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Bigfooting: Argentine dinosaurs



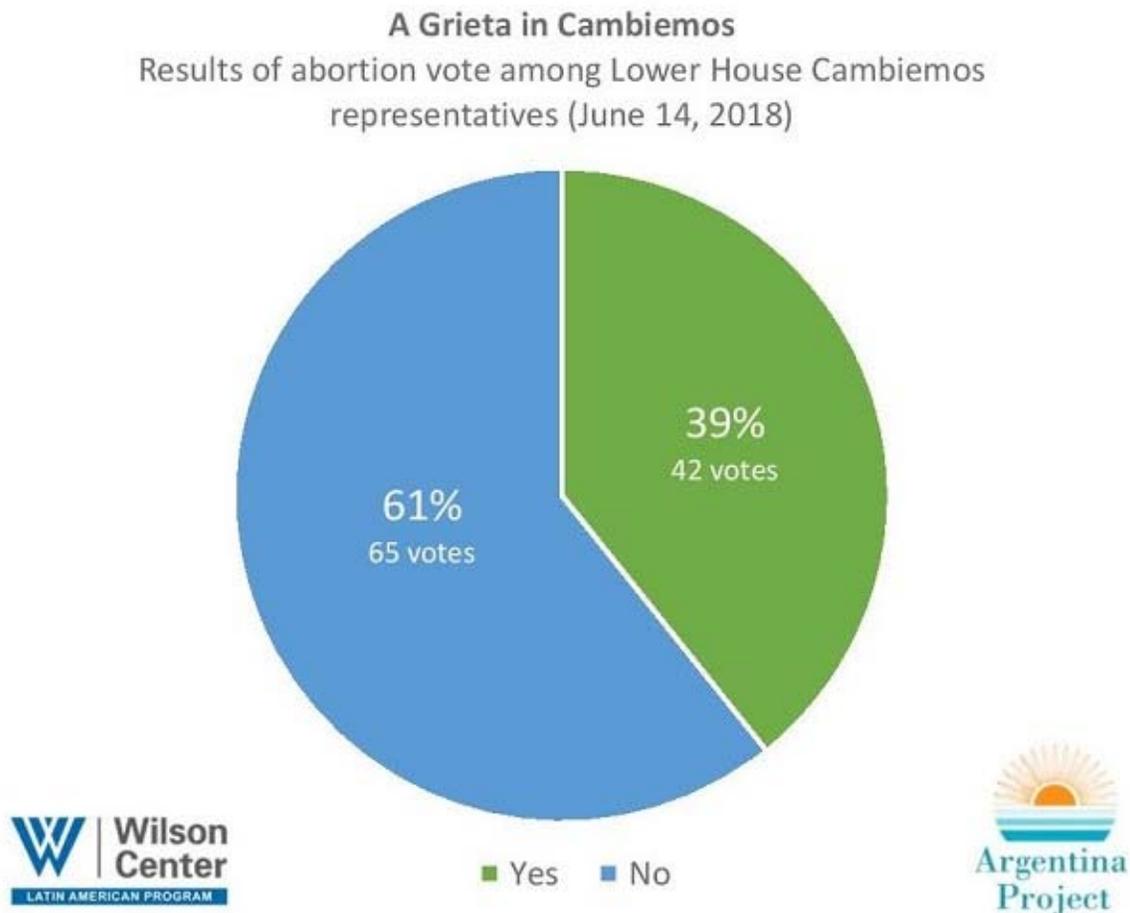
Argentina has had its share of giants, from Juan Perón and Evita to Diego Maradona and Messi. But long ago, the South American land was home to truly larger-than-life figures: dinosaurs.

In recent decades, paleontologists have made notable findings throughout Argentina, including the recent discovery of fossils linked to the world's first "giant" dinosaur. The [new species](#), *Ingentia prima*, was believed to weigh *10 tons*. Its discovery was reported earlier this month. Before that, an Argentine farmer in the Patagonian desert encountered spectacular fossils of a Titanosaur (pictured above), one of the largest land animals ever to have roamed the Earth. In 2016, the American Museum of Natural History, in New York City, installed a cast of the 122-foot-long Titanosaur

in its popular [fossil halls](#).

Dinosaur fossils have been found all over Argentina, but the two most prominent regions for discoveries are La Rioja Province and the Patagonian provinces of Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, where the sedimentary rocks are well suited to preserve fossils.

Reproducing dissent: A house divided



Unexpectedly, Argentina's center-right president, Mauricio Macri, has become a champion of gender issues. During his presidency, the government has proposed legislation to address the gender wage gap, extend maternity leave and increase support for victims of domestic violence. So it was not entirely surprising that Mr. Macri, an abortion opponent, promoted a legislative debate on reproductive rights in a country infamous in the pro-choice movement for its tight restrictions on abortion. (By contrast, his predecessor, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, subverted attempts to advance abortion legislation.)

In some ways, Mr. Macri's gamble is paying off. The Lower House approved the legislation June 14, and polls show public opinion on this once taboo subject is rapidly changing. The president seems to have succeeded in distracting public attention from economic troubles, and perhaps opened doors to some segments of the Peronist opposition.

But the political calculus is complex. Mr. Macri, aware of the intensely personal nature of this issue, did not demand party discipline. ("*Yo tengo mi posición, como la puede tener cualquiera de ustedes, pero no se la impongo a nadie,*" he told Cambiemos lawmakers.) Unlike in the United States, where party affiliation and views on abortion rights are often linked, the division on abortion in Argentina is not partisan. As a result, the debate has splintered Cambiemos, and not only in congress. Vice President Gabriela Michetti, Buenos Aires Governor María Eugenia Vidal, Social Development Minister Carolina Stanley and Congresswoman Elisa Carrió are vocally opposed to the legalization of abortion. At the same time, some of the most vocal supporters of the legislation are also in Cambiemos, including Congresswoman Silvia Lospennato and Congressman Fernando Iglesias. In the June 14 Lower House [vote](#), the Cambiemos vote split 42 in favor to 65 against. During the debate, Ms. Lospennato, in tears, called the bill emblematic of "*el siglo de los derechos de las mujeres,*" while fellow Cambiemos lawmaker Cornelia Schmidt-Liermann pleaded for "*soluciones alternativas*" to abortion, asking lawmakers, "*¿Qué clase de sociedad queremos?*" Outside government, conservative Catholics who support Mr. Macri are aghast.

The intraparty squabble is unwelcome for Mr. Macri. With the economy contracting and budget cuts limiting discretionary spending, the president will struggle to co-opt working-class Peronists in the Buenos Aires Province battleground in the run-up to next year's presidential election. The last thing he wants on his next *timbreo* is to stand on a front stoop and face hostile members of his own coalition.

Taken: A Sherpa's descent



Pity Argentina's G-20 organizers. In the Trump era, the United States is a potential spoiler of any international summit, and that is especially true of the G-20, a global body dedicated to expanding free trade. So far, the United States has behaved at high-level preparatory meetings, with even the G-20 [climate change](#) discussions still more-or-less alive. But the recent departure of Everett Eissenstat – the U.S. G-20 Sherpa (as the chief negotiator is known) who [resigned](#) in June – will complicate the already complex process of setting priorities for the G-20 leaders' summit in Buenos Aires in late November. His absence deprives the Argentine government of a key link to the sometimes fickle, inaccessible and inscrutable Trump administration, just as President Trump's [performance](#) at the Quebec G-7 summit in June must be giving nightmares to Argentine officials.

At this point, Argentina has modest ambitions for its G-20 presidency; it hopes to drive consensus on key issues, likely through a short communique listing watered-down commitments. But even that goal might be out of reach. Mr. Trump has shown a party crasher's willingness to scuttle goodwill and dynamite summit statements, including in gatherings of close U.S. allies in the G-7 and NATO. The chances of a repeat performance in November seem high. After all, in addition to its focus on trade, the G-20 includes China, Germany and Mexico, with which Mr. Trump has had rocky relations. Meanwhile, it is not even clear Mr. Trump will attend the G-20, as unthinkable as that might sound. The

president has shown a dismissive, and at times hostile, attitude to Latin America. In April, he [dropped out](#) of the Summit of the Americas at the last minute — a first for a U.S. president.

That said, Argentine President Mauricio Macri has so far avoided conflict with Mr. Trump, based upon their [friendly](#) relationship – and Argentina’s willingness to stomach a series of protectionist slights. It is well known that Mr. Trump sees [personal relationships](#) as key to negotiations. As we have [discussed](#) previously, Mr. Trump and Mr. Macri’s father did not play nicely in the New York real estate world; after their falling out, the elder Macri reportedly [accused](#) Mr. Trump of kidnapping his son. (There is no evidence whatsoever that Mr. Trump played any role in the kidnapping.) But the onetime kidnapping victim and the U.S. president have been chummy. Though Mr. Trump has not visited Latin America as president, he sent his vice president, secretary of state and treasury secretary to Buenos Aires. After threatening steep tariffs on Argentina’s steel and aluminum exports, the White House settled for [modest quotas](#). As Argentina successfully pursued an International Monetary Fund bailout, the two leaders [exchanged](#) Twitter [plaudits](#). Whether those ties buy Argentina a peaceful summit is unclear, but for better or worse, it probably means Mr. Trump will at least show up.

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