

POLITICAL MAP OF ARGENTINA AFTER 2019 ELECTIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

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Argentina is one of the most influential players in Latin America with the aspiration of being a regional leader. However, history of the country has been affected by serious economic and political instability. Political scientists agree that the country has the potential to be a real economic and political power. This paper analyses the main events creating and influencing the current political map of Argentina and explains the reasons of electoral behaviour with special emphasis on the elections of 2019.

Key words: Argentina; political map; Peronism; elections; Kirchnerism.

1 INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS UNCERTAINTY OF THE 21st CENTURY

At the beginning of the 20th century, Argentina was the richest country in Latin America and one of the richest countries in the world. The living standard of the country was comparable to those of the U.S. and Western European countries. It was even higher than in France, Italy or Germany at that time and Argentina was a hemispheric rival of the U.S. (Clavijo 2020).

The remarkable economic growth of Argentina started in the second half of the 19th century and continued with the dynamic demographic change of the country. In 1869, Argentina's national population was about 1.7 million; in 1914, it was almost 8 million (Smith and Green 2019, 246). The country became the destination for migrants from Europe in the second half of 19th century and Western and Eastern Europeans moved to three American destinations – Canada, U.S., and Argentina. This process made Argentina (together with Uruguay) unique in Latin America. About 97% of Argentinians have European origin – comparing to 14% of Bolivians, 25% of Chileans, 50% of Brazilians or 20% of Colombians (Kent 2016, 184). During that period gross domestic product grew continuously – estimated average rate was at least 5% from 1860s to 1914 (Smith and Green 2019, 246).

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Argentina's economic success was based on agriculture – especially on export of agricultural products – beef meat and grain (ibid., 245). However, one-way and export-oriented economy was dependent on world prices of export commodities. Very soon, the economic policy of the country proved to be problematic as the value of the export goods was unpredictable. This kind of economic policy of Argentinian governments resulted in the country being affected by protectionism during the Great Depression in late 1920s and early 1930s. The political turbulences that followed led to the first of the six military coups in the country in 1930.² Broader consequences of that situation are detectable in Argentinian politics and society until present times. No Argentinian government has been able to solve a major social problem – deepening inequities in Argentina as one of the sources of political turbulences in the country in the following hundred years. Social unrests of 1930s and 1940s helped to establish really strong and influential trade unions as one of the decisive players of Argentinian politics. Later they became a very close and traditional partner of different Peronist parties and movements. Due to the Peronist ideology of corporatism, workers and the working class were brought into politics. On the other hand – as trade unions were influential and became a real part of the Peronist movements, it was difficult and even impossible to adopt actions necessary for the revitalization of the economy³ – including social restrictions. Populism,⁴ typical for the governments of Juan Domingo Perón (1946–1955), (1973–1974), remained an integral part of Argentinian politics.

After the Dirty war period (1976–1983) Argentina became one of the examples of the countries of Huntington's third way of democratization.⁵ The military junta was definitively discredited in 1983 as a result of a series of military government actions - defeat in the war on Falklands, crimes of the government and military representatives and unwillingness to discuss social problems as military junta banned unions and controlled social institutions in the country (Hellinger 2011, 244). The upcoming tasks for the new civic government were clear – national reconciliation, punishment of crimes of representatives of the military junta government (1976–1983) and revitalization of economy.⁶ The newly elected president Raúl Alfonsín⁷ (1983–1989) was partially successful in the first two areas of action, but he was unable to solve the economic crisis⁸ in Argentina. His economic policy even involved the introduction of a new currency – the *austral*. However, the currency was devaluated so many times that it became worthless (Buckmann 2012, 43). Social riots caused by economic problems forced Raúl Alfonsín to leave the office pre-term in July 1989 (transfer of power to the new president was originally scheduled for December 1989).

The successor of Raúl Alfonsín in the office of the President of Argentina was the

² The other coups were in 1943, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976.

³ Compare Čech (2011).

⁴ Theoretical approach to populism compare Cremonesi and Salvati (2019).

⁵ Some authors argue that the process of transition started much earlier in April 1977 – one year after military coup when group of mothers of disappeared Argentinians went to Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace to protest silently. They immediately became international symbol of resistance of repression – Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (Hellinger 2011, 245), inevitable part of symbolism in modern politics of Argentina.

⁶ The inflation reached 335% in 1975, 200% in 1982 and about 400% in 1983 (Hellinger 2011, 246).

⁷ Raúl Alfonsín from left-centrist Radical Civic Union was surprisingly winner of the election of 1983 as the favorite of the election was Peronist from Justicialist Party Ítalo Argentino Lúder. Raúl Alfonsín finally obtained 52% of votes and Lúder 40% (Schumacher 1983).

⁸ Inflation in Argentina was about 600% in 1986, 380% in 1988 and 3000% in 1989 (World Bank Open Data 2021).

Peronist Carlos Saúl Menem (1989–1999). Carlos Saúl Menem and his political approach support the fact that it is not easy at all to categorise Peronism and the ideology of Peronism.⁹ Carlos Saúl Menem was by no means leftist nor was he linked with trade unions as traditional Peronists. Menem's economic approach was rightist and neoliberal and included privatisation of key sectors of economy – airlines, energy supplies, railways. In opposition to other prominent Peronists was his foreign policy close to the U.S.¹⁰ As his neoliberal approach seemed to be successful in the beginning of 1990s,¹¹ he brought Peronists new type of voters – middle class voters. However, as in previous decades, the economic prosperity of Argentina did not last longer period. The hope for economic stability ended during 1998¹² and at the beginning of the 21st century, the economy of Argentina fell into its deepest decline since the Great Depression (Smith and Green 2019, 272). Finally, in 2001 Argentina defaulted – the first of the three times in the following twenty years of the 21st century.

2 FROM 2001 DEFAULT TOWARDS THE 2019 ELECTIONS

Argentina's economic problems on the brink of the new millennium had serious political consequences. President Fernando de la Rúa¹³ (1999–2001) was forced to resign on December 21, 2001. His resignation was the response to the riots across the country and the lack of political support within his own coalition as some deputies refused his free market style. After his resignation, Argentina witnessed 4 different presidents in the course of two following weeks. Firstly, Fernando de la Rúa was replaced by Peronist Adolfo Rodríguez Saá. He resigned on December 30, 2001 – as in the case of Fernando de la Rúa, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá also lacked the support within his own party - this time the Peronist Justicialist Party. Later Ramón Puerta (President of the Senate) and Eduardo Camaño (President of the Chamber of Deputies) served as presidents – both only for 48 hours. Finally, on January 2, 2002, Peronist Eduardo Duhalde was elected President to complete the original term of Fernando de la Rúa (O'Toole 2011). The society was hit significantly by the consequences of the recession and default. The unemployment rate rose to about 25%, 55% of the society found themselves below the poverty line. About 27% of the society lived in extreme poverty (Clavijo 2020).

The Presidential election of 2003 was held in a situation of political and economic tensions. The list of candidates proved the fragmentation of Argentinian politics, even within traditional political parties (Justicialist Party and Radical Civic Union). Three of nine candidates in the election of 2003 were Peronists – Carlos Saúl Menem, Néstor Kirchner and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá. They were supported by different factions of Justicialist Party and each of them obtained more than 14%

⁹ Carlos Saúl Menem managed to govern Argentina through decretes of Urgency and Necessity (Decretos de Urgencia y Necesidad) as the results of disputes in Peronist camp. The number of the decretes he issued between his first term (1989-1994) was unprecedented – 336 (Smith 2012, 162).

¹⁰ Argentinian approach towards U.S. is traditionally inconsistent. Leftists Peronists leans to cooperation with leftist governments in the regions (the case of Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández Kirchner). Liberals and centrists tends to cooperation with the U.S. (the case of government of Mauricio Macri).

¹¹ Inflation was about 1% in 1996 and 1997 (Smith and Green 2019, 270).

¹² Country was hit by Asian financial crisis in 1997 and Russian financial crisis in 1998. Argentina was in severe recession from 1998 (Clavijo 2020).

¹³ President Fernando de la Rúa was leader of Radical Civil Union and in 1999 presidential election defeated Peronist Eduardo Duhalde.

of votes. Two other candidates had their roots in the Radical Civic Union – Elisa María Avelina Carrió and Ricardo López Murphy. However, the official candidate of Radicals was Leopoldo Moreau with a marginal result of about 2% (Election Guide 2020).

TABLE 1: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2003

First round/April 27 th , 2003; Turnout 77.53%				
Carlos Saúl Menem <i>Front for Loyalty/ Frente por la Lealtad</i>	Nestor Kirchner <i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	Ricardo López Murphy <i>Federal Movement to Recreate Growth/ Recrear para el Crecimiento</i>	Elisa María Avelina Carrió <i>Argentines for a Republic of Equals/ Argentinos por una República de Iguales</i>	Adolfo José Rodríguez Saá <i>National and Popular Movement/ Frente Movimiento Popular</i>
24.34%	21.99%	16.35%	14.15%	14.12%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Nestor Kirchner, one of Peronists' candidates became President as a relatively unknown politician after the election of 2003. Nestor Kirchner was a leftist Peronist and a rival of Carlos Menem within the Peronist movement. He was the governor of the province Santa Cruz and until 2003 he did not perform significantly in the national policy. In 2003 election president in office Eduard Duhalde supported him. His main rival – also Peronist Carlos Saúl Menem stepped down after the first round¹⁴ of the presidential election – disappointed by his poor result (although he was the winner of the first round – Table 1). Menem's decision not to compete had considerable effect on the future of the politics in Argentina. Nestor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernandez Kirchner became the most influential players in the politics of the country. Kirchnerism developed to one of the decisive and essential political movements in Argentina of the 21st century.

Nestor Kirchner did not introduce a radically new program as Carlos Menem did before (Plachý 2012, 263). His rhetoric was leftist and anti-liberal. However, in practical politics he was moderate and centrist. As president he tried to by-pass legislature and to govern through decrees. Nestor Kirchner issued 232 of them – the amount comparable to Menem's 336 during his first term. For his opponents, that style of governance was an evidence of corruption and clientelism (ibid.). On the other hand, we have to underline that economic situation during his presidential term was stable – *i.e.* economic growth in 2006 was 9.2% (Buckmann 2012, 50). Because of social programs, declining the poverty and stable economy Nestor Kirchner was relatively popular during his whole term in office. His decision not to run for office in the 2007 presidential election was a surprise. However, it came not as a surprise that he decided to support his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in the presidential contest of 2007. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won the 2007 election smoothly. Her main rival Elisa María Avelina Carrió gained about 20% of votes less than Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Table 2).

¹⁴ According to Argentine constitution to avoid runoff in presidential election, it is necessary to gain 45% of votes or 40% of votes with at least 10% over the runner-up. According to the Argentine constitution candidates are to obliged to have two debates during the campaign. If there is a second turn they have to take part in the third one. The Chamber of Deputies consists of 257 seats, Every two years is re-elected part of the chamber (130 or 127 deputies). They are elected by proportional system. Argentinian Senate consists of 72 senators – every two years is elected one third of them. Eleggible to vote is every 16 years old native Argentinian or 18 years old naturalized citizen (Constitución de la Nación Argentina 2021). Argentina is also a country with obligatory quotas for women (the first party list quota decision in the world) – from 1990 every party list must contain at least 30% of women candidates. The election are obligatory in Argentina for all the citizenese with possible sanctions for those who do not take part (fincial penalties, depriving the possibility to work as a state employee etc.).

TABLE 2: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2007

First round/October 28 th , 2007; Turnout 71.8%				
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Elisa María Avelina Carrió <i>Civic Coalition/ Coalición Cívica</i>	Roberto Lavagna <i>Alianza Concertación para Una Nación Avanzada/ Consensus for an Advanced Nation</i>	Alberto Rodríguez Saá <i>Union and Liberty Party / Alianza Frente Justicia Union y Libertad</i>	Nestor Pitrola <i>Worker's Party / Partido Obrero</i>
44.92%	22.95%	16.88%	7.71%	6.19%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner confirmed her position as head of the state in presidential election of 2011 gaining almost 54% of votes (Table 3). It is questionable if the election process in 2011 was competitive as the election was affected by the death of still popular Nestor Kirchner and consequent sympathy for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The first mandate of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner¹⁵ was influenced by continuously favourable economic situation (GDP growth in 2010 was about 10% - Table 7). The situation changed at the beginning of the second decade of 21st century during her second term. The government of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was not willing to make a deal with creditors and Argentina was forced to leave international capital markets. The economic policy of the second government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner resulted in a new default in 2014.

TABLE 3: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2011

First round/October 23 rd , 2011; Turnout 74.42%			
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Hermes Juan Binner <i>Broad Progressive Front Alliance / Alianza Frente Amplio Progresista</i>	Raúl Alfonsín <i>Radical Civic Union / Unión Cívica Radical</i>	Eduardo Alberto Duhalde <i>Justicialist Party / Partido Justicialista</i>
53.96%	16.87%	11.15%	5.89%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner could not compete in the 2015 presidential election and Peronist movement had to nominate a new candidate. The official candidate of the Peronists became the former vice-president in Nestor Kirchner administration and governor of Buenos Aires Daniel Scioli. His main rival was Mauricio Macri from the opposition (included i.e. Radical Civic Union) bloc Let's Change. The situation was different to contests in 2007 and 2011. As there was no winner after the first round of the election (Table 4), the second round was necessary. Mauricio Macri won narrowly (Table 4) with about 51% of votes.

TABLE 4: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2015

First round/October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 78.66%		
Daniel Scioli <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Let's Change / Cambiemos</i>	Sergio Massa <i>United for a New Alternative / Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>
36.90%	34.30%	21.30%
Second round/November 22 nd , 2015; Turnout 80.85%		
Daniel Scioli <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Let's Change / Cambiemos</i>	
48.66%	51.34%	

Source: Election Guide (2020).

¹⁵ Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was in a dispute with prominent Peronist colleagues – in 2008 left her chief of her office Alberto Fernández (current president). In the same year vicepresident Julio César Cleto Cobos decided not to support her decision to increase tax on export on agriculture products. As his vote was in the Senate decisive the governmental proposal was rejected (Argentine Senate rejects farm tax 2008).

The political division of the society was confirmed in the legislative election held at the same time. Although Mauricio Macri won presidential election, his coalition lost in the elections to both chambers of the Parliament. Peronist coalition Front for Victory won both (Table 5, 6).

TABLE 5: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2015 ELECTION

October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 74.17%			
<i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	<i>Let's Change Alliance/ Cambiemos</i>	<i>United for a New Alternative/ Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>	<i>Others</i>
60 seats	40 seats	14 seats	16 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 6: SENATE ELECTION 2015

October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 79.83%			
<i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	<i>"Let's Change" Alliance/ Cambiemos</i>	<i>United for a New Alternative/ Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>	<i>Others</i>
13 seats	6 seats	1 seat	4 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

3 ELECTIONS 2019

3.1 Pessimism before elections in 2019

Immediately after he was inaugurated Mauricio Macri took steps for the liberalization of the Argentinian economy. He cut export taxes, lifted currency controls and negotiated conditions allowing Argentina to return to international capital markets (Nelson 2020). However, his support declined once he had to deal with broader economic reforms and expenditure cuts. Mauricio Macri was finally forced to turn to IMF to ask for assistance to solve the economic crisis in the country. The debt from IMF rose to 56 billion USD – the largest one in IMF history (Fróes). Despite this decision, economic conditions failed to improve (Nelson 2020) and Mauricio Macri was not able to fulfil one of the key promises of his campaign – zero poverty. Of course, his supporters suggested that the economy was in a really bad condition in 2015 so he needed more time to achieve his economic goals. However, one can ask if promises of that kind (zero poverty) are not to be perceived only as a sort of populism usually linked with Peronism and Kirchnerism but not with a moderate candidate unable to compete without articulating unrealistic promises to society that is not prepared for necessary but painful restrictions. The economy was once again the main topic of the political campaign and the atmosphere in the country was pessimistic.

In 2018 62% of Argentinians identified the situation in the country as very bad or bad. In Latin America only Venezuelans identified the situation as worse (83%). The average of Latin America was 42% with the most satisfied residents of Chile and Bolivia where the situation was identified as bad or very bad by 16% and 18% of population respectively (Latinobarómetro 2018, 8). In the same poll only 8% of Argentinians were satisfied with the economic situation in their country. The average of Latin America was 12%. The most satisfied were the citizens in Chile (26%), Uruguay (21%) and Bolivia (18%) (ibid.). At the same time, Argentinians were the most pessimistic in perception of their future. Only one third of them thought that the situation would be better in 2019 – in the year of the election. The average for Latin America was 45%. The most optimistic appeared to be Brazilians and the citizens of the Dominican Republic with 58% (ibid., 12).

Despite those results, Argentina traditionally belongs to Latin American countries with higher support for democracy. In 1996 about 76% of Argentinians were in favour of democracy. A better result was only recorded for Uruguay (80%). In 2018 it was 58% of support in Argentina. Despite this result, Argentina is still among the countries with the highest support for democracy – only Venezuela (75%), Costa Rica (63%) and Uruguay (61%) recorded a higher level of support (ibid., 16).

Pessimism was confirmed also by the polls held in the year of elections. The nation did not expect better living standard regardless of the candidate who would have won the election. According to Argentinians, the most severe problems facing country in 2019 were inflation (40.7% of poll responders), unemployment (22.2% of poll responders) and corruption (15.9 % of poll responders) (The presidential election in Argentina 2019). Only 29.2% believed that the economy would perform better if Mauricio Macri won election in 2019. 50.7% of poll responders thought it would perform worse (ibid.). The poll took place in May 2019 so it was not clear yet if Cristina Fernández would run for office or not. If she were a candidate 38.5% of responders said that the economy would perform better if she won and 44.7% said it would perform worse (ibid.).

Those opinions were approved in the poll held on September 2–3, 2019. According to the results, 63.3% of Argentinians were not satisfied with the way Mauricio Macri governed the country. Only 32.9% of responders were satisfied. About 57% of responders said that his government was bad or very bad. Only 26% of them agreed that his government was good or very good. The same poll confirmed that the most distinctive persons in politics of the country are Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Mauricio Macri. More than 48% of responders said that they would never vote for Mauricio Macri and 39.1% of them pointed out that they would never vote for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. About 35.5% of responders would never support Alberto Fernández and 10% would never vote for Roberto Lavagna. The principal problems for the country were inflation (37.8%), corruption (21.1%), inefficient state (16%) and unemployment (14.8%) (Encuesta electoral: Elecciones Presidenciales de Argentina 2019).

Macroeconomic data (Tables 7–11) also confirm bad condition of Argentinian economy in the second decade of the 21st century and could also explain the position of Argentinian society in terms of economy and economic expectations. Looking at GDP growth, Argentina did very well in 2010 but the economy of the country was still in recession in the election year. Comparing the four other countries only Colombia's growth exceeded 3%. One of the most important problems for the whole region is social inequality¹⁶ (Table 9). It is visible that this issue poses a challenge not only for Argentina. However, as underlined in this paper – the main problem for the country was inflation regardless of the year – the results for Argentina were critical during all the time and no other country we chose faced such a critical situation (Table 10).

¹⁶ Compare i.e. Mahler et al (2015).

TABLE 7: GDP (ANNUAL %)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	10.1	2.7	-2.6	-2.1
Brazil	7.5	-3.5	1.3	1.1
Chile	5.8	2.3	3.9	1.1
Colombia	4.5	3.0	2.5	3.3
Uruguay	7.8	0.4	1.6	0.2

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 8: GDP PER CAPITA USD

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	10 386	13 789	11 633,5	9 912,30
Brazil	11 286,2	8814	9001,2	8 717,2
Chile	12 808	13 574,2	15 924,8	14 896,5
Colombia	6336,7	6175,9	6716,9	6428,7
Uruguay	11 992	15 613,8	17 278	16 191

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 9: INCOME SHARE HELD BY LOWEST 20%

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	4,6	X	5,0	4,7
Brazil	X	3,6	3,1	3,1
Colombia	3,3	3,8	4,0	3,7
Uruguay	5,0	5,6	5,9	5,8

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 10: INFLATION (%)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	20,9	26,6	40	50,6
Brazil	8,4	7,6	3,3	4,2
Chile	9,0	5,0	2,4	2,7
Colombia	3,8	2,4	4,5	4,3
Uruguay	4,9	9,0	5,6	7,7

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 11: UNEMPLOYMENT - TOTAL LABOUR FORCE (%)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	7,71	7,61	9,22	9,84
Brazil	7,73	8,43	12,33	11,93
Chile	8,42	6,51	7,23	7,29
Colombia	10,98	8,3	9,11	9,96
Uruguay	7,16	7,49	8,34	9,35

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

3.2 Results of the 2019 elections

Presidential and legislative elections were held on October 27, 2019. They were preceded by obligatory primaries called Simultaneous and Compulsory Open Primaries (PASO)¹⁷ on August 11, 2019. They are perceived as primaries as they are the first phase of the election. Every party can perform its program and present different opinions. The citizens also decide which candidates will take part in national election. They are open as every Argentine citizen can take part in this process. They are simultaneous as they are realizing the same day for every political party in Argentina. And they are obligatory as every political party and candidate has to go through the process of primaries and also every citizen should take part in the election process of primaries to choose the candidate (Miranda 2019, 58–59). Candidates with less than 1.5% of votes in primaries cannot take part in the national election.

Mauricio Macri was not a favourite in the primaries. He tried to increase his popularity by choosing his vice-presidential candidate from the Peronist camp.

¹⁷ PASO is part of election process in Argentina from 2011.

He chose senator from the province Río Negro Miguel Ángel Pichetto. This strategy was understandable but did not prove helpful. The tandem Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won the primaries with 47.7% of votes, Mauricio Macri and Miguel Ángel Pichetto gained 32.1% of votes and Roberto Lavagna with Juan Manuel Urtubay 8.2% (Horowitz 2019).

Although Mauricio Macri tried to reverse the results, the trend was clear and on October 27, 2019, he lost the election (Table 12). However, analysing the results of the 2019 elections more precisely it becomes evident that the society is divided strictly into two strong camps. Macri won only in six of total twenty-four provinces. His loss can be interpreted as a rejection of his neoliberal approach and austerity policy that even worsened after the economic crisis in 2018.¹⁸ On the other hand, although Mauricio Macri lost the presidential election, Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner did not obtain clear majority in the legislative part of election (Tables 13, 14). Taking into account the results of midterm election from 2017 (Tables 15, 16) it was evident that Alberto Fernández would face strong opposition and that he would need to try to find compromise and partners from all political camps if he wanted to solve crucial problems of the country.

TABLE 12: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2019

First round/October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
Alberto Fernández <i>Everyone's Front/Frente de Todos</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Together for Change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	Roberto Lavagna <i>Federal Consensus/Consenso Federal</i>
48.10%	40.37%	6.16%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 13: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2019 ELECTION

October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
<i>Everyone's front/Frente de Todos</i>	<i>Together for change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	<i>Others</i>
64 seats	56 seats	10 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 14: SENATE ELECTION 2019

October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
<i>Everyone's front/Frente de Todos</i>	<i>Together for change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	<i>Others</i>
12 seats	8 seats	4 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 15: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2017 ELECTION

October 29 th , 2017; Turnout 76.82%			
<i>Let's Change/Cambiamos</i>	<i>Citizen's Unity/Unidad Ciudadana</i>	<i>Justicialist Party/Partido Justicialista</i>	<i>Others</i>
61 seats	28 seats	18 seats	20 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 16: SENATE ELECTION 2017

October 29 th , 2017; Turnout 78.72%			
<i>Let's Change/Cambiamos</i>	<i>Citizen's Unity/Unidad Ciudadana</i>	<i>Justicialist Party/Partido Justicialista</i>	<i>Others</i>
12 seats	6 seats	4 seats	2 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

¹⁸ The crisis was worsen by external factors – slow economic growth in Brazil, the trade war between the United States and China affecting e.g. export of Argentinian goods, low global commodity prices and serious draught (the worst in 50 years) in Argentina (Gedan 2019; Baculáková 2018). The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) also raised interest rates – the consequence was reduction investor interest in Argentine bonds (Nelson 2020).

One of the strongest groups of supporters of the Fernández-Fernández tandem were young Argentinians. Leftist ideas were really popular among young Argentinians in 2019. In addition, it was “cool” to be anti-Macri. Young Argentinians were attracted to the ideas of Peronism. The Fernández-Fernández tandem was able to address the so-called generation Z (Special Analysis: Argentina Election 2019).

Alberto Fernandez¹⁹ (former critic of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner) was a more moderate candidate than Cristina Fernández de Kirchner would ever be. He was incorporated in the structure of the Justicialist Party and was able to attract Peronists who could not accept Kirchnerism. Alberto Fernández sees himself as a Peronist, left liberal and a progressive liberal (Schuster 2019). He is not a supporter of neoliberal programs as according to him the role of the state is to balance what the market unbalances (*ibid.*). Mauricio Macri joined only two leaders in Latin America who were not re-elected since 1990.

Those two were Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in 1990 and Hipólito Mejía in the Dominican Republic in 2004. On the other hand, he is only the third non-Peronist candidate who was able to complete his term since 1912 (Nielsen 2019).

4 CONCLUSION

After being elected, Alberto Fernández once again faced a severe economic crisis. His predecessor Mauricio Macri failed mainly because the investments he promised in his election campaign of 2015 did not arrive (Schuster 2019). Moreover, in 2019 Argentina did worse in major economic indicators as it did in 2015. The estimated GDP decline in 2020 was about 11.8%. Expected growth for 2020 was - 11% and the prediction for 2021 is +3.0%. Expected inflation for 2020 was 45.4% with not better figures in 2021 - 42.4%. Public debt was 89.8% in 2018, 93.8% in 2019, 117.3% in 2020 and forecast for 2021 is 118.3% of GDP (Argentina: Economic and political outline 2021).

However, the history of Argentinian economic problems and consequently the history of the country's political turmoil is rich. Argentina has defaulted nine times in total (last time in May 2020) and since 1950, it spent one third of the time in economic recession. Only the Democratic Republic of Congo has worse results in this indicator (*ibid.*). During that period Argentina also logged 14 recessions (Gedan 2019). Since 1956 Argentina also joined 21 IMF programs

¹⁹ Alberto Fernández was not the only opposition candidate in Latin America who won the election at the end of the second decade of 21st century. Opposition candidates won also in Chile (Sebastian Pinera in 2017), Colombia (Iván Duque in 2018), Mexico (A. M. López Obrador in 2018), Brazil (Jair Bolsonaro in 2018), El Salvador (Nayib Bukele in 2019), Panama (Laurentino Cortizo in 2019) and Guatemala (Alejandro Giammattei in 2019). The result of those elections confirm these about heterogeneity rather than homogeneity (leftists governments in the first decade of 21st century) in the region (Malamud and Núñez 2019). Elections in the regions won candidates from different parts of political spectres - extreme right (Jair Bolsonaro), conservative right (Iván Duque, Mario Abdó Benítez, Juan Orlando Hernandez), center-right (Sebastian Piñera, Alejandro Giammattei), center left (Carlos Alvarado, Laurentino Cortizo), left (Manuel López Obrador) (Malamud and Núñez 2019). Alberto Fernández becomes to center-left but tandem Fernández-Fernández moves him closer to positions that are more leftist. He governs in the region that is different to the era of Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner governments. There are no more friendly governments as in the past (Brazil by Lula and Dilma, relatively prosperous Venezuela governed by Hugo Chávez). From the list above it is visible that region is a mosaic of dissimilar projects (Schuster 2019).

(International Monetary Fund 2020). Despite these figures, Argentina is without any doubt a regional power with great economic potential and sufficient influence to defend its national interests and, hypothetically, has favourable conditions for its development: adequate number of population and the space for its increasing, productive agriculture and skilful labour force (Friedman 2011, 234). Argentina faces mainly political challenges – politicians have to stop increasing their popularity with money they do not have (ibid.). Marshall (2017, 220) in that context points out that Argentina has a real chance to be the First world country. The pre-condition for this is a responsible economic policy as the steep status fall of the country during the last century was caused by the lack of diversification,²⁰ stratification, injustice in social structure, inadequate educational system, military coups and economic policy of the government period after the Dirty war. Also, Clavijo (2020) points out that although the international environment plays a role in the country's current conditions, there are two more important factors that obstruct the resolution of the main problems. Firstly, the Argentinian governments were not willing to modernize and diversify the economy of the country. Secondly, the population tends to vote for populist politicians. Midterm elections will be held in Argentina in 2021. The role of Alberto Fernández is to keep his coalition intact and to deal with the post COVID-19 atmosphere in the country. According to María Esperanza Casullo, political scientist at the National University of Rio Negro, Alberto Fernández can succeed. She points out that if the Argentinian economy rebounds and if a COVID-19 vaccine appears, Alberto Fernández government should do well in 2021. However, she emphasizes that those two 'ifs' are significant (Mander 2020).

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²⁰ The economy is still very depended on agricultural sector. Argentina is the world's largest exporter of soy and soy derived products. Except for soy, it is necessary to mention wheat, corn, beef or wine as key export articles.

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POLITIČNI ZEMLJEVID ARGENTINE PO VOLITVAH 2019 V PRIMERJALNI PERSPEKTIVI

Argentina je eden najvplivnejših igralcev Latinske Amerike, ki si prizadeva postati regionalni vodja. Na zgodovino države je vplivala resna gospodarska in politična nestabilnost. Politologi se strinjajo, da ima država potencial resnične gospodarske in politične moči. Prispevek analizira glavne dogodke, ki ustvarjajo in vplivajo na trenutni politični zemljevid Argentine, ter pojasnjuje razloge volilnega vedenja s posebnim poudarkom na volitvah leta 2019.

Ključne besede: Argentina; politični zemljevid; peronizem; volitve; kirchenizem.