



# SOCIAL OUTBURSTS IN LATIN AMERICA

**Vol 1: Bolivia, Chile &  
Ecuador**



April 2021

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## **Executive Summary**

Social outbursts are complex political phenomena whose analysis becomes necessary for a better understanding of political systems, their deficiencies and opportunities for progress. Therefore, the study of the motives that lead to these protests makes it possible to visualize the degree of heterogeneity of the social groups that may or may not participate in protests and the reasons for their actions.

Latin America is a region in which populations grew too fast for the capacity of the States that emerged in the 20th century. Governments have experimented with different policies that have led to economic stability or instability, influencing the country's development capabilities and the welfare of its citizens. Due to this, social outbursts can be a consequence of the implementation of misguided measures, but also can showcase the influence of ideologies and citizens' demands.

This report analyzes the social outbursts that occurred in Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia in 2019 in order to generate a better understanding of the possible causes and effects of these mass protests.

## Bolivia

- PREVIOUS EVENTS:** reelection and lack of autonomy in the government's branches **1**
- THE PROTESTS:** a reaction to electoral fraud **2**
- THE CONSEQUENCES:** the return of the MAS party **6**

## Chile

- PREVIOUS EVENTS:** precarious growth **8**
- THE PROTESTS:** expression of a persistent discontent **9**
- THE CONSEQUENCES:** a new Constitution, the formula for peace? **14**

## Ecuador

- PREVIOUS EVENTS:** IMF loans and Executive Order 883 **15**
- THE PROTESTS:** discontent of a defrauded population **16**
- THE CONSEQUENCES:** human rights violations and elimination of subsidies in the midst of a pandemic **21**

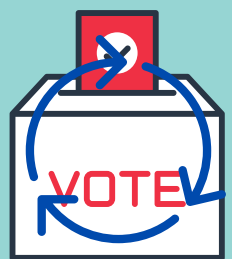
## Conclusions

## Bibliographical References



The government of Evo Morales has been the object of both criticism and acclaim. It's social policies have benefited a part of the Bolivian population, however, these have been accompanied by authoritarian intentions, which have been undermining the quality of democracy in Bolivia.

## PREVIOUS EVENTS: reelection and lack of autonomy in the government's branches



**Evo Morales' reelection:** The 2009 Constitution mentions that the president governs for five years and can be reelected only once continuously. However, Evo Morales in 2009 (at the end of his first term) presented a new draft constitution which was approved and in the same year Morales won reelection.



**Lack of autonomy in the Electoral Court:** To secure his third term, Morales presented an appeal to the Electoral Court, alleging that, as the first term occurred under another constitutional regime, it was invalid, establishing the term of 2010 - 2014 as his first one, assuring him the possibility of launching his candidacy for the 2015-2020 term.



**The 2016 referendum:** In 2016, a constitutional referendum was held to consult Bolivian citizens on whether President Morales could run again for reelection and whether a new constituent process should be initiated. In these elections the "No" option won with 51% of the votes. However, an appeal was filed with the Constitutional Court, which allowed Morales to participate in the 2019 elections.



**Lack of power alternation:** The 14 years of Evo Morales' government, although he had presented himself as a renovating option against a discredited political class, his eagerness to stay in power led to an erosion of his political plan. This was seen in the 2016 referendum, which, unlike the 2009 referendum, did not have the popular support for him to continue his government through regular options.

## THE PROTESTS: a reaction to electoral fraud

Irregularities in the 2019 electoral process was the main trigger for the outbursts that lasted from October 20 to November 10 of that year, ending with the formal resignation of Evo Morales from the presidency. But, to learn about the events prior to this demonstration of discontent, we talked to **Montserrat Rodriguez, a graduate in Political Science and Public Management from the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, with specialization in International Defense of Human Rights.**

### 1. THE REELECTION OF EVO MORALES

Evo Morales, managed to run for the 2019 elections by introducing an appeal to the Constitutional Court, that allowed him to participate despite having lost the 2016 referendum, where the citizens decided with 51% of the votes that they did not agree with a new candidacy.

Considering this, democracy in Bolivia appears to be far from optimal. The lack of separation of powers and the fact that important institutions respond to the political party in power, shows a panorama in which the opposition does not manage to adequately influence the political landscape.

Position N°

# 94/167

**In the Democracy Index (2020). This defines Bolivia as a "hybrid regime".**

**"All the organs of the State had a very strong presence of the MAS, if not total, considering that the National Assembly was constituted in 2/3 by the MAS party and all the initiatives coming from the opposition have not come to fruition (...) The same happened in the judicial organ and the electoral organ, they all responded to a greater or lesser extent to the MAS, this did not guarantee a balance of powers or freedom in the participation of representatives of other parties."**

## 2. IRREGULARITIES IN THE ELECTION'S VOTE COUNT

The electoral process of October 20 seemed to be going smoothly, until the vote counting that was taking place at the former Radisson Plaza Real Hotel was stopped without a plausible explanation.

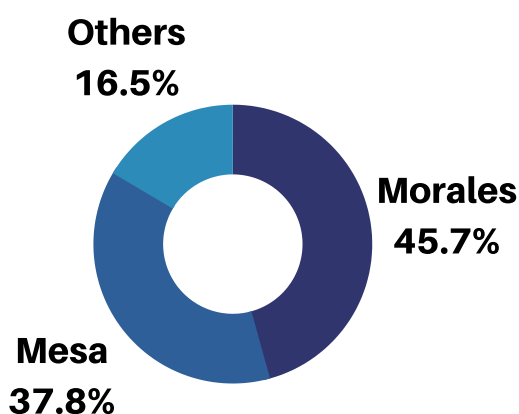
After this was publicly known, it caused discontent among the citizens who were posted in front of the hotel, the president of the Supreme Electoral Court, in an attempt to calm the crowd, stated that the counting was stopped due to the fact that a pre-established goal of 80% of the total votes had been reached.

Counting was halted for 24 hours, meanwhile, the holding of a second round of voting was in dispute.

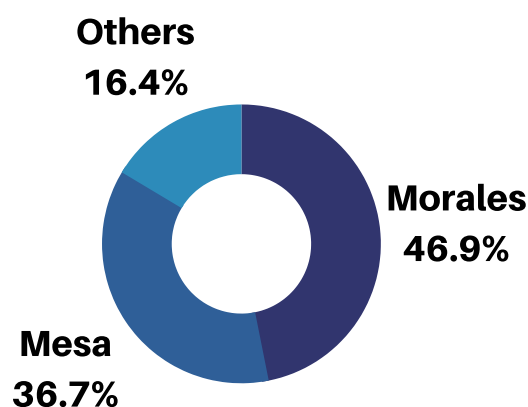
On October 21, the final official results were published, which proclaimed Morales as the winner with more than 10 points in his favor. This, according to the Bolivian Electoral Law, implies that it is not necessary to hold a second electoral round and that, therefore, the result is irreversible.

"When the TREP (Transmission of Preliminary Electoral Results as per its acronym in Spanish) incident happened, people arrived at the Radisson Hotel where the official count was taking place and everything was quite calm. **When the results came back in favor of the MAS, there was discontent and complaints of fraud began to emerge**".

### Provisional results (1)



### Final official results (2)



(1) El País (2019)

(2) Los Tiempos (2019)

### 3. DAYS OF TENSION THAT LED TO A RESIGNATION

From October 21 to November 1, Bolivia experienced public confrontations and demonstrations in response to the allegations of irregularities in the electoral results.

After the official results were published by the TSE (Supreme Electoral Court, as per its acronym in Spanish), Evo Morales proclaimed himself as the winner of the elections and rejected the accusations of fraud, which further enhanced the discontent that had been brewing since the 2016 referendum.

On the opposition's side, the Local Civic Committees (political groups present in each Bolivian locality) and the opposition candidate Carlos Mesa, led the protests against the proclamation of Morales as president-elect in these elections.

In response to this, MAS supporters also took to the streets to defend the election's results. This created a division between citizens of opposing sides, which led in some cases to violence and riots in Bolivia's main cities.

"(...) these were no longer just demonstrations to establish the truth regarding the election's results, **but were different sides of civil society confronting against each other**"

After 10 days of protests, on November 1st the OAS publishes a preliminary audit report, which affirms that there were irregularities in the election and that it should be annulled, in order to establish guarantees of transparency and call for new elections.

### THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN THE DEPARTURE OF MORALES

Upon witnessing the violence unleashed by Morales' choice to remain in power, the General of the Armed Forces, Williams Kaliman, suggested Morales to resign from the presidency. Subsequently, on November 10, Evo resigned and left the country for Mexico and so did several government officials, leaving the vice-president of the Senate, Jeanine Añez, as interim president.

## 4. JEANINE AÑEZ TAKES OVER AS INTERIM PRESIDENT

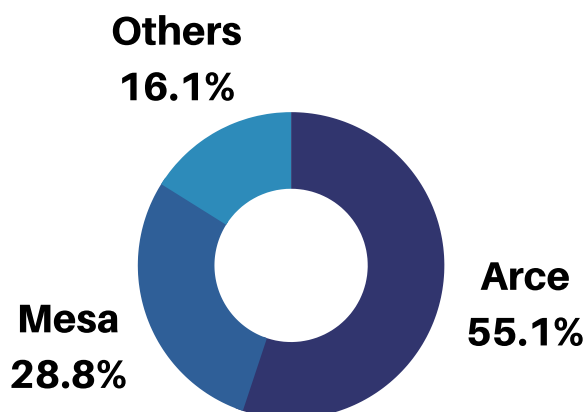
Jeanine Añez, vice-president of the Senate at the time of Morales' resignation, took over as provisional president of Bolivia on November 11, after those in line to the position (the vice-president, the president of the Senate and the president of the Chamber of Deputies) also resigned from their positions.

After a resolution by the Constitutional Court and a short deliberation by the Senate and the Assembly, in order to resume the constitutional thread as soon as possible, Añez took over as interim president.

In addition to running the country after the outbreaks, her duties included calling for elections as soon as possible. This was scheduled to happen in March 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was postponed to October 20, 2020.

Añez decided to run for president in these elections, but later withdrew her candidacy, due to the discontent that this decision generated among the population.

In these elections, Luis Arce (MAS) was elected with 55.1% of the total votes, against the opposition candidate who obtained only 28.8%.



"The truth is that I cannot say that Añez's government had great acceptance. The moment she decides to run for president, everything lost credibility. **It was the same thing that was criticized about Morales, "you can't be judge and judged".**



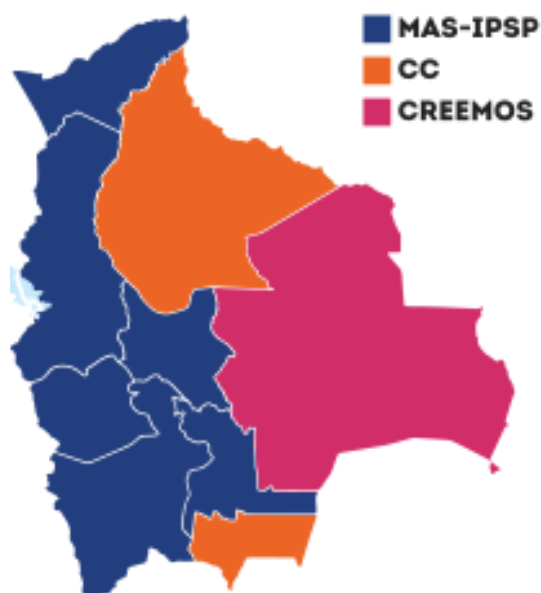
## THE CONSEQUENCES: the return of the MAS party

The victory of the MAS party in the 2020 elections generated some confusion in those observing the process from outside of Bolivia. Why, if there was so much discontent with the government of Evo Morales, a candidate who represents, in a certain sense, a continuation of this model is elected?

There are several theories about this, the main ones being:

**1. The discontent was not towards the model implemented by the MAS, but about the electoral fraud committed by Morales:** The discontent towards Evo Morales and his desire to remain in power for longer than allowed, had been brewing since the 2016 referendum. The electoral fraud was the event that ended up causing the outburst.

**2. The opposition's campaign was deficient:** Mesa's popularity as the leader of the outbursts, generated confidence within the Comunidad Ciudadana party, so the campaign was mainly done through social media and was directed towards the populations where the party already had a strong presence, leaving out the places where the MAS had greater influence.



Electoral results by State

@evoespueblo after the official count:

"The official count of the @TSEBolivia concluded in the resounding triumph of the MAS-IPSP and @LuchoXBolivia with 55.10% of the votes. **It is the victory of a country that wants economic stability and peace. We returned thanks to the people!**"

Tweet from Evo Morales on October 23, 2020

**3. The crisis caused by the pandemic was linked to Añez's government and, therefore, to the opposition:** The MAS used political communication strategies to promote Arce as an option that would bring back the stability experienced in the 14 years of Morales' government, while Mesa was associated with unemployment and economic crisis.

## 4. JEANINE AÑEZ'S TRIAL

On March 12, 2021, Jeanine Añez was arrested, after the Bolivian Prosecutor's Office accused her of "terrorism, sedition and conspiracy" for the outbursts that led to Morales' resignation in 2019. In addition, arrest warrants were issued against two former ministers of the interim government, a former police chief and the former commander of the Armed Forces, Williams Kaliman.

Within the MAS ranks, she was accused of having orchestrated the "coup d'état" that forced Morales out of office. However, this imprisonment and trial presented multiple irregularities.

1. The term "terrorism" is ambiguous, it can be applied to several types of crimes. In addition, "terrorism, sedition and conspiracy" is what Evo Morales was accused of during the Añez administration, which leads to believe that the charges are politically motivated and not based on justice. In addition, the main figure from the accusing side is Lidia Patty, a former MAS legislator. (1)

2. The initial 4-month prison sentence was extended due to a possible "escape risk" (2).

3. The Prosecutor's Office seems to agree with government officials that what happened in Bolivia in 2019 was a "Coup d'Etat". Despite the fact that there is no evidence implicating Añez in any kind of plan to overthrow the government or conspiracy against it. (3)

**"It is widely understood that this a strategy to avoid certain procedures and (...) the accusations she is being judged for are not correct."**

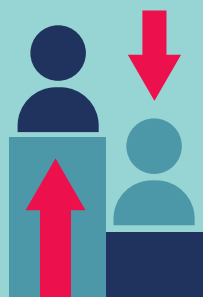
(1) Romano (2021)

(2) DW (2021).

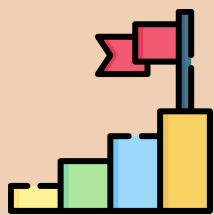
(3) Human Rights Watch

Chile, after an increase in subway and public transportation fares, revealed through a series of protests a reality that had been hidden behind the improvement of indicators and the apparent high living standard experienced by the population. The country, despite being one of the most advanced in Latin America, is also one of the most unequal, where not everyone has equal access to opportunities and a large part of the population is at a disadvantage.

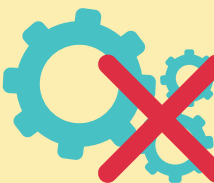
## PREVIOUS EVENTS: precarious growth



**Attrition of the political elite:** Considering the succession of governments between Sebastián Piñera and Michelle Bachelet, which at first managed to recover the Chilean economy and promote social plans that benefited the population, it has been shown how the same policies and the same political characters have lost popularity and reach among the Chilean population, creating a generalized rejection towards the political class.



**Prosperity for some:** Although Chile has experienced relatively sustained growth after its return to democracy 30 years ago, this reality hid a precarious middle class, which is financed by loans, with deficient pensions and salaries. This discontent, was revealed in the protests of October 2019, which formally began due to the 30 pesos (\$0.04) increase in the public transport fares but also expressed other demands related to this inequality.



**A system showing signs of exhaustion:** Faced with uncontrollable outbreaks of violence, the President made a profound change in his cabinet, established a "guaranteed minimum income" and increased pensions by 20%, in addition to supplementing this with other contributions. However, the protests continued, only an agreement to change the National Constitution managed to calm the unrest and create a truce between government and citizens by foreshadowing a presumed change in the system.

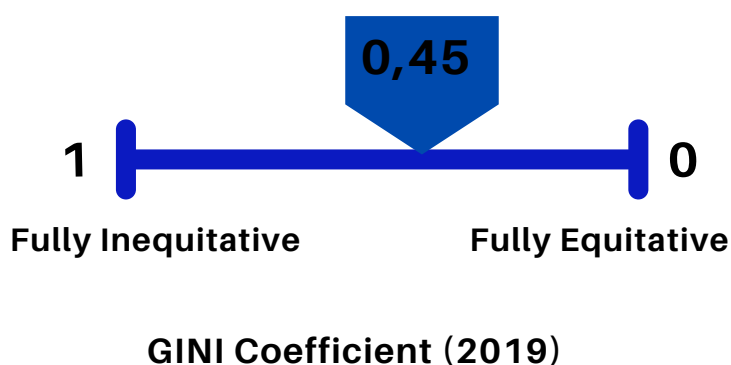
## THE PROTESTS: expression of a persistent discontent

To learn more about the underlying reasons for this insurrection, we interviewed **Javier Peñafiel, Master in Public Policy at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and Analyst for the Chilean Government's Budget Office.**

### 1. CHILE: AN UNEQUAL COUNTRY

The progress that the country has experienced in the last 30 years has not been evenly enjoyed by all social groups. Chile, according to ECLAC (2019), is the eighth most unequal country in Latin America.

According to the same report, the wealthiest 1% of people has access to 26.5% of the wealth, while 50% of the lowest income households had access to only 2.1% of the country's net wealth. This shows that although Chile has made significant progress in health, education and quality of life compared to the rest of Latin America, there is still a large part of the population that cannot access these resources as easily as the wealthiest 1%.



"In Chile there seem to be two countries at times. There is an education for the rich in private schools and one for the poor with very different standards, and when students take the test to enter to a university they get very different scores. There is health care for the rich in high level centers and health care for the poor where you have to wait for months to get assisted".

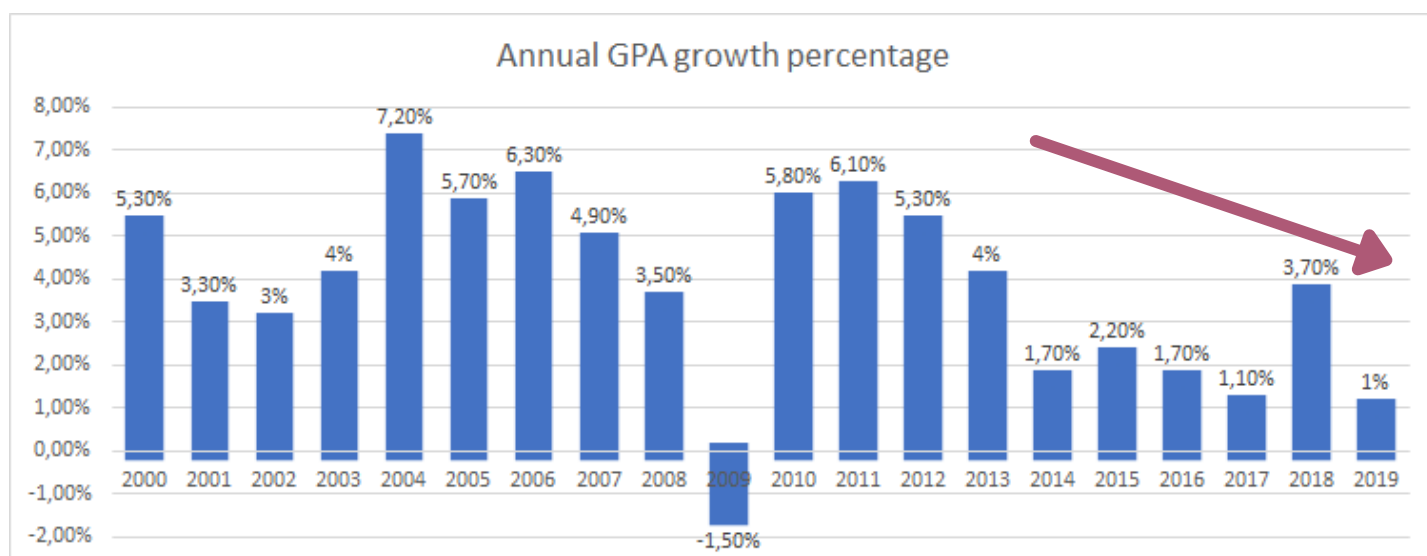
## 2. REJECTION TOWARDS THE POLITICAL ELITE

Michelle Bachelet and Sebastian Piñera have been the protagonists of a unique phenomenon in Latin America: the alternation of their democratically elected governments has contributed to the formation of a strong bipartisan system and has given the political system an apparently exceptional stability.

However, the lack of renewal has also brought consequences with it. The Chilean population has seen how the impulse of the first governments, which achieved a great development in the country, has been exhausted in recent years and the policies implemented have not responded to the needs of the less favored classes, while the political game has been concentrating more on presenting a dynamic of opposing sides that seek to discredit what was done before, than a union to respond to the citizenship's needs.

"(...) and the data shows it, growth stagnated quite a lot. So this gave the feeling that **politics was more about fighting and destroying** what the other did before, **rather than building and advancing.**

There was a **discourse of much contestation** of the years of development and of the implementation of social policies between the 90's and the 10's."



Source: Own elaboration, with data from the IMF (2021).

## 3. IT'S NOT 30 PESOS, IT'S 30 YEARS.

While the October 2019 protests started due to an increase in subway fares, these grew in scale and brought together various demands, not only from the people affected by the increase but by many different groups.

Thus, when inquiring about who were the communities mostly involved in these movements, it can be affirmed that it was not a homogeneous public, but it was rather formed by all those who were defrauded by the system, whether in terms of health, education, quality of life or opportunities.

### Who were involved?



**High school students:** after the implementation of the new fare, high school students protested by jumping the turnstiles at the stations without paying.



**The general population:** A week after the student protests, mass demonstrations were planned. During this time, especially on October 18, there were outbreaks of violence such as the burning of more than 20 subway stations and looting.



**There was not an obvious leader:** these protests were apparently spontaneous. No leader or coordinator belonging to any union, political party or institution was identified. However, opposition groups to the Piñera government participated in the movement.

### What were the main demands?

Due to the heterogeneity of the movement and its disaffiliation to a specific political group or guild, the social outbursts of 2019 encompassed a variety of demands such as:

1. A healthcare system accessible to all
2. Higher wages
3. An end to the violence against women and the LGBTQ community
4. Nationalization of the public water service
5. Condemnation of corruption
6. Increased access to higher education
7. Reforms in the social security system
8. Impartial justice
9. A new, more inclusive Constitution
10. The elimination of the Metro fare increase

## 4. PIÑERA'S RESPONSE

Faced with the escalation of protests, some of these becoming violent and difficult to contain, the Piñera government decided to deploy the Armed Forces in order to placate this movement, which had been classified as a "a powerful and implacable enemy who respects nothing and no one" (RTVE, 2019).

### October 18th, 2019

- Burning of 20 metro stations
- Declaration of a state of emergency in Santiago de Chile
- 150 detainees
- 18 casualties

**5  
days later**



### October 22th, 2019

- Suspension of the metro fare increase
- Creation of the "Universal minimum wage"
- 20% of raise in the "Basic Solidary pension"
- Fiscal reforms

Piñera's response seemed insufficient to the population. The protests, now expressing a discontent with the political class itself, did not accept that the previously imposed measures were reversed, but sought a profound reform of the whole system.

In addition, the cases of repression where the Armed Forces and Police (also in disrepute due to corruption scandals that happened in previous years) implemented an excessive use of force to control the demonstrations which generated greater discontent in the population.

"These protests started before the 18th and there was a week of these that consisted of skipping the tourniquets and the answer was "this is not going to change, why are students protesting if their rate wasn't raised?" (...)

Then, these more violent events occurred and **Piñera's reactions were quite bad, very defensive and very focused on controlling the most violent part**, while associating all this with violent initiatives of organized groups."

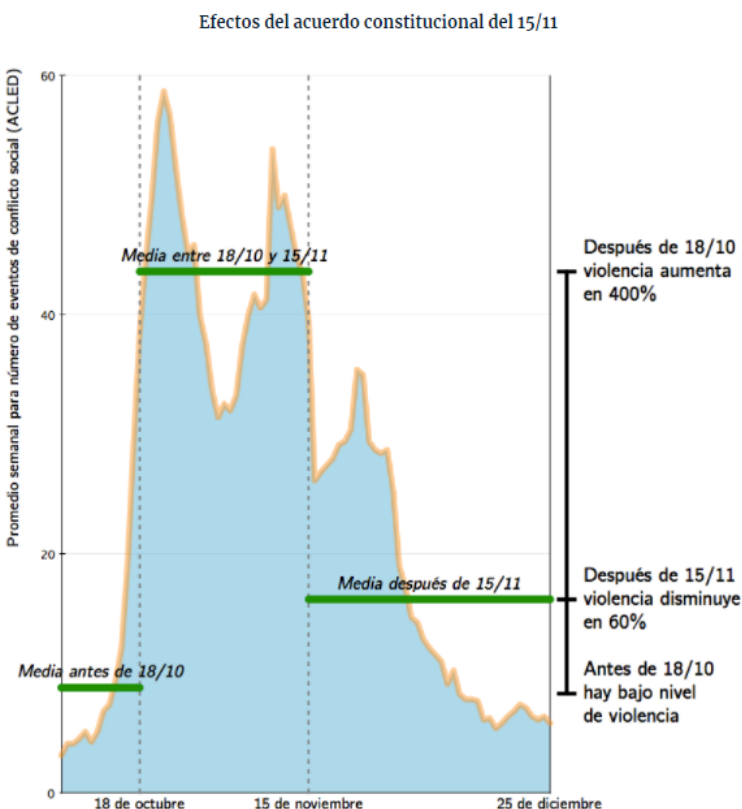
## THE CONSEQUENCES: a new Constitution the formula for peace?

In the midst of the protests, an agreement was reached to change the National Constitution, which had been in force since the Pinochet dictatorship. This Magna Carta, despite being reformed over the decades, still represented a legacy of those years of repression and human rights violations and therefore, for some, it lacked legitimacy of origin, because it was not created including the population in its promulgation.

While the idea of radically changing the constitution was discussed only among minority groups, such as the Chilean Communist Party, it gained more popularity during the outbreaks.

The Agreement for Peace and the New Constitution was signed by the main Chilean political forces, in an attempt to channel the discontent expressed in the demonstrations by political means. (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, 2019).

### What happened after this agreement was signed? (1)



1. There was a decrease in the frequency of manifestations.
2. The referendum to approve the change to the Constitution obtained a 78% approval, with the participation of 51% of the population.
3. In addition, in the same referendum, it was decided that the new Constitution should be drafted by constituents chosen by citizens and not by serving politicians.
4. It advocated parity and inclusiveness in the drafting, something that the 1980 Constitution lacked.

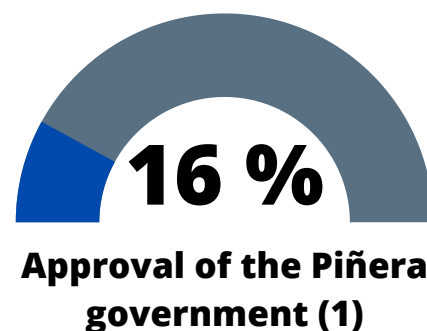
(1) Corvalán & Pardow (2020)



## 1. THE PICTURE TWO YEARS LATER

The Constitution is in the process of being drafted, an exit referendum is planned for the second half of 2022, where the population will approve the outcome of the work of the constituents. The protests have ceased (also taking into account the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on public demonstrations and the possibility of crowding). Meanwhile, the government of Piñera, Congress and the political parties suffer a great drop in their approval levels, this leaves an uncertain outlook for the November 2021 elections.

**"There is a very seedy environment for "outsiders,"** for independent candidates, who are known for being more difficult to form a government with. Above all because Chile has a stable political party culture, It is not like now there are 10 new parties, there are still the traditional ones and they will continue to exist for much longer. But under **this scenario an "outsider" or abstention could be the winning option"**



In short, Chile's current outlook shows how the expansion of freedoms and the implementation of a democracy has been leading to the development of increasingly ambitious needs, which, not being adequately answered by the political system and by a process of perfecting democracy itself, creates an accumulation of dissatisfaction, which in this case ended up being channelled through mass demonstrations.

Hence also that the slogans of this movement have been against the current political class and forceful actions have been taken, such as the renewal of the Constitution, in which hopes are placed for a change of system that can reduce the gap of inequality between the population and achieve a more equitable Chile.

(1) CADEM (2021)

On October 2019, Ecuador experienced a wave of mass protests, as the result of the announcement of a series of economic measures taken by the national government. These measures, known as decree 883 or "paquetazo" generated an incredible rejection among the population, which would be affected by the decrease in wages and other benefits of public employees, as well as the elimination of fuel subsidies. This last measure would take the population to the streets.

## PREVIOUS EVENTS: IMF loans and Executive Order 883



**Subsidies:** Subsidies to gasoline and domestic gas have been around for more than 40 years, so rulers and ministers have not proposed eliminating them considering how unpopular this measure would be. This was confirmed by the forced exit from the government of former President Jamil Mahaud in January 2000, after wanting to increase the price of domestic gas by 500%.



**IMF loans:** From the beginning of his administration, Lenin Moreno took popular measures to avoid a crisis of governance. However, in 2019 he completely changed his approach and asked the International Monetary Fund for a loan of 4.2 billion dollars in order to reactivate the country's economy.



**Loan Terms:** These types of loans are given to the government only if it agrees to take certain economic measures to improve the country's economy and repay the borrowed money. Therefore, as part of this agreement, the IMF agreed on a series of measures to liberalize Ecuador's economy.



**Decree 883:** These measures, embodied in "Decree 883" directly affected the budget of the least favoured families. The decision to withdraw the subsidies, doubling the price of diesel and increasing by 25% the price of gasoline (0.49\$ per liter), in turn caused a 40% increase in the cost of public transport. This generated a discontent that manifested itself in weeks of protests against the government.

## THE PROTESTS: discontent of a defrauded population

Protests in various parts of the country, repression, "cacerolazos", states of emergency and human rights violations, this was the reality of Ecuador for more than 10 uninterrupted days.

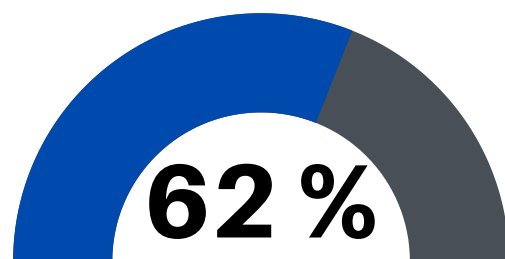
To further investigate the situation and to comprehensively understand the context of the outbreaks in this country, **Valeska Chiriboga, Researcher in the Standing Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDH)** gives her approximations on these events:

### 1. AN INTERRUPTED POLITICAL PROJECT

Lenin Moreno, elected in 2017 as president of Ecuador, represented the continuity of the "Citizen Revolution" project, which had been initiated by his predecessor Rafael Correa. The latter had placed his trust in Moreno and promoted him as a candidate close to his ideals, which managed to attract a considerable number of voters.

However, seeing himself in the midst of his government in an unsustainable economic situation, Moreno decides to ask for a loan from the IMF, and in turn, the institution imposed certain conditions to grant it, including the elimination of the fuel subsidy.

"It is important to remember that the governability of Lenin was not based on his abilities, the people voted for him because of Rafael Correa, since **Moreno represented the continuism of a political model**"



Of Ecuador's total GDP corresponds to public debt payments (1)

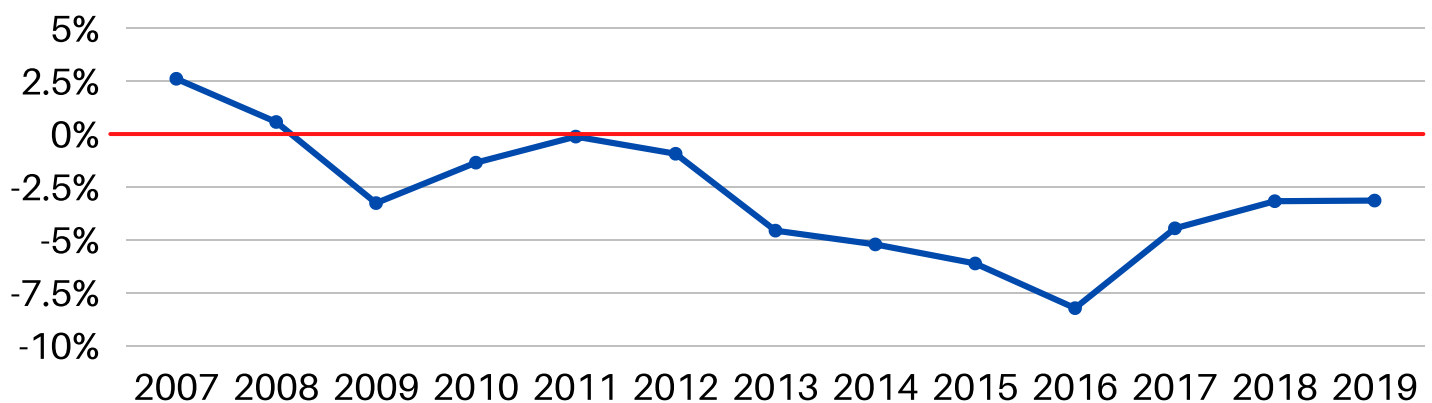
(1)By October 2020, with data from the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Ecuador

## 2. SUBSIDIES: A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN ECUADORIAN POLITICS

Subsidies for hydrocarbons and domestic gas have been in force for more than 40 years. They were implemented in 1974, by the military regime in a context of an increase in domestic oil prices and production, which provided increasing revenue (Elcano Royal Institute, 2019).

The government of Rafael Correa (2007-2017) was characterized by a large public expenditure that represented around 44% of GDP and managed to maintain itself due to the increase in the prices of certain raw materials sold by Ecuador, among which oil stands out. Even though subsidies for gasoline and domestic gas accounted for 3% of GDP, this was in addition to public spending, which accumulated into a large fiscal deficit during the correísmo.

**Government deficit (% of annual GDP)**



Source: Datos Macro (2021)

	"Extra gasoline" per gallon (the most commonly used)
<b>Cost of production</b>	2,08\$
<b>Oficial price</b>	1,4\$
<b>Subsidy per unit</b>	0,6\$

Source: Real Instituto Elcano (2019)

Ecuador's economic situation was reaching critical levels, after more than a decade of presenting deficits in its budgets. Due to this, Lenin Moreno goes to the IMF, which would grant a loan of 4.6 billion dollars for 2019, 3.1 billion dollars in 2020 and 2.5 billion dollars in 2021, for a total of 10.2 billion dollars.

## 3. THE IMF LOAN AND THE "DECREE 883"

Access to IMF loans requires the fulfilment of a number of conditions, many of them consist in measures for liberalizing the economy, such as the elimination of subsidies, among others.

According to Richard Martinez, the Minister of Finance for 2019, access to this credit "was not only about solving fiscal problems but about implementing structural reforms to transform the economy towards a more modern model. This type of agreement allows accompaniment so that this transition does not affect the poorest". These policies to be implemented to access the loan were set out in "Decree 883", which developed policies of a neoliberal nature.

### What did the "Decree 883" consist of?

On October 2, 2019, the "Decree 883" was signed, which states:

- 1- 20% reduction in the remuneration of temporary contracts signed by the public sector
- 2- Reduction of public employees' leave from 30 to 15 days
- 3- To allocate to public finances the salary of one day of each month of public employees
- 4- A temporary special contribution to the public finances of companies with an income of over \$10 million
- 5- A \$15 increase in the Human Development Voucher (between \$50 and \$240 depending on the situation of households) that benefits 1.1 million people
- 6- Elimination of fuel subsidies

"The issue of gasoline subsidies **has been present in the country for decades**, it is something that is more than institutionalized. That is why **previous governments have not even touched on this issue**, because it is very difficult to manage and has economic repercussions. It represents a high expense for the government but also for civil society that **translates into a higher cost of living.**"

## 4. THE OUTBREAK AND THE AGREEMENT

On October 3, 2019, citizens woke up to the reality of the elimination of subsidies. Public transport had increased by 40%, gasoline by 25% and diesel prices had doubled. These types of measures directly affect the lower and middle socio-economic strata, whose a mismatch in their budget due to the increase in the price of public transport, which they use to a large extent. It also increases the cost of different products and services as they are more expensive to mobilize.

### The indigenous movement as a leader

The Confederation of Indigenous Nationals of Ecuador (CONAIE as per its acronym in Spanish) led protests against the elimination of the subsidy. Historically this institution had represented the middle and lower classes and also, when former president Jamil Mahuad (1998 - 2000) tried to abolish the domestic gas subsidy in January 2000, they managed to make him resign by occupying Quito. Therefore, during the October 2019 outbreaks, it was the main actor representing citizens unhappy with the government. Other sectors of civil society would later join.

### The agreement between CONAIE, the United Nations and the government

On October 13, 2019, 10 days after the start of the demonstrations, CONAIE, the government of Moreno and representatives of the United Nations as mediators met to have a dialogue, aiming to end the acts of violence provoked by the measures taken. The meeting led to the repeal of decree 883, another agreement was drawn up, and CONAIE called for the demonstrations to cease.

**"It was no longer a thing of the indigenous movement or CONAIE, it was civil society in the face of an unpopular government that did not respond to the demands of the citizenry and in the face of a discontent that was unbearable"**

## THE CONSEQUENCES: Human Rights Violations and Elimination of Subsidies in the Midst of a Pandemic

After more than 10 days of protests, the events of October 2019 would not go unnoticed in the consciousness of citizens, international actors and Lenin Moreno's own government.

Just as the measures taken in "Decree 883" were not consulted with the population, nor were they communicated in an appropriate manner so that they wouldn't cause the tensions that culminated in the outbreaks, the response to the protests didn't show an intention of dialogue either.

President Moreno ordered the control of the demonstrations to the Armed Forces, a body that is trained for war actions and not for the control of demonstrations led by citizens. This left a significant toll of injuries and deaths:

"During the 11 days of the strike, **the government's response was nothing more than repression**, translated into deaths and human rights violations. **There was no intention to dialogue**, on the contrary (...) the response of the government of Lenin Moreno **were states of exception, curfews and very repressive measures.**"

### THE FINAL BALANCE (1):

**249**

Human rights violations  
perpetrated by State  
actors

**6**

Extrajudicial  
Executions

**14**

Casualties

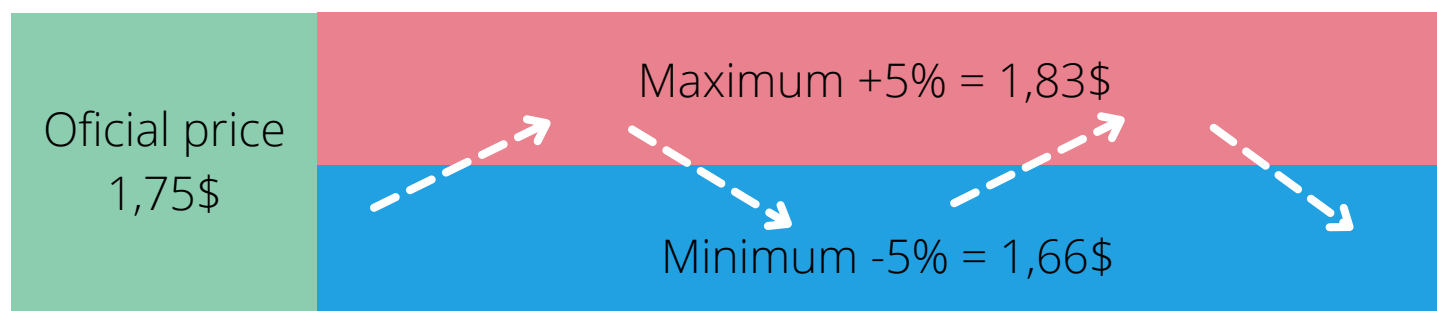
**22**

Alleged cases of  
political persecution

(1) Defensoría del Pueblo de Ecuador (2021)

## 1. INADVERTENTLY, SUBSIDIES ARE AGAIN ELIMINATED

On May 19, 2020 it was announced that the subsidies would be replaced by a "band system", which would allow the price of gasoline to be set according to international quotes but still with some State control, setting a maximum and a minimum price.



According to the Minister of Energy and Non-Renewable Natural Resources of Ecuador, René Ortiz: "The fuel trading system with market prices and fluctuation bands of 5%, ensure relative stability in the market, particularly in the extra gasoline and diesel prices (...) If the band breaks the international market, means that it protects the consumer because the price ceiling is maintained in Ecuador"

## 3. A CHANGE OF MODEL AND THE END OF CORREISMO?

In the second round of the presidential elections held on April 11 2020, Guillermo Lasso, a former banker who presented a model opposed to correismo, was proclaimed the winner.


# 16,3%

was the percentage of invalid votes in the second round, the highest in 40 years (1)

(1) Quiróz & Vélez (2021)

"(...) There is a polarization that makes people prefer this to a continuation of Lenin Moreno's project of citizen revolution. **So I don't think it weighs very much the knowledge that this is a right-wing government but the fact that Guillermo Lasso represented a change of model.**"





NO + ABUSOS

## Conclusions

- 2019 was a year of protests in Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia. The governmental action that generated the social explosion in Chile and Ecuador seem to be similar: the increase in tariffs for a frequently used public product or service, however, the contexts of these countries are extremely different. In Chile the main reason can be identified as social inequality, while in Ecuador there is a discontent for the implementation of a political project for which they did not vote. On the other hand, in Bolivia one can identify as the main motive the permanence of Evo Morales in power without respecting democratic processes. Specifically in Chile, distrust of the political class stands out more than in other countries, even though the policies implemented have improved the general economy of the country.
- In all three countries, protests turned violent and human rights violations were reported. In all three cases the outbreaks achieved their initial objective, however, it is not clear whether the solutions presented resolve the problems (in some cases structural) that caused these outbreaks in the first place.
- Social outbreaks are complex political phenomena that are part of the forms of denunciation of the citizenry. Although they are a valid method, it is preferable to improve the feedback between the government and the citizens so that the demands are channeled before and a massive protest is not necessary to promote a change.

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