

A brink of a new era in Argentina and Venezuela

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Javier Milei's victory in the Primarias, Abiertas, Simultáneas y Obligatorias (PASO) elections in Argentina threatens the twenty-year reign of Kirchnerism, which, to retain power, has employed corruption, state intervention in the economy, media control, exchange control, polarization and confrontation, control over state powers, and conflict with rural sectors.

The recent polls in Santa Cruz, the cradle of Kirchnerism and its political stronghold for over three decades, signal its decline. The official candidate, Javier Belloni, lost. For over 32 years, since Néstor Kirchner first assumed the governorship, this province had been under political control, led first by him and then by his wife, Cristina. Sunday's defeat is symbolic; it signals the end of an era.

Milei, who identifies himself as an "anarcho-capitalist", advocates for the elimination of the state and is also opposed to abortion, secured 30.1% of the votes without the machinery of a major party or enough inspectors to ensure votes. The 31% abstention rate, coupled with significant backing for the libertarian stance, reveals that we are witnessing "an explosion of the exhausted Argentine democracy". It's an outcry against old politics that echoes at the ballot box.

It is a clear reflection of the rejection of the political parties of Mauricio Macri and Cristina Fernández, viewed by most Argentinians as incapable of addressing the nation's persistent socio-economic challenges.

In an unexpected twist in the Argentine PASO, Milei not only surprised with his win but also wrested the narrative initiative away from both Macri's and Kirchner's factions with themes like "the elite", borrowed from Podemos in Spain, "dollarization", "together for the position", "the camporonga", and "the front of thieves".

The phenomenon of the libertarian vote, spearheaded by Milei, offers a unique interpretation. It's not just about ideological support for the candidate; it's more of a protest vote "against the system". As some analysts assert: "Milei's voters aren't voting for him; they are voting out of anger, not ideological choice".

What many missed, and what eventually became evident, was that Milei wasn't just capitalizing on the "angry vote"—a new political identity—but was also channeling a cultural shift. His vision embodies renewed trust in market forces over the welfare state.

The PASO results have shown that most Argentinians want change. They want to be in charge of their happiness. Thus, they expect actions, results, and solutions from politicians that would allow them to overcome poverty and the chaos they're living in.

Today, that hope is embodied by Milei, who resonated with society's desire for a profound shock and reset, encapsulated by the sentiment "enough is enough".

Thus, his victory cut across demographics. The support comes from a broad and diverse spectrum of voters. Beyond widespread social frustration, many see in the founder of the "La Libertad Avanza" party a figure representing a radical shift, a sort of "reboot" in Argentine politics—a trustworthy change agent.

His party won in the poorest regions of the country. He triumphed in 16 of 24 provinces where he had previously underperformed in provincial elections, indicating that elected Peronist governors and mayors didn't rally votes for their presidential candidate, Sergio Massa.

Parallels between Milei and figures like Perón and Kirchner are evident. Both led Argentina during times of change and transformation. If Milei continues his trajectory, Argentina might well embark on a new era, free from the shadows of Kirchnerism.

The Milei phenomenon finds parallels in Venezuela with María Corina Machado. Just as in Argentina, Venezuela aims to move past the grip of Chavismo-Madurismo. The political tactics of both Kirchnerism and Madurism have resulted in frustration, despair, and poverty.

The plea is the same in both scenarios: a longing for change and an exit from the political gloom that has overshadowed these nations for decades. The hope is that under new leaders like Milei and María Corina, Argentina, and Venezuela can reemerge as prosperous and free countries where the happiness and freedom of their citizens are assured.

In conclusion, the recent electoral results in Argentina are a reminder of the innate desire for change and renewal. After years of Kirchnerism and Madurism, hope for a brighter future is alive than ever. These nations stand on the brink of a new era, where power returns to the people, and the future holds promise.