrarian reform that will implement the peace agreement; the political, health and education reforms, among others. Double-edged sword: the inclusion of parties representing the status quo has begun to disappoint some voters. Moreover, the agreements reached may imply the moderation of some of the structural reforms advocated in the campaign. One of the great challenges for the president-elect will be to quickly show his electorate that the proposed reforms begin and end their legislative process in Congress. To this end, the president of Congress has called for the executive initiatives to be taken out with a message of urgency, which would speed up the legislative process, if the congressmen so decide. The incoming government should take

advantage of and try to prolong the honeymoon period with which it apparently begins its mandate.

A quick divorce, either of the political parties that have declared themselves in the coalition, or of any of the appointed minister(s), would put governance at risk, and would reactivate citizen frustration through mobilizations against its own leader, and the expected changes would be put on hold once again. For the good of the country, it would not be convenient for something like this to happen.

# Colombia in the Andean context: governance challenges in liminal times

Liminal refers to being on the threshold of another space or time – an in-between state between what's ending, what's being left behind, and what's new, if not yet realized. The marked unrest across the Andean region between 2019-2021 that preceded the political course-changes in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, coupled with the changing international context, to some extent place governments in such a liminal scenario: unable to draw on alliances, structures that were once in place and instead needing to reconfigure new ones, and with uncertain consequences.

In this analysis, Victoria Murillo outlines three scenarios that could spill from this:

- The first is of a political fragmentation or 'destructuring' as part of which the growing social mobilization fails to produce clear leaderships or find a focused electoral expression, but where at the same time the existence of economic elites ensures a relative macroeconomic stability. This is the case of **Chile, Colombia and Peru**. Recent elections there show how deep-seated but widely disparate interests and demands together with an appetite for renewal led to a proliferation in candidates and electoral options, and allowed for the emergence of outsiders and pledges to deliver on citizens' desire for change. There is, however, one key difference between these countries. The first two have a more consolidated party system. There, the traditional parties, despite facing huge setbacks in the last elections, continue to have gravitas and retain considerable legislative representation. This is not the case in Peru, where the party system has collapsed.

- A second scenario is one where the cleavages that emerged from the crisis of representation in the 1990s continue to shape the political systems and where there are active and well-expressed social sectors. This corresponds to **Bolivia and Ecuador**, although in both cases symptoms of this order breaking down are already visible. In Bolivia, they are manifesting through internal struggles in

Movimiento al Socialismo, more power-related than ideological: chiefly those that are opposed, on the one hand, to President Luis Arce and his Vice President David Choquehuanca (both former historic ministers of Evo Morales), on the other opposed to Morales himself. In Ecuador, it can be seen in how mobilized indigenous and peasant sectors are reshaping a leftist opposition increasingly less driven by the fading 'Correaism'.

- A third scenario is one that is marked by the emergence of new leaderships that express discontent with traditional parties but also have the capacity to restructure the political system (for example, Mexico or El Salvador).

Petro's electoral triumph is not unrelated to these experiences. Thus, recent goings-on in the Andean governments may offer clues on what is to come for Colombia.

## 1. It is not easy to deal with the "transforming legacy" of social outbursts

As Marcelo Mella stated in this article of Agenda Pública on the Chilean case (from which we also take the concept of transformative legacy), "if the social outburst consisted of a rupture with the previous political process, it should be understood as a juncture originating from a cycle that ran out", rather than as a series of efforts "aimed at promoting or consolidating replacement structures".

What does this imply? Among other things, that navigating this juncture requires solid leadership and stable coalitions, conditions that in light of the recent experience of Chile, Peru and Ecuador are difficult to build in contexts of political fragmentation. Indeed, coexistence between the different sectors of government support, and between government and opposition, has so far proven to be very fragile in these countries.

It also implies that new governments have the difficult task of responding to a need for change that

# Colombia in the Andean context: governance challenges in liminal times

often involves atomized or dispersed expectations. The constitutional process in Chile could be a case in point. The aspiration for change was initially channeled in the strong will to move towards a new constitution with a convention made up of 100% representatives elected by direct vote, and then began to reveal its diversity in the election of the constituents, with the notable emergence of independents as a central fact. Thus, the result that will be taken to the polls in September generates, to put it schematically, the rejection of the right, the distrust of the center and the disillusionment of a fraction of the left.

## 2. The presidential "honeymoon" is history

Gustavo Petro will begin his term in office with a favorable image of 64%, according to a recent INVAMER survey. It is often said that the first 100 days in office are key because the president's popularity and political capital are intact and citizens' expectations are in his favor. It is the time to give strong signals and define the government's imprint. Well, in recent times that seems to have changed, which basically means that the margin of error is reduced to a minimum.

Both Lasso, Boric and Castillo, presidents of different political sign and extraction, experienced very sharp drops in approval shortly after taking office, or else they quickly lost that initial credit.

Bolivia emerges as the exception in this context, with approval levels that have remained in the order of 45% over time. It should also be noted that in this case, the availability of measurements is much lower and less regular.

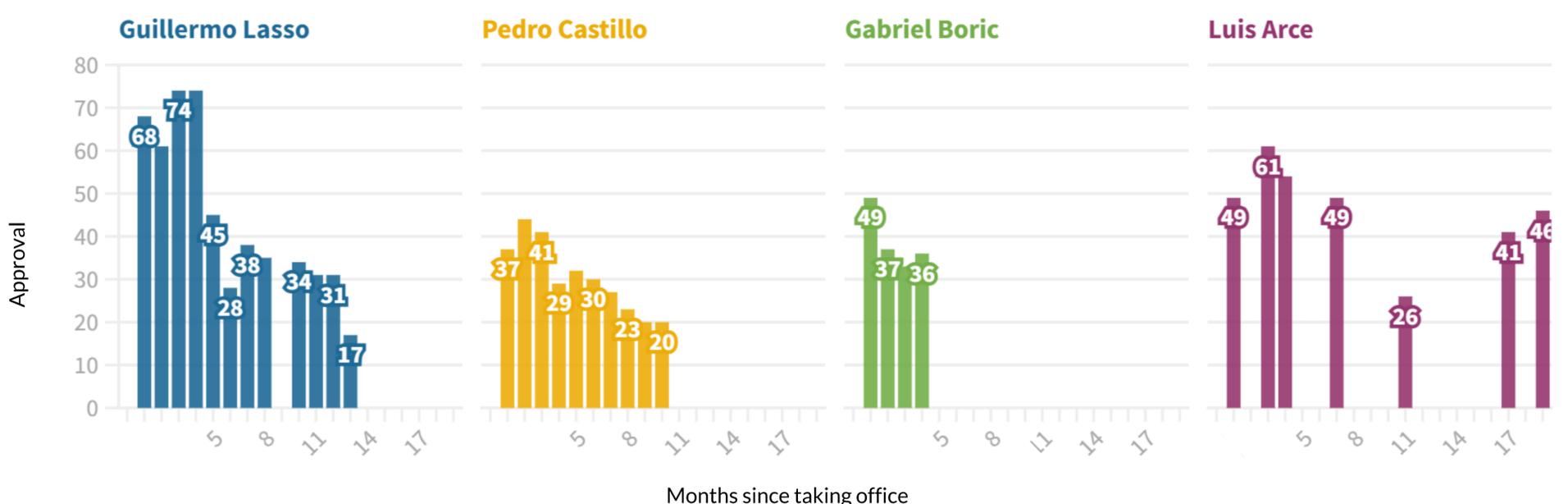
It is worth remembering that -with the exception of Luis Arce, who became president of Bolivia with 55% of the votes- the electoral flow of Gabriel Boric, Pedro Castillo and Guillermo Lasso in the first round was low (26, 19 and 20%, respectively) and their advantage in the second round was too small to shore up their initial capital (less than 1% in Peru and less than 5% in Ecuador). Nor does the discredit of his predecessors seem to have contributed to this: Sebastián Piñera ended with an approval rating of 23% and Lenin Moreno, with 9%. The case of Peru is different, where the dismissed Martín Vizcarra and his successor Francisco Sagasti showed higher levels of favorability than Castillo at the beginning of his term.

## 3. Congresses are fragmented, but also play a strong role

As we have already analyzed in previous issues of this report, a common condition in these countries - with the notable exception of Bolivia - is the growth of legislative fragmentation in the last elections.

To put it in numbers. In Peru, the 130-seat unicameral congress is divided into 14 benches, 4 more than at

Figure 5. Evolution of presidential approval since taking office (by month)



Source: Author's own elaboration based on a compilation of public opinion surveys

# Colombia in the Andean context: governance challenges in liminal times

the beginning of the period. The ruling bloc Peru Libre went from being the first minority to the second, after losing 11 of its original 37 members. In Ecuador, the 137-seat National Assembly has 10 blocs. Since its installation, several rearrangements have taken place, the main feature of which is the increase in the number of "independent" assembly members, who currently amount to 21. The ruling bloc CREO has only 13 seats and is the fourth minority (not counting the mass of independents), which means that it is necessary to negotiate each law on an individual basis. In Chile, the coalition Apruebo Dignidad arrived with only 6 seats of its own in a Senate of 50 (in turn divided into 4 blocks), and 37 in the Chamber of Deputies out of a total of 155 (in 6 blocks). To these are added those of the coalition Socialismo Democrático, 13 and 30 respectively.

The effects of this fragmentation, even in contexts of highly discredited legislatures in the public perception, irrigate at multiple levels. In the first place, the Executive Branch has less muscle to promote its legislative agenda (or to prevent the approval of those that are not in line with its government plan) and, at times, it must negotiate with multiple interlocutors outside and within its own coalition.

Secondly, very high fragmentation can also lead to deadlock situations that basically paralyze the legislative body or affect its internal governance. Or in other words, no single sector has the capacity to build majorities on divisive issues. Ecuador's recent experience with the successive threats of dissolution through the "cross-death" mechanism and the conflicts that preceded the removal of Guadalupe Llori (MUPP) as president of the Assembly are a good example of this.

However, beyond the legislative function, there is another aspect that cannot be overlooked: how, when and with what intensity the legislative body exercises its powers of political control. The last few months offer us a generous amount of examples and, in particular, Peru, where presidential vacancy motions have been frequently

used. Guillermo Lasso also faced a motion of censure recently, as well as cabinet ministers in Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Chile. Regardless of the concrete outcome of these motions, which are more widespread in Peru than in the rest of the countries, it should not be overlooked that their use also has an impact in terms of increased transactional costs for the Executives.

## 4. Signals of conciliation may have political costs

The political fragmentation to which we have been referring has made it necessary for the new governments to negotiate with the traditional parties, to reach post-electoral agreements with different political sectors and also to send conciliatory or moderation signals in order to facilitate governability.

This has been reflected in the establishment of legislative alliances and the formation of "multicolor" ministerial cabinets, made up of figures from outside the winning electoral coalition and independents. It was also observed in the search for moderate profiles for the finance portfolios, such as Pedro Francke in Peru (World Bank and IDB economist, now out of government), Mario Marcel in Chile (former president of the Central Bank of Chile until 2022) or José Antonio Ocampo in Colombia (finance minister of former liberal president Ernesto Samper).

Even though these gestures may have been well received externally, they also generated tensions within the coalitions regarding the balance in the distribution of positions or the fear that moderation might lead to postpone important points of the government agenda that are at the basis of the political agreements. For example, the expansion of social spending or the implementation of the ambitious environmental agendas proposed by the new governments, which are difficult to implement in a context of economic recession. In addition, there are the problems of coexistence with allies and pressure from the opposition.

The recent experiences of Chile and Peru are a good example of this. In the first case, Boric has had to reconcile the interests of the coalitions Apruebo

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Dignidad and Socialismo Democrático (former Concertación), sometimes without success as the debates around the declaration of the state of emergency in Araucanía showed. Castillo, for his part, failed in the attempt to balance his three initial support groups in the conformation of his cabinet. Also pressured by the opposition, he has already accumulated in his first year of government four cabinet changes (which, it is worth remembering, require a vote of confidence from Congress) and a list of more than 50 ministers. In the process, he clashed with and was excluded from Peru Libre, the party with which he came to power.

Now it is the turn of Gustavo Petro who has achieved, with unexpected success, a rapprochement with Partido Liberal, Partido Conservador, Partido de la U, Cambio Radical and Alianza Verde to secure a legislative majority that in March seemed elusive. He also integrated figures from these spaces to his cabinet, as was seen in the appointment of the conservative Álvaro Leyva Durán to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Alejandro Gaviria of Centro Esperanza to Education.

## **5. "How much responsibility do you think the government has?" The difficulty of providing local responses to insecurities that cross borders**

As we indicated in the introduction, the context in which this new "pink tide" is taking place is very different from that of the early 2000s because of the cumulative effects of the economic recession, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Europe. In this framework, governments have to provide satisfactory local responses to problems that have been exacerbated by environments over which they have little or no control, and to respond politically for the lack of such responses. We are talking about phenomena such as the shock in energy commodity and food prices, the decrease in the flow of capital to emerging economies, the devaluation of currencies and the tightening of the Federal Reserve's monetary policy.

In the previous edition, we stated that inflation - or in more general terms, the state of the economy - was the main concern of citizens in several countries in the region. However, in recent months there has also been growing concern about the worsening of violence and citizen insecurity, linked to the expansion of organized crime and problems associated with extractivism.

The case of Ecuador, which today has become a new drug trafficking route and with an intentional homicide rate that increased by almost 90% in one year, is particularly significant. But there are also worrying signs in other countries. Such is the case of a law approved at the insistence of the Peruvian Congress that empowers the Citizen Self-Defense Committees to provide an auxiliary role to the security forces and to receive, carry and use civilian weapons for the development of these tasks. In Chile, the homicide rate shot up by almost 30% in the first semester of 2022 along with a notable increase in the use of firearms. CEP and Activa surveys indicate that crime, assaults and robberies are the most urgent problems for citizens.

The social impacts of these complex problems were felt in the increase in the intensity of protests in Chile, Ecuador and Peru and in the extension of states of exception highly resisted by the population, which in turn raise the dilemma of the effective capacity of territorial control in "hot" zones and the need to think of regional policies to face these challenges. It was precisely social resistance that forced the lifting of the latest emergency measures in Ecuador and Peru, in addition to the resignation of four ministers, the reduction of fuel prices and the limitation of hydrocarbon exploration zones in Ecuador.

# Election calendar

July - December 2022

Fecha	Country	Election
September 4	Chile	Constitutional referendum
October 2	Peru	Municipal and regional elections
October 2	Brazil	Presidential, legislative and state elections
October 30	Brazil	Second round presidential election

## Methodological notes

This monitoring of presidential image compiles surveys on presidential image, level of presidential approval and level of government approval, developed in 18 countries of the region by a group of approximately 90 consulting firms and research centers.

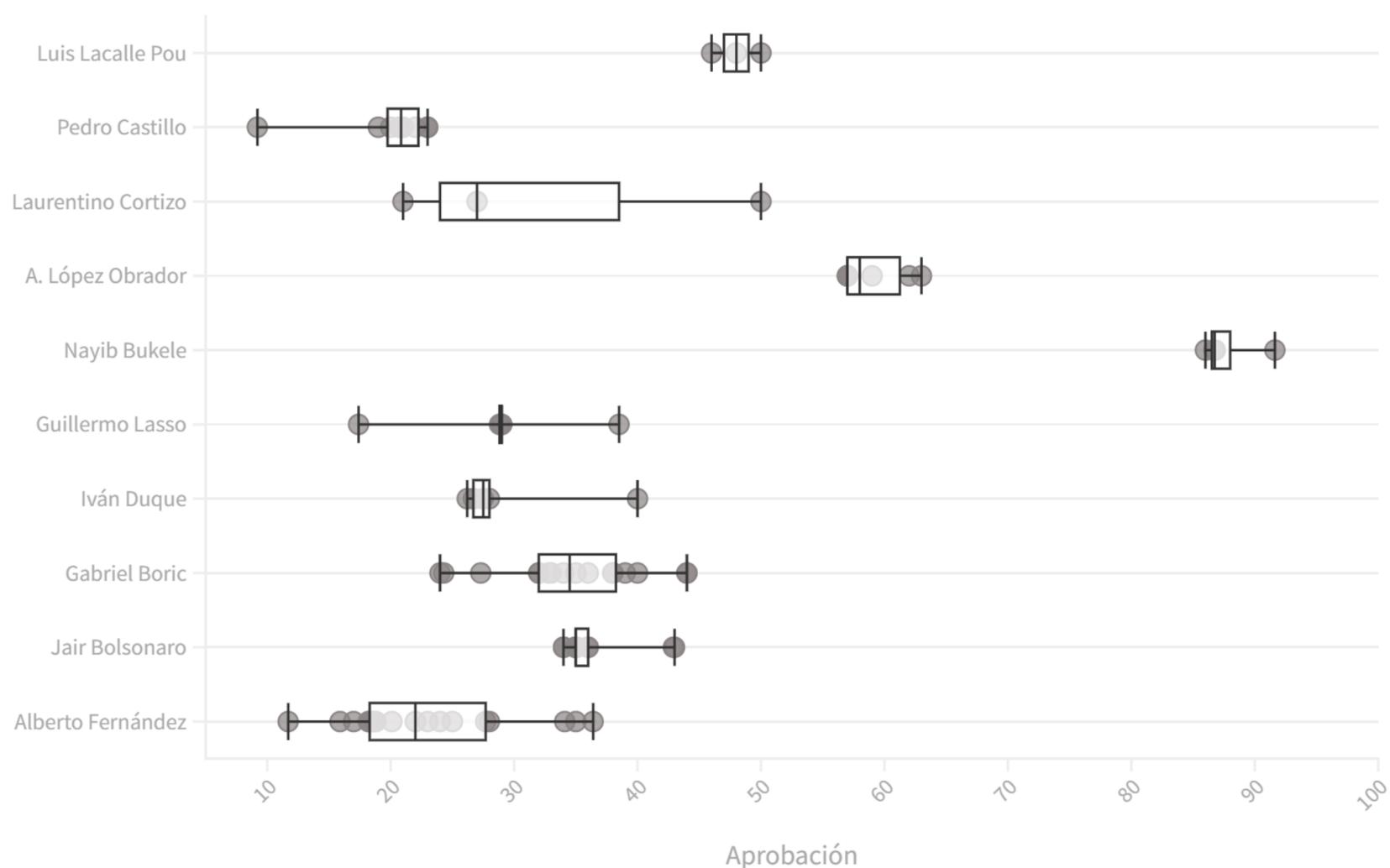
The measurements are integrated by means of a simple average per country for the study period. The data sources are not weighted according to the methodology used, sample size or pollster. The averages corresponding to this two-month period are compared with those of previous two-month periods, using the same methodology. Starting in 2022, the presidential ranking and evolution graphs only aggregate presidential approval data, not government approval data, which will be presented separately, when deemed convenient.

The presidential image rankings include cases that meet the following two criteria: a) they have

measurements of presidential approval taken by at least two data sources (consulting firms / research centers); b) they have at least three measurements for the period considered.

Although the goal of this report is to average multiple data sources, its fulfillment is conditioned by the availability of information. For this reason, all those cases in which the figures are based on a single source of data for each period considered are identified. The graph below shows the number of polls included in this number and their distribution.

**Image of Power** is a report produced by Directorio Legislativo's research team: Felicitas Torrecilla (coordinator), Facundo Cruz (associate researcher) and Matías Carpignano. [Your feedback and comments are welcome.](#)





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**BUENOS AIRES**

Av. Entre Ríos 258 3o E  
(1079), CABA. Argentina  
+ (5411) 5218-4647



**WASHINGTON D.C.**

1110 Vermont Ave, NW, Suite 500  
Washington DC 20005, USA  
+ 1 (786) 828-0675



[info@directoriolegislativo.org](mailto:info@directoriolegislativo.org)



[www.directoriolegislativo.com](http://www.directoriolegislativo.com)