

The table is served

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For Kast (on the right... literally), it is more difficult to try to make up for his reactionary ideas and, in particular, his Pinochetista past. Photo: Archivo/RHC

By Guillermo Alvarado

After the last debate between the candidates for the presidency of Chile, Gabriel Boric, of the progressive alliance Apruebo Dignidad, and José Antonio Kast, of the far-right coalition Pacto Social Cristiano, everything is ready for the final round of the elections next Sunday.

The meeting, broadcasted on radio and television, showed two candidates very concerned about showing a moderate image, aimed at the center of the political spectrum and the undecided or absent in the first

round, who were 53 percent of the electorate and could now decide the outcome.

The task is easier for Boric, a 35-year-old candidate, the minimum age to be president in that nation, who comes from the student struggles of 2011, although with little experience in the complex world of electoral and partisan politics.

"I hope to be the president of all Chileans, who gives certainty and tranquility, and they know that we are going to give the best of our best to be able to build a fairer, more egalitarian country," he said, and reiterated his promises to improve pensions, increase taxes on the richest and fight corruption.

For Kast it is more difficult to try to disguise his extreme right-wing ideas and, in particular, his Pinochetista past.

As published by the German magazine Der Spiegel, Kast "does not scold or bark" like his Brazilian counterpart Jair Bolsonaro, but uses a subtle language backed by a church pastor's smile, through which he slips his ultra-conservative, misogynist and xenophobic profile.

In recent weeks he has tried to portray himself as a moderate democrat and denied that he will dissolve the Ministry of Women, but people do not forget that when he was a congressman he voted against all laws that sought to favor the female sector in Chile.

Nor do people forget that during his time as a university student he was an activist for the permanence of the dictator Augusto Pinochet, that his brother Miguel was a minister in that regime or that he furiously attacked the movement for sexual diversity and environmental initiatives.

There are only four days left for the second and definitive round, and the table is set, although rarely has the Chilean electoral environment been so polarized and, at the same time, so indefinite regarding an eventual result, because nobody has anything won or lost beforehand.

In this southern country, voting is voluntary, abstention is traditionally high and a good part of the population is tired of governments that promise changes but do not put them into practice.

Soon, friends, we will know the answers.

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