



Friday, February 15, 2019

Election 2019



Outsider Candidates

Who are they? Could an outsider pull it off?



Alfredo Olmedo

Ahora Patria

- Alfredo Olmedo, a congressman from Salta, has centered his far-right platform on security and socially conservative issues.
- He has proposed obligatory military service, separate bathrooms for LGBTQ people and easing restrictions on the use of deadly force by police.
- He has aligned himself with Brazil's far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro.

José Luis Espert

Partido Libertario

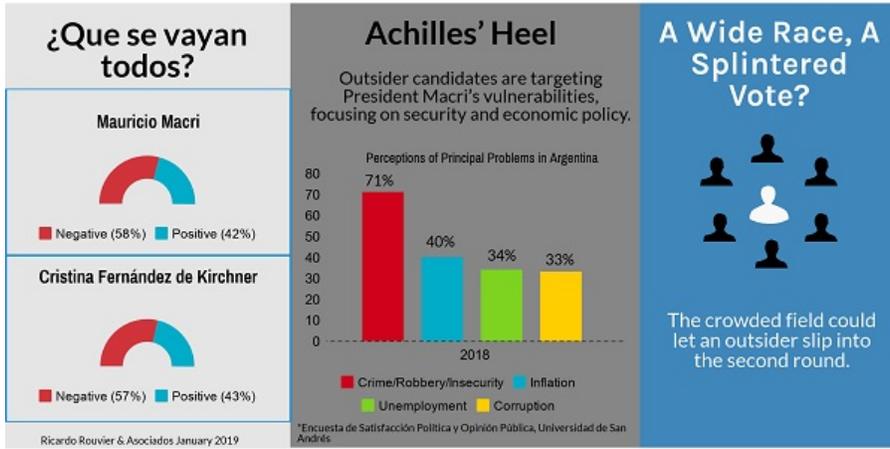
- José Luis Espert is an economist and well-known television commentator.
- He supports reduced public spending, lower taxes, deregulation and privatization.



Marcelo Tinelli

Likely Candidate

- Marcelo Tinelli is a wealthy businessman and popular television personality.
- His program, "Showmatch," has been a staple of Argentine pop culture for 25 years.
- Though he has not yet published policy proposals, he is likely to run as a Peronist.



An Outside Chance

Been there, done that

Successful outsiders like Bolsonaro and Trump used populist appeals, but Argentina already emerged from its populist experiment with the Kirchners.

President Macri, neither a Radical nor a Peronist, is arguably an outsider himself.

Insider Outsiders

Unhappy with both Macri and Cristina?

Take a look at the moderate Peronist candidates, including Sergio Massa, Miguel Angel Pichetto and Juan Manuel Urtubey.

Rising Expectations

The exchange rate has remained stable. Improving expectations for Argentina lessens the likelihood that an outsider will prevail.

Sources: Americas Quarterly, Buenos Aires Times, Clarín, El Cronista, Foreign Policy, Infobae

By Emma Sarfity

Presidential split personality: Jetsetter, homebody



Argentine President Mauricio Macri is a jetsetter and star of international forums. Argentine President Mauricio Macri is a homebody, focused on domestic politics and rebuilding Argentina's economy. It all depends on the year.

In 2016, Mr. Macri was a boldfaced name at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where his presence signaled a new era following 12 years of [populist rule](#) by Argentina's Kirchner family. In 2018, he was back in the Swiss mountains, [holding court](#) in the "Casa Argentina" with Bill Gates and the CEOs of Cargill and Coca Cola. "For decades, we have been isolated from the world," Mr. Macri said in Davos. "But we are now opening a new phase. We are in a position to play a significant role on the international stage."

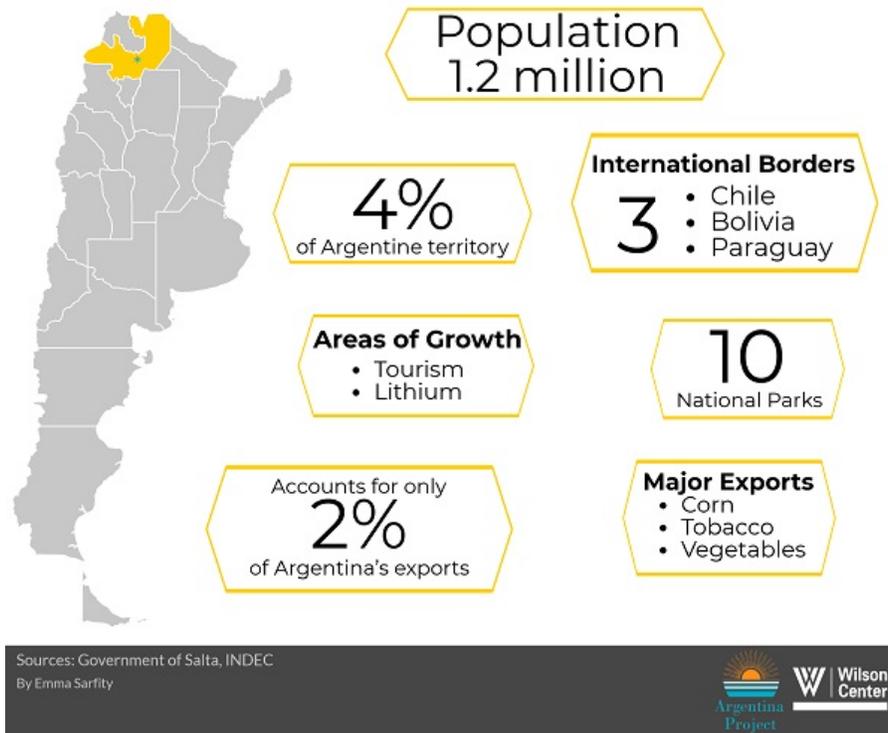
At least every other year. In election years, Mr. Macri takes a different approach to [presidential travel](#). In advance of the [2017 midterms](#), for example, he skipped both the UN General Assembly, in New York City, and Davos. Last month, the start of a presidential [election year](#), he was a no-show at the World Economic Forum.

That strategy makes sense in some ways. Mr. Macri is trying to demonstrate his focus on domestic challenges – including a [sputtering economy](#) – while deepening the country's international reengagement. Though he argues that his foreign policy will boost foreign investment – and helped Argentina secure an unprecedented \$57 billion International Monetary Fund [loan](#) last year – foreign travel risks giving the impression of a distracted head of state. (The popular Buenos Aires governor, [María Eugenia Vidal](#), has adopted a similar approach, swatting away a swarm of international invitations, in part to downplay rumors she covets Mr. Macri's job.) Worse, as Mr. Macri tries to win over traditional working class and poor Peronist voters, his globetrotting might reinforce his image as an unconnected oligarch more comfortable among cosmopolitan crowds than in Argentina's *barrios humildes*.

Former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, however, did not appear to share these concerns. She spoke at every UN General Assembly during her eight years in office. (She never attended the World Economic Forum, where her anti-elitist brand and protectionist policies would not have won over the crowd.) For his part, Mr. Macri might be overstating the perils of presidential travel. The November [ArgentinaPulse](#) survey – from the Wilson Center and Poliarquía – found that 60 percent of Argentines believe the country benefits from more active participation in international affairs. Indeed, following the year-end [Buenos Aires G-20](#), Mr. Macri's public approval began to rebound, despite a deepening recession.

Off the sidelines: Interior takes center stage

Spotlight on Salta



It is not unusual for Argentina's presidents to emerge suddenly from the country's *interior*. President Carlos Menem (1989 to 1999) had been governor of the sparsely populated La Rioja Province (population 333,642), and President Néstor Kirchner (2003 to 2007) spent his previous 12 years as governor of Santa Cruz (population 273,964) in Patagonia. (His associates were known as "*penguinos*.") In both cases, they started out as underdogs competing against Peronist counterparts in Buenos Aires.

This year, the northwestern province of Salta (population 1,214,441) has produced not one, but *two candidates* with their eyes on the Casa Rosada, 900 miles away. Governor Juan Manuel Urtubey is in the running to be the Peronist candidate for the presidency, competing against, among others, [Sergio Massa](#). And a second *salteño*, a [Bolsonaro-impersonator](#) and congressman, [Alfredo Olmedo](#), is also vying for the presidency.

Salta is better known for its empanadas, farms and tourist attractions than for its role in national politics. Outside the capital city and Buenos Aires Province, Argentina's biggest political prizes are Córdoba, Santa Fe and [Mendoza](#).) In general, Porteño pundits often overlook the interior, focusing on political developments in Buenos Aires. But given Argentina's history of electing geographic outsiders, it is worth paying attention as Salta shows unexpected signs of political vigor.

As is often the case, there is political value in portraying oneself as close to salt-of-the-earth, middle class rural communities – and to portray urban competitors as out-of-touch elitists. In Argentina, this is true for all political parties. In [remarks](#) at the Wilson Center on Tuesday, Mendoza's Radical governor, Alfredo Cornejo, suggested Mr. Macri should choose a running mate from the *interior*. That phenomenon is an advantage for Mr. Urtubey, Salta's best shot at taking the presidency. Unlike Mr. Olmedo (who has competed with the incumbent for governor), Mr. Urtubey is a moderate with potential national appeal. A former

member of Ms. Fernández de Kirchner’s leftist Frente Para la Victoria movement, he has often supported Mr. Macri’s pro-business agenda and he is now a [leading figure](#) among traditional Peronists.

It is not clear whether Mr. Urtubey can broaden his national profile in time for the October election. In a January survey by Synopsis, only 3 percent of respondents said they planned to vote for him, compared to 7 percent for Mr. Massa. As in 2015, when Mr. Macri outpaced Mr. Massa and former Buenos Aires Governor Daniel Scioli, this year’s election is dominated by porteño candidates, including Ms. Fernández de Kirchner. But stranger things have happened in Argentine politics.

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