

Americas

QUARTERLY



ENTER THE MILLENNIALS

**Will they be more democratic? Less capitalist?
What to expect from a new generation of leaders**

A SPECIAL REPORT



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**Americas Society and
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Americas Quarterly: Politics, Business and Culture in the Americas (ISSN 1936-797X) is an independent publication of Americas Society and Council of the Americas (AS/COA). AS/COA are nonpartisan, not-for-profit organizations founded to promote better understanding and dialogue in the Western Hemisphere. The positions and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors or guest commentators and do not represent those of AS/COA. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from AS/COA.

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A New Generation Takes Charge

Millennial politicians are taking power across Latin America. Will they be more authoritarian than their elders?




THERE ARE ALREADY TWO millennial presidents in Latin America, and they offer starkly different visions of what the next generation of leaders might bring.

Chilean President Gabriel Boric, 36, has prioritized climate change, named a majority-female Cabinet and speaks passionately about democracy, human rights and dialogue with those who think differently. President Nayib Bukele, 41, has by contrast used Twitter and TikTok to vilify El Salvador's opposition and independent press, jailed 50,000 people under a state of emergency since March and recently declared he would run for a second term, even though it's prohibited under his country's constitution.

Which leader more accurately represents the future? That's a question at the core of this new special report. Polls suggest that millennials (generally defined as those born between 1981 and 1996) in Latin America are less committed to democracy and capitalism, and more skeptical of institutions, than their elders. They tend to place more importance on addressing climate, inequality and representation of women, Indigenous people and other groups.

But as the Peruvian journalist Andrea Moncada writes in our cover story, there's a lot of nuance. "It's not that millennials are suddenly giving up on democracy in favor of caudillos," she writes, "or that our generation is being swayed by socialist ideologies and a desire to tear down the capitalist system." If anything unites them, she says, it's the belief that the political class has "failed on its promise to deliver more equitable and just societies."

That reflects a broader anti-incumbent sentiment in Latin America — and it suggests change is coming. As millennials make their way into political office, it seems there are more Borics than Bukeles. But take note: Bukele is wildly popular, with an approval rating above 75%, while Boric and many like him are stuck at levels less than half that. Unless democracy can deliver, and soon, young voters everywhere may be tempted by authoritarian rule. 

Enter the Millennials

The next generation of politicians is already here. Two millennial presidents and scores of legislators, mayors and governors are showing that the change of the guard has already started.

What will this new generation bring to the table?

Our special report starts on page 18.

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A nuanced picture emerges of a generation on the rise.

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Young entrepreneurs renewed business. It's time for politics to follow suit.

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Cubans are crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in record numbers.

By Lisette Poole

ON OUR COVER, FROM UPPER LEFT CLOCKWISE:

Mauricio Toro, 39, former member of Colombia's legislature

Francia Márquez, 40, vice president of Colombia

Gabriel Boric, 36, president of Chile

Nayib Bukele, 41, president of El Salvador

Luis Donald Colosio, 37, mayor of Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico

Luísa Canziani, 26, representative in Brazil's lower house of Congress

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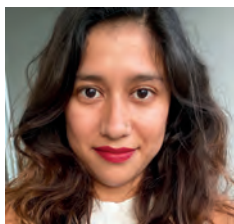
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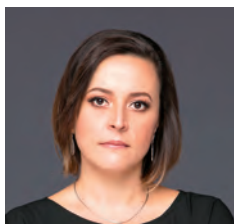
Andrea Moncada

Moncada is a Peruvian journalist and political analyst based in the U.K. She was opinion editor at *El Comercio*, Peru's largest newspaper, from 2018 to 2021.



Lisette Poole

Poole is a writer and photographer based in Mexico City. Her book *La paloma y la ley* documents two women's journeys from Cuba to the U.S. through 13 countries, and was named a 2016 *Time* photobook of the year.



Cristina Tardáguila

Tardáguila is the founder of fact-checker Agência Lupa and a senior program director at the International Center for Journalists. She was associate director of the International Fact-Checking Network between 2019 and 2021 and coordinated the #CoronaVirusFacts alliance, the world's largest collaborative fact-checking project.



Andrew Downie

Downie is a Scots-born foreign correspondent with 30 years of experience reporting in Latin America, much of it in Brazil. His latest book, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, is an oral history of the 1970 World Cup.



Ana Ionova

Ionova is a freelance multimedia journalist based in Brazil. She is a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the BBC World Service and other outlets.

Tell us what you think. Please send letters to Brian@as-coa.org



AQ's managing editor, Cecilia Tornaghi, top left, leads a conversation launching our special report on supply chains. Former Mexican Secretary of Finance and Public Credit José Antonio Meade, top right, joined Shannon K. O'Neil, vice president and senior fellow for Latin America Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.



Amb Antonio Garza

@aoggarza

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.@amerquarterly - Mexico and Washington Can Disagree Without the World Ending. AMLO's no-show at the summit in Los Angeles won't disrupt collaboration on issues like migration.



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Mexico and Washington Can Disagree Without the World Ending
AMLO's no-show at the summit in Los Angeles won't disrupt collaboration on issues like migration.



Patricia Campos Mello

@camposmello

Journalist @Folha; associate research scholar @Columbia; Cabot award; Int'l Press Freedom & King of Spain award; author Lua de mel em Kobane & Maquina do Ódio

Important warning from @robertosimon and @NickZimmerman05 at @americasquarterly - Brazil's Election: A Looming Crisis for Washington



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Brazil's Election: A Looming Crisis for Washington
A meeting between the two presidents in Los Angeles foreshadowed bigger trouble ahead, as Bolsonaro looks set to ...



Hari Seshasayee

@haricito

Advisor @PROCOLOMBIACO & Global Fellow
@TheWilsonCenter. Research on India, Latin
America, foreign policy, trade & energy E:
harisesh@alumni.stanford.edu

This article by @eduardoyeyati for
@AmerQuarterly does a great job of
unpacking what seems like a black box –
Argentina's economy – and does so with
surprising ease & practicality
[americasquarterly.org/article/can-an...](https://americasquarterly.org/article/can-anyone-stop-argentina-s-great-unraveling/)
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Can Anyone Stop Argentina's Great Unraveling?

A workable solution must address the country's dense web of
special privileges.

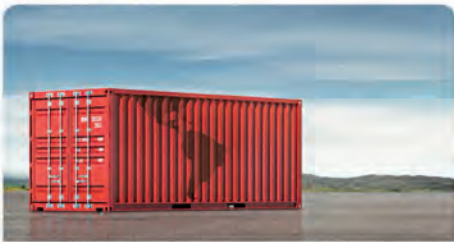


Dan Restrepo

@dan_restrepo

Citizen | Dad | Husband | Strategic Advisor | Current:
@amprog, @latintrade | Alum: @NSC44,
@HouseForeign, @pennlow, @UVA,
@GonzagaGoodNews

#LatAm integration can be propositional or
oppositional (to US). @shannonkoneil does a
great job of laying out the benefits of
integration aimed at making lives better in
"Why Latin America Lost at Globalization—
and How It Can Win Now"
[americasquarterly.org/article/why-la...](https://americasquarterly.org/article/why-la-...) via
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Why Latin America Lost at Globalization—and How It Can Win N...

A case for greater intraregional trade in today's changing world

Javier Corrales

@jcorrales2011 Great essay by @shannonkoneil.
Despite all the lofty talk about integration, Latin
America remains a most disunited civilization.
Infrastructure and antiglobalizers share the
blame via @amerquarterly

Jim Shultz

@jimshultz A good read by Thomas Graham in
@AmerQuarterly on the state of MAS in #Bolivia.

Will Freeman

@WillGFreeman Beautiful story from
@AmerQuarterly on the hometown of Peruvian
poet, César Vallejo.

Nina J. Lahoud

@ninalahoud4paix A compelling read! 📌
"Haitians Deserve a Rethink on International Aid"
via @amerquarterly

Joaquín Requena

@ReqJ · Excelente resumen de
@eduardoyeyati sobre lo que pasa en Argentina.

Evodio Kaltenecker

@Evodio_Kalt · Very interesting piece by @
shannonkoneil via @AmerQuarterly

Jordi Amaral

@AmaralJordi · Panama protests rocking
political establishment, creating opportunities
for outsiders and change in the 2024 elections
@cristinaguev

Kevin Casas

@KevinCasasZ · This is one of sharpest pieces
I've read lately on #LatinAmerica. Very well done
@BrazilBrian !

Chris Lenton

@lenton_chris · interesting podcast here where
@OliverStuenkel argues that left-wing govts in
LatAm, once seen as antagonistic to Washington,
are now seen as seen as good partners,
especially in terms of the environment, LGBT,
human rights

John Otis

@JohnOtis · Excellent piece by @WillGFreeman
that helps explain the region's political instability.
Latin America's Parliamentarism Problem



Pega de Boi (Catch the Bull) is a traditional competition among *vaqueiros* (Brazilian cowboys) in the dry inland areas of Brazil's Northeast region. The men wear leather from head to toe to protect their bodies from the thorny bush during the high-speed race after cattle.

PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY



THE BIG
PICTURE





A man destroys a weapon as part of Mexico's Yes to Disarmament, Yes to Peace initiative, which aims to reduce the number of firearms owned by the civilian population. In the program, people voluntarily and anonymously hand in their firearms in exchange for cash and children's toys.

PHOTO BY GERARDO VIEYRA/NURPHOTO



THE BIG
PICTURE

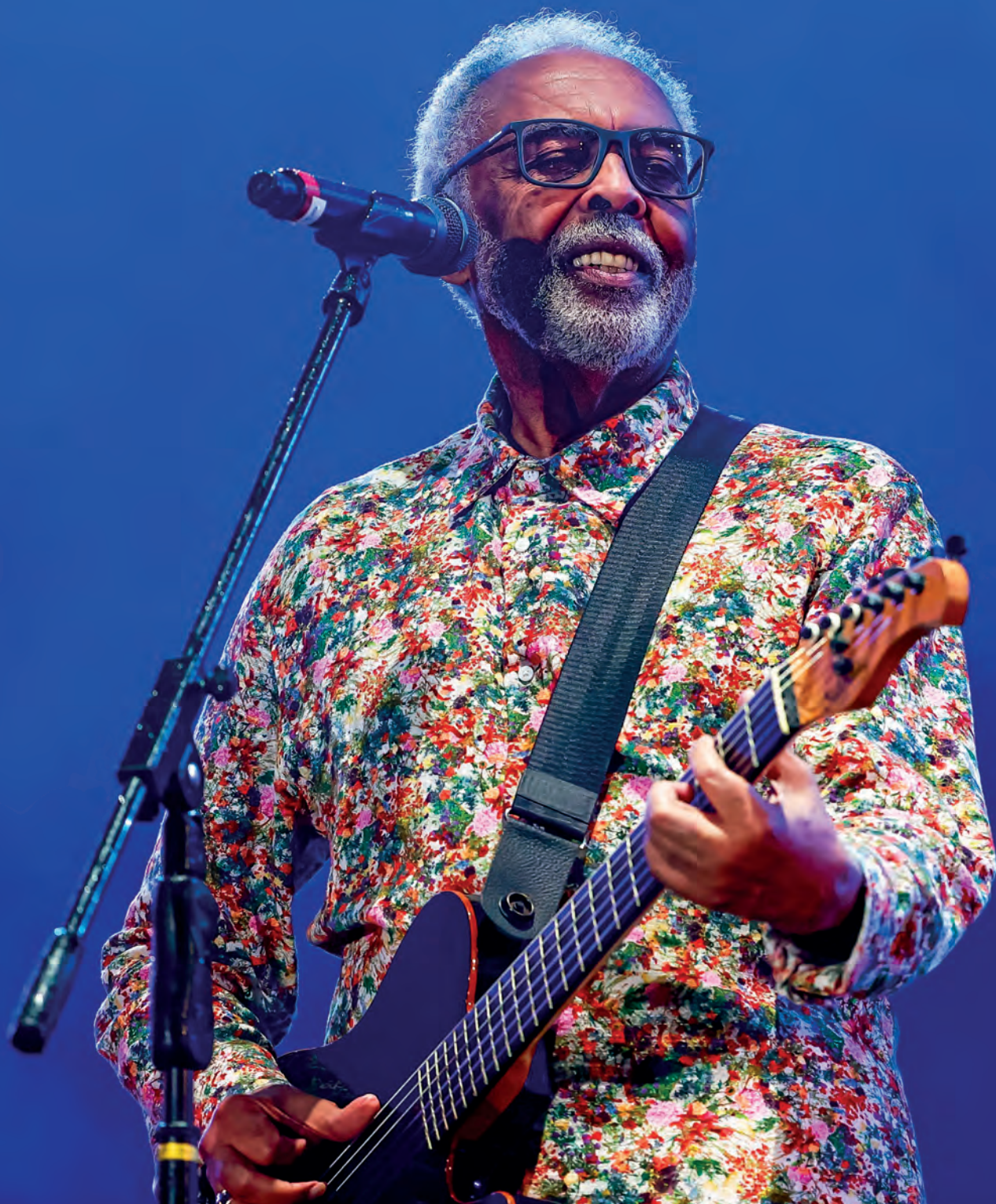


AQ

THE BIG
PICTURE

Gilberto Gil performs at the Rock in Rio Festival in Rio de Janeiro. One of Brazil's most respected and loved musicians, Gil was minister of culture from 2003 to 2008 during the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Rock in Rio is one of the world's largest music events, held every few years, bringing together hundreds of thousands of people for seven days of concerts.

PHOTO BY BUDA MENDES/GETTY





The face of Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014) emerges from an array of recyclable bottles in Plaza de Banderas in the city of Turbaco, Colombia. The piece was created by artist Eduardo Butrón, whose work reflects environmental concerns.

PHOTO BY RAFAEL QUIROZ/AFP/GETTY

AQ

THE BIG
PICTURE

Venezuelan filmmaker, restaurant owner and racing car enthusiast Augusto Pradelli has developed handcrafted vehicles that run on solar energy, which he hopes to mass produce. Here he poses next to two models of electric cars he recently manufactured, in the El Saladillo neighborhood of Maracaibo, Venezuela.

PHOTO BY LUIS BRAVO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES







AS HEARD ON THE AMERICAS QUARTERLY PODCAST

Experts and policymakers join AQ's Editor-in-Chief Brian Winter to discuss the issues currently shaping Latin American politics, business and culture.



“The personal dispute between Alberto Fernández and Cristina Kirchner is so strong that it colors all other programmatic or policy disputes. A split (between them) would mean the government would fall, which could happen in Argentine politics, (and) it would be the end of their prospects.”

—**María Esperanza Casullo**, political scientist and professor at the National University of Río Negro in Argentina



“The region is doing very well in terms of growth. We have increased the growth forecast for many countries and something surprising is that Latin American currencies are still holding up despite all the headwinds.”

—**Ernesto Revilla**, head of Latin American economics at Citigroup



“A very interesting status quo was established in which López Obrador kowtowed to (Trump), and in return Trump said nothing about Mexican politics internally. Biden came into office saying that democracy, human rights (and) the environment would be key ... and on all of those issues López Obrador feels extremely uncomfortable.”

—**Denise Dresser**, Mexican political scientist, writer and activist

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Ignacio Peña

Founder & Executive Chairman, Open Space

Students in Argentina designed a communication device at school. Now it's being sent to space aboard a satellite.

by Martina Graña

AQ: What is Open Space?

Ignacio Peña: Open Space was created in 2019 as a platform for Latin American students interested in space technology. We organize competitions and have received projects from students as young as 16 years old. A panel of judges ranging from university professors to experts in the industry choose the winners, who are then supported by Open Space to bring their ideas to reality. One such idea is now in space! A group of students designed a device that beams information back to Earth. It was included in a satellite sent to orbit by Satellogic, an Earth imaging company.




Students designed a system that beams information back to Earth.

AQ: What inspired you to start the organization?

IP: In 2011, I started thinking to myself, how can we build a better future? I believe that the only way is by transforming Latin America into an innovative region and activating potential modern industries. What is the most valuable thing we have in Argentina? Is it the arable land, the oil from Vaca Muerta? Or is it the younger generation? And are we putting the necessary resources at their disposition? I think not. That is what Open Space tries to do. We want to awaken interest in science and technology and help develop key skills needed for the 21st century.

AQ: What missions has Open Space accomplished so far?

IP: The first competition had more than 900 participants and two teams were selected. One project allowed for the use of low-cost yet high-performance electronics for space missions and the other designed sensors facilitating the design and simulation of future space missions. Another competition resulted in an app called ImpactApps that uses AI to detect fires using satellite images. Recently, a new group of students has designed Moonstat, an open-source satellite made for lunar orbit with the aim of providing GPS services on the moon, which is already in the process of prototype development. 

THIS INTERVIEW HAS BEEN EDITED FOR CLARITY AND LENGTH





COVER STORY

CAN DEMOCRACY DELIVER?

Interviews with a dozen millennial politicians in Latin America yield a nuanced picture — of a generation that is less radical than elders assume, but may lose patience unless its needs are met.

by Andrea Moncada

IT'S ALREADY STARTING to happen: Millennials are taking over Latin America. Our generation now accounts for 23% of the region's population, or roughly 155 million people, making this the largest youth bulge in decades. The youngest millennials are 26 years old and the oldest are turning 41 this year, which means they are increasingly in a position to shape Latin American politics and economics. A few, like Gabriel Boric in Chile and Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, are already at the helm of their countries, giving hints as to what other millennial-led governments may look like in the future.

They represent a generation that differs in important, and sometimes positive, ways from our parents and grandparents. With a few notable exceptions, such as Venezuela, today's young Latin Americans have lived most or all of our adult lives in democracy, able to freely express our views and elect our leaders, unburdened by the military dictatorships that were the rule as recently as the early 1980s. We grew up during an era of economic development, falling poverty rates and broader access to education in Latin America, as well as a technology boom that expanded humanity's horizons at an unprecedented speed.

And yet, that feeling of progress has clearly dissipated in recent years — replaced by economic stagnation, social unrest and a general unease, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, unemployment and underemployment are high on millennials' list of concerns, fueling widespread pessimism about the future. In many countries, the political class has been marred by a seemingly never-ending series of corruption scandals, reinforcing the perception that politics only benefits the well-connected few. Despite elites' promises to build more meritocratic and egalitarian societies, young people still face dis-

crimination and entrenched class structures in our everyday lives. Across the region, from Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador in 2019 to Colombia, Panama and Mexico more recently, young people have taken to the streets to express their discontent with the political class and living standards in general.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that Latin American millennials express higher levels of ambivalence than previous generations toward both democracy and capitalism. Sentiment on such questions varies considerably by country, but according to a major region-wide survey in 2020 by Latinobarómetro, 32% of millennials across Latin America feel there is "no difference" between a democratic and an authoritarian regime. That compares to 29% of people between 41 and 60 who said the same, and 23% of those 61 and older. Meanwhile, nearly a third of millennials disagreed with the statement, "A market economy is the only system with which my country can develop," compared to 26.1% and 22.7% among the next two older generations, respectively.

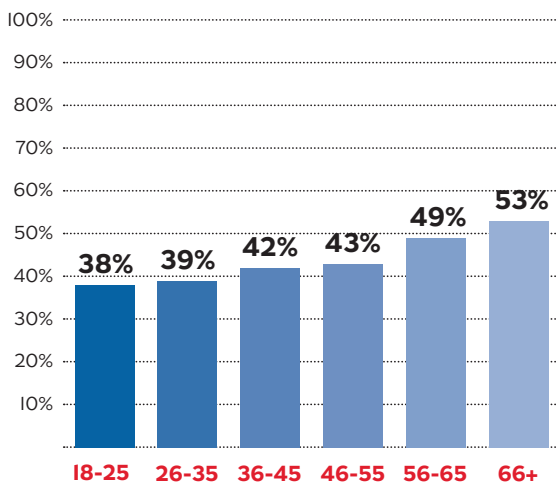
There is nuance to these numbers, though. It's not that millennials are suddenly giving up on democracy in favor of caudillos, or that our generation is being swayed by socialist ideologies and a desire to tear down the capitalist system. A narrow majority — 52% — still prefer democracy over authoritarianism in all circumstances, and support for market policies is even higher, at 63%. Even in Chile, which was branded as a bastion of millennial radicalism following the 2021 election of Boric, a former student activist, 55% of millennials report a favorable view of market policies — and voters of all ages recently rejected what would have been one of the world's most progressive constitutions.

So, what is it that Latin American millennials really want from politics? Are we headed toward an

Younger Latin Americans ...

... have less trust in elections ...

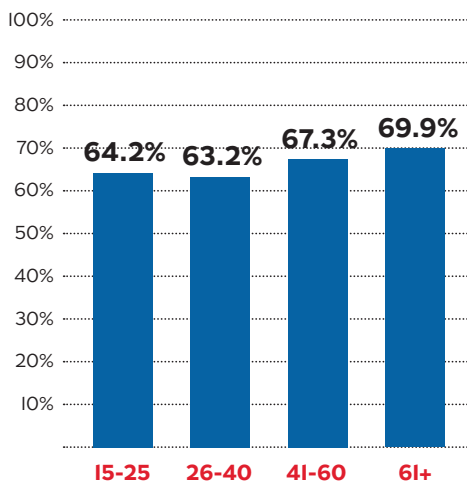
Numbers show the percentage of respondents answering from 5 to 7 on a 7-point scale of how much they trust elections in their country.



SOURCE: AMERICASBAROMETER 2021

... have slightly less support for capitalism ...

Asked whether the free market was the only path to development, generational cohorts differed slightly.

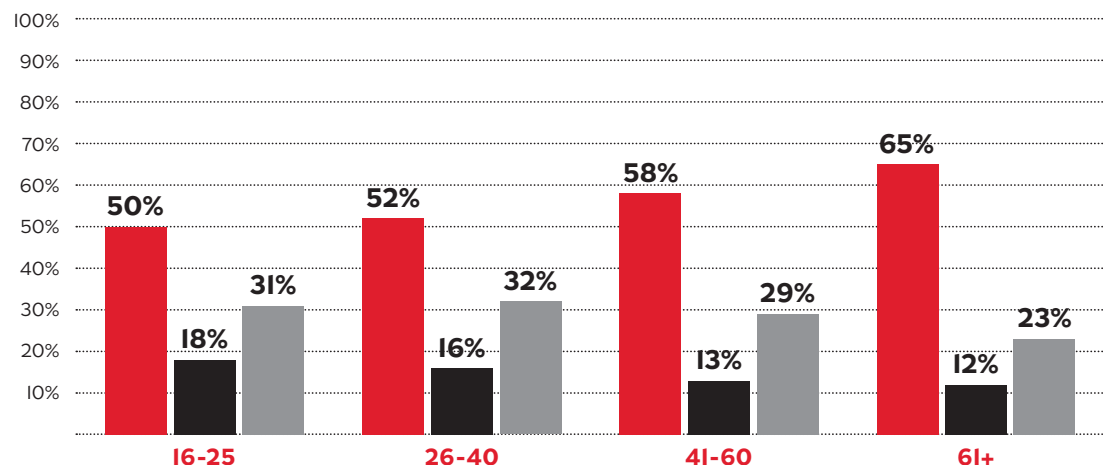


SOURCE: LATINOBARÓMETRO 2020

... and their support for democracy is more conditional.

Respondents were asked if they support democracy in all cases, authoritarianism in some cases, or if they were indifferent.

■ DEMOCRACY ALWAYS ■ AUTHORITARIANISM SOMETIMES ■ INDIFFERENCE



SOURCE: LATINOBARÓMETRO 2020

era of healthy democracies, or will this generation be tempted by the allure of authoritarian rule? Will priorities such as inequality, climate change and anti-extractivism move to the top of national agendas — or will the status quo essentially remain in place? In search of answers, or at least some insight into these questions, I spoke to a dozen politicians who hail from this generation. These individuals, who are from Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, Panama, Argentina, Chile and Mexico, are current or recent officeholders, or are in the process of building a political movement in their countries. Their views range from the progressive left, to centrist liberalism, to right-wing libertarianism.

There were, of course, many differences. But despite their diversity, one overarching theme stood out. All of them believe their political class, whether on the left or right, has failed on its promise to deliver more equitable and just societies. And that unless they can quickly succeed themselves, their generation's patience with politicians — and perhaps democracy itself — may indeed run out. "Young people are among those inclined toward authoritarianism, and I can understand why," Gabriel Silva, 33, a Panamanian congressman who ran as an independent, told me. "There is enormous frustration ... enormous discontent."

SEEKING REFORM, NOT REVOLUTION

MANY OF THE YOUNG politicians I interviewed said they were called to action by the crises of recent years — and the feeling they could not leave solutions to the older generations. For Tabata Amaral, 28, a federal congresswoman for the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), it was the 2013 protests against inflation and stagnant living standards in Brazil. Thirty-year-old Samuel Pérez, Guatemalan congressman for the center-left Movimiento Semilla, credited 2015 demonstrations against corruption in Otto Pérez Molina's government, when he was still a university student, as his watershed moment. Edu-

ardo Leite, 37, the former governor of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, said the Lava Jato corruption scandal of the 2010s tainted an entire generation of older politicians — implying the task was left to figures in his own age group. And Álvaro Zicarelli, 40, foreign policy advisor to Javier Milei, the libertarian Argentine presidential hopeful, was spurred by what he described as the overly burdensome COVID-19 restrictions in his country.

All of those I spoke to overcame major barriers to entry — including their own distaste for the profession. "I always had a very negative view of politicians. I felt disappointment, even disgust," said Mauricio Toro, 39, a former Colombian congressman for the Partido Verde who served between 2018 and 2022. Luis Donaldo Colosio, 37, the current mayor of Monterrey, Mexico, wasn't originally comfortable with the idea of participating in public service, despite getting offers from parties from an early age, and only warmed up to it after working for years as an advisor to his small political party, Movimiento Ciudadano.

Despite this distaste with the status quo, most of the young politicians I interviewed did not speak in terms of radical structural economic and political change. While they seek to renew their national politics and economics, this transformation — contrary to the stereotypes held by older generations — isn't framed in revolutionary or even particularly ideological terms. This may be because they feel that enhanced economic opportunities, better quality education, the protection of individual freedoms and social inclusion are simply their natural rights. Indeed, the picture that emerged is that millennials haven't stopped believing in the ideals of democracy and the market. They are frustrated with how these have worked in practice, and want to improve the current system, not replace it.

Indeed, the demands I heard were more pragmatic in nature. Eliminating corruption was a common theme, as well as better access to employment and educational opportunities. "Most young people don't support a radical agenda (in Panama). They are interested in specific issues," said Silva. Pedro Kumamoto,



**“I ALWAYS HAD A VERY NEGATIVE
VIEW OF POLITICIANS. I FELT
DISAPPOINTMENT, EVEN DISGUST.”**

**MAURICIO TORO, 39,
FORMER COLOMBIAN CONGRESSMAN**

32, a former state legislator and a current city councillor in Mexico's Jalisco state, finds there is a generalized anxiety among his generation regarding very material concerns, like housing, working hours, retirement and social security. In other words, "what the previous century's revolutions supposedly gave us." These are needs that are "common sense" for Ana Martínez Chamorro, 34, a member of the Chilean party *Revolución Democrática*.

The main way to achieve these goals, according to the politicians I interviewed, is to ensure that Latin America's political class actually fulfills its representative function. "The biggest problem (in Brazil) is politics' disconnection with the people," said Amaral. In Colombia, traditional political parties make decisions that have nothing to do with the reality that voters experience, agreed Toro, fueling a generalized distrust. Across the region, younger generations do not see themselves reflected in party politics and want to see the old political class replaced. After Peruvian President Martín Vizcarra was impeached by Congress in 2020, a move considered highly corrupt and undemocratic by the majority of the country, it was mostly young people who took to the streets to protest, chanting, "The dinosaurs are going to disappear."

These concerns seem straightforward. It's hard to disagree with providing young people better opportunities in life. Demanding more political representation is not, at first glance, a controversial issue. At least theoretically, democracy is about providing a seat at the table to all groups in a society. But while Latin American millennials might think their demands are sensible, they face a significant challenge: The elites that have ruled Latin America for decades don't have much incentive to change the status quo.

SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

TO UNDERSTAND WHY requires looking at the last three decades of Latin America's history. As recently as 1977, there were just three true democracies in the region: Costa Rica, Colombia and (ironically) Venezuela. Today, by contrast,

more than 90% of the region's population lives in democracies, although many of them are backsliding or under threat. This transition has seen its share of progress: Social movements supporting causes like Indigenous representation, gender equality, access to abortion and the protection of sexual minorities have successfully campaigned for more political and socioeconomic rights. And yet, as the saying goes, the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. Despite the election of left-wing governments in the early 2000s that sought to increase the role of the state in the economy after years of structural adjustment policies, and that promised to bring about social justice for the underprivileged, Latin America's oligarchic tendencies and high levels of inequality remain.

One explanation for this is that democratization in the region was largely a top-down, elite-controlled affair. In Brazil and Peru, military juntas were able to leave power largely under their own terms, and retain a degree of influence that helped protect the status quo. The end of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship in 1990 saw the return of many of the same figures, including Presidents Patricio Aylwin and Eduardo Frei, who had been prominent in Chilean politics prior to the 1973 coup. Elsewhere, too, including Argentina, governing returned to the hands of those elites who had been in charge before democracy was interrupted, and they often chose political stability over large-scale reform.

Another barrier is that Latin American economies are built in a way that entrenches inequality. Driven by the commodity boom of the 2000s, countries doubled down on primary resource extraction, like mining, gas and oil, as their main source of wealth. But these are not labor-intensive industries, and so elites have little reason to invest in their workforces. Leftist governments relied on limited-impact welfare policies like conditional cash transfers, which targeted populations in extreme poverty. But the measures that would more widely transform people's living conditions, like tax reform, tertiary education reform or streamlining labor markets, either went against elite interests or were unpopular among the population.

**“THE BIGGEST PROBLEM (IN BRAZIL)
IS POLITICS’ DISCONNECTION
WITH THE PEOPLE.”**

TABATA AMARAL, 28,
FEDERAL CONGRESSWOMAN FOR THE BRAZILIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSB)





**“MOST YOUNG PEOPLE DON’T
SUPPORT A RADICAL AGENDA
(IN PANAMA). THEY ARE INTERESTED
IN SPECIFIC ISSUES.”**

GABRIEL SILVA, 33,
PANAMANIAN CONGRESSMAN WHO RAN AS AN INDEPENDENT

KEEPING AN ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT POSTURE AND REMAINING ABOVE THE FRAY IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE OVER TIME.

In other words, millennials have inherited a political and economic structure that is stacked against them. Those who now seek to improve the system face an additional obstacle: Party systems in the region have turned increasingly rigid in the past two decades. In the 1980s and '90s, countries generally had low requirements for registering a political party, in terms of signatures, the number of affiliates, electoral thresholds to avoid legal cancellation and so on. This was because during democratic transitions, parties became fundamental and were considered a way to channel citizens' political views. But since then, political elites have tried to retain power and prevent fragmentation by closing their party systems and making it harder to create and register new political movements.

This is a particularly difficult issue for today's young politicians, who often do not want to run under traditional parties considered unpopular and lacking in legitimacy. The politicians I spoke to reported significant, and sometimes astounding, bureaucratic obstacles in the path to building their own movements. Guatemalan legislation, for example, formally requires parties to present 25,000 signatures for registration, but Samuel Pérez told me that since the electoral board usually rejects around 80% of the signatures presented, Movimiento Semilla had to present 100,000 signatures in total to reach the threshold. Each signature also had to be certified by a lawyer. In Mexico, Kumamoto's party, Futura, was required to hold 88 municipal assemblies — each of which needed to have at least 0.2% of Jalisco state's population present. Indira Huilca, 34, a former Peruvian parliamentarian elected in 2016, pointed out that while Peruvian legislators removed the registration requirement of 100,000 signatures, parties now need to have committees in at least two-thirds of the country's regions,

and in no fewer than a third of the provinces. Young people may have the enthusiasm and drive to participate in politics, but as newcomers they usually lack experience and resources, making it hard to navigate tangled legal systems.

Even if millennial politicians make it through the bureaucratic hurdles and manage to get elected, keeping an anti-establishment posture and remaining above the fray is almost impossible over time. In Peru, former congresswoman and two-time presidential candidate Verónica Mendoza was once considered an exciting progressive newcomer. But that began to change after her party, Nuevo Perú, formed an electoral alliance with leftist hardliner Vladimir Cerrón in 2019, provoking dozens of party members to resign in protest. After participating in President Pedro Castillo's government, Nuevo Perú is now seen by many Peruvians as just another corrupt, self-interested party. And the ultimate cautionary tale in this vein may be Boric — who took office in March as the exciting face of a new generation, and then saw his approval rating fall into the 30s barely a month later, as he was unable to tackle problems like inflation, crime and political deadlock.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

EVEN THE TOOLS that are supposed to favor millennial politicians may actually be working against them. Latin America has some of the world's highest rates of usage for platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Some millennial politicians, such as Huilca, Silva and Toro, believe these tools make them more attuned to the electorate than their

older peers. “Young politicians are better at connecting with people’s real needs, better at engaging through social media,” said Toro. But there is little evidence that social media fosters effective forms of political engagement, like voter turnout. In fact, studies in Europe have pointed to the opposite: Internet usage has lowered turnout in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

In fact, it’s pretty clear that social media has a negative impact on individuals’ evaluation of democracy. The 2018 AmericasBarometer report indicates that only 37.7% of heavy social media users in Latin America were satisfied with democracy, compared to 43.8% of non-users. The former also report less trust in institutions like the justice system, parliament and elections. This doesn’t necessarily make them authoritarian — social media users express higher support for democracy as an ideal — but the constant exposure to information makes users hyper-aware of the flaws in their political class, especially when these platforms also function as their main source of news. Social media can also exacerbate polarization among the political elite, according to Pablo Argote, a researcher at Columbia University who studies the political effects of social media. He has found that in Chile, political elite interactions on Facebook in the past 10 years pushed them toward more extreme views because negative and angry posts were more widely shared. In such an environment, it becomes extremely difficult for politicians to pass minor legislation — much less tackle difficult, urgent priorities such as climate change.

We are already witnessing what happens when a young politician combines social media with an authoritarian, populist style of governing. Bukele, El Salvador’s controversial president, has been described as the world’s first authoritarian millennial because he has built a modern personal brand through social media that allows him to disregard democratic institutions. He speaks directly to both the population and his officials on platforms like Twitter, making him seem transparent and personable, traits that are valued by voters disillusioned with politics and especially by young people. But at

the same time, his strong support — approaching 90% in some polls — has emboldened him to make authoritarian moves such as ordering troops into parliament to pressure legislators into approving a security bill.

DEMOCRATIC OVER PERSONALISTIC LEADERS

INDEED, SOME WORRY that Bukele represents the future in Latin America; that his corrosive brand of politics will win over adherents who see institutions as hopeless bastions of self-dealing elites, and place their faith in supposedly pure individuals instead. They point to other personalistic leaders, including Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro, Mexico’s President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and Argentine Congressman Javier Milei, and say this process is already underway. If economies remain damaged in the wake of the pandemic, and social media continues to drive polarization and make compromise impossible, their millennial successors may become even less democratic in years ahead.

For that dire scenario to be averted, the region’s political and business elites will have to be convinced that genuine reform — the kind that allows economies to grow, narrows the inequality gap and provides incentives for a green future — is in their interest. Large parts of the population would have to mobilize, not just on social media, but on the streets or through organized civil society, to help ensure such a transition. And though it may sound like a contradiction, citizens will also have to understand that structural change takes time — and give their elected leaders the space to succeed.

It’s a daunting task. But we have seen previous generations of democratically elected politicians in Latin America deliver positive, if imperfect results. Now it’s millennials’ turn to do even better.

Moncada is a Peruvian journalist and political analyst currently based in the U.K.

State of Youth in Politics

Millennials are already moving into important roles in Latin American politics. In addition to the region's two millennial presidents, Gabriel Boric of Chile and Nayib Bukele of El Salvador, this generation is also increasingly present in legislatures, mayors' offices and city councils. South America has a higher percentage of national legislators under 40 (29.8%) than any other region globally, according to a 2021 study from the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Here, AQ looks at indicators measuring youth participation in politics—and profiles leading politicians age 40 and under in eight Latin American countries.

by AQ Editors



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

ARGENTINA

Amid the country's deep financial crisis, polling has shown that the main future concern for Argentines between 16 and 34 is their economic situation. Elections are set for 2023, but according to a 2021 study from think tank CIPPEC, 52% of 12-to-24-year-olds surveyed said their ideas are not represented by any political party and/or candidate.

31.6

Median age
of population

54.4

Average age
in Congress

25

Minimum age to
run for Congress

28

Age of youngest
national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Camila Crescimbeni

MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, **32**

Crescimbeni represents Buenos Aires province and is a member of the Propuesta Republicana (PRO) party founded by former President Mauricio Macri. She is the former president of the PRO's youth wing and a former director of youth inclusion at the national youth institute. Crescimbeni authored the Yolanda Law, which provides sustainable development training to public officials and was passed in 2020.



Anabel Fernández Sagasti

SENATOR, **38**

Fernández Sagasti has been in Congress since 2011 and heads the Partido Justicialista's Mendoza chapter. A member of the *kirchnerista* youth movement La Cámpora, she is seen as an ally of the vice president. Fernández Sagasti lists the environment and housing among her priorities and has presented a bill to create a national program providing jobs for the unemployed.



Emmanuel Ferrario

MEMBER OF THE BUENOS AIRES CITY LEGISLATURE, **37**

Ferrario is the vice president of the capital's legislature and a member of the PRO. He previously worked as an adviser to Horacio Rodríguez Larreta and María Eugenia Vidal. Ferrario's initiatives include reform of the capital's teaching statute and ¿Te votarías?, the PRO's project to find 200 people new to politics to run for local office in Buenos Aires in 2023.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

BRAZIL

A record 156 million Brazilians are eligible to vote in this year's general elections, and since 2018 the number of 16- and 17-year-olds registered to vote increased by 51% to 2.1 million. Of the registered candidates, 44% are under 40 years old (12,440 out of 28,274 candidates total). Whether the elections will bring political renewal remains to be seen. Those elected in October will take office in January.

33.2

Median age of population

50.9

Average age in Congress

21

Minimum age to run for Congress

26

Age of youngest national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



João Campos

MAYOR OF RECIFE, **28**

The youngest-ever mayor of Recife, a capital city in Brazil's Northeast, and a member of the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB), Campos is the scion of a political dynasty and previously served part of a term in the lower house of Congress. Since entering office in 2021, Campos has prioritized Recife's COVID-19 vaccination campaign and the construction of bike lanes and a large park.



Luísa Canziani

MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, **26**

Canziani hails from Paraná in southern Brazil and is a member of the Partido Social Democrático (PSD), one of the parties in President Jair Bolsonaro's base. She entered Congress in 2019, the year her father, Alex Canziani, left, as the youngest-ever deputy. Education is a priority issue for Canziani, who was the rapporteur for the homeschooling bill backed by the Bolsonaro administration.



Dani Monteiro

MEMBER OF THE RIO DE JANEIRO STATE LEGISLATURE, **31**

In 2018, Monteiro became the youngest woman ever voted to join Rio's state legislature, where she heads the commission on human rights. She grew up in a Rio favela and has been a member of the leftist Partido Socialismo e Liberdade (PSOL) since 2015. Monteiro, whose areas of focus include feminism, racial equality and youth, was formerly an advisor to Marielle Franco, the Rio councilwoman who was assassinated in March 2018.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

CHILE

Former leaders from Chile's influential student movement have steadily entered elected office since 2011. The most prominent example is 36-year-old President Gabriel Boric, whose initial cabinet had an average age of 49. Since the widespread protests of late 2019, Chile has held several elections that have brought in new leadership at the national and local levels.

35.2

Median age of population

52.1

Average age in Congress

21

Minimum age to run for Congress

25

Age of youngest national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Giorgio Jackson

MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, **35**

A member of Boric's inner circle who led his presidential campaign, Jackson is a former student activist and two-term legislator in the lower house. He launched his own party, Revolución Democrática, in 2012, and helped found the Frente Amplio, the coalition that Boric ran under in the 2021 election. Jackson started as Boric's chief of staff, and following the September constitutional referendum and cabinet shuffle, Boric appointed Jackson to head a different ministry.



Irací Hassler

MAYOR OF A DISTRICT IN SANTIAGO, **31**

Hassler is a former student leader who previously served on Santiago's city council. She came to national prominence in 2021, when she was elected mayor of a district in downtown Santiago, becoming the first Communist to hold that office. Hassler's agenda includes promoting gender equality and addressing climate change, and she has had to contend with rising crime in her district.



Diego Schalper

MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, **37**

Schalper is serving his second term in the lower house and is the secretary general and one of the younger faces of the conservative Renovación Nacional party. Schalper's priorities include promoting entrepreneurship and decentralization. He has been a vocal critic of the process to draft a new Constitution and of the Boric administration.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

COLOMBIA

March's legislative elections brought more newcomers to national politics; according to *La Silla Vacía*, two out of five members of Congress are not career politicians. A bill presented in July would allow more young people to join Congress by lowering the age of eligibility to run for the lower house from 25 to 18, and in the Senate from 30 to 25.

31.2

Median age of population

N/A

Average age in Congress

25

Minimum age to run for Congress

26

Age of youngest national legislator

NOTE: Average age of Congress members elected in March 2022 not yet available as of August 2022. Ages as of October 2022.



Francia Márquez

VICE PRESIDENT, **40**

An internationally renowned environment activist and social leader, Márquez is the first Afro-Colombian vice president. Prior to joining President Gustavo Petro's ticket, she received the third-highest number of votes of any candidate in the March primaries, behind only Petro and Federico Gutiérrez. Márquez will lead a future Ministry of Equality and has stated that she will promote social, racial, gender and economic justice, as well as confront the climate crisis.



David Racero

PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, **36**

Racero is a member of the Pacto Histórico and a longstanding Petro ally. He entered politics as the youth coordinator for two of Petro's campaigns and ran youth programs in Bogotá while Petro was mayor from 2012 to 2015. Racero has said he seeks to "lead the big transformations that young people want," and his priorities include pension, health and education reform and eliminating the police anti-riot squad.



Miguel Uribe Turbay

SENATOR, **36**

Former President Álvaro Uribe (no relation) chose Miguel Uribe Turbay to head the right-wing Centro Democrático party's 2022 Senate list. Uribe Turbay received the most Senate votes in Bogotá this year, campaigning on promoting private enterprise and improving public safety. He has been a critic of Petro since they were both in the Bogotá government (Uribe Turbay joined the capital's city council at age 25), and stands to be a vocal member of the opposition.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

GUATEMALA

Guatemala's population is young even by regional standards, and many in the younger generation have expressed their frustration with the current political class and the administration of President Alejandro Giammattei. Ahead of the June 2023 general elections, domestic and international scrutiny over government corruption has been heightened.

22.4

Median age
of population

47

Average age
in Congress

18

Minimum age to
run for Congress

22

Age of youngest
national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Álvaro Arzú Escobar

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **37**

Arzú Escobar is the secretary general of the right-wing Unionista party and was the legislature's president from 2018 to 2019. He is the son of former president and five-term mayor of Guatemala City Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen, a legendary power broker. Arzú Escobar was a vocal critic of the U.N.-backed CICIG anti-corruption commission and the Guatemalan investigators who worked with it.



Román Castellanos

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **37**

A member of the center-left Movimiento Semilla party, Castellanos is focused on environmental issues, youth development and reforms to strengthen Guatemala's democracy and electoral system. As president of the congressional youth commission, Castellanos has recently called attention to alleged police abuses during student protests and alleged irregularities in the administration of the public university system.



Andrea Villagrán

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **30**

Villagrán got involved in politics after participating in the student movement and protests against corruption in 2015. She has been the youngest woman in Congress since 2017 and was reelected through 2024 with the center-right Bienestar party. She has focused on pushing anti-corruption and women's empowerment legislation and leads the Central American Forum for Women in Legislatures.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

MEXICO

In a 2019 survey by the Grupo de Diarios América, 40% of millennial and Gen Z respondents from Mexico said the government has no credibility, and 53% of millennials and 45% of Gen Z Mexicans reported that political parties have no credibility. Young voters represent a key electoral bloc in Mexico — there are 26 million registered voters aged 18 to 29.

29.4

Median age
of population

51.1

Average age
in Congress

21

Minimum age to
run for Congress

23

Age of youngest
national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Luisa María Alcalde Luján

LABOR SECRETARY, **35**

Alcalde Luján served in Congress from 2012 to 2015 and was the secretary of the lower house's labor and social welfare commission. She was the national youth and student coordinator for Morena and is now part of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's cabinet, where her portfolio includes unions, the labor system, and the labor provisions within the USMCA, such as collective bargaining agreements.



Hiram Hernández

MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, **28**

Hernández hails from Ciudad Juárez and is the president of Red de Jóvenes X México, a youth group run by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). His party has a training program for politicians and a youth quota — 30% of candidates must be under 35. Hernández was elected to Congress last year and presides over the environment commission in the lower house.



Verónica Delgadillo

SENATOR, **39**

A member of the center-left Movimiento Ciudadano party, Delgadillo leads the Senate commission on development and social welfare. She was previously a member of the lower house and the Jalisco state legislature. A self-described feminist and environmental activist, Delgadillo has proposed initiatives to address gender violence and corruption. She has become known for wearing T-shirts emblazoned with causes like “Ni una menos” to Senate sessions.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

PERU

Peru's turbulent presidential politics have captured widespread attention, but the country has also undergone recent changes at the legislative level. Last year's elections brought in representatives of four parties that were new to Congress. Regional and municipal elections this October may bring more young people into politics — there is a 20% quota for candidates under 30 in local elections.

28.4

Median age
of population

48.3

Average age
in Congress

25

Minimum age to
run for Congress

28

Age of youngest
national legislator

NOTE: Average age rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Sigrid Bazán

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **32**

A former journalist and television presenter, Bazán was elected in 2021 as part of the leftist Juntos por el Perú party. Bazán backed President Pedro Castillo's plan to hold a referendum to ask Peruvians if they want a new Constitution, but criticized his administration for "turning to the right." She has introduced a bill to block public officials accused of corruption from running for president.



Alejandro Caverro

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **30**

Caverro has stated that he is a member of the "liberal right," and joined Congress in 2021 as part of the right-wing Avanza País party. He is a former political and communications adviser to the Pedro Pablo Kuczynski administration and his party, Peruanos por el Cambio (PPC). A member of the LGBTQ community, Caverro announced plans to introduce a bill legalizing same-sex unions.



Adriana Tudela

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **34**

Tudela is a member of the conservative Avanza País party and her father was a former vice president and foreign minister during the Alberto Fujimori administration. She is serving her first term in Congress and was previously an advisor to former President of Congress Pedro Olaechea. Tudela has proposed reforms such as voluntary voting and holding midterm congressional elections and introduced a bill to reinstate congressional reelection.



LATIN AMERICA'S YOUTH MOVEMENT IN POLITICS

VENEZUELA

During the economic crisis and political repression brought by the dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro, about 7 million Venezuelans have fled, including young members of the opposition who continue to protest the regime from abroad. Others, like the 39-year-old leader Juan Guaidó, recognized by some in the international community as Venezuela's interim president, have remained to oppose *chavismo*.

28.2

Median age
of population

N/A

Average age
in Congress

21

Minimum age to
run for Congress

22

Age of youngest
national legislator

NOTE: Ages rounded to one decimal place. Data as of October 2022.



Marialbert Barrios

FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **31**

Barrios was elected to the National Assembly in 2015, becoming the youngest member to join the body. She resigned in January 2021, just before legislators who won office in the December 2020 elections were set to start their terms. She represented a district of Caracas and is among a group of prominent young leaders within the Primero Justicia party. Barrios has focused on women's empowerment initiatives both in and out of political office.



Nicolás Maduro Guerra

MEMBER OF CONGRESS, **32**

Also known as "Nicolásito," Maduro's son held government appointments before he was elected to the National Constituent Assembly that the regime created in 2017. The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned him in 2019, and in 2020 he was elected to Congress in a poll that many international observers criticized. He was in the government's delegation at negotiations with the opposition in August 2021.



Miguel Pizarro

GUAI DÓ INTERIM GOV'T'S COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNITED NATIONS, **34**

Pizarro is a member of the Primero Justicia party and was first elected to the National Assembly at age 21, representing a district of Caracas. He started his political career in the student movement and the anti-government protests of 2007. In his current role, he is a vocal critic of the Maduro government's human rights violations on the international stage.

“I’m Optimistic About the World We’re Headed Toward”

President Ricardo Lagos on today’s young generation of leaders, how they’re different, and what they still need to learn

CHILE’S FORMER PRESIDENT RICARDO LAGOS (2000–2006) is one of Latin America’s true statesmen. Now 84, he also began his political career quite young — in 1972, when Salvador Allende designated him ambassador to the Soviet Union. In this interview, he speaks to *AQ* Editor-in-Chief Brian Winter about why he’s bullish on today’s young generation of politicians, including his successor as president: 36-year-old Gabriel Boric.



Former President of Chile Ricardo Lagos is positive about Latin America's new generation of politicians.

Q. In Latin America, Chile is the most emblematic case of a new generation that has taken power. In your opinion, what makes them different from previous generations?

A. Well, I'd say it's been a very successful group from a political point of view. I remember when many of them started, as a new generation in the student organizations in 2010 and 2011, when there were student protests in Chile. They were the leaders.

Q. Would you have ever imagined at that time that 10 years later they would be running the government?

A. Never! They seemed so young. Anyway. Some of them went directly from receiving money from their parents to study in the university to the stipend that legislators receive from parliament. That's not a bad way to start a political career. And they were very successful at capturing people's imaginations.

And you saw the latest, right? In which one of them even became president. There wasn't even a debate on who was going to be the candidate, because several of the others (from the group of former student leaders), who could have been candidates, weren't yet of the age the constitution requires to be president. (*Ed. note: The age is 35.*) Isn't that amazing? One could say that Boric is 'the oldest' of the group, and that's why he became president.

Q. How do you think their values are different from past generations?

A. Well, I'd say this stems from a country that has had fast economic growth. To cite just a few figures: In 20 years, Chile saw its average income double to \$22,000 per person. However, it maintained the same fiscal income, at about 20% of GDP. A richer Chilean society implied that society was demanding more goods and services from the state.

Today in Chilean universities, for every 10 young people, seven are the first generation in their family who gets to the university. Well, we're also very proud of that, but it must be paid for. How can you have such fast economic growth, but the fiscal income stays the same? So, there's a dissatisfaction because I'm earning more than before, but I can't get to the end of the month, when before I could. So you have this situation where we have more money, we have more resources, but we're also more unhappy.

When you have the social explosion in Chile, the famous October of 2019, when we had the origins of this need to produce a new constitution, that's when it became indispensable to understand this task we had before us.

Q. Throughout Latin America we see a generation of young people with a lot of focus on inequality, on public services, as you just mentioned, and on climate change, among other areas. What do you think today's young people are missing, though?

Are there any lessons they haven't learned yet, or have forgotten?


A. I think they're lacking a certain knowledge of the apparatus of the state, and how it works, what its problems are. It's not enough to think, "I want to improve and have better taxes and to have ...". No! How do you do it? What are the tools? And that requires experience, that requires experience. It's not easy.

Q. You began very young in politics as well, more than 50 years ago. If you were young again, would you go into politics?

A. It was a different era. I'm from the era of the Industrial Revolution. The world was clear and simple. There are a few who have the capital to buy the machine. There are the others who only have their labor to make the machine run. So the world is divided between those (two groups). You see? How clear it is, there's left and right, you see where everybody is.

Now, instead, we're going through a digital revolution. This is a Copernican change, a new world is emerging. ... The power centers are less clear. When you talk about the United Nations, the Millennium Development Goals — these are things that come from the industrial world. We still have to reduce poverty, we have to improve the distribution of income, all of that. But there are new questions we're only beginning to understand.

Q. Does this new generation make you more skeptical, or more optimistic about the future?

A. I'm optimistic about the world we're headed toward. I have no doubt. When he got to the second round (of the 2021 election), I came out and immediately said, "We have to support Boric," you know? I think this new generation is very positive. Will they have difficulties? Yes. But they're going to move forward, I believe. 

THIS INTERVIEW WAS EDITED FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.



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A New Generation of Viral Political Moments

These viral moments—some planned, others accidental—show how social media platforms from TikTok to Twitch are changing the political landscape for a younger generation. Political consultant Jesús Elizondo, 24, who has advised presidential campaigns on three continents, weighs in on what this means for the future of campaign strategy as candidates court young voters.

by Rich Brown and Martina Graña



://THE_“SANTILETA”.Argentina



Santilli promotes the Santileta in a TikTok video and encourages others to come onboard.

WHAT HAPPENED

During his campaign for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies in 2021, Diego Santilli refurbished an old Volkswagen van, painted his smiling face on its side, and added the slogan, “Get on board with hope.” Santilli used this van, nicknamed the “Santileta,” to tour his district. Unfortunately, the Santileta broke down, and a bystander snapped a photo of the symbol of “hope” getting towed away.

WHERE IT HAPPENED

The image went viral on Twitter and videos and memes spread on TikTok and Instagram. The van now has its own Instagram account run by a group of young Santilli supporters.

IMPACT

The moment resonated with voters, who saw their own struggles in the van’s pitiable fate. Santilli benefited from greater name recognition and an aura of optimism in the face of life’s inevitable setbacks. Voters ultimately elected Santilli, showing that candidates can benefit from even apparently negative social media exposure if they find a way to match it to the narrative or persona they campaign on. “You have to remember that when people vote, it’s not just a rational decision. It’s something they feel, too,” Elizondo said.



://THE_VIRAL_GRANDDAD.Colombia

WHAT HAPPENED

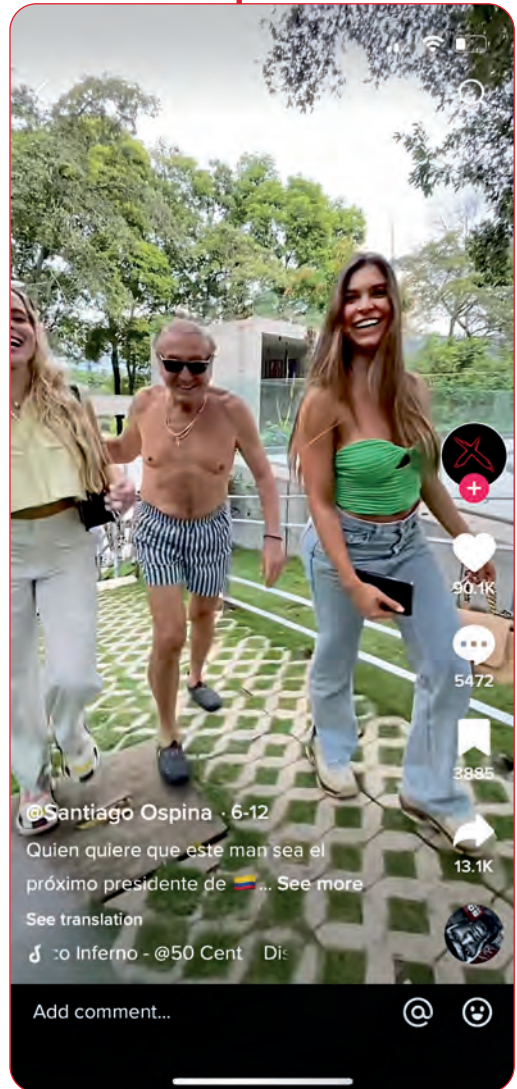
Perhaps the biggest electoral surprise of 2022 was 77-year-old Rodolfo Hernández, who relied heavily on social media to reach Colombia's presidential runoff. With the help of Argentine publicist Ángel Beccassino, he cultivated a relatable persona through posts that radiated behind-the-scenes intimacy, genuineness and positivity. This played well with a public battered by the pandemic, political polarization and economic crisis. To broaden his reach, he invited young influencers to hang with him on his ranch, and in another key move, he announced just hours before a first-round debate that he would be the only presidential candidate not to participate. Instead, he went live on Instagram to connect directly with followers and answer questions informally — even eating a mango — creating an impression of accessibility that contrasted markedly with the formal debate.

WHERE IT HAPPENED

Hernández first went viral on TikTok, which he joined in February 2021. With his team's guidance, he steadily built his presence on the platform, and just five months later, one of his posts reached 1 million views.

IMPACT

Hernández's campaign showed how — given a political context increasingly defined by anger at politics-as-usual — candidates with novel messages are best served by communicating them through novel channels. People who are fed up with the same old messages might tune out even new messages if they arrive over traditional channels, Elizondo explained. But others should be cautious about attempting to emulate Hernández. "TikTok relies on short, humor-based reactions, so it's easy to come off as a clown," Elizondo said. Even if politicians manage to avoid being "cringe" and attract some new voters, their antics may ultimately turn off many more.



Above: Hernández is joined at his ranch by social media influencers. Below: Hernández eats a mango on Instagram Live as other presidential candidates appear in a formal televised debate.

://THE_GAMER_CANDIDATES.Brazil

Opções Personalizadas

Mapa: The Skeld

Impostores: 2 (Limite: 1)

Confirm Ejects: Não

Reuniões de Emergência: 1

Recarga de Emergência: 15seg

Tempo de Discussão: 15seg

Tempo de Votação: 120seg

Velocidade do Jogador: 1,5x

Visão da Tripulação: 1x

Visão do Impostor: 1,5x

Recarga de Ataque: 30seg

Distância de Ataque: Normal

Visual Tasks: Não

Tarefas Comuns: 1

Tarefas Longas: 1

Tarefas Curtas: 2

Ping: 201 ms



Guilherme Boulos plays Among Us during his campaign for mayor.

WHAT HAPPENED



When Guilherme Boulos was running a long-shot campaign for mayor of São Paulo in 2020, he turned to video games. Boulos played Among Us with digital influencer Felipe Neto on YouTube, and the stream reached 2.5 million views in two days. In Brazil, political discourse among the gamer public leans right, and Boulos, a leftist, used it to reach new audiences. He also appeared via Twitch, a streaming platform for gamers, on a video game podcast associated with Brazil's right wing. His outsider campaign gained steam, and, against the odds, he advanced to the runoff, though he ultimately lost.

WHERE IT HAPPENED



Twitch allows viewers to watch both gamers and their screens and interact with them over voice and text chat, providing an informal environment for communication. Politicians are increasingly active on Twitch, sometimes generating controversy. In 2020, President Jair Bolsonaro's fourth son, Jair Renan Bolsonaro, was banned from the platform for allegedly spreading COVID-19 misinformation. "Twitch is very important," Elizondo said, because political communication in very niche channels can be especially effective. "We've run strategies to focus on gamers, specifically those who play Call of Duty, Halo, Minecraft. ... We've even done ads targeting fans of certain kinds of anime."

IMPACT



Brazil has the fifth-largest population of gamers in the world, and politicians see them as an increasingly important voting bloc. The right has been especially active on Twitch, and in courting gamers more broadly; Bolsonaro has lowered taxes on video games and consoles — four times. But even old-guard leftist politicians like Eduardo Suplicy are appearing on Twitch live-streams. This trend is most pronounced in Brazil but is also gaining steam elsewhere. In Argentina, for example, President Alberto Fernández and Deputies José Luis Espert and Javier Milei have all given interviews on Twitch.



://THE_INFLUENCER.Mexico



WHAT HAPPENED



Governor Samuel García of Nuevo León won his 2021 election thanks in large part to the support of his influencer wife, Mariana Rodríguez, who has 2.3 million followers on Instagram alone. When García kicked off his candidacy, Rodríguez immediately began to post about his campaign. They built on this with content that aimed for entertainment value; they shot a music video with a famous local child singer, and in another video set to “My Heart Will Go On,” they stood at the front of a speedboat parodying the famous embrace in *Titanic*. The embrace even earned headlines, like one in *Infobae* for an article that contrasted García’s viral rise with the fall of another candidate in the race, who went viral when a video from 2016 circulated showing her with the leader of an infamous sex cult.

IMPACT



“[García’s] social media presence and his wife’s as an influencer played an important role in his election,” Elizondo said. But not everyone was entertained. The government slapped García with a fine of 55 million pesos — around \$2.8 million — for not declaring Rodríguez’s posts as campaign contributions with monetary value. The case involved around 1,300 Instagram stories posted within 90 days of the election and set an important precedent in Mexico that may soon cross borders. Questions of when exactly posts, shares, interviews and other kinds of “platforming” become campaign contributions will soon cause headaches for regulators across the globe.

WHERE IT HAPPENED



García and Rodríguez posted videos, images and memes on various platforms. From Instagram to Twitter to YouTube, their content went viral, and so did García’s campaign.



Above: Photos from Rodríguez’s Instagram account of the *Titanic* moment, which was recorded on video from another boat and set to “My Heart Will Go On.” Below: One of Rodríguez’s posts promoting her husband’s candidacy from the first day of the official campaign season.

:://THE_MACALLAN_INCIDENT.Panama



Ruling party deputies toast with luxury whiskey during Panama's descent into mass demonstrations.

WHAT HAPPENED



Amid intensifying social upheaval over inflation, inequality and corruption, deputies from Panama's ruling PRD party kicked off a new legislative period in July with a toast of luxury Macallan whiskey. An attendee naively posted a video of the deputies, dressed in white suits, on social media. It went viral instantly, attracting intense criticism from all sides.

WHERE IT HAPPENED



The video was posted on various social media platforms, and news outlets picked up the story.

IMPACT



The viral incident helped to crystallize the social discontent that erupted into massive, weeks-long demonstrations. "There's a lot the public doesn't know about how politicians and their teams use social media for campaigning, but at the same time, there are a lot of politicians who don't understand social media," Elizondo said. The incident shows the danger politicians face when they use socials without professional advisors to help them understand the public mood and the tools themselves.




The Time Is Now

Getting more young people involved in politics is fundamental to the health of democracies.

THE TIME HAS COME for millennials and Gen Z to assume political leadership — and for my generation to move over and make space. This is critical if we want to engage young people and create an environment for civic involvement.

We have seen over the last 20 years almost two new generations of entrepreneurs emerge, paving the way for innovation, new ideas as well as a new style of leadership. They have built companies, created networks and encouraged others to do the same. Their innovation and drive empowered the next generation to think big and break down preexisting barriers to success. This has also stirred passion, creating a cycle of even more innovation and engagement. They foster the hope that anyone can help create a unicorn or find a social development concept that can change the world. They are inspirational role models.

But to date, that has not translated into broad-based civic engagement or political leadership renewal among the same generation. Latin America does have two millennial presidents: President Gabriel Boric in Chile and President Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, which is a start. But we need more. We need mayors, governors, legislators and civic leaders to truly drive change. This is critical if countries are going to meet the expectations of coming generations. And of course, more women and diverse minorities are also fundamental. Millennials and Gen Z want leaders who reflect their thinking and values.

Just as successful entrepreneurs have become role models, that same process must occur in the civic and political arena. So why don't more millennials engage in political leadership? Maybe they do not believe they can make a difference or have an impact. That would be very sad, as millennial and Gen Z political leadership is exactly what is required to make their communities, their countries and the world better. 



Susan Segal is the CEO of Americas Society/Council of the Americas

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THE AQ PROFILE

The Evangelical Leftist

Henrique Vieira is a devout Baptist pastor — and a card-carrying member of Brazil's Socialism and Freedom Party.

by Ana Ionova



RIO DE JANEIRO — To roaring applause, Baptist minister Henrique Vieira took to the small stage in a bar in Rio de Janeiro's historic port district, where enslaved Africans were once traded in an open-air market. He wore a sticker that read “Jesus is Black” and spoke softly into the microphone.

“My dream is not an evangelical country,” Vieira told a crowd of a few dozen people. “I don’t want the state to be an extension of the church. I want a country that is united, fair and where children aren’t going hungry.”

It was an unusual opening for an evangelical pastor seeking to win over voters. But it is exactly this brand of politics — anchored in social and racial justice — that has made Vieira, 35, a wildly popular figure on the Brazilian left.

Now, Vieira is running for a seat in Brazil’s Congress — making him a test case in a country where 70% of evangelical Christians voted for President Jair Bolsonaro in 2018. As the evangelical community continues to grow here and elsewhere around Latin America, Vieira’s campaign may help illustrate whether the region’s politics will inevitably become more socially conservative — or whether another, more progressive path is also possible.

Vieira, who grew up across the bay from Rio in

Niterói, told *AQ* he sees no contradiction between his faith and his brand of politics. “The gospel is what gave me the force to fight inequality, to fight racial injustice,” he said. “My religion is the root of my activism.”

This is not the first time that Vieira has dabbled in politics. Between 2012 and 2016, he was a city councilor in Niterói, pursuing a leftist agenda focused on the poor. Vieira has now set his sights on federal politics, running for a seat in Brazil’s Chamber of Deputies under the banner of the leftist PSOL party.

Evangelical pastors are not a rarity in Brazilian politics — but Vieira’s path to politics has, in fact, been uncommon. A trained actor and clown artist, he’s a familiar face in Brazil, thanks to a role in Wagner Moura’s blockbuster film *Marighella* (2019) and a musical collaboration with popular rapper Emicida.

Vieira’s decision to run for office, he told me, was fueled by the rise of religious fundamentalism. Increasingly, he sees religion being used as a tool by the far right, spearheaded by Bolsonaro, who is seeking a second term in October’s elections.

“It is very important that the left can counter fundamentalism,” he said. “I understand that faith and politics are related. But faith cannot be a power-grabbing instrument. ... That is dangerous, it is undemocratic.”

“The gospel is what gave me the force to fight inequality, to fight racial injustice.”

In 2018, the political power of the evangelical church became crystal clear.

The left searches for allies

HIS CANDIDACY is part of a broader attempt by the Brazilian left to win over the country's growing evangelical voter base. While about half of Brazilians still identify as Roman Catholic, evangelicals now make up about 30% of the population, doubling their share in just two decades. This echoes a trend across Latin America, where about a fifth of the population now identifies as evangelical, up from just 4% in the 1970s.

Evangelicals are expected to become a majority in Brazil within the next decade, said Victor Araújo, a political scientist and the author of a book on the politics of Brazilian evangelicals. And winning over this influential voter base is perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Brazilian left.

"Once these voters become the majority, then it's going to be really hard for the left to have a dialogue with them," Araújo said. "It will become much more difficult for the left to win elections ... so it is turning to churches and searching for allies."

Vieira is a powerful ally for the left. His sermons about racial justice and religious tolerance attract hundreds in Rio and Niterói. He's a popular wedding minister, too, sought after by straight and gay couples alike. And Vieira's appeal goes beyond the church; on social media, his activism has helped him amass more than half a million followers.

Yet while this has made Vieira a strong contender for a seat in Congress, experts question whether other moderate evangelicals can draw popular support on a similar scale. "Henrique is an important,

emblematic example," said Ana Carolina Evangelista, executive director at the Institute of Religious Studies, a think tank. "Is it possible to be evangelical and progressive? Definitely — just look at him. Is he likely to draw more votes than a (religious) candidate on the right? Probably not."

There were 640 candidates running under religious banners this year, including 474 ministers. Candidacies by evangelical leaders jumped 17% compared to 2018, data from Brazil's electoral court shows. But most of these candidates fall on the political right, Evangelista said.

In a way, this reflects the electorate that such candidates are courting. Some 60% of evangelicals identify as Pentecostals, embracing deeply conservative views that often clash with progressive leftist policies on issues like abortion and transgender rights.

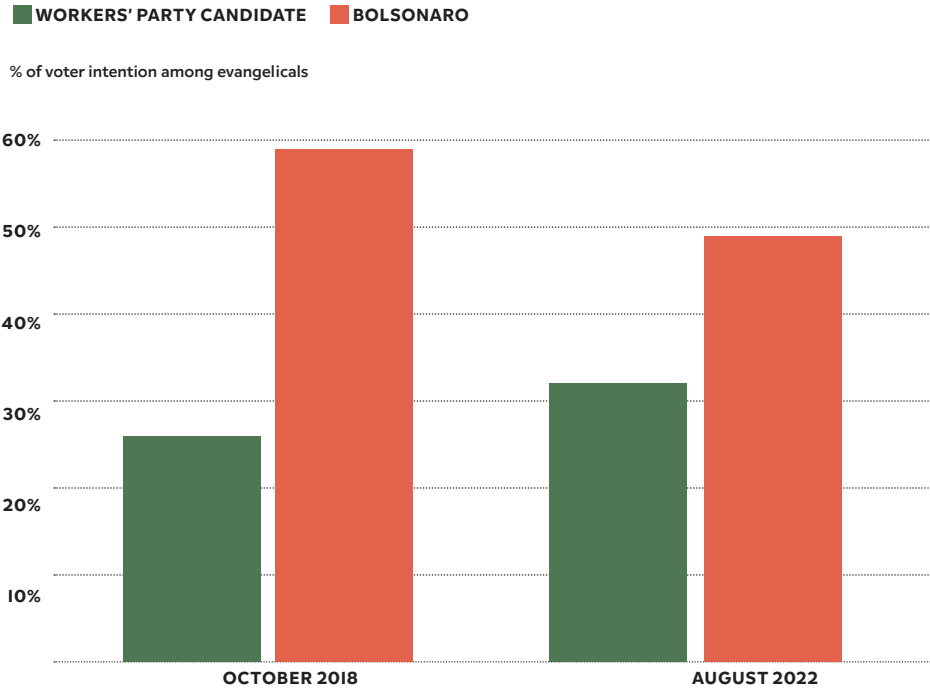
This ideological division has been fed by influential ultra-conservative pastors like Silas Malafaia and Marco Feliciano — a congressman since 2011 — who have aggressively criticized the left, casting it as a major threat to Christian values and urging their congregations to reject progressive candidates like Vieira.

In 2018, the political power of the evangelical church became crystal clear: Some 70% of evangelicals voted for Bolsonaro, whose rhetoric about a leftist attack on "traditional family values" won him the loyalty of Brazil's most influential evangelical pastors, who mobilized their congregations to vote for the then-candidate.

In the four years since Bolsonaro's 2018 election,

Brazilian evangelicals lean right

Bolsonaro has had a clear advantage among the religious group in the past two elections.



Source: Datafolha

the president's popularity has tumbled — among evangelicals and non-evangelicals alike — partially thanks to a botched handling of the pandemic and a painful economic crisis that has left many Brazilians hungry and unemployed.

Vieira has urged his own followers to reject Bolsonaro. During the pandemic, Vieira sharply criticized the president's advice against masks and social distancing. "Bolsonaro has shown himself to be truly genocidal," he wrote on Facebook early in the crisis. As elections drew closer, Vieira argued that "toppling Bolsonaro is an act of love."

Faced with dwindling support, Bolsonaro has responded by doubling down on divisive "culture wars." And his strategy may have helped him recover his advantage over his rival, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

"It's the economy ..."

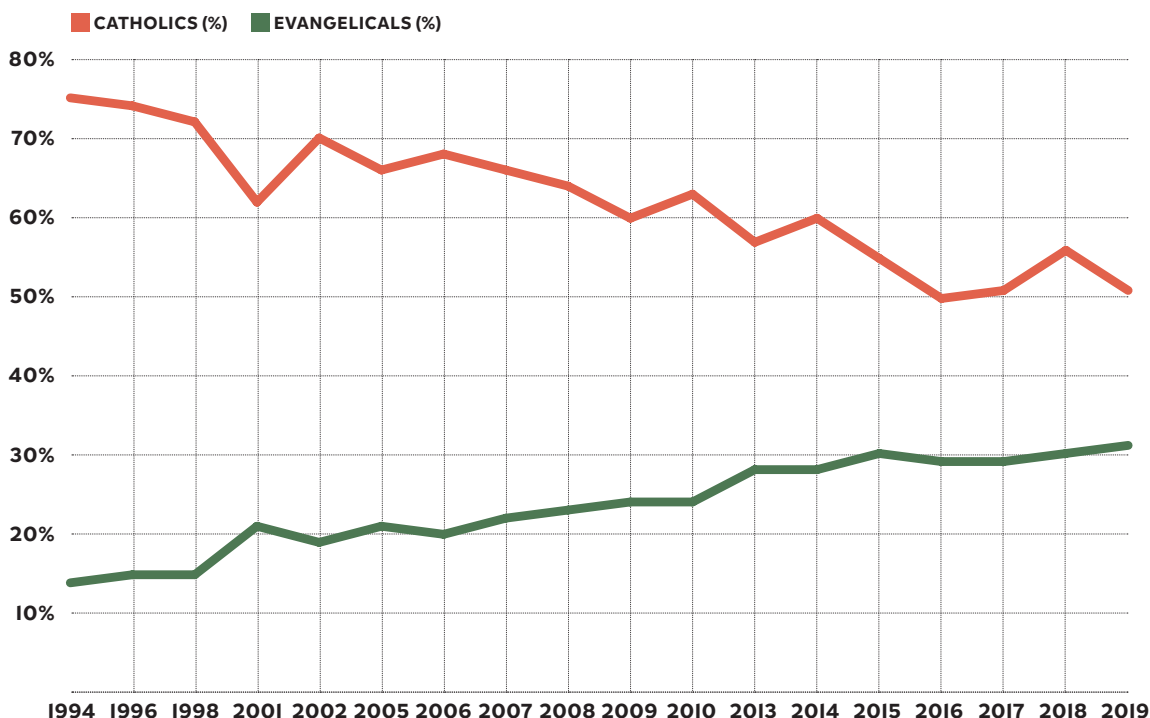
"The typical evangelical in Brazil is a low-income, Black woman living in a neglected neighborhood," said Evangelista. "These people are also worried about jobs, about education, about income inequality. And these are issues that can help the left connect with them."

Lula's PT was once the party of choice for many of the poor, Black Brazilians that now fill evangelical churches across the country. But the left's shine wore off as an economic crisis battered Brazil and a sprawling corruption scandal embroiled PT's upper echelons, including Lula himself. And in tough times, evangelical churches swooped in to help the needy, rescuing drug addicts, running after-school programs and training the jobless.

"The left has lost touch with this base," said

The rise of evangelicals in Brazil

Brazilians are increasingly identifying as evangelical rather than Catholic.



Source: Datafolha and José Eustáquio Alves

Juliano Spyer, an anthropologist who studies evangelical movements. “Now we see churches doing things that improve the lives of people.”

As a result, evangelical churches have amassed tremendous sway in such communities, often giving religious leaders the power to shape the voting patterns of their congregations, Spyer noted. “While the state remains absent from poor communities until election time, the church is there every day,” he said. “Church leaders end up gaining the trust of the people.”

This is evident in Vieira’s own church. During the pandemic, it handed out food parcels to the needy and educated followers on how to avoid COVID-19. These days, it is also fundraising to prepare high school students in poor neighborhoods for college entrance exams.

Building alliances with leaders like Vieira may be helping the Brazilian left attract more moderate evangelicals. But as leftist parties seek to elect candidates, they may end up shifting away from issues that could cost them votes among more conservative evangelicals.

“Parties want to win elections,” Araújo noted. “The left also has to play the game at election time. And they will adapt to voter demands, so they can get candidates elected.”

Vieira, meanwhile, has not shied away from such talking points. In fact, his religious beliefs are right in line with his leftist agenda, he insisted. “Evangelical values are all about social justice and human rights — whether we call them leftist, or not.” **AQ**

Ionova is a journalist based in Rio de Janeiro




PHOTO ESSAY

STORIES FROM CUBA'S NEW EXODUS

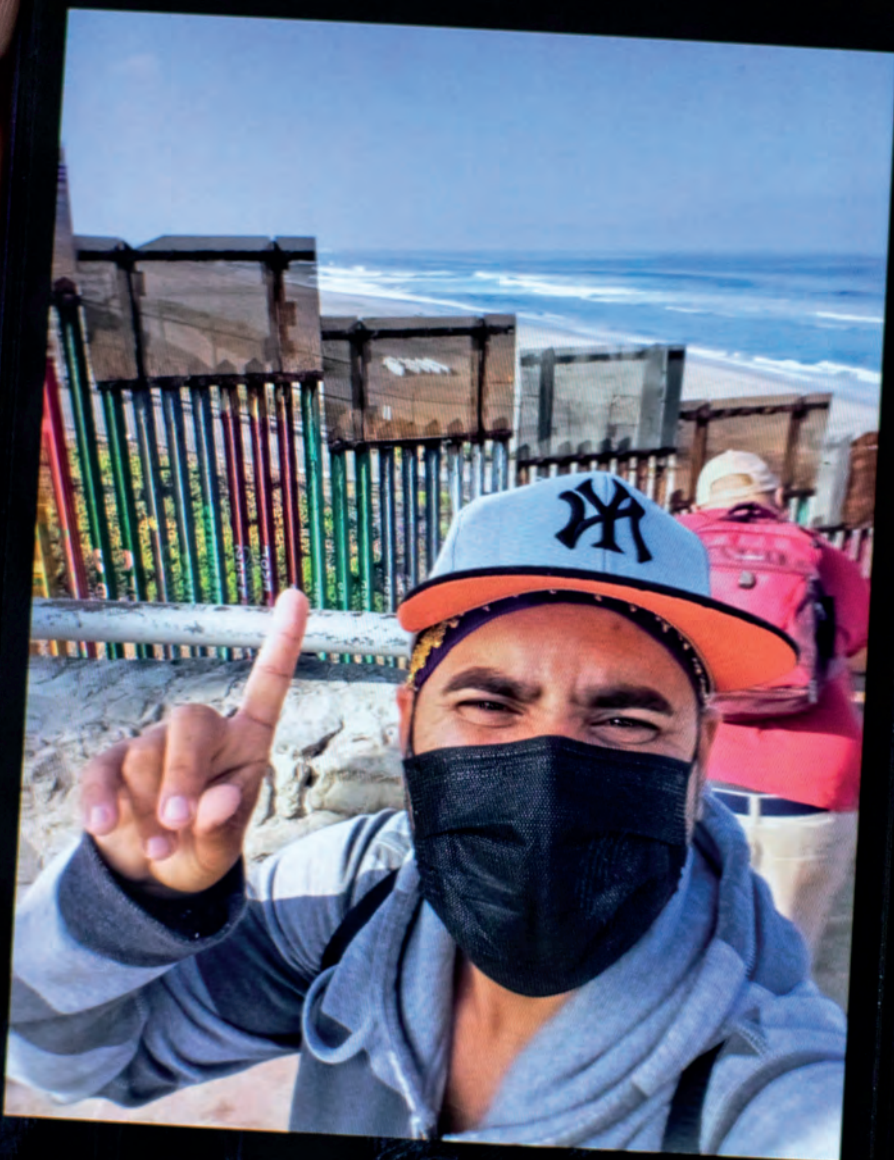
AQ visits the U.S.-Mexico border as record numbers of Cubans attempt to cross.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISETTE POOLE

CUBANS ARE LEAVING their country in numbers not seen since the Mariel Boatlift crisis of 1980, when 125,000 reached Florida in five months. In the first seven months of 2022, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol alone registered over 150,000 Cuban entries, indicating over 1% of the island's population made the journey in under a year.

Under the U.S. Remain in Mexico policy, many Cubans attempting to enter from Mexico waited in border towns for their court processes to conclude, just shy of their hoped-for destination on the other side of the wall. Photographer Lisette Poole, a Cuban-American herself, visited Tijuana in July — just before Remain in Mexico was suspended — where she met Hector, Jesús and Marcos to hear their stories.

Their last names have been withheld for their safety and that of their families in Cuba.



Marcos shows a selfie he sent to his family in Cuba celebrating his arrival in Tijuana. On the other side of the border wall in the background lie the shores of San Diego.





Tijuana's vibrant public spaces, known for music and street vendors, frequently reach right to the border. This contrasts with the U.S. side, where civic life is often set back from border barriers.



Hector

Hector, 55, a carpenter from rural Cuba, volunteers at the Desayunador Salesiano “Padre Chava” shelter and soup kitchen in return for a place to stay as his U.S. court process unfolds. He said he left Cuba because his son and his siblings are struggling to afford food and other necessities. He had lived his whole life in the small town of Las Tunas but the situation had recently grown so desperate in rural areas that he left as soon as his older brother, in the U.S., offered to finance the \$4,500 journey.



A church in Tijuana where Hector found a job cleaning.



“Dame Almas...
Llévate lo demás”

DON BOSCO.





“ELLA LO HA
HECHO TODO”

D.B.

GRACIAS!

Hector and others who live in the shelter prepare and serve meals for its soup kitchen, which caters to both locals and migrants. Hector left Cuba on an arduous but increasingly common route: to Nicaragua by air and then overland to the U.S.-Mexico border. Nicaragua lifted visa requirements on Cuban travelers in November 2021, making this journey much more accessible. This is part of why so many Cubans are now arriving at the border.



Hector walks with another migrant who lives at the shelter and works at the church. He was shocked by Tijuana's high rates of drug addiction, homelessness and violent crime. To Cuban migrants especially, these symptoms of poverty are different from those back home—and jarring. But they were also moved by the relative abundance of food and other necessities. "The supermarkets are a whole other world. You can choose what you want," Hector said. Cuba's economy was already struggling under tightened U.S. sanctions and the Venezuelan crisis that sharply reduced access to energy and foreign reserves, when the pandemic crushed the country's tourism sector. Supply chain problems pushed food prices ever higher.



Jesús

Jesús, 58, a doctor from Holguín, Cuba, volunteers with a local doctor who sees patients at a free clinic. He lives at the shelter, and he said that feeling useful helps him in his struggle with depression. As he waited in Tijuana, he often felt hopeless and without agency, subject to a confusing, opaque process.

Jesús worked for 26 years as a doctor and served on medical missions in Honduras and the Brazilian Amazon. Yet, he said, “My salary isn’t enough even to buy my daughter a pair of sneakers.” In Cuba, he moonlighted as a cab driver and decided to leave when the government offered him a mission in East Timor, which he viewed as punishment for speaking out against low wages and lack of medical supplies. “Families in Cuba have to provide their own supplies for surgeries,” he said.



Here, Jesús hands out masks to patients waiting in line.





At the shelter, volunteers have only a few square feet to themselves. In this limited space, they store all the belongings with which they hope to start a new life—and those they borrow from others as they endure an indeterminate wait. This bed belongs to a worker at the shelter who has created a home for himself—albeit a temporary one.





Marcos

Marcos, 38, washes the windows of the shelter where he lives and volunteers. Lawyers and other groups also visit the shelter to provide resources and information for migrants, but the information is often sparse. He left Cuba in April, after learning that many Cubans were being granted legal status in the U.S. He said one reason he left is that “there’s no freedom of expression ... so (the government) marks you as an undesirable, as a counterrevolutionary and whatever else.” In July 2021, the island experienced the largest anti-government protests since the 1990s, sparking hope that the administration of President Miguel Díaz-Canel would loosen restrictions on expression and commerce. Instead, the government responded with violence and over 1,400 arrests, fueling the exodus.




At the shelter, Marcos speaks with a representative from the UN's International Organization for Migration (OIM in Spanish) to participate in a group outing to a theater performance arranged for migrants in Tijuana.



Parishioners participate in a joint church service with a group on the other side of the border fence. These services provide a gathering place for families separated by the border. Before the pandemic, an open gate allowed families to congregate, a rare opportunity for physical contact. Now, the gate is locked.







Marcos, Hector and Jesús all crossed into the U.S. at an area called el Nido del Águila, the Eagle's Nest, where there is a break in the border barriers seen in the background. In the foreground, a local man burns trash to collect scrap metal from the ashes. The area is known as one of opportunity for those seeking to cross without legal status into the U.S., but also an area of danger where migrants are especially vulnerable to robbery and extortion. All three were apprehended by U.S. authorities, who expelled Jesús and Hector into the Remain in Mexico program and expelled Marcos under Title 42, which allows authorities to deport migrants on public health grounds. The U.S. is deporting relatively few Cubans to their home country, in part because the Cuban government is refusing to accept deportation flights.

Poole is a Cuban-American writer and photographer whose book *La paloma y la ley* on migration from Cuba to the U.S. was a 2016 *Time* photobook of the year



ONE YEAR LATER



Brazil Has Never Been So Prepared to Fight Fake News

A year after AQ's special report on misinformation, a leading journalist sees progress.

by Cristina Tardáguila

FOUR YEARS AFTER seeing a tsunami of falsehoods related to the presidential election, Brazil gets to the 2022 campaign much better equipped. The country has more professional fact-checkers. Social media platforms have built war rooms. Influencers are engaged in the battle against “fake news,” and fantastic tools have been developed to combat Portuguese-language misinformation and disinformation.

As always, candidates, parties and supporters will work hard to push narratives capable of undermining their rivals, even if they in-

clude misleading or incorrect data. But it's clear that Brazilians, including the authorities, are much more alert and ready to combat those lies.

In 2018, the vast majority of the population fully believed the content of videos, photos and texts shared by friends and family members. Only a few Brazilians, mainly in the large cities, knew about the work of fact-checkers, and very few citizens had the ability to somehow assess the veracity of pieces of content using databases and online tools.

On August 16, when the 2022 campaign officially started, Brazil had six certified fact-checking organizations in full operation: Lupa, Estadão Verifica, Aos Fatos, UOL Confere, AFP and Reuters. The expression “fake news” has become popular and is understood even in tiny rural communities. In the past four years, Brazilians learned that they should doubt the content they see online and can spot it much better than before.

Unfortunately, the federal government hasn't been part of this effort. President Jair Bolsonaro has instead repeated false claims about the integrity of Brazil's voting system, the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) and other subjects.


Nevertheless, Brazil was in good shape to face this year's election. Social media platforms did a lot of work in the past four years. Pushed by the TSE, which created an Anti-Disinformation Committee, 11 major tech companies presented concrete plans to fight electoral mis- and disinformation in Brazil in 2022. They revamped and adjusted their public policies, hired more people and increased their investments in product development. The group is obviously trying to look good (or better than they did in 2018), but their effort has been noticed and will still have an impact in the long run.

Authorities entered 2022 well aware of the damage mis- and disinformation can do and the risk that democracy itself faces. The Supreme Court, for ex-

ample, has banned channels and profiles disseminating lies about the voting machines and has requested that platforms remove false content about candidates. Supreme Court Minister Alexandre de Moraes, who is the president of the TSE for the entirety of the campaign, has openly said candidates can lose the right to run for public office if their campaigns disseminate false narratives.

It's also great to see that, unlike in 2018, hundreds of digital influencers seem ready to fight mis- and disinformation. A group of 30 online celebrities went to the TSE on August 4 to understand how voting machines work and how they can teach their followers to identify misleading content. Those 30 influencers can reach 10 million people with a few clicks and will be promoting data-based content as much as possible.

New tools are also available — and in Portuguese! On one platform, a bot is ready to point out the minute and second of a video that might contain a falsehood about the electoral system. Less overt, but still important, measures include a speech-to-text transcription program that has just been released in Portuguese for journalists to use freely. This tool should free journalists up to spend more time detecting, and consequently, fighting election-related “fake news.” The creators estimate that in 2018 journalists would spend 50 hours transcribing their own interviews with candidates and other important figures. In 2022, they should spend only eight hours.

For all these reasons, it's possible to be optimistic. Disinformation is now on the stage, and many Brazilians are ready to fight it. The pending issue on the table for this year is hate speech, which will likely present our next set of lessons. 

|||||
Tardáguila is senior program director at the International Center for Journalists and founder of Lupa, a Brazilian fact-checking agency

A World Cup for the History Books

Brazil's improbable 1970 championship team remains widely beloved. It was also a reminder of how politics is never distant from "the beautiful game."

by Andrew Downie

Pelé celebrates victory on June 21, 1970, after Brazil won the final match in Mexico City.





ONLY THREE MONTHS before winning the 1970 World Cup, Brazil's national team played a friendly match against Bangu, a lowly club from Rio. The preparations for the global tournament had not been going well and they got worse that rainy night on the edge of the city. The match ended in a 1-1 tie and the national team, popularly known as the *seleção*, was booed off the pitch.

Just 99 days later, team captain Carlos Alberto Torres kissed the Jules Rimet trophy in front of an ecstatic crowd at Mexico City's Estadio Azteca. Moments earlier, Torres had scored the final goal to give Brazil a thumping 4-1 win over Italy with a move that is still considered one of the greatest in World Cup history. It was Brazil's third world title in 12 years and confirmed the South American nation as the country of soccer.

Brazil's triumph in the first World Cup screened live on global television was as sensational as it was unexpected, and it has never been forgotten. Even though soccer is now a multi-billion-dollar business that demands infinitely more strength, speed and commitment from players, the 1970 team led by Pelé remains the gold standard for style. The tale of how Brazil overcame the odds is also a reminder of how soccer and politics have always been intertwined — with lessons still poignant today.

It's hard to believe now, but when the *seleção* boarded their flight to Mexico in May of 1970, many fans thought they were destined for disaster. In the 1966 World Cup in England, Brazil were eliminated at the group stage for the first and still the only time, prompting much soul-searching. Brazil changed coaches five times in two years as experts warned that their once brilliant brand of football had become obsolete. Injuries had plagued Pelé during two consecutive World Cups, and he became so depressed that he'd taken a two-year sabbatical from the *seleção*. Only after his return did Brazil begin to take international soccer seriously again.

An unexpected transformation

PELÉ'S RETURN played its part, but the team's radical transformation was thanks mostly to João Saldanha, the charismatic and outspoken coach who took over in February 1969. Saldanha was an odd choice, given that the military had just imposed its most repressive laws yet since seizing power in 1964. He was a card-carrying Communist who claimed to have met Mao Zedong while working as a foreign correspondent in China, but he was also a soccer radio commentator whose sharp and earthy analysis excited fans. Saldanha was chosen in part because he could rally fans behind the national team, and he did the job superbly, guiding Brazil to six wins out of six in their qualifying campaign.

The streak was a record at the time and the prospect of more victories in Mexico was both good news and bad news for the military. Winning the World Cup might boost Brazil's image abroad and the government's image at home, but it would also make Saldanha untouchable. That was a frightening prospect for President General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, a fanatical football fan. He loved to watch his favorite team, Grêmio, at the Estádio Olímpico in Porto Alegre, the capital of his home state of Rio Grande do Sul, and Flamengo at the Maracanã stadium in Rio, where he would sit in the stands with a transistor radio glued to his ear.

Médici and Saldanha clashed in March 1970 after the media reported the president wanted to see his favorite player, Dário, included in the squad. Saldanha responded with humor, "I don't pick his cabinet and he doesn't pick the team. As you see, we understand each other very well."

Saldanha was removed not long after and historians have focused on his disagreement with Médici. But the truth was that Saldanha had become too unpredictable. He was a fabulist, a drinker and a loose cannon. In early March, he took a gun to the Flamengo training ground to threaten their coach. A few days later, he claimed Pelé had a life-threatening disease and dropped him from the upcoming



Brazil's military President Emilio Garrastazu Médici (center) holds the Jules Rimet trophy with members of the national team.

friendly against Argentina. It was all too much for the establishment to bear.

The military worried that if a Communist won the World Cup for Brazil, he would have a soapbox from which to denounce the dictatorship. The regime had also invested heavily in the World Cup campaign. Many of the backroom staff were army officers. The airwaves rang out with the nationalist song “Pra Frente Brasil.” Cars and windows showed pro-regime stickers declaring, “I love you, my Brazil.” Saldanha’s position was untenable and he was fired less than three months before the World Cup was due to start. No one ever explained exactly why, but it didn’t really matter. The real question, Saldanha said, was not why he was fired, but why they gave him the job in the first place.

His position was taken by Botafogo coach Mário Zagallo. Zagallo was a fierce nationalist who had no intention of rocking the boat, but he was also an astute tactician who got Brazil playing great soccer again after the rocky period marked by the draw against Bangu. He assured Pelé he needed him on

attack, shored up the midfield to handle the more physical Europeans, and found places for Brazil’s most creative players, Gerson, Rivellino, Jairzinho and Tostão among them.

Once in Mexico, Brazil won all six of their games. They beat title-holder England 1-0 in an unforgettable match the players called “the final before the final,” and put four goals past Czechoslovakia and Peru and three past Romania and Uruguay. Pelé was superb, Jairzinho made history as the first player to score in every round including the final, and Tostão, Gerson and Rivellino became household names the world over.

In the final, Brazil destroyed Italy 4-1 to set off incredible celebrations. Fans invaded the pitch. Pelé was paraded around the field wearing an enormous sombrero. Tostão wept uncontrollably. “It was madness,” said Rivellino. “They stripped the shirt I was wearing right off my back. I fainted and had to be helped up.”

In Brazil the celebrations were no less crazy. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to greet their heroes when they arrived home. In Brasília, the whole squad were met at the presiden-



Jair Bolsonaro greets his supporters, many dressed in jerseys of the national team, at a 2021 rally.

“We never had any inkling it would be like that. People were free, they went out into the streets to celebrate. It was madness.”

tial palace by Médici, who had formed a bond with the players by calling their dressing room after each game to talk over the action. Every member of the squad received a prestigious medal, cash, cars and 10,000 shares in state electricity company Light.

The victory was greeted with joy that was all the more euphoric for its timing. Brazilians had been banned from having large gatherings under the military's AI-5, a draconian decree issued in December 1968 that closed Congress, increased censorship and led to widespread arrests and torture. The victory parades were a rare chance to let off steam. “It was as if it was a release,” said reserve goalkeeper Ado. “We never had any inkling it would be like that. People were free, they went out into the streets to celebrate. It was madness, I didn’t really understand it. I thought, does soccer really mean that much to us?”

It did, although things have changed since.

End of an era

THE 1970 TRIUMPH was the end of an era for Brazilian football. It would be 24 years before they won the World Cup again and when they did, in California in 1994, it was a workman-like victory, lacking the gloss of past glories. Brazil remains the only team to have won five World Cups — they won again in 2002 — but the world no longer reveres them like before. And, it’s now clear, neither do Brazilians.


Today’s game is ridden with corruption and mismanagement — four consecutive presidents of the Brazilian Soccer Confederation have been either removed from office or banned from football — and the local leagues are beset by violence and racism, on and off the pitch. The most promising players are sold to Europe before they’re out of their teens,

robbing Brazilian fans of a chance to see them in their prime and making it harder for fans to identify with the guys who will wear the yellow jersey. Walk around any Brazilian city and you’re as likely to see a Real Madrid or a Manchester City shirt as a Corinthians or Palmeiras one.

Even donning the famous yellow jersey has become a questionable act, associated with the far-right nativism of President Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters. In a poll carried out earlier this year by students at São Paulo’s Ibmec University, more than one in five football fans said they would not wear the yellow jersey for political reasons. This partisan fray may be why a new blue design sold out in just a matter of hours, and it is certainly why Nike no longer allows buyers to customize its Brazil jerseys with the names of major politicians.

The players themselves — almost all of whom now play for clubs in Europe — recognize the gulf that has opened between themselves and the fans.

“It’s sad to see that for this generation the Brazilian national team is not important, because when I was a kid, Brazil matches were an event. The whole family was there, wearing jerseys, eating barbeque, hanging the Brazilian flag from the window,” Neymar said earlier this year. “It doesn’t have that same importance today.”

It might be too much to ask the Neymar generation to repeat the performances of 1970, but they go to this year’s tournament in Qatar as one of the favorites. If Brazil wins in December, all qualms will be laid aside, and the country will go crazy again, celebrating like only Brazilians can. Another victory — another wild, unifying catharsis — is well within their grasp. 

Downie is author of *The Greatest Show on Earth, an oral history of the 1970 World Cup*



A scene from the film
The Joy of Things

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Books

Nonfiction

Dispatches from Cuba tell true and striking stories of life on the island.

Reviewed by Oliver Barch

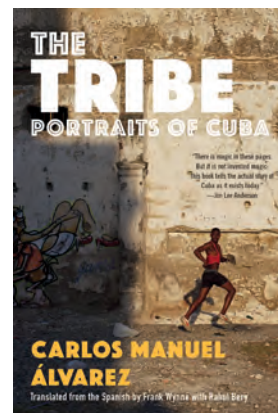
CUBA FINDS ITSELF in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. Masks are mandatory. In the tropical heat, journalist Carlos Manuel Álvarez finds his glasses steaming up — an apt metaphor for the country, “its breath constrained, its gaze blurred.”

Foreign observers often rely on metaphorical language to describe Cuba — the more cliché the better. According to these observers, this former banana republic or mobster playground became, under Fidel Castro, a haven for socialism or a communist stronghold — depending on your politics. Now, it has emerged as either an economic basket case or, as the Lonely Planet travel guide has it, a “country of indefinable magic ... where you can wave goodbye to everyday assumptions.”

Thankfully, Álvarez, a native Cuban, has little time for such tropes. In this compilation of real-world dispatches, he cuts through the clichés with prose as unsentimental as it is searing. If a balcony in Old Havana is described as “crumbling,” it’s because the struts of this “desolate picture-postcard” would soon collapse, killing three children in the process. If he writes about a José Luis Perales classic being sung along the Malecón, it’s because the busker’s tuneless voice reminds him that “behind every bad song badly sung is someone trying to make a living.”

Álvarez’s incisiveness doesn’t come from astute geopolitical analysis. There is no overt punditry, at least not of the evening-news, talking-head variety. Nor is it because of the book’s balanced objectivity. Álvarez picks his stories like a pickpocket picks his prey — with a mix of artfulness and opportunism.

Instead, the book’s revelatory insights derive from its joyful rejection of the reporter’s usual mode of operation. Álvarez turns to what he knows, what he cares about and whatever happens to cross his path — and that



The Tribe: Portraits of Cuba

By Carlos Manuel Álvarez
Translated by Frank Wynne with Rahul Bery
Graywolf Press
Paperback
312 pages

returns to Julio himself, who aspires to be a novelist. Julio's romance with Emilia, his reading with Emilia, and his glimpses into the lives of their friends are finally reconciled in a book of his own, also called *Bonsai*. In Julio's writing, the desultory details of their lives cohere into something resembling art.

But Julio's *Bonsai* and Zambra's *Bonsai* are not the same book. When Julio learns that Emilia has committed suicide, his draft is already shelved. The lives of his friends, acquaintances and lovers resist Julio's effort to contain them — but emphatically, not his creator's. When *The New Yorker* anointed Zambra "Latin America's new literary star" in 2015, the reviewer, reigning dean of critics James Wood, made much of the book's definition of a bonsai, both "the living tree and the container." Challenging himself to write a book as capacious as life, Zambra rigged his container to burst. Life is conjured in the negative space — in its refusals to elaborate, in its snapshots of minor characters, and in its allusions to larger fictions. Through gestures beyond the text, he charts the territory of a much larger book, no less legible than its diminutive source.

Holding *Bonsai* in its slim physical form, you would be forgiven for voicing skepticism. You might judge its presentation as a "novel" a touch optimistic, or gimmicky. It does not help Zambra's case that he has morphed, since his debut, into a lauded but shameless practitioner of high literary gimmickry.

In 2014, he published *Multiple Choice*, an otherwise bland novel in the form of Chile's university entrance exam. His most recent novel, *Chilean Poet* (2020), is far more conventional. Vigorously promoted in the Anglosphere, its sappy dialogue and trite contrivances feel calibrated for prestige television. The high school romance remains, but the experimental verve does not. Fair enough, perhaps — Zambra is no longer young, and no writer has ever retired on a surfeit of experimental verve.

Still, in every great marketer — from David Ogilvy, known as the "father of advertising," to Norman Mailer, who might be the Ogilvy of letters — is planted a seed of genius. From Zambra's seed, we have *Bonsai*, which may live up to its hype: a genuine novel in ten thousand words.

Chile's young president, Gabriel Boric, reportedly counts Zambra among his favorite writers. It may be tempting, if facile, to see a reflection of Chile's political present in the high bar Zambra's early ambitions set for the rest of his career. Whether Boric can rise to his own challenge remains to be seen. But in literature, happily, unlike politics, we are permitted to return to promising beginnings. With the arrival of Megan McDowell's resourceful translation, now is the time to return to Zambra's. AQ

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Caddell is a writer based in  
San Francisco, California

# Upcoming Books

**The latest in economics, history, policy and fiction from across the hemisphere**

## FICTION

### **Blood Red**

Gabriela Ponce  
October 2022  
Restless Books  
192 pages

### **México sediento**

Francisco Martín Moreno  
October 2022  
Alfaguara  
320 pages

### **Los hechos casuales**

Juan Carlos Botero  
November 2022  
Alfaguara  
556 pages

## NONFICTION

### **Sports in South America: A History**

Matthew Brown  
January 2023  
Yale University Press  
288 pages

### **The Call of the Tribe**

Mario Vargas Llosa  
January 2023  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
288 pages

# Film

## Drama

**An unfinished swimming pool reveals the ironies of life for Brazil's precarious "new middle class."**

**Reviewed by Ena Alvarado**



***The Joy of Things*  
(*A felicidade das coisas*)**

Directed by Thais Fujinaga  
Screenplay by  
Thais Fujinaga

Distributed by  
Filmes de Plástico and  
Lira Cinematográfica  
Brazil

Starring Patrícia Saravy,  
Magali Biff, Messias Gois,  
and Lavinia Castelari

AQ Rating: ★★★★★ (5/5)

**O**WNING A POOL SOUNDS FUN, but few middle class families manage to enjoy this luxury. The reasons are clear enough: They require high up-front and maintenance costs, not to mention ample yard space. In temperate climates they aren't even useful year-round.

But sometimes common sense isn't what people care about. In Brazilian director Thais Fujinaga's debut feature, *The Joy of Things*, the relentless pursuit of a pool symbolizes one family's desire to attain middle class status — and a vision of happiness that seems ever more questionable.

Forty-year-old Paula is spending the summer with her mother and two children in Caraguatatuba, a coastal city to the east of São Paulo. Between scenes of idle and idyllic vacationing, we see a large ditch dug in the front yard. Nearby is a giant blue tank lying on its side, immobile. After indulging her kids' wish for a pool, Paula has run out of money before it can be installed.

Preoccupation with the unfinished pool comes to dominate Paula's life. She spends much of her time on the phone — with the man who sold her the tank, who threatens her over the sums she still owes him; and with her estranged husband, who won't hold up his end of the bargain. Her obsession becomes so all-consuming that she fails to recognize her family's changing attitudes. Her mother Antônia tries to be the voice of reason: "Soon that house is gonna start collapsing, and you're worried about the pool. The pool is just one big headache." But Paula won't give up on the idea: "Up until yesterday, everybody wanted a pool. The pool was great."

We see Paula's stubbornness materialize in other ways, too. She frequently chastises Antônia for speaking with a fisherman who casts nets from a small patch of her yard next to a river. "This is private," she chides him. "I bought it." The fisherman is technically trespassing, but he's hardly bothering anyone. His livelihood depends on access to the riverbank he





After indulging her kids' wish for a pool, Paula has run out of money before it can be installed.

has fished from for years — land that's now partially owned by Paula. His sons are even friends with her own teenage son, Gustavo. None of it matters: Paula's fetishistic view of property clouds her judgment, isolating her from the people who matter most.

There's a broader context for what the pool and the fisherman say about Paula's fixation on status. In the early 2000s, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva instituted social policies that significantly reduced poverty in Brazil. His administration, as the sociologist Perry Anderson has argued, "took to boasting of its achievement as the creation of a 'new middle class.'" Brazil's previously poor were invited to identify with the "consumerist individualism" of the established middle class. As Fujinaga's film suggests, their new wealth encouraged the same disdain for the lower classes that the country's established elite has long cultivated. When commodity prices crashed in the early 2010s, so did the presumed stability of this "new middle class" — but not its newfound hopes and expectations.

The pool could be a metaphor for politics in Brazil — or many other Latin American countries, for that matter. Highways only partially built, hospitals in perpetual construction, neglected schools — the list of half-realized dreams, taken up during times of bounty and abandoned during times of want, goes on and on. The enormous gap between reality and aspiration raises the question: Why pursue these plans in the first place?

*The Joy of Things* is about the wreckage left behind by broken promises. Under the pretext of the swimming pool, Paula spends the vast majority of her time and energy away from her family. She's almost as absent as her kids' father, who never appears on screen. But even sadder and more ironic is that Paula's family spends the summer on the coast: They hardly need a pool to begin with. Why bother with the hassle and expense when the ocean is right next door? 

|||||

*Alvarado is a writer and former assistant editor at The Atlantic*

# Music

## Opera

**Using puppets and percussion, a 1934 modernist opera puts the full sweep of Cuban culture on stage.**

**by Rich Brown**

### *Manita en el suelo*

Music by Alejandro  
García Caturla

Libretto by  
Alejo Carpentier

Orchestration by  
Sebastián Zubieta

Directed by Doug Fitch

**A**LMOST A CENTURY after its beginnings in a Havana prison, the Cuban puppet opera *Manita en el suelo* was performed for just the second time, this past July in Brooklyn.

A chamber orchestra, a chorus and an elaborate yet rustic set of puppets brought to life this subversive *opera buffa* conceived by a pair of modernist Cubans, with a score reconstructed by Americas Society music director Sebastián Zubieta.

The opera stars the “Three Juanes” — Juan Esclavo, Juan Indio and Juan Odio — who represent Cuba’s African, Indigenous and Spanish roots. They fish from their canoe but catch only starfish, reflecting the hunger afflicting Cuba in the waning years of the Gerardo Machado dictatorship, when the opera was written. So they resort to eating Motorongo, a sacred black rooster that, in this production, boasts a fearsome 12-foot wingspan — a transgression that brings a curse down on their heads.

A version of the opera was performed in Cuba in 1985 but used dancers instead of the puppets envisioned by its creators: Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980), one of the greatest Latin American novelists of the 20th century, and composer Alejandro Caturla (1906–1940), sometimes called the “Cuban Stravinsky.” Both were modernists immersed in the ferment of the European interwar avant-garde.

This staging hews more closely to Carpentier’s and Caturla’s vision. In the preface of their 1934 libretto, they write that the opera aims “to bring together on a single stage for the first time in Cuba all the characters from popular mythology.” They imagined an intimate staging in a modest theater where “everything that happens on the small stage is enveloped in an atmosphere of prayers, tobacco box lithographs, Santería images and witchcraft altars.”

Carpentier and Caturla were both white, and their work — defined by a vision of a nation that respects the contributions of its marginalized communities — was a radical departure from the prevailing elite opin-





Singers operate humanettes—a type of puppet where the puppeteer’s head appears—during the finale of *Manita en el suelo*.

ion of the time. Carpentier brought deep knowledge to the effort: He wrote the first comprehensive history of Cuban music, still regarded as one of the best. Throughout the 1920s, he had worked to bring Afro-Cuban art and artists into the avant-garde, and in 1927, he wrote the novel *Ecué Yamba O* (“God be praised,” in an Afro-Cuban language) from a jail cell after he was imprisoned by the Machado dictatorship. That novel formed the basis for the *Manita* libretto.

For his part, Caturla dedicated himself to studying the complexities of polyrhythmic Afro-Cuban percussion and learning from the practitioners, or *ñáñigos*, of Cuba’s *abakuá* (secret societies that practice spiritual traditions with origins in West Africa). Caturla’s life was brief — also a judge, he was killed at age 34 by a criminal he was about to sentence.

Carpentier and Caturla named their opera after a real-life *ñáñigo* named Manuel Cañamazo, whose long arms earned him the eponymous nickname that translates as “hand on the ground.” In 1871, Cañamazo and other *abakuá* led an assault on Havana’s jail — the same jail where Carpentier would later

write *Ecué Yamba O* — hoping to free white medical students whose families they had served as domestic laborers. Cañamazo was killed along with at least four others, and eight of the students were ultimately executed.

After they eat the sacred rooster, the opera’s protagonists, the Three Juanes, are trapped in rough seas in their canoe — which represents the island of Cuba. They are saved by Cuba’s patron saint, the Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, thought also to represent syncretic versions of African and Amerindian water and fertility deities. Her story dates to the early 1600s, when three fishermen are said to have found an image of her that calmed a storm.

Here, the Virgin appears in puppet form, rough yet majestic — like the production itself. After decades of obscurity, this one-night-only performance of *Manita en el suelo* opens the door to future stagings, and the wider audience that the opera deserves. [AQ](#)

Brown is editor and production manager at Americas Quarterly

# Visual Arts

## Art

**Caribbean art is shaped by an economy geared to serve visitors first.**

**by Marina Reyes Franco**

**TROPICAL IS POLITICAL:  
CARIBBEAN ART UNDER  
THE VISITOR ECONOMY  
REGIME**



**CURATOR**  
Marina Reyes Franco  
**ON VIEW**  
September 7 to December 17, 2022  
Wednesday 10:00-5:00 pm  
Thursday 12:00-5:00 pm  
Free Admission  
Americas Society, 1000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
americassociety.org

**Tropical Is Political:  
Caribbean Art  
Under the Visitor  
Economy Regime**

Curated by  
Marina Reyes Franco

September 7–  
December 17, 2022

Americas Society

**I**N ALL THEIR DIVERSITY, it is the colonial legacy of the occupation of European empires and the contemporary yoke of transnational capital that bind the islands of the Caribbean together. For an observant resident or visitor to the Caribbean, the link between the plantation and tourist economies is evident, whether measured by the economic impact of the industries, the resignification of spaces from one era to the next or the importance each has played in the creation of stereotypes for the region.

Within this context, the exhibition *Tropical Is Political: Caribbean Art Under the Visitor Economy Regime* at Americas Society investigates ideas of paradise, including “fiscal paradise” (the literal translation of “tax haven” in many languages) as portrayed in Caribbean art. More specifically, it examines the region as subject to an economic regime that transforms its societies into ones organized to serve the visitor — a social paradigm at the intersection of finance and tourism.

Many Caribbean countries have transitioned from agriculture-based to tourism-supported economies. Economies once sustained by the cultivation of monoculture crops on plantations for export to metropole nations in North America and Europe now rely on income from visitors from the wealthiest countries, attracted by pristine beaches and banking secrecy.

This transition is a legacy of colonialism and empire, which have left an undeniable mark on Caribbean culture by shaping the way we relate to ourselves, to each other and to nature itself. Even after many Caribbean





"Night and Day-O" (2012) by Dave Smith. Acrylic and glitter on canvas. Courtesy of the artist.




"Rock the Boat," from *Still Life, Still Lives | Not so Enchanted* series (2020) by Abigail Hadeed. Archival pigment ink print. Courtesy of the artist.

bean nations became independent in the mid-20th century, political decolonization did not free these new countries from the exploitative ideas that global tourism relies on to thrive. The plantation-to-tourism pipeline is alive and well in some parts of the Caribbean, where former plantation lands have become golf courses and resorts that exclude the descendants of the people who were exploited in them from the coasts, making the link between the settler-colonial legacy and present-day exploitation abundantly apparent.

Although the tourism industry in the Caribbean started in the 19th century, it experienced a boom in the 1950s and 1960s, when the region began to transform towards a service economy rooted in hospitality, an industry standard that stabilized and solidified in the 1990s. Simultaneously, the rise of the financial services sector emerged in many Caribbean countries, becoming the second most important industry in the region. These decades also roughly encompass the period when most of the participating artists in this exhibition (and myself) came of age in the Antilles. Tourism campaigns and a sense of performativity in our mere existence in relation to tourism has shaped us deeply, even in countries where tourism is not the main economic motor.

The artists included in this exhibition use diverse

strategies and media to highlight the conditions of life and art in a region besieged by the commercialization of its people and land under the visitor economy regime. Works by Dionne Benjamin-Smith, Gwladys Gambie, Dalton Gata and others address critiques of self-representation and Caribbean sexuality, while Ricardo Cabret, Carolina Caycedo, and Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker look at currency manipulation, bond debt and economic systems from the plantation to the more recent crypto investors. Airbnb, displacement and the struggle to retain access to our natural resources motivate Sofía Gallisá Muriente, nibia pastrana santiago and Viveca Vázquez.

Through their works, but also through the way they develop their lives and careers, the artists featured in this exhibition propose ways of seeing and reinterpreting life in the Caribbean; not merely pointing out flaws but also the opportunities to transform ourselves and our future. A further emancipation from these legacies is necessary, and that is where the realms of culture and art can play an important role in expanding our imagination. 

Reyes Franco is curator of the Tropical Is Political exhibition at Americas Society as well as of Puerto Rico's Museo de Arte Contemporáneo





"The Upkeepers" (2021) by Joiiri Minaya. Archival digital print. Courtesy of the artist.

## LATIN AMERICA AT A GLANCE

Amid the war in Ukraine and global inflation, sovereign debt is again rising in some emerging markets. Argentina's debt load has made headlines, while other Latin American nations are focused on fighting inflationary pressure.



ARGENTINA



BRAZIL



CHILE



COLOMBIA



DOMINICAN  
REPUBLIC



ECUADOR



GUATEMALA



MEXICO



PERU



VENEZUELA

### GDP GROWTH

|                  | ARGENTINA | BRAZIL | CHILE | COLOMBIA | DOMINICAN<br>REPUBLIC | ECUADOR | GUATEMALA | MEXICO | PERU | VENEZUELA |
|------------------|-----------|--------|-------|----------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|--------|------|-----------|
| 2022 (projected) | 2.9%      | 1.8%   | 2.1%  | 6.3%     | 4.8%                  | 2.8%    | 3.7%      | 2.0%   | 2.8% | 10.8%     |
| 2023 (projected) | 1.5%      | 0.8%   | 0.3%  | 2.4%     | 4.4%                  | 2.3%    | 3.2%      | 1.7%   | 2.6% | 5.1%      |
| 2024 (projected) | 1.2%      | 1.9%   | 2.1%  | 3.0%     | 4.9%                  | N/A     | N/A       | 2.0%   | 3.0% | N/A       |

PROJECTIONS CURRENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 2022

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS

|                                       |       |       |       |       |      |       |      |       |       |        |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|--------|
| 2022 Inflation (projected)            | 64.6% | 9.6%  | 11.1% | 9.1%  | 8.6% | 3.0%  | 4.0% | 7.7%  | 7.0%  | 233.7% |
| 2022 Unemployment rate (projected)    | 8.1%  | 10.0% | 7.6%  | 11.2% | 6.0% | 5.5%  | 4.0% | 3.6%  | 7.7%  | N/A    |
| Govt. deficit as % of GDP (projected) | -4.6% | -6.9% | -3.0% | -5.4% | N/A  | -0.8% | N/A  | -3.3% | -2.4% | -7.9%  |

PROJECTIONS CURRENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 2022

### SOVEREIGN DEBT PROFILE

|                                              |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| International reserves (billions of dollars) | 36.7  | 339.7 | 41.5  | 56.4  | 14.0  | 9.0   | 21.1  | 205.1 | 75.7  | N/A |
| Government Bond Yield (latest)               | 20.7% | 6.0%  | 4.7%  | 7.3%  | 7.9%  | 13.3% | 6.5%  | 5.5%  | 5.0%  | N/A |
| 2022 Government Debt as % GDP                | 74.4% | 91.9% | 38.3% | 60.6% | 59.4% | 62.2% | 30.6% | 58.4% | 34.4% | N/A |

INTERNATIONAL RESERVES CURRENT AS OF AUGUST 2022. WEIGHTED-AVERAGE YIELD TO MATURITY OF DOLLAR BONDS. BOND YIELD AND DEBT AS % GDP CURRENT AS OF JULY 2022.

### PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL RATINGS

| President |                   |                |               |               |               |                 |                      |                             |                |                |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|           | Alberto Fernández | Jair Bolsonaro | Gabriel Boric | Gustavo Petro | Luis Abinader | Guillermo Lasso | Alejandro Giammattei | Andrés Manuel López Obrador | Pedro Castillo | Nicolás Maduro |
| Approval  | 20%               | 46%            | 33%           | 56%           | 61%           | 17%             | 19%                  | 56%                         | 23%            | 23%            |

SOURCES: GDP growth forecasts, inflation rate, unemployment rate, government deficit as percentage of GDP: Bloomberg (September); Dominican Republic: unemployment: Trading Economics (September); Guatemala: GDP and inflation: FocusEconomics (September), unemployment: Trading Economics (September); international reserves: IMF (August); government bond yield, government debt as % GDP: Bloomberg (July).

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL: Argentina, Management & Fit (September); Brazil, PoderData (October); Chile, Plaza Pública Cadem (October); Colombia, Invamer (August); Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Venezuela: CID Gallup (May); Ecuador, Perfiles de Opinión (August); Mexico, El Financiero (September); Peru, Ipsos (September).

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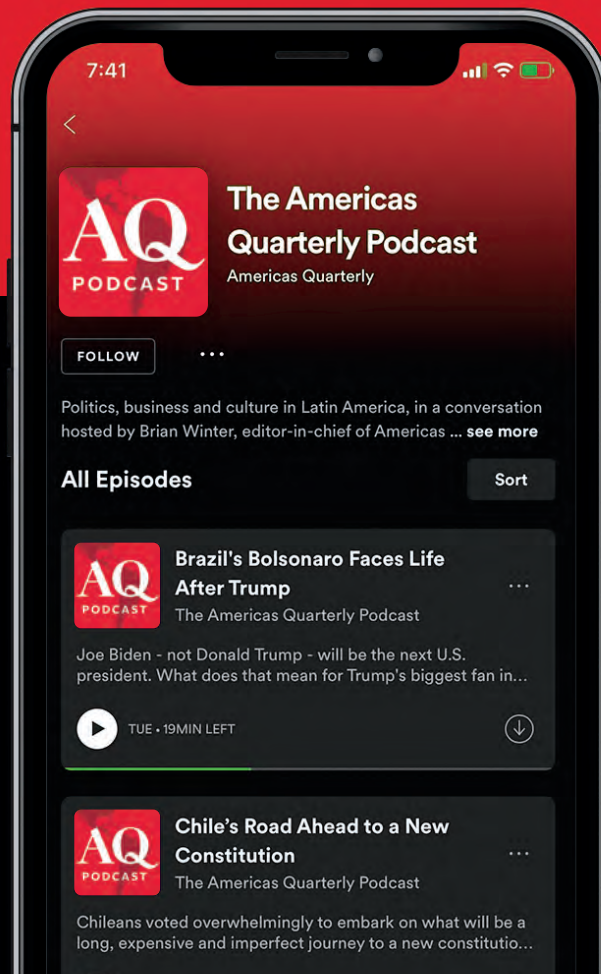
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