



SPECIAL REPORT

Argentina is facing much more than legislative elections

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*Argentina is going through the last week before the mid-term elections where as it seems, nothing would dramatically change the results obtained in the **Simultaneous and Obligatory Open Primary Elections (PASO in Spanish)**.*

1. THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

This new electoral battle, in which **127 seats for National Deputies, 24 for National Senators** and more than thousand local and provincial legislative authorities will be renewed, will take place next October 27th, date in which the third anniversary of the death of the former President Néstor Kirchner will also be commemorated.

While this seemed to be an electoral process where the distinctive aspect had to do with the defeat suffered by the governing party in the Province of Buenos Aires –main electoral district in Argentina– at the hands of Sergio Massa, Mayor of Tigre Partido and former kirchnerist, former Executive Director of the Argentinian Agency that manages pension and retirement funds and former Chief of Cabinet of Ministers during Cristina Fernández de Kirchner’s first term, a series of events later became part of the public agenda and, somehow, intervened both on the forecasts in view of October 27th and on the political future of the South American country.

Generally speaking, the different opinion polls carried out within a very dynamic political and economic context and their conclusions do not present significant changes with respect to the figures that appeared as a result of the last primary elections.

Again, the candidate of the Frente Renovador, Sergio Massa, establishes himself in the first place, with a voting intention around 39%. Martín Insaurralde, the candidate of Frente para la Victoria and governing party, is positioned in the second place according to the studies with a voting intention of 32%. Margarita Stolbizer, leader of the Frente Progresista Cívico y Social, appears in the fight for the third place and manages to retain most of the votes from the PASO (11.7%) and she could even add some more points benefitted from the loss of votes that the candidate of Unión Celeste y Blanco, Francisco de Narváez could suffer, who would occupy the fourth place with a 6.3% voting intention.

In the last days, the gap between the candidates of the Frente Renovador and the Frente para la Victoria would have reduce. Although the difference between them is bigger than the one in the primaries, it is smaller than the one indicated at the surveys carried out in August and September of this year. According to what the main political analysts point out, there would

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be different factors influencing directly or indirectly:

- The last measures adopted by the National Government, related to the modification of the Income Tax and a range of announcements as regards safety within the Province of Buenos Aires.
- According to what the pollsters agree, there has been some improvement in President Cristina Kirchner’s image in the months after the PASO despite the unfavorable results for the governing party. There are people who argue that the kirchnerism’s strategy consisting in separating the Argentinian President from the electoral campaign bore its fruit, since the polls confirm some independence between the performance of Frente para la Victoria and the presidential popularity.
- The health problem the President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner is going through in the middle of the electoral process. While there is a consensus among the analysts with regard to the institutional seriousness of the matter, the majority thinks that the surgical operation, due to a chronic subdural accumulation, the President had to undergo would not necessarily be translated into votes, considering that 95% of the respondents would not change their

choice when the time comes to vote.

- Analysts show different views in relation to the role of Amado Boudou as the acting President. Ranked as one of the political figures with the greatest negative image in the country, some specialists consider that the image of the Vice President will damage the government authorities in their electoral campaign, while others think that the public opinion will observe this process quite naturally, without negative repercussions on the electoral dynamics.
- The reduction in the gap between Massa and Insaurralde could also be based on the increase of the number of undecided voters. Last polls stand out an increase of the percentage of people who have not made a decision regarding whom to vote. It is estimated that as we approach the date of the elections this number will tend to decrease, because it is expected that the opposition vote will align with the “useful vote”, as well as a more intensive campaign from the governing party.

2. AFTER THE ELECTORAL BATTLE

Beyond the election itself, what this new electoral process

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questions is how the political future in Argentina will be, in the view of the presidential elections in 2015.

If the results of August 11th recur, the project “eternal Cristina”, which was being boosted by some sectors of the Frente para la Victoria, will find a non-extendable deadline: December 10th, 2015. Even more after the last events in relation with the President’s health that represents an additional sign to an end of political cycle that was coming anyway.

Against this new context a succession period that in a loud or in a low voice, criticizes the governmental strategy developed so far, is beginning. There are people that argue that the successor will emerge from within the Justicialism itself in any of its forms: kirchnerists or traditional justicialism from the Justicialist Party of Buenos Aires predominance or Justicialist Party of federal predominance.

However, other forces are also part of the fight for who is going to get the “Rivadavia’s Seat” once Cristina Fernández de Kirchner leaves the power. On the one hand, the forces of the moderate left around the Partido Socialista / Unión Cívica Radical gathered by the former Governor of the Province of Santa Fe, Hermes Binner, the former Vice President of the Nation, Julio Cobos, or the current National Senator for the Province of

Mendoza, Ernesto Sanz, and on the other hand, the progressive conservative forces gathered around Mauricio Macri, current Chief of Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. The characteristic cyclothymia of Argentinian politics could even appear causing the latter to formalize some alliance with any of the two variables of the traditional justicialist party.

Behind closed doors the Justicialist Party does not see a “K” candidacy with capacity of success likely to be developed. Only the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, Daniel Scioli, could lead it but he is strongly fought from the very inside of the “cristinism”. Daniel Scioli can only rely on the central core of the Justicialist Party –which is trying to resurrect these days–. However, it is highly probable that the rest of his peers impose certain conditions and try to move him, essentially, away from the “K purity”.

Everything seems to point out that there may be internal elections in the Justicialist Party and Scioli may compete with a federal leader. The Governor of San Juan, Gioja, was the best-ranked candidate but the accident he suffered recently, when the helicopter transporting him collapsed, creates a great expectation about his capacity of keeping this leadership. Although it is too early, Gioja’s situation creates opportunities for other

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peronism’s figures such as Juan Manuel De la Sota (Governor of the Province of Córdoba), Juan Manuel Urtubey (Governor of the Province of Salta), Sergio Urribarri (Governor of the Province of Entre Ríos) or Jorge Capitanich (Governor of the Province of Chaco).

On the other hand, within the very Justicialist Party, the nowadays candidate for the National Chamber of Deputies of the Frente Renovador, Sergio Massa, will try to be elected but he should participate in intern elections against one of the federal candidates. However, it is probable that his party’s peers send him to the candidacy for the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires. In that case, he will probably seek support among the most progressive conservatives and will make up his candidacy outside the Justicialist Party.

3. CONCLUSION

In any case, the coming leaderships will need a totally different view

of the one developed so far by the succession of K governments, first with Néstor Kirchner and afterwards with Cristina Fer-nández de Kirchner. Each of them will face the challenge of developing non-populist future strategies, dealing with complicated problems such as the energetic and financial collapse the country is facing. As well as considering that the social and governability crisis that is now beginning does not leave any margin to, on the one hand, continue with the design of distribution policies without genuine investment that generates new wealth and, on the other hand, with the populist subsidies that funded the survival of the political power in the last five years rather than the encouragement of willingness for personal development of those who received resources from the State.

For all that has been said, next Sunday, October 27th, Argentina will elect much more than senators or deputies; this weekend the Argentinians’ vote will decide how the actors of a new national political scenario will be ordered.

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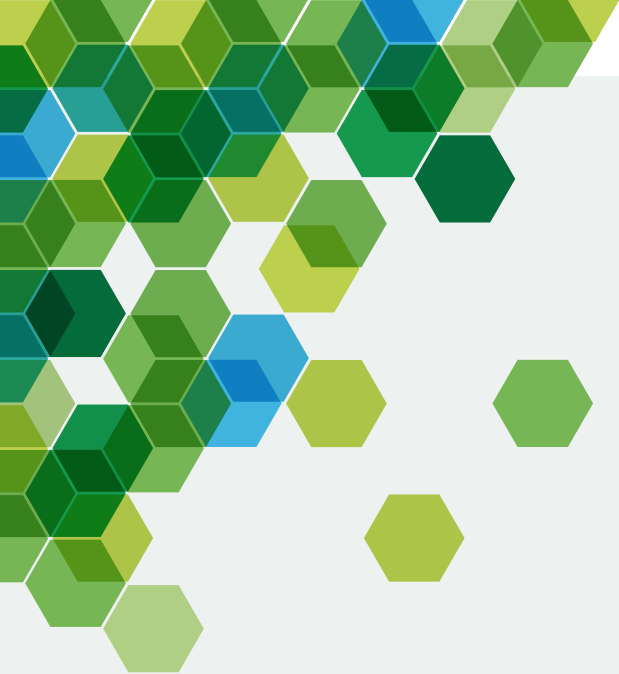
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