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# **Predictions on Chile's constitutional referendum; propaganda or reality?**

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September 3, 2022



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Sept. 1 was the last day to campaign for the Constitutional referendum to be held on Sept. 4 in Chile. In this vote, Chileans will decide whether to approve the country's new Constitution, closing over a decade of social struggles, whose final stage began with 2019 people's massive protests in the subways and streets.

The first step of this constitutional process was the entry (first) referendum, in which 78.28% of voters decided it was necessary to overrule the Pinochet Constitution from 1980. In only 72 hours, this process will end, but tension and uncertainty grow as time goes by.

Many opinion polls point out that the Constitution won't be passed. It has been something repeated to exhaustion. This prediction never withstood any analysis of

the Chilean political context. Today, after irrefutable evidence came out, it can only be considered coarse propaganda.

### **Propaganda playing its role**

Until August 20, mainstream media pointed out that the “I Reject” option might win by a 4 to 15% margin. A quick Google search does not show a single headline differing from this discourse. At most, some analyses conclude there is a lot of indecision, although rejection still prevails in the neoliberal narrative.

In a moment of coming back to solid ground to reflect, it is necessary to ask where are the 80% who voted for a new Constitution elected a progressive Constituent Assembly, and later, a progressive president instead of the right-wing candidate. One has to wonder where does the sudden change come from?

The right-wing propaganda machine has bet on confusion to achieve its objectives. Both traditional media and opinion pollsters played a fundamental role in this strategy, which included fake news, manipulations, and lies.

For example, the “I reject” campaign was built on the false image of a citizen movement instead of right-wing political parties to avoid a defeat like the one they had in the 2019 plebiscite. They want us to believe they have nothing to do with the Chilean right-wing, which bears on its shoulders the gloomy management of the country for decades. That’s why the “I Reject” campaign spokesman stated there wouldn’t be any politicians attending the closing activity. He even went so far as to say his coalition was only made up of civil society organizations not connected to any political parties.

At this point, it is impossible to lie in such an obvious manner. For example, the advertising segment of “I Reject” on public TV was supported by several NGOs in alliance with the “Chile Vamos” coalition and other right-wing parties.

However, despite the efforts to set their media agenda, the poll numbers are not adding up in their favor. Two research teams, Espacio Político (Political Space) and Daoura, recently published two social media-based investigations forecasting the referendum results. Both issues agree that “I approve” should win with around 55 or 56% of the votes.

Both research teams have closely monitored the campaign’s development and have a good record in this type of exercise. Espacio Político predicted the first referendum would be won by “I approve” with 77.8% of the vote, while the final result was 78.28%. In the case of the March presidential election, its prediction was a victory for Gabriel Boric with 57% of the votes, compared to 55.64% of the final count. Meanwhile, the Brazilian team Daoura predicted that 75% of the voters would support the first referendum.

Politically speaking, it is clear that Chile is a country in motion away from the past. In 2019, over 7.5 million people voted in the entry referendum, which was later surpassed in the Presidential runoff, where over 8.36 million people going to the polls. The latest predictions say over 11.6 million people (77% of the electorate) should vote on September 4 since the vote is mandatory and the electoral system has been upgraded.

These statistics show some of the growing political mobilization going on in the country has favored progressive sectors in the last two electoral processes. On the other hand, it must be taken into account that this is a society deeply affected by neoliberalism and that the current constitutional process is the result of great social discontent with the management of right-wing governments.

After all this, it is unlikely that the “I reject” option can have such support as the polls suggest.

Once again, that alliance between the establishment and the corporate media plays

a key role in electoral processes. The Chilean right wing is focused on preserving its privileges inherited from the dictatorship through the current Constitution. This time, they disguised themselves as supposedly regular working people opposing civil society. Although, for those who know the reality of the Andean country, it is evident that those behind the “I reject” option are nothing less than the Chilean establishment itself.

It looks like the majority is still supporting the change and are aware of the benefits of the new Constitution. For them, approving it would be a fresh start to build a new type of state, a stronger one that recognizes all the intricacies of the society, guarantees workers’ rights, gender equality, the rights of indigenous peoples, and Chile’s plurinational nature.

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - U.S.](#)

