

# Chile's Presidential Elections 2025: Three Competing National Projects at Stake

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*In the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, three distinct projects are in competition: (i) a neoliberal authoritarianism reminiscent of leaders like Giorgia Meloni, Jair Bolsonaro, Donald Trump, and Javier Milei; (ii) an attempt at a 'grand coalition' similar to that in Germany or France, with dominance by traditional right-wing parties allied with neoliberal social democrats; and (iii) a social democratic popular front aimed at containing neoliberal authoritarianism.*



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Original article: [Chile: Tres Proyectos de País en Disputa en las Elecciones Presidenciales 2025](#)

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On Sunday, November 16, approximately 15 million voters in [Chile](#) will head to the polls to select their new president in a contest that highlights deep societal

divisions and challenges facing the nation. With a runoff scheduled for December 14 if no candidate surpasses 50%, these elections represent not just a clash of personalities but a battle of opposing visions for Chile's future.

Amidst eight candidates vying for the presidency, the focus is on four leading contenders with substantial voter support and parliamentary backing: Jeannette Jara, José Antonio Kast, Evelyn Matthei, and Johannes Kaiser. The independent candidacies of Franco Parisi (a right-wing populist), Harold Mayne-Nicholls, Marco Enríquez-Ominami, and Eduardo Artés are unlikely to secure seats in Congress, generally polled below 5% except for Parisi.

This presidential and parliamentary election centers on three distinct projects: (i) a neoliberal authoritarianism akin to governments led by Giorgia Meloni, Jair Bolsonaro, Donald Trump, and Javier Milei; (ii) an attempt at a «grand coalition» similar to Germany or France, dominated by traditional right-wing parties allied with neoliberal social democrats; and (iii) a social democratic popular front aimed at countering neoliberal authoritarianism.

### **1. The Project of Neoliberal or Pinochetist Authoritarianism**

This model, rooted in Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, combines strong political authoritarianism with neoliberal economic policies. Internationally, it draws parallels with figures such as Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, and Javier Milei in Argentina.

José Antonio Kast and Johannes Kaiser embody this project, competing separately in the presidential election while their supporting parties—Republican Party, Social Christian Party, and Libertarian National Party—join forces in the parliamentary elections.

Their programmatic priorities are aligned, with differences primarily in “intensity”. Both propose restricting civil liberties, militarizing public security, and

increasing presidential powers; instituting stricter immigration policies towards Chile by announcing the expulsion of all irregular migrants and fortifying borders. Kaiser has even suggested creating “detention camps” for migrants. Economically, both candidates promise significant cuts to public spending (Kast proposes \$6 billion, while Kaiser suggests doubling that), tax reductions for large corporations, and relaxing labor rights to purportedly stimulate the economy. The reduction in fiscal spending will inevitably impact public social policies.

This project has the potential to mobilize 30% to 40% of the electorate, indicating the resilience of a hard-right segment in Chile that has gained strength following the social unrest of October 2019. Currently, José Antonio Kast leads with an average of 20% to 25% in polls; however, Kaiser has been gaining ground at Kast’s expense, with projections suggesting Kaiser could surpass Kast to reach the runoff alongside Jeannette Jara.

## **2. The Neoliberal Grand Coalition**

Led by Evelyn Matthei, this candidacy aims to revive the center-right and center-left governments that dominated Chile since the return to democracy in 1990. Its strategy is to present itself as a stable and governable option, appealing to voters nostalgic for that era. Nevertheless, this approach raises skepticism, as Matthei was a staunch defender of Pinochet during the dictatorship and is the daughter of a member of the Military Junta.

Matthei remains stagnant in third place, despite leading polls for two years. In her effort to win over the “center” and even neoliberal social democratic voters, she has alienated some of her conservative base, which has shifted towards Kast. The main argument is the “useful vote” to fend off what they consider a “dangerous” far-right government; however, they have only managed to mobilize sections of the business community without shifting the electoral base of the right.

Programmatically, her candidacy advocates for a “moderate hard hand”, suggesting less radical proposals concerning security and immigration, even considering the possibility of regularizing irregular migrants for agricultural work. In terms of economic policy, she advances a neoliberal agenda focused on reducing the fiscal deficit, albeit with less radical proposals than Kast and Kaiser (e.g., proposing a \$2 billion tax cut).

### **3. The Social Democratic Popular Front**

The official candidate, Jeannette Jara, represents a broad coalition extending from the Communist Party and leftist parties outside President Gabriel Boric’s government to the Christian Democracy. Her primary strength lies in uniting against the threat of the far right, functioning as a “popular front” whose original program has had to adapt to accommodate many allies.

Programmatically, there isn’t a comprehensive national project; rather, there are concrete measures focused on alleviating the economic crisis faced by families: renegotiating electricity contracts to lower bills, raising the minimum wage to \$750, creating jobs, and strengthening public health, including dental and mental care. On security, she has proposed extensive use of technology for border security and lifting bank secrecy to pursue organized crime’s financial resources.

Beyond this election, Jara represents the possibility of a progressive government led by the Communist Party. She has distanced herself from the current president Gabriel Boric by opposing a controversial agreement between the state mining company Codelco and the private SQM, expressing interest in Chile joining BRICS+ (a bloc of emerging economies).

Should Jara win, the inevitable internal struggle for dominance among communists, leftist parties outside Boric’s government, socialists, and traditional center-left parties will ensue. Currently, Jara leads the first round with projections

of 30% to 38% of the votes, but struggles to surpass 45% in the runoff according to electoral forecasts.

### **Conclusion: A Country in Dispute**

These elections in Chile are far more than a simple electoral contest; they reflect a nation that has yet to define its course following the social explosion of 2019, and they also illustrate the polarization existing in other Latin American countries. Neoliberal capitalism is in crisis globally, and in Chile, the response to this crisis has manifested in two pathways: a return to pinochetism, strengthening neoliberal and authoritarian policies, or a commitment to a social democratic model that guarantees freedoms and civil rights, aiming to accumulate more strength for deeper transformations in the future.

According to polls, Jeannette Jara leads in the first round but faces defeat in the second round, with only a narrow result and potential to win if pitted against Johannes Kaiser. On the right, while Kast remains at the forefront among right-wing candidates, he faces significant challenges from Kaiser, suggesting that Kaiser may advance to the runoff, or that the contest between the two for the pinochetist right electorate could enable Evelyn Matthei to move forward.

The only certainty is that, regardless of who wins, the profound social and political tensions will keep Chile in a state of ongoing dispute.

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**Fuente:** [El Ciudadano](#)