THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PARTISAN RIGHT IN ARGENTINA: THE CASE OF THE PRO PARTY*

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Although the forces of the right have ruled Argentina for much of the last hundred years, the conservative parties have only played minor roles during this time. This is due to several factors such as the fragmentation of the socioeconomic upper classes, the divorce between partisan and non-partisan elites, the Argentine history of coups -in which rightist forces played a leading role- and the fragmented party system that followed each dictatorship. However, the major reason that explains the weakness of the partisan right is its inability to successfully face the rise of populism, especially in its Peronist version. Since the new democratic period started in 1983, various right-wing parties have tried to exorcise the curse of their electoral failure using different strategies. So far, the most promising path appears to have been the subnational direction followed by *Propuesta Republicana* (Republican Proposal party, known by its shortened form, PRO).

PRO has governed the City of Buenos Aires (CBA, which is the Argentine Federal District) since 2007 and now appears to be a strong competitor for the 2015 presidential elections. Born around the leadership of Mauricio Macri, a businessman shaped by neoliberal ideas, PRO quickly incorporated elements of the partisan and non-partisan classical right, but it also recruited incumbents from the major national-popular Argentine parties and from the world of think tanks and NGOs. The aim of this chapter is to put into context and explain the relative success of PRO, and to offer some commentaries regarding its future. To accomplish this task, in the following pages, (1.) we begin with a brief review of Argentine right-wing history, and we try to explain the weakness of its partisan expressions. Then (2.) we present some details about the context of the emergence of PRO. In this section, we explore the post–2001-crisis scenario, the weight of subnational politics in Argentina, and some peculiarities of CBA. Next, (3.) we go on to explain the relative success of PRO. In this section, data about the PRO electoral outcomes, as well of the party's incumbents and the CBA constituents are presented and analyzed. Later, (4.) we offer some conclusions about PRO's strengths and weaknesses in the current political landscape of Argentina. In this section we attempt to answer some questions about the near future of PRO and the partisan right. Finally, (5.) we summarize our main findings.

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1 The paths to power of the partisan right

Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald Dolkart claim that, for an important part of the public inside and outside Latin America, the expression "Argentine right" seems redundant. Argentina is usually regarded as a sort of Nazi paradise, where Peronism imposed fascist practices and the military waged genocide against its own people.[1] Nevertheless, these perceptions fail to consider that Argentina received more emigrated Jews than any other Latin American country; that while it is true that Peronism flirted with fascism, this political movement never imposed it; and that a portion of the Argentinian population resisted the criminal actions of the last dictatorship. More importantly, these perceptions fail because they seem to consider that the only kind of right that existed in Argentina was an "extreme right", a socially reactionary, culturally conservative and economically retrograde force.[2] However, this type of right only occupied a marginal place in Argentine politics, generally as a minor and dispensable ally of traditional elites. In fact, what we might call the "center-right" has had the leading roles since the end of the 19th century.

While it is true that center-right (i.e., conservative, liberal, and -later on- neoliberal) alliances have ruled the country for almost all of its history, it is also true that, for much of the time, they have had to accomplish this task without the help of political parties.[3] What is the origin of this peculiarity of the Argentine case? Several factors help to explain this uniqueness; however, two causes deserve to be highlighted. On the one hand, the surge of populism produced a new political cleavage in Argentine Politics that superseded the traditional division between left and right, making rightist electoral success a difficult task. On the other hand, choices taken by political actors throughout the past century resulted in a weak democracy and a poorly institutionalized party system, both factors which inclined rightist leaders to pursue non-electoral paths to power. For a better understanding, a brief historical summary is presented.

1.1 Direct partisan participation (1880–1943)

In the 1880s, the elite *Partido Autonomista Nacional* (National Autonomist Party, PAN), kept full control of the Argentine political landscape through restricted franchise. The PAN administrations promoted Church and State separation and *laissez-faire* policies, but maintained oligarchic political practices such as the manipulation of elections, cronyism and lack of press freedom. By the 1910s, the PAN had become a state party that served as umbrella for the alliance between liberal and conservative elites that mobilized the lower classes as a strategy aimed at maintaining an orderly society.[4] This "conservative order".[5], finished in 1912 with the enforcement of the Sáenz Peña Law (guaranteeing secret and compulsory ballot for adult males) that opened the door to an unstoppable advance of the *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Civic Union, UCR), a modern-type party that organized the urban middle-class ranks.[6]

The conservative reformers had hoped that the opposition advance would be gradual, but the UCR obtained the presidency in 1916. In order to undermine the right-wing sources of power, the UCR decreed federal interventions in the conservative districts and rejected legislative controls.[7] In this new scenario, the traditional elites were not able to fulfill their hopes of

[1] Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, "Introduction," in *The Argentine right: its history and intellectual origins, 1910 to the present*, edited by Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1993).

[2] Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las derechas. La extrema derecha en la Argentina, Chile y Brasil 1890–1939*, translated by Noemí M. Girbal-Blacha and Julio C. Cortés (Bernal: UNQUI, 2005).

[3] Atilio A. Boron "Ruling without a Party. Argentine Dominant Classes in the twentieth Century," in *Conservative Parties, the Right, and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Kevin J. Middlebrook (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 140.

[4] Ezequiel Gallo and Roberto Cortés Conde, *La república conservadora* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986).

[5] Natalio R. Botana, *El orden conservador: la política argentina entre 1880 y 1916* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1985).

[6] David Rock, *El radicalismo argentino,* translated by L. Wolfson (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1977).

[7] Ana María Mustapic, "Conflictos institucionales durante el primer gobierno radical: 1916–1922," *Desarrollo Económico*, 24(93) (1984): 85–108.

forming a modern right-wing party with genuine chances of curbing the UCR.[8] Excluded from the Executive branch in a strongly presidential country, the alliance of elites was forced to watch its territorial strongholds taken by the UCR and was eventually broken-up into a weak alliance of local parties. However, these local parties reunited in 1930, when a military coup overthrew the UCR government. Between 1930 and 1943 (a period known as the "infamous decade") Argentina was ruled by *la Concordancia* (the agreement), a conservative electoral front that proclaimed attachment to liberal and republican values while practicing fraud and bribery.

1.2 The Populist defiance (1943–1955)

In 1943, a nationalist coup overthrew the *Concordancia* government. It was in this context that the political figure of Juan Perón emerged and he was eventually elected president with a landslide victory in free and fair elections in 1946.[9] The rise of Peronism redefined Argentine political identities. On one side, Peronism seemed to share the objectives of the nationalist right (such as the formation of a "Christian order" that allowed harmony between classes) but the regime did not abjure from liberal and republican principles nor did it advance in the pursuit of an ultramontane path.[10] On the other side, while some conservative forces were co-opted by Peronism, the main leaders of *la Concordancia* became the backbone of a fierce opposition (to the point of allying themselves with the UCR and even with communism in an attempt to stop Perón). This high level of challenge has two sources: firstly, the fact that Perón built his movement explicitly confronting liberal-conservative sectors and, secondly, the kind of state-centralized popular mobilization led by Perón precluded any territorial political work by other parties.[11] The strange arrangement of Peronist and non-Peronist forces in the political scenario of mid-forties Argentina marks, as Pierre Ostiguy has noted, the rise of a new cleavage that superseded the traditional left/right division and which persists today.[12]

The Peronist/non-Peronist fracture must be understood in the same way as that which divides "the high and the low" in terms of political and social culture. The high/low cleavage explains the ways of being and acting in politics, linked more with cultural forms than with ideologies: "high and low have to do with ways of *relating* to people; as such, they go beyond 'discourses' as mere words, and they include issues of accents, level of language, body language, gestures, ways of dressing, etc.".[13] According to Ostiguy, the Peronist pole is oriented toward a strong personal leadership and popular culture. In contrast, the non-Peronist pole is inclined to a legalist impersonal authority and to a polished elitist social behavior. As each of the poles have their own right and left, it can be concluded, that, since the Peronist rise, "Argentina's politics and its party system are structured as a double political spectrum.".[14]

1.3 Direct non-partisan participation (1955–1983)

Prior to 1943, the right ruled or fought to rule Argentina through their own partisan organizations, but, after Perón's victories, the electoral path to power appeared to be closed. Over the

[8] The new *Partido Demócrata Progresista* (Progressive Democratic Party, PDP) was too liberal in the eyes of traditional elites, but the more conservative PAN was unable to win elections under conditions of universal suffrage. See Carlos Malamud, "El Partido Demócrata Progresista: un intento fallido de construir un partido nacional liberal-conservador," *Desarrollo Económico* 35(138) (1995): 715–742.

[9] Robert A. Potash, *El ejército y la política en la Argentina*, translated by E. Tejedor (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986).

[10] Ricardo Sidicaro, *Los Tres Peronismos. Estado y poder económico 1946–55/1973–76/1989–99* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002). See also, Loris Zanatta, *Perón y el mito de la nación católica: Iglesia y Ejército en los orígenes del Peronismo (1943–1946)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999).

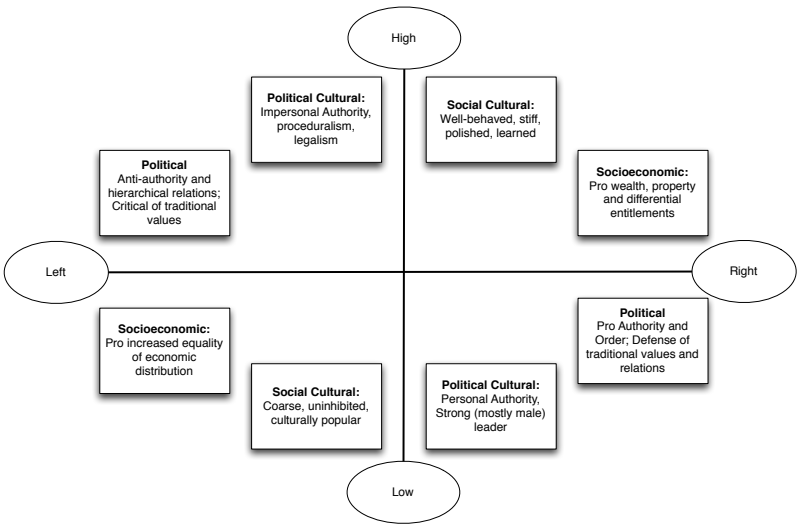
[11] Gerardo Aboy Carlés, *Las dos fronteras de la democracia argentina: la reformulación de las identidades políticas de Alfonsín a Menem* (Rosario: Ediciones Homo Sapiens, 2001).

[12] Pierre Ostiguy, "The high and the low in politics: a two-dimensional political space for comparative analysis and electoral studies," In *Kellogg Institute Working Paper,* nº 360 (University of Notre Dame, July 2009); "Argentina's Double Political Spectrum: Party System, Political Identities, and Strategies, 1994–97" in *Kellog Institute Working Paper,* nº361 (University of Notre Dame, October, 2009).

[13] Ostiguy, July 2009, 5.

[14] Ostiguy, October 2009, 3.

Figure 1: Argentina's Double Political Spectrum



following decades, the partisan Argentine right would choose another strategy: access to power directly by inserting liberal and conservative political figures inside the military (or military surveilled) governments that characterized the new period.[15] In this strategy, some factions were more successful than others.

After the coup that overthrew Perón in 1955, the traditional elites were divided into two fronts: the *federalistas* and the *liberales*.[16] The former was a heterogeneous network of parties with regional scope, led by strongmen of rightist orientation and linked to major fractions of local bourgeoisies.[17] The latter was formed by Buenos Aires' liberal elites, strongly linked to the interests of agro-exporters (and, later, to the financial economy and capital-intensive industries). Unlike the *federalistas*, the *liberales* parties never achieved electoral success.[18] That does not mean that *liberales* lacked relevance, but that, as happened with socio-economic elites not linked with the partisan right, their political activity was channeled almost exclusively through personal contacts with the State, major political parties and the military high commands.[19] The peculiarities of the *liberales* resulted in the formation of a political class oriented towards technocracy and, thus, more permeable to neoliberal ideas.[20]

The 1955 coup also gave rise a new political right-force: the right-wing Peronist trade unions. During the ban of Peronism (1955–1973), unions were mobilized from the right/low quadrant of the political spectrum, with a combination of authoritarianism and representation in strange but clear collusion with *liberales*, *federalistas* and nationalists in order to stop the growth of a Peronist left-force. Despite differences on many issues, the anti-leftist identity of these four groups allowed them to act together in bizarre combinations throughout this period (see Fig. 2).[21]) However, the connection between different right-forces broke-up with the 1976 coup, because this last dictatorship was aimed at "re-founding the republic", and destroying

[15]Between 1955 and 1983, Argentina experienced four military coups (1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976), and only seven years of (not fully democratic) civil government.

[16]Edward Gibson, *Class and conservative parties: Argentina in comparative perspective* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 66–68.

[17]Such as the *Partido Autonomista Liberal* (Liberal-Autonomist Party, PLA) from Corrientes.

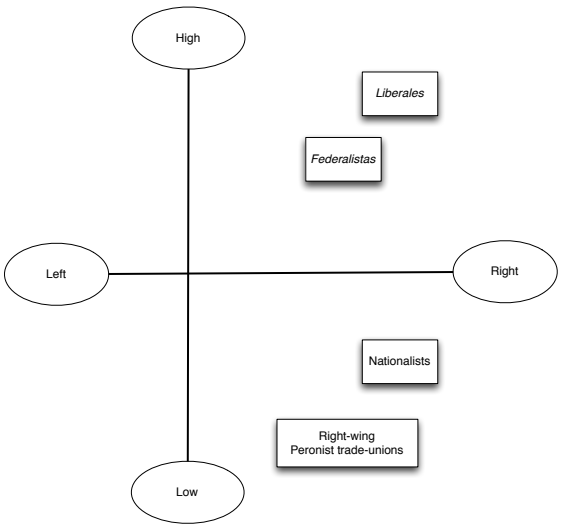
[18]Such as the *Partido Cívico Independiente* (Independent Civic Party, PCI)

[19]Gibson, 1996; Leonardo Senkman, "The Right and the Civilian Regimes, 1955–1976," in *The Argentine right: its history and intellectual origins, 1910 to the present*, edited by Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1993); Raúl J. Romero, *Fuerzas Armadas: la alternativa de la derecha para el acceso al Poder, 1930–1976* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría, 1998)

[20]Sergio D. Morresi, "Las raíces del neoliberalismo argentino (1930–1985)," in *Crisis y metamorfosis del Estado Argentino*, edited by Miguel A. Rossi and Andrea López (Buenos Aires: Luxemburg, 2011)

[21]Senkman, 1993.

Figure 2: Low and Left/Right distribution of Argentine right-forces



Peronism's populist legacy.[22]

1.4 Non-direct partisan participation (1983–2001)

The right-authoritarian project broke-down after the Malvinas/Falkland Islands Argentine invasion. It was then that Álvaro Alsogaray, traditional leading figure of the *liberales*, founded the *Unión del Centro Democrático* (Union of the Democratic Center, UCEDE.[23]). The new party shared some leading cadres and political agenda with the moribund military regime, but also criticized it for being insufficiently liberal in economics.[24] In the 1983 elections UCEDE obtained only a 0.17% of votes; nevertheless, it was the only nation-based center-right party to obtain two seats in the National Congress.[25] After 1983, the growing heterogeneity and political fragmentation of Argentina facilitated the neoliberal seduction of middle-class urban sectors.[26] and, by 1987, UCEDE had consolidated its position as the third political force. This achievement allowed the Buenos Aires *liberales* to hegemonize the right of the political field.[27]

Partially, UCEDE's electoral success in the early 80s can be tracked to the entrance of a growing number of young constituents that formed a powerful militant core. This new core occupied a lower position in the Argentine political spectrum (see Fig. 1) and wanted to leave behind the *liberales'* tactic to reach power through contacts with major players.[28] However, the party's 'historical' leaders (i.e., its founders and some allied *federalistas*) resisted the newcomers' rise and stood firm in their strategy of offering their cadres to a government that would accept them as allies.[29] Their opportunity came as a result of the neoliberal shift of the Peronist president Carlos Menem.[30]

[22]Vicente Palermo and Marcos Novaro, *La dictadura militar, 1976–1983: del golpe de estado a la restauración democrática* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2003)

[23]For a deeper analysis of UCEDE, see Gibson, 1996, chapters 5–6.

[24]César L. Mansilla, *Las fuerzas de centro* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983)

[25]Rosendo Fraga and Gabriela Malacrida, *El centro-derecha: de Alfonsín a Menem* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría, 1990)

[26]José Nun, Juan Carlos Portantiero and Carlos Altamirano, *Ensayos sobre la transición democrática en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur Editores, 1987).

[27]Gibson, 1996

[28]Gibson, 1996, 151–158. See also Fabián Doman and Martín Olivera, *Los Alsogaray. Secretos de una dinastía y su corte* (Buenos Aires: Clarín-Aguilar, 1989)

[29]Alfredo Gutiérrez, *El derrumbe de la UCeDe: de Videla a Menem, la mutación liberal* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Letra Buena, 1992)

[30]Fraga and Malacrida, 1990

The entry of UCEDE leading figures into the Peronist government had mixed results: Menem's administration did carry a UCEDE agenda, but the Peronist success produced the electoral decline of the party, because its constituents started to see the *Partido Justicialista* (Justicialist Party, PJ) as a viable option. By the mid-nineties, the Argentine right was, in one way or another, inside the Peronist government. This was something completely new, as one of the Argentine right's main features had been its rejection of Peronism. However, in 1997, Menem's former economy minister, Domingo Cavallo, founded his own party, *Acción por la República* (Action for the Republic, AR), in the hope of turning it into a new UCEDE. Cavallo defended the neoliberal agenda of Menem's government but accused him of being unable to carry it forward without corruption.[31] In partnership with other minor parties (such as the old PDP), AR quickly became the Argentine third party. This allowed some liberal-conservative leaders to dream of a competitive right force that would not be "eaten" by the major parties, as had happened with UCEDE.[32] Nevertheless, that dream was not fulfilled, largely because Cavallo joined the government of the *Alianza* (the Alliance, an electoral front formed by the UCR and the *Frente por un País Solidario*, Front for a Country in Solidarity, FREPASO) that won the presidency in 1999. As Cavallo and AR played major roles in the last months of the *Alianza*, they were blamed for the crisis faced by Argentina in 2001. Thus, at the dawn of 21st century, rightist ideas were delegitimized for much of Argentine society.

2 Born from the ashes: the rise of the PRO party

In 2001, a few months before the collapse of *Alianza's* government, a group of political and social activists began to meet at the "Believe and Grow Foundation" in order to design political and policy projects. The Foundation had been created by Francisco de Narváez, a Peronist entrepreneur who had ventured into politics, but was headed by the businessman Mauricio Macri. Macri is the heir to one of the largest Argentine fortunes (his father was the head of SOCMA enterprises, an economic group that had grown exponentially in the 70s and 80s, mainly due to State contracts) and, in 2001, he was president of Boca Juniors (one of the two most popular soccer teams in Argentina). Macri had shown an interest in entering into politics in the mid-nineties, but preferred to delay this decision until 2002, at which time he announced his candidacy for CBA mayor with an agenda that mixed neoliberal policies, with moral issues, and highlighted the newness, youth and the technical background of his members. In the 2003 CBA elections, Macri obtained 37% of the vote in the first round, but was defeated in the second. However, contradicting the expectations of the specialized media, Macri and his people did not quit politics after their 2003 frustration, nor did they dissolve their initiative into a traditional organization. On the contrary, they began to strive to strengthen the party. The first years of the new century were a turbulent time in Argentina. The deep economic troubles and the rising social mobilization framed a bleak landscape for political parties. So, why did Macri and his entourage pick that moment to found a new party? Why did they prefer to focus on the CBA and reject campaigning nationwide? Why did they choose to strengthen their new political organization and not offer themselves as outsider leaders for other parties? In order to understand the reasons behind these foundational decisions taken by PRO, it is necessary to explain the context of the PRO's rise and to describe in more detail its main characteristics.

2.1 Crisis and opportunity

The depth of the 2001 Argentine crisis can be hardly exaggerated. The relative success of the institutional stabilization implemented by the acting government of PJ's president Eduardo

[31] Domingo F. Cavallo, *El Peso de la verdad: un impulso a la transparencia en la Argentina de los 90* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1997)

[32] Sergio Daniel Morresi and Gabriel Vommaro, "El PRO en el contexto del espacio de centro-derecha argentino," paper presented at the *X° Congreso de la Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político* (Córdoba: SAAP - Universidad Católica de Córdoba, July 27, 2011)

Duhalde could not obliterate the socioeconomic and political crisis that had been maturing in the 90s and exploded in December 2001 when the people of the main Argentine cities (especially from CBA) hit the streets crying *"¡Que se vayan todos!"* ("Get rid of them all.[33]!"). In this chaotic context *Compromiso para el Cambio* (Commitment for Change, CPC) was founded. CPC (the original organization that would later become PRO.[34]) was not a new label for and old party, nor was it a split of a traditional political movement. Its founder and main leader was not an experienced politician. Unlike the case of Uribe in Colombia (analysed by Laura Wills-Otero in this volume), Mauricio Macri was not the leader of a traditional organization who created his own electoral instrument. He was, in fact, an outsider -coming from the corporate world- for whom the 2001 crisis seems to have served as accelerator to a delayed personal decision to enter politics.[35]

The crisis situation must be considered in two ways. Firstly, to be an outsider at a time when political parties and traditional leaders were seriously delegitimized was a clear competitive advantage. In fact, PRO widely emphasized this point, presenting itself as the only "really new" player in the field.[36]

Secondly, to form a political party is a difficult task that implies the organizational support of a system of networks (territorial, expert, economic). To set up this system a lot of human resources are needed and not all of them are available for recruitment. However, in the "critical juncture"[37] of the 2001 crisis, some of these assets became suddenly accessible. Seeing themselves bereft of genuine electoral chances, and attracted by Macri's discourse and good poll numbers, political figures from minor parties (as the *federalista* PDP), as well as militants and leaders from the UCR and PJ, freely joined the newborn party.

Thus, the national situation, jointly with some particularities of the CBA (see below), allowed a moment of political experimentation, an auspicious "political opportunity structure".[38] Indeed, the context was, as a congressman interviewed in 2011 told us, "a unique occasion to create a completely brand new party". To take advantage of this "unique occasion", and since the electoral timetable issued by temporary president Duhalde anticipated CBA elections in early 2003, Macri decided to dissolve the political alliance that linked him to De Narváez in the "Believe and Grow" Foundation.[39] While the latter sought to close links with Peronism and try a quick leap to national politics, the former chose to prioritize both the autonomy of the new party and the local contest in CBA.

2.2 The subnational strategy

In order to understand the local strategy adopted by PRO in 2003, it is necessary to focus both on the peculiarities of Argentine subnational politics in the last decade of the 20$^{\text{th}}$ century and on the unique characteristics of the CBA.

Argentina is shaped by a weak and unbalanced federal system: most of the provinces depend economically on the national government and, at the same time, the national government

[33]See, for example, Inés Pousadela, *Que se vayan todos* (Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2006).

[34]In order to simplify our description, we've decided to refer to Macri's party as PRO, its current name, even when at the beginning it was called CPC, *Compromiso para el Cambio*. Nowadays the old label was forgotten in common language.

[35]Gabriela Cerruti, *El pibe: negocios, intrigas y secretos de Mauricio Macri, el hombre que quiere ser presidente* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2010).

[36]Adriana Gallo, "El discurso político de la centroderecha argentina o la anulación de la alteridad izquierda-derecha," *Revista SAAP* 3(2) (2008): 287–312. We will return to this point later in this section.

[37]See V.O Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17(1) (1955); also see Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, party Systems and voter alignments: an introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* edited by Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan *(New York: Free Press, 1967)*; Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[38]Herbert P. Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies," *British Journal of Political Science* 16(1) (1986): 57–85.

[39]Later, the roads of Macri and De Narváez reunited for a period, when transiently allied under the label "Unión PRO", with which they competed in the 2009 legislative elections.

depends on the provinces to obtain political support.[40] As federalism provides each territory with its own constitution and authorities, Argentine subnational politics have always been important. In addition, it was expected that the neoliberal oriented decentralization process undertaken by the military regime in the 70s and continued by democratic governments in the 90s, would increase the weight of subnational politics. However, this did not happen due the unfunded form of the process, the sequence in which decentralization policies were adopted (it started with administrative reform, and fiscal and political transformations were implemented only years later) and the actors who undertook the decentralization path (it was led by national government administrations instead of subnational coalitions).[41] As result of the failed decentralization, the balance of power between the national and provincial governments was not modified to a large extent.[42], but the process certainly helped to accelerate the federalization and fragmentation of the Argentine party system.[43] Thus, the traditional power of the provincial bosses (*caudillos*) and the autonomy of municipal leaders were strengthened.[44] The re-territorialization course was sinuous, because it occurred together with a socioeconomic transformation and a political representation crisis with deeper roots and wider scope.[45] Nevertheless, some districts attained a remarkable autonomy during this time, as was the case with CBA. CBA is located on the west coast of the River Plate estuary and has a size of 77 mi2. It is surrounded by Greater Buenos Aires (GBA), a 1470 mi2 territory of the Province of Buenos Aires consisting of 24 counties thoroughly integrated with CBA. With 2.9 million inhabitants (Argentina has 40 million, and GBA 12.8), CBA is the most populated city in the country. Traditionally, CBA's residents (*porteños*, in reference to the Buenos Aires port) possess a level of income and education far superior to the Argentine average and enjoy the best public services in the country, wider job opportunities (as CBA is the country's business center) and a more varied availability of cultural and leisure activities.[46]

Since its federalization in 1880, CBA has been the capital city of Argentina and for this reason the city was originally under the authority of the national government, which retained control of the port, the police, the justice administration and direct-tax collection. By law, CBA had a municipal council elected by the people. Often, the political forces that enjoyed majority status at the national level were not favored by the *porteños*, who customarily supported opposition candidates for the city council, whether in democratic or undemocratic conditions. However, as the mayors of the city were appointed by the President with the approbation of the Senate, the CBA executive office was a sort of prize for the ruling parties. With the rise of Peronism, the CBA's lack of full autonomy continued and deepened, partially as the result of becoming the main opposition stronghold (with a few exceptions, the PJ fared poorly in

[40] Nicolás Cherny and Gabriel Vommaro, "Territorios, Liderazgos, Partidos: la política Argentina a nivel subnacional," In *¿Qué cambió en la Política Argentina?* edited by Isidoro Cheresky and Jean Michel Blanquer (Rosario: Homo Sapiens, 2004). See Daniel Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1987).

[41] Tulia G. Falleti, *Decentralization and subnational politics in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[42] Falleti, 2010, 76.

[43] Marcelo Leiras, *Todos los caballos del rey: La integración de los partidos políticos y el gobierno democrático de la Argentina, 1995–2003* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2007); Edward Gibson and Julieta Suarez-Cao, "Federalized Party Systems and Subnational Party Competition: Theory and an empirical application to Argentina", in *Comparative Politics* 43(1) (2010): 21–40.

[44] Allyson L. Benton, "Presidentes Fuertes, Provincias Poderosas: La economía política de la construcción de partidos en el sistema federal argentino," *Política y Gobierno* 10(1) (2003): 103–120; Mark P. Jones, Sebastián Saiegh, Pablo T. Spiller and Mariano Tommasi, "Amateur Legislators – Professional Politicians: The consequences of party-centered electoral rules in a federal system," *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3) (2002): 656–669.

[45] Cherny and Vommaro, 2004. See also, Eduardo Rinesi and Gabriel Vommaro, "Notas sobre la democracia, la representación y algunos problemas conexos," In *Las Lentes de Víctor Hugo. Transformaciones Políticas y Desafíos Teóricos en la Argentina Reciente,* edited by Eduardo Rinesi, Gabriel Nardacchione and Gabriel Vommaro (Buenos Aires: UNGS-Prometeo, 2007).

[46] Perdo Pírez, "La Formación de la ciudad metropolitana de Buenos Aires: de la riqueza al deterioro," EURE. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbano Regionales 20(61) (1994): 27–39; Marcelo Escolar and Pedro Pirez, "¿La cabeza de Goliat? Región metropolitana y organización federal en Argentina", paper presented at the *23º Latin American Studies Association Congress* (Washington, DC: LASA, 2001).

CBA's presidential and legislative elections, a trend that intensified after 1983.[47]). Later, the military administrations modernized and "beautified" the face of the city eradicating some of the slums through the expulsion of their inhabitants to the GBA. At this time the socioeconomic distribution of the CBA's neighborhoods that remains today was consolidated: the north for the higher classes, the center-west for the middle-class sectors and the south for the lower strata.[48]) Finally, during the third wave of democratization it became clear that the inherited rules were inadequate for administrating the CBA and insufficient to satisfy the demands of its citizens. The *porteños'* discontent is evident when considering a salient fact: CBA has been the focal point of almost all Argentine third parties (between 25 and 50% of the national vote of UCEDE and AR came from CBA.[49]). Obviously, this peculiarity was important in the PRO decision to present Macri's candidacy in CBA.[50]

In 1993, in order to gain the UCR's institutional support to attempt his re-election, PJ's president Menem agreed to a wide constitutional reform agenda, including a special autonomy status for CBA. At that time, the trends that would lead to the turn of the century crisis were already developed, especially in CBA.[51] The poor performance of Peronism in the CBA was customary, but it escalated in the 90s, due partly to the PJ's neoliberal conversion, and partly to the media revelation of several scandals affecting Peronist mayors.[52] At the same time, the UCR's complacency with Menem's re-electoral ambition triggered a crisis in the main opposition party. In this context, a new center-left force emerged (the *Frente Grande*, Broad Front, that later integrated the FREPASO) and became a major player in CBA's politics.[53]

Through the 1994 constitutional reform, CBA became able to draft its own constitution, popularly elect its mayor, and establish its own electoral system and schedule.[54] In 1996, Fernando de la Rúa, a traditional and conservative UCR leader, won the first Chief of Government CBA's elections. A few months later, UCR and FREPASO formed the *Alianza* that obtained a landslide victory in the 1997 legislative elections and won the presidency in 1999. So, as a campaign ad of that time said, the *porteños* helped their mayor to walk the hundred yards that separated his office from the *Casa Rosada* (the Argentine executive mansion). Nevertheless, the poor performance of President De la Rúa, quickly led to *Alianza's* demise and to the deepening of the political representation crisis. It is true that the situation did not affect all actors in the same way, because, at the national level, the Peronist family (Ostiguy's low partisan forces) was significantly less affected than the non-Peronist one (the high parties.[55]). However, the CBA's local Peronist crisis was previous to the general one.[56] Also, as noted by Tomás Bril Mascarenhans, the party crisis had different intensities in different districts and, by far, CBA was that most affected, since in CBA an authentic "collapse of the party system" occurred.[57] So, it can be said that, the magnitude of the city of Buenos Aires' party system crisis, jointly

[47]Miguel De Luca, Mark P. Jones, and María Inés Tula "Buenos Aires: The Evolution of Local Governance," In *Capital City Politics in Latin America: Democratization and Empowerment.* Edited by David J. Myers and Henry A. Dietz (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Escolar and Pirez, 2001.

[48]Pirez, 1994.

[49]De Luca, Jones and Tula, 2002.

[50]According to Cerruti, 2010, until 2002, Macri had flirted with the idea of running for governor in the northeast province of Misiones, previously administrated by Ramón Puerta, a friend of his.

[51]Juan Carlos Torre, "Los huérfanos de la política de partidos. Sobre los alcances y la naturaleza de la crisis de representación partidaria," *Desarrollo Económico* 42(168) (2003): 647–665. See also, Leiras, 2007.

[52]Steven Levitsky, *Transforming Labor-based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[53]Juan M. Abal Medina, "The rise and fall of the Argentine Centre-Left: the crisis of Frente Grande," *Party Politics* 15 (3) (2009): 357–375.

[54]However, the law n°24588 (known as "Cafiero Law") delayed the transfer of much of the national administration power to the city.

[55]Torre, 2003; Steven Levitsky and Maria Victoria Murillo, "Argentina Weathers the Storm," *Journal of Democracy* 14(4) (2003): 152–166.

[56]Levitsky, 2003.

[57]Tomas Bril Mascarenhas, "El colapso del sistema partidario de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Una herencia de la crisis argentina de 2001–2002," *Desarrollo Económico* 47(187) (2007): 367–400. The collapse referred to by Bril Mascarenhans was framed by an already fragmentized party system and was deepened by the proportional electoral method established by CBA's constitution. By 2003, CBA had 73 legally constituted parties (one fifth of the country's total) and the CBA's effective number of parties is the highest in Argentina (5.4, while the country's average was 1.9). See, Leiras, 2007, 104–107.

with the national situation and the customary *porteño* support of the third-parties, facilitated the moment of political experimentation by PRO in the first years of 21st century.

It must be noted that PRO's local strategy is not a completely new idea in Argentina. In the 70s, the military dictators had already thought that the only way the center-right parties could defeat the traditional populist movements was to begin locally and slowly move onto the national level.[58] The military plan failed due to the regime collapse and quick re-democratization. However, the success of the strategy was not unthinkable in a new context, especially if some peculiarities of PRO are taken in account.

2.3 The management party

In 2003, after the center-left Peronist Néstor Kirchner was elected President for the *Frente para la Victoria* (Front for Victory, FPV), Macri announced his candidacy for CBA Mayor. His campaign was presented as part of a "new politics". It is a matter of controversy how new PRO is, because more than half of its leaders are experienced politicians with traditional backgrounds. However, it is true that Macri's organization was born as a "new kind" of party at least in a sense. As explained by Allan Sikk, "project of newness" kind of parties (such as Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* in Italy and *Res Publica* in Estonia) are neither purifiers of traditional ideologies, nor prolocutors of a new and circumscribed demand; they are new players who confidently step onto the territory of established parties to change the manner of doing politics rather than the contents of it.[59] In the case of PRO, the change of manner points to a managerial approach to politics that seems to have been successful not only at electoral level, but also in the construction of the party.

In order to agglutinate the heterogeneous elements available as a result of the political representation crisis (former UCR, PJ and rightist incumbents that approached the new organization) and present itself at the same time as a new kind of party, PRO openly rejected the left/right traditional cleavage and focused on a neat management approach to public administration, combined with the promotion of some post-material values, which has allowed it, as we will see, to attempt a reframing of political debate. Through being attentive to local administration and post-material values, PRO departed from the previous Argentine rightist parties experience and approached the so-called "new right".

It is true that the use of the term "new right" can be misleading.[60] However, it could be useful to us due the anomalous way in which PRO is a party of the right, at least in an Argentine historical perspective. The PRO uniqueness becomes clear when some political, social and cultural values of the PRO's cadres are taken in account.[61] According our 2011 Survey, PRO leaders have consistently conservative positions on cultural issues (58% opposition to even discussing a law legalizing abortion, and an astounding 77% support for stricter regulation of foreign immigration in a country built by immigrants). Also, almost 60% of PRO cadres

[58] Richard L. Harris, "Centralization and Decentralization in Latin America," In *Decentralization and Development*, edited by G. Shabbir Cheema and Dennis A. Rondenelli (Beverly Hills, London, and New Delhi: Sage). A similar idea is advanced for left parties by Benjamin Goldfrank in *Deepening Local Democracy in Latin America: Participation, Decentralization, and the Left* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).

[59] Allan Sikk, "Newness as a winning formula for new political parties," *Party Politics* 18(4) (2011): 465–486.

[60] Piero Ignazi, *Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 28–29.

[61] This data comes from a survey, (hereafter, 2011 Survey) by questionnaire to PRO "leading cadres" with executive or legislative positions in the CBA. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions, half closed-ended questions and half open-ended questions that covered city legislators, district representatives, and officials of the CBA, from Ministers to undersecretaries, between May 1st and December 10th 2011 (date on which a new term began). Of the total of identified cases (U=76), 52 were surveyed (N=52), meaning 68.4% of the universe. To avoid the over-representation of certain posts, the presence of at least two cases in each Ministerial Unit was guaranteed and at least 60% of each of the types of posts was covered. On the other hand, gender and age were taken into consideration in the representativeness of the sample. The sample was formed by 6 Ministers (on existing 9), 3 Secretaries (out of 5), 22 undersecretaries (out of 31), 4 national representatives (out of 7) and 17 legislators of the city (out of 24). In terms of areas of responsibility, 44.2% of the sample belongs to the political area, 28.8% to the area of social and human rights policies, 11.1% to economic and human resources areas, 7.7% to infrastructure area, which is the same percentage as security and justice. Together with the survey, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted in selected cases.

dislike the power of the unions and consider that it has to be reduced and 92% are in favor of controlling social protests, positions that traditionally belong to the Latin-American right.[62] At the same time, PRO leaders do not look so conservative regarding Government intervention: a majority (77%) accepts that the reduction of income differences between social groups is a duty of the State. This is compatible with the wide rejection (62%) of the idea that public health and education must be available only to people who cannot afford them by their own means. Also, the PRO leaders are profoundly pro-democracy (more than 90% think that it is the best political regime). Nevertheless, more than the half of the PRO leaders (58%) asserts that the market is the better and more efficient mechanism of distribution. Thus, PRO's leaders' ideology seems to be culturally conservative, socially restrictive and market-oriented, but also democratic and open to Government intervention in order to reduce socioeconomic differences. So, the PRO case does not fit completely in the definition advanced by Luna and Kaltwasser in the introduction of this volume (for them the right is defined by the belief that the main inequalities between people are natural and outside the purview of the State).

At the time PRO was founded, the heterogeneity of its membership, the mixed ideological positions of its cadres and the strong leadership of Macri misled some observers that had taken for granted that the newborn party was a sort of personal and temporary tool for Macri's political entrance.[63] However, PRO was actually a party in the process of institutionalization, although this process was weak and had labile contours, as is the case in the wide majority of the parties in Argentina.[64]

3 How to construct a successful party of the center-right in contemporary Argentina?

How can the electoral success of PRO in the federal district be explained? In this section we will show, first, the different factions composing the PRO party and their ideology. Second, we will offer some notes about PRO diverse political strategies and will show that they are related not only with the widening of the electoral bases of the party, but also with its internal diversity. Third, the last point of this section will be assigned to note some general features of the constituency of CBA, and the way in which PRO was able to attract this electorate.

3.1 Different factions within the party

The PRO is made up of a combination of pieces of preexisting parties and different types of outsiders. This heterogeneity can be organized into five factions, which dispute the leader's favor.[65]

The first one, which we call the "right faction", was formed by some minor *federalistas parties* (such as the Buenos Aires' *Partido Demócrata*, Democratic Party, PD), some declining *liberales* parties (like AR), some conservative minor parties (such as the *Partido Nacionalista Constitucional*, Nationalist Constitutionalist Party, PNC), as well as some former cadres of UCEDE and leaders of Buenos Aires liberalism that had played major roles in the last military dictatorship (such as Santiago de Estrada, who was secretary of Social Action in the *de facto* Government). In 2003, this faction was doubly important: it not only had a relevant ideological

[62] Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[63] This was the view presented in the Argentine newspapers in 2003, the year CPC (later PRO) was born.

[64] See Steven Levitsky and María Victoria Murillo, "Theorizing about Weak Institutions: Lessons from the Argentine Case," in *Argentine Democracy: The Politics of Institutional Weakness,* edited by Steven Levitsky and María Victoria Murillo (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2005).

[65] We define factions as partisan groups that dispute the control of the party and the selection of the candidatures. See Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Scott Morgenstern, "Organized factions and Disorganized Parties: Electoral Incentives in Uruguay," *Party Politics* 7(2) (2001): 235–256.

role, but also made it possible for PRO to be present at elections.[66] It also provides some important political actors, such as the chief of the PRO parliamentarian group, the conservative Federico Pinedo, and some political economic cadres trained in neoliberal ideas. Also, thanks to this faction, PRO built specific political alliances at a national level with the provincial traditional conservative parties, such as the *Partido Demócrata* in Mendoza.

The second group was formed mostly by young professionals who came from foundations, think tanks and other NGOs linked to research and promotion of public and social policies, we will call it the "NGO faction". In this faction, comprising mainly newcomers to politics, the weight of former members of the *Grupo Sophia* is especially important. This group was a think tank of neoliberal orientation created in the 90s by Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, vice-mayor candidate in 2003. Most of the members of this faction were educated in catholic high schools and studied social sciences degrees in private and confessional universities.

Leaders of the corporate world compose the third group, which we call the "business faction". It is a homogeneous faction, with solid business experience (mostly in technical and financial positions) and with close ties with Macri. The links between Macri and this group can hardly be exaggerated, since most of its members were former SOCMA senior employees that had already previously accompanied him when he was president of Boca Juniors.

The fourth group, which we call the "*radical* faction.[67]", is composed by individuals (or minor groups) coming from the UCR, mainly of second rank in their own party who already worked in the CBA government and felt themselves displaced because, in 2003, Aníbal Ibarra, the *Alianza's* acting mayor, had oriented a more center-left Peronist coalition. Some of them, however, had relevant grassroots organizations and knew Macri from his time in the soccer business.

The fifth and last group which we call the "Peronist faction", were CBA PJ members who faced a difficult situation in 2003: their own candidate in the district, Daniel Scioli, was chosen by Kirchner as running-mate for the vice-presidency. At the same time, for CBA, President Kirchner favored a center-left alliance that relegated them. Thus, the offer to take major roles in the PRO campaign, when survey polls already showed that Macri could become mayor, seemed obvious for them. This group provided PRO with linkages with the popular electorate, as well as a grassroots organizations network mainly in the south, the poorest zone of the city.

The five factions do not work in the same way. Three of them (Peronists, radicals and rightists) run like factions *stricto sensus*: as organizing groups in domestic competition. The other two (the businessmen and the NGO factions) can be thought of in that way because of their internal cohesion in sociological and cultural terms, but they do not always work in a collaborative way. These last two factions are much more alike. Both are formed by not very experienced politicians; both have expertise-based incumbents and they are more deeply involved in the PRO party than Radicals and Peronists (some of whom did not officially abandon their original parties). The heterogeneous conformation of the party also functions as a sort of division of labor. Each faction fills different roles in the partisan work as well as in the local government. The experienced incumbents manage political areas in local government (mainly rightist), do legislative work (mostly radicals), develop grassroots political activism (mostly Peronist) and run electoral task when the elections come. The inexperienced incumbents work at social ministries (mostly NGO's professionals) and manage the party and city finances (mostly businessmen).

The heterogeneity of the factions that compose PRO requires us to be careful when analyzing the ideology of this party. According our 2011 Survey, different factions have different ideas on many subjects.

In cultural terms, the right, the Peronist and the businessmen factions are those that are closer to the ideology of the right. Their incumbents are the ones who have least agreement with the intervention of the State to reduce the social differences, who agree in greater proportion with the idea that the market is the best and most effective mechanism of resource allocation,

[66] Without institutional support of prior legally constituted parties, PRO would have not been able to submit all its nominations at that moment.

[67] We use the term *radical* in Spanish to denote UCR's affiliation, not an extremist ideology.

and who defend a kind of public policy of health and education oriented only to the people who cannot acquire those goods in the market. The *radical* faction has positions nearer to the center and, in some cases, to the left: they agree mainly with discussing a law legalizing abortion, have greater discord than the rest of the factions (except the NGO faction) with the belief that it is necessary to look forwards in human rights matters and with the idea to adopt stricter measures to control the arrival of migrants. They agree entirely with the opinion that the State must intervene in the economy to reduce inequalities, and are less in favor than the others of defending the market as the best mechanism of resource allocation. At the same time, along with the Peronists, the *radicals* are the ones who agree the least with the idea that the power of the unions in Argentinian politics has to be reduced.

Finally, the faction that seems to set the tone in PRO ideology is that of the NGO professionals. Indeed, the answers of their members place them, in almost all the subjects, nearer to the average of the total of the incumbents' responses. Thus, it is the group that symbolizes the midpoint of the PRO party. The proximity with catholic ideas, especially with social Catholicism makes the NGO professionals faction a combination of conservative values in a cultural dimension (they are mostly against the discussion of a law legalizing abortion) and in some aspects of politics (they support the reduction of the power of the unions in politics) and some social-liberal ideas in other facets of politics (human rights) and the economy (State intervention).

Table 1: The heterogeneous ideology of PRO incumbents

Issue	All	Business	NGO-Prof.	Right	*Radicales*	Peronists
Increase the Control on Immigration	76.9	80	76,9	80	63.7	100
To look forwards in human right issues	61.5	77.7	33.3	80	57.1	72.8
Discuss a law legalizing abortion	42.3	44.4	40	30	71.5	36.4
State intervention to reduce inequalities	76.9	80	77	60	100	72.8
Market is considered the best mechanism of distribution	57.5	66.7	46.7	80	42.1	54.6
Public Health and Education aimed only to the poor people	38.5	22.2	33.3	60	28.6	45.4
To reduce unions power	59.6	77.8	73.3	60	42.9	36.4
Control social protest	92.3	100	93.4	90	71.4	100
Self considered as righ-to-the-center	42.3	77.3	20	70	14.3	36.4
Reject left-right classification	13.5	0	26.7	0	28.6	9

Source: own elaboration from survey 2011.

This heterogeneity of political ideas of the PRO incumbents has meant that, in the local House of Representatives, PRO's vote was divided in the case of some laws connected with cultural and religious matters, such as same sex marriage. These differences also indicate a tension between the post-ideological position and the ideological position. The differences of ideas, as much between the factions as inside them, suggest that the PRO party oscillates between ideological pragmatism, especially when governing, and positions more directly linked with the traditional right (from liberal or conservative lineage). At the same time, due to PRO attempt of building a political identity "beyond the left and the right", not only the opposition attitude, but also a new political appeal seems to have been created. "Citizens against politicians" and "federal district against national government" are some of the ways in which PRO tries to re-frame political identities.

As Kent Eaton states in this book, to re-frame political conflict is one of the strategies of the right in Latin America. Following our survey, we note that 44.2% of PRO incumbents identify their ideological position as left-of-center, 42.3% as right-of-center and 13.5% reject this classification. However, different factions have a different ideological definition of themselves: whereas the rightist and, more noticeably, the businessmen, consider themselves by a large majority (70% and 77.3% respectively) as being part of the right, this proportion is reversed in the case of the *radicals* (14.3%) and the NGO professionals (20%). Both factions, along with the Peronists, are mainly self-located on the left of the political space. In summary, the ideological positions of PRO incumbents are consistent with the attempt of the party, and especially of its leader, to reframe political cleavages.

3.2 Electoral results and the strategies of PRO

Since the beginning, the main factions forming the PRO were not concerned with creating a testimonial or marginal party. On the contrary, their goal was to gain immediate access to municipal power to serve as a solid springboard to the national stage.[68] Probably, this aim to win elections quickly was the first uniting aspect among the different groups.

The 2003 campaign was framed in a political discourse that included common topics of liberal-conservative forces (similar to those that UCEDE had flagged in the 80s, such as "efficiency" and "serious economy", i.e., market-oriented). Also, topics that pointed to the "moral questions" (similar to those that were put in play in the 90s by AR, such as "zero corruption" and "political cost") were resumed. Finally, the PRO campaign ventured into a new vein of social sensitivity, such as "universal social security" and "integration of lower strata" that were commonplace in post-crisis Argentina across the entire political spectrum. On the whole, PRO's political discourse was aimed at appealing not only to traditional right voters, but also to all middle-class *porteños*, especially to those that had become outraged by the political elites.[69]

The public presentation as an outsider was linked to Macri's disapproval of "politicians" and the use of the *aparato* (political machine) and the "money of the citizen". Despite this strategy, the weight that the groups associated with "old politics" still had in the new party, as well as the past of the leader, linked to the neoliberal Menem's Government, resulted in a quite firm rejection of PRO by a good proportion of the electorate. Even though Macri said that he was "wrong to support the re-election of Menem", the identification of PRO with the 90s' right promoted by the opposition was successful, and that contributed to guaranteeing Macri's rejection by the progressive middle class constituency. Also, the choice of his running mate, Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, a man of technocratic profile and patrician surname, seemed to confirm Macri's difficulties in breaking with the past. Thus, despite having won more votes in the first round than the candidate of the center-left (37.5% against 33.5%), he was defeated in the *ballotage* (53.5% against 46.5%).[70] On the day of his defeat Macri asserted: "we do not accept being confined to ideological labels that today are meaningless. We are a plural and open force". But the true is that this plurality was still under construction. However, despite the defeat, PRO won 18 seats in the city council plus 6 for its unofficial allies in RECREAR (CBA council has 60 seats) and begun a slow but systematic process to institutionalize the party and attract new members.

As shown in a study based on ecological regression, it is clear that Macri's party inherited votes from the UCEDE and AR.[71] However, the same study shows that it also drew votes from the then fragmented traditional parties (UCR and PJ). In fact, PRO, like AR before it, and differently from traditional Argentine rightist parties is not an anti-Peronist organization

[68] In one of the in-depth interviews we conducted, a congressman said: "this is not the UCEDE. We are not here because of ideology but to offer an alternative to power".

[69] Adriana Gallo, 2008.

[70] Sebastián Mauro, "La campaña electoral por la Jefatura de Gobierno de Buenos Aires: estrategias políticas e inteligibilidad de la agenda," *Revista Argentina de Sociología*, (4) (2005): 78–98.

[71] Martín Alessandro, "Clivajes sociales, estrategias de los actores y sistema de partidos: la competencia política en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires (1995–2005)", *Revista SAAP* 3(4) (2009): 581–614.

and, for that reason, it was able to enjoy of a larger potential electorate.[72] In 2003 first round, Macri reconstituted in elections a social alliance that had already been successful in the 90s (the one that had been built by Menem's Peronism). So, the PRO managed to win at the same time in wealthier districts and in some poorer districts of CBA. However, in this election, Macri was defeated in middle class neighborhoods, which are numerically very important. In the second round, Macri managed to maintain control of the wealthy districts of the north, but he was defeated in the slums of the South (with the exception of La Boca, the neighborhood where is located the football club of the same name, of which Macri was president).

To better understand PRO electoral growth, we will focus briefly on the evolution of its performance in first round of elections for head of Government, from 2003 to 2011 in 4 Communes (electoral districts in which CBA is divided after the 2008 administrative reform). The Communes we have chosen are socially and geographically divergent. Commune 2, which comprises most of the former 19th section (Recoleta), is the most homogeneous wealthy district in the North of CBA and the traditional electoral fortress of the right. Commune 13 includes the Northern districts of Belgrano, Colegiales and Núñez, an area of residence of the upper middle classes traditionally identified with a non-Peronist vote that was an important section of votes for progressive forces in the 90s (in this case, to continue the series we use the old 16^{th} electoral section). Commune 5 includes the districts of Almagro and Boedo, typical areas of residence of the CBA middle-class and mostly non-Peronist voters (for the historical series, the old 8^{th} and 9^{th} sections were chosen). Finally, Commune 8, in the South of the City, includes the poorest CBA slums: Villa Lugano, Villa Riachuelo and Villa Soldati. This last Commune is a political space in which territorial and face-to-face politics play an important role in everyday residents' sociability (we use data from the old 22^{nd} section for historical series).

Looking at the numbers included in Fig. 3, some conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the main increase in the flow of votes to PRO occurs between the 2003 and 2007 elections. In the 2011 election, however, the new party manages to keep most of constituency conquered 4 years earlier, especially in the electorate of the medium and lower classes, which stops growing. Thus, it is in the 2007 electoral strategy where should be found the critical conjuncture of PRO electoral success. Secondly, PRO early manages to position itself as the electoral choice in upper-class districts, traditional voters of the right-wing parties. Thirdly, in 2007, the PRO attracted a high proportion of the upper middle class votes, which during the 90s had gone to mostly progressive options. Fourthly, the votes of the inhabitants of middle class neighborhoods grew considerably between 2003 and 2007, but in 2011, they fell very slightly. Fifthly, the percentage of PRO votes in the poor neighborhoods of the South was the only one that did not grow throughout this cycle. So, it is not in this constituency where the main reasons for the electoral growth of PRO should be looked for.[73] In summary, although PRO conquers a heterogeneous electorate (under its ability to take sectors traditionally elusive to right) it captured more electoral weight in north wealthier districts of the city.

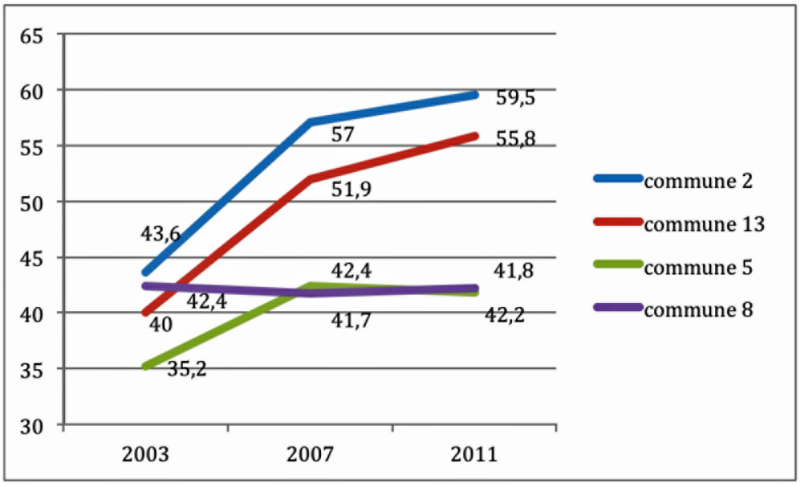
In 2005, Mauricio Macri presented his candidacy for National Congress deputy for CBA and forged an official alliance with RECREAR. Thus, the *Alianza Propuesta Republicana* (Republican Proposal Alliance), which later would be known as PRO, was born. In these elections, PRO won by 34% of votes, obtained six seats in the Congress and added 13 more legislators in the city council, which it now dominated.

Between 2005 and 2007, Macri did not attend the National Congress because, he said, it was a "boring and meaningless task". He used the time to flirt with the idea of a wide center-right alliance for the next presidential elections that included López Murphy (from RECREAR) and Jorge Sobisch, the Neuquén province governor for the *Movimiento Popular Neuquino* (Neuquén Popular Movement, MPN) a traditional *federalista* party converted to neoliberalism. However, in April 2007, a teachers' union demonstration in Neuquén, ended in excessive police repression and the murder of a union activist. The fresh memories of the police repressions of 2001 were

[72] Regarding relations between Argentina's rightist parties and anti-populism, see Ostiguy, October 2009. Also, it must be noted that one of our interviewees, from the "right faction" said that, at first, the CPC founders even considered competing from inside Peronism.

[73] It is true that, in the second round, there was a significant growth from 2003 (46.7%) to 2007 (55.1%), but it may be supposed that those votes are not, in the first instance, near PRO.

Figure 3: Evolution of PRO votes in 4 Communes (2003–2007)



revived, and Macri decided to break the alliance with the MPN, not present a presidential candidacy and re-run for the mayoralty of the federal district.

In 2007, even though Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, from the Peronist center-left FPV, won at the national level, PRO achieved a landslide victory in elections for the mayoralty of CBA and obtained a decent third place in Buenos Aires Province (where it was allied with the center-right Peronist, De Narváez, the entrepreneur who had supported the "Believe and Grow" Foundation). Macri ran for the CBA office accompanied by Gabriela Michetti, a former leader of the Christian Democrats, a small party of catholic social orientation, providing a character of sensitivity and a progressive hue to the formula. PRO obtained 45% of vote in the first round and an astounding 61% on the second. After this victory, the PRO grew in other electoral districts (including the provinces of Buenos Aires, Salta and Santa Fe), and quickly consolidated in the federal district.

This victory was, at least partially, the result of a shift to the center of the political spectrum. Some traditional figures of the right were hidden during the campaign and the political discourse lost some of its neoliberal flavor. The PRO candidates followed the instructions of the campaign spin-doctor Jaime Durán Barba, who suggested fiercely rejecting any ideological identification and to highlight the "newness" of the party. This rejection of ideological identification and the resistance of Macri to strongly endorsing RECREAR's López Murphy's candidacy for the Senate produced some bitter arguments in the PRO alliance, and, eventually, a breakup. The brutish anti-populist campaign headed by López Murphy was the reason why Macri did not openly support him. After PRO's triumph, López Murphy's leadership in RECREAR was contested between those who wanted to maintain an independent party and those who wanted to merge with Macri's government; the latter faction won and, by 2009, the fusion was complete.

While in 2003 Macri showed some sympathy with Néstor Kirchner's new Government, and in 2005 made an ambiguous characterization of this, in 2007 the PRO leader took the place of opposition vacant in the city after the weakening of López Murphy. Against the candidacy of the Minister of education of the national Government, Daniel Filmus, Macri appeared, then, to be the main opponent, and also a guarantee of the autonomy of the city against a supposed colonization by the federal State. Besides this, the PRO campaign finally abandoned the traditional format of partisan meetings, and changed it for a set of personal visits by Macri to citizens. The advertising format acquired a systematic, strong identity. The party definitively adopted yellow as its color, and proposed TV spots and posters on the streets with short slogans, associated with politics as management but also with the promotion of State intervention, which helped PRO to move from its most identifiably liberal profile. Positivity and the rejection of ideological confrontation were translated in "optimistic" slogans, as "Buenos Aires will be good". This strategy was combined with the already classic attempt

to build a discourse based on management: "For every assault [from national Government], we offer a proposal", was other major campaign slogan. Unlike the elections of 2003, in 2007 the PRO managed to win middle-class neighborhoods, and thus attained a heterogeneous electorate that combined social and ideological sectors: middle and upper classes, non-Peronist progressive votes and traditionally right votes. From our perspective, the heterogeneity of this constituency corresponds to the heterogeneity of groups forming the party. Also, the fact they had been able to present PRO as a new political force, detached from their identification with the neoliberal right, and even more so from the traditional political parties, also corresponds to this heterogeneity of components that formed the new force.

As in the Colombia case described elsewhere in this volume, the PRO's first cabinet was a combination between experienced political leaders and newcomers technocrats linked to the private sector. It can be noted that some groups, as the NGO professionals and businessmen are the most represented. Also, it is clear that even if PRO rightist groups are not the most important quantitatively, they manage an important quota of values production and economic policies. Besides, it is striking that there was only one minister from the radical faction. In summary, it is certain that the first CBA PRO's cabinet privileged the people with Macri's confidence. The arrival of Diego Santilli to the government in 2009 meant the reinforcement of the Peronist faction, not previously represented in the cabinet.

Table 2: Macri's first cabinet

Minister	Area	Faction	Prior experience
Horacio Rodríguez Larreta	Chief of Cabinet	NGO-Prof.	Yes
Néstor Grindetti	Finances	Businessmen	No
Guillermo Montenegro	Security	Professionals	Yes
Jorge Lemus	Health	NGO-Prof.	Yes
Mariano Narodowsky*	Education	NGO-Prof.	Yes
Daniel Chaín	Urban development	Businessmen	No
Hernán Lombardi	Culture and Tourism	Radical	Yes
Esteban Bullrich**	Social Development	Right	Yes
Francisco Cabrera	Economy	Right	No
Juan Pablo Piccardo***	Environment	Businessmen	No
Marcos Peña	General Secretary	NGO-Prof.	No

Source: own elaboration from CBA Files.
* Replaced in 2009 by Esteban Bullrich from the right faction.
** Replaced in 2008 by María Eugenia Vidal, from the professional faction.
*** Replaced in 2009 by Diego Santilli, from the Peronist faction.

In the composition of Macri's cabinet we can also see the debatable newness of PRO. The partisan actors all had political experience in public office. On the contrary, the businessmen had no experience in state management. In the case of the professionals, the situation is more heterogeneous: most of them had experience in the area where they were designated.

The first two years of PRO's CBA government showed some of the limitations of the wide reform agenda proposed by the party. The city's employees' strong unions, the bad relationship with the President Fernández de Kirchner's office, the inexperience of PRO's cadres to deal with a heavy bureaucracy, and the fierce opposition by the left and center-left parties in the city council permitted only slow progress. Outraged, Macri protested in the media about the "stopping machine of populism" and began a strong confrontation with the FPV. As part of this game plan of full opposition to national Government, the PRO allied again with De Narváez in Buenos Aires Province. The 2009 elections showed the mixed results of this strategy. On one side, De Narváez won a tight contest in Buenos Aires province, even though former president Néstor Kirchner was the main FPV nominee. On the other side, CBA PRO's candidate for the National Congress, the former vice-mayor Gabriela Michetti, won by a lower than expected margin. Partially for that reason, in the 2011 elections, Macri backed off and offered a non-confrontational discourse. He was accompanied again by a woman, María Eugenia Vidal, former Minister of Social Development, who seemed to occupy the same role that Michetti had

played in 2007: humanizing the leader. The bet paid off, and Macri was re-elected to mayor of CBA by 65% in the second round (46% in the first).

The 2007–2011 period allowed PRO to progress in its reframing of political cleavages. To do this, as in the Peruvian case described by Carlos Meléndez in this book, PRO attempted to build new topics identified neither with the right, nor with the left. In those years, PRO discourse focused not on redistributive issues but on the economic troubles caused by the national government's policies (such as the inflation supposedly originated by an overheated economy). The two principal strategies to re-frame the political debate were, first, to develop a public discourse on the rise of crime and insecurity and, second, to defend the idea of a new ecological public policy. Carlos Meléndez considered (in his chapter in this volume) that a new type of rightist leadership based on law and security issues can gain preponderance in Latin American countries where a party system collapse has taken place. As we have seen, PRO was born at those circumstances and -in the middle of fierce discussions on security in Argentina- Macri's party focused on public safety policies in order to help its strategy of reframing traditional cleavages. In 2009, PRO local government created a metropolitan police force. Although this proposal was an old demand of several political forces, the PRO justified it as a reaction in face of the lack of answers from the federal police and the national government.

Furthermore, PRO started two kind of policies linked with the ecological issue: firstly, the construction of bicycle lanes and the implementation of a promotional loans from the city bank for the purchase of bicycles; and secondly, the campaigns to promote recycling of waste. Both policies seem to have achieved an identification of PRO with ecological values and practices. In this sense, the idea of a "green city" intends to build some post-materialist and trans-ideological values that counteract the image of PRO as a conservative party.

3.3 The CBA constituencies: Fertile ground for the growth of PRO

Reliable data on the characteristics of the PRO constituency is not yet available. However, we can make some general notes about the socio-political features of the inhabitants of CBA that allow us to understand to what extent it is a receptive political space for the kinds of proposals that PRO has put forward.

As we said earlier, CBA is a district that traditionally votes non-Peronist and it is in the high area, in terms of Ostiguy's political spectrum. In this context, PRO is a party that could embody high values but, at the same time, uses the popularity of its leader and the populist political appeal of the Peronist its faction members. However, the PRO peronists were increasingly marginal in the public-media presentation of the candidates.[74] In this way, the PRO location in Argentine political spectrum is strikingly lower than previous center-right parties, but not so lower as to merge with nationalist right experiences (see Fig. 4, in the next section).

It must be noted that *porteños'* relationship with the public services is increasingly fragmented. For example, CBA upper and middle classes have abandoned public schools (in 2011, 47% of CBA students went to private schools). The difference between communes is clear: while in those of the North the percentage of students attending private institutions amounts to 65% in average, in those of the South this number is lowered to only 30%.[75] PRO policies seem to follows this collective decision: its Government is that most subsidies has given to private, confessional and non-confessional schools. Undoubtedly, PRO did not produce this situation of abandonment of the public schools by the upper-middle and middle classes, but it was able to take advantage of it, perhaps because it was less ideologically committed with the

[74] A Buenos Aires' newspaper described almost as a complaint that the PRO agencies, in the southern part of the city, did not use the PRO colors, but rather the light blue and white classic colors of Peronism, as well as the name: "*PRO-Peronismo*". Thus, they pointed out the compartmentalized segmentation of the PRO political strategy. See, Juan Pablo Luna, "Segmented Party–Voter Linkages in Latin America: The Case of the UDI," *Latin American Studies*, 42: 325–356.

[75] See *Anuario estadístico* (Buenos Aires: Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, Ministerio de Hacienda, Government of Buenos Aires, 2012).

universalist and secular principle of the public-statist, which was instead held most strongly by UCR and progressivism.

The two areas in which the PRO core constituency seems to really need the State action are those of transport and security. Here, the performance of PRO has been different. In the first case, the PRO's campaign promise was to build ten kilometers of subway per year. Whether due to funding difficulties caused by the national Government -as PRO incumbents say- or to difficulties of management in the Government of the city -as its opponents argue- or a combination of both, the truth is that the PRO Government made little or no progress in the enlargement of the subway network. However, PRO conceived an intelligent policy to supplant the mis-advances in this expensive and structural area with another type of transport policy: the construction of tunnels for automobiles under railway crossings (especially in the neighborhoods of the Center and North of the city) and the construction of exclusive lanes for buses that acquired a smart advertising name, "Metrobus", which seemed to combine both a means of transport, and the improvement of public traffic in middle-class areas.

At least since the end of the 90s, public opinion polls point to insecurity as one of the main public concerns. Massive demonstrations in 2005 testified to the importance of this subject. The discourse of Macri made the "insecurity problem" a main issue. The creation of the Metropolitan Police appears to have been a concrete response (not necessarily the adequate one) to this social question that contrasted with the inability of the national Government to bring a solution. Unlike public education, security concern seems to be a subject that cuts across all classes. Contrary to what happened in other more socially segmented policies, such as ecology, with this policy the PRO Government decided to create the police in districts of the south, center and north of CBA. Thus, it managed to reach the different components of its electorate, without prejudice to its core constituency.

4 PRO in Argentinian political space

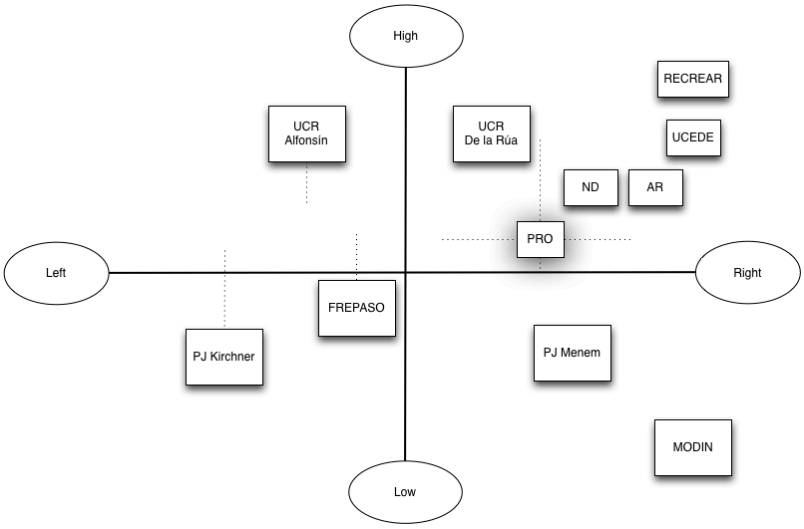
Given the context described above, how should PRO be placed in the Argentinian political space? In terms of Ostiguy, what is the relationship that PRO establishes with the right and the populism? As Luna and Rovira Kaltwasser maintain, the ideological classifications of the actors are relational: the actors place themselves in relation to their competitors but they are also classified and labeled by them. As we saw, PRO defines itself, in large measure, in opposition to the national Government. In this sense, the resetting of Peronism accomplished by the FPV, that manages to mobilize most of the Peronist factions represents a challenge to PRO.[76]

Although, in 2003, Néstor Kirchner represented, according to Ostiguy, the high-left of Peronism, the abandonment of a strategy of transversality* *in pursuit of a rapprochement with classic Peronism (in its* evitista* version compatible with the left positions of that movement) took the FPV back to a place in the lower sector in politics. In this context, PRO inherited the electorate and the discourse of rightist forces associated with non-Peronism, so occupying a higher area in Ostiguy's space. As CBA is the district with the greatest proportion in the high political hemisphere, occupying this area seems to be enough to win elections. Since 2007, the PRO managed to appear as the main challenger to Peronist national government inside CBA, so the main reason of the party success seems obvious. In this way, the construction of new issues, such as the ecological ones, probably helps to go beyond left-right cleavage but, in the end, it places PRO in the high hemisphere.

Due to the importance of the Peronist constituency (low hemisphere) at national level, the desire to become a powerful alternative at national level has led PRO to attempt to dispute a portion of the Peronist electorate. Doubtless, the existence of Peronist groups into the PRO party contributes to this objective: there exist some linkages with the popular electorate, as the

[76] In the presidential elections of 2003, in the federal district, the FPV would have attracted votes as much by virtue of its identification with the Peronism as with the left-of-center. These identifications, settled an alternative for the voters of both sectors of the high-low axis and left-right axis. See Alessandro, 2005. There are reasons to think that this situation remained, and may even have deepened, after those elections.

Figure 4: Argentinian political space in recent decades



electoral results already described show, as well as a capacity to attract the rightist Peronist constituency.[77] Nevertheless, the confrontation with the national Government based on the defense of republican principles (it has to be remembered that the PRO name is Republican Proposal) tends to distance the party from the low area and bring it closer to institutionalist positions traditionally mobilized by the non-Peronist forces. So, it can be said that, in order to become a national majority force, PRO is trying to occupy more than one area in the political space. This is not an easy task to accomplish.

The support on issues not identifiable with the left-right cleavage seems compatible with the PRO heterogeneity. However, it is not clear that these themes will become solid political appeals at the national level. In this regard, the more we move away from the municipal issues, the more relevant Ostiguy's high-low cleavage becomes. If PRO chooses to represent the high area of politics, its electoral chances will probably be reduced, because the party would lose the support of the low popular electorate. In summary, PRO is playing a double game of political reframing by virtue of its aspirations to become a majority force. The Macri's party appears as aimed to go beyond left and right, but it also wants to supersede the high-low cleavage. So, PRO tends to nourish itself from elements three of the four quadrants of the Argentine political space at the same time. This attempt to go beyond both cleavages also endeavors to subordinate the different factions around a new political project. In this sense, the position of the leader is important: as a businessman trained in the neoliberal right, Mauricio Macri attracts the non-Peronist high constituency, but as ex-president of Boca Juniors, he conserves his ability to attract low sectors of the political spectrum.

A party that is both "beyond left and right" and "beyond Peronism and non-Peronism" seems to be building, but his future is uncertain. This uncertainty is due to the success of PRO in CBA and mainly lies in two factors that do not seem to exist outside that district. Firstly, in CBA a very peculiar voter lives: traditionally non-Peronist, identified with the high hemisphere of politics, earning above the average national income, with a cosmopolitan

[77] In the legislative elections of 2005 in CBA, PRO was the main receiver (although, with a number outside the parameters) of the "high" vote of right-of-center (UCEDE in 1995), but, as we expect because of the "popular" style of Macri's candidacy, it also takes a significant proportion from the PJ vote of 1995, a territory forbidden for other rightist candidates, as Lopez Murphy. See Alessandro, 2005, 602–603. Thus, we do not consider, as Alessandro does, that PRO structures its candidacies according to the left-right axis. The fact is (and it is even more true in 2005) that when PRO had still not finished incorporating post-materialist issues like the emphasis on management and the ecology, the party gained the traditional votes of the right and of the high side of the political space (the non-Peronist right), this does not mean that it was a strategy looked for by the actors. On the contrary, we maintain that the PRO tried (and still tries) to extend that "natural" niche of voters.

viewpoint and a relationship of proximity -but not dependence- on public services and State. This voter profile was not well represented by the other parties (especially not by UCR and the progressivism). Secondly, the crisis of the main parties also opened an opportunity for the emergence of a political party that picks "available" leaders, orphan militants and disoriented electors. However, the situation beyond the General Paz Avenue (the peripheral highway on CBA) seems to be different because Peronism remains very strong in many districts and, in others, radicalism is socially rooted. As a matter of fact, the traditional parties even appear to have been reinforced after the crisis.

In 2011, the president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was re-elected by the 54% of Argentinians, strengthening the so-called Latin American "pink tide".[78] However, the same year, PRO obtained an astounding 64% in the run-off for the Mayor's Office of CBA. Also in 2011, PRO gained the Mayor Office of Vicente López (an important suburban area next to Buenos Aires) and came in a close second-place in the elections for the governor of Santa Fe (the second most important province in Argentina) and also Salta (a northern, traditional province).[79] Macri's strategy of not presenting his presidential candidacy that year, but rather conserving the government of the federal district and advance in the gradual national expansion of the PRO, seemed to have produced unequal results. While the first element was successful, the PRO nationalization continued to be a "pending account". Since then, the party and its leader have been active visiting the provinces in search of establishing new alliances and recruits. However, so far, only the traditional provincial conservative parties, some second-rank celebrities and a few radical mayors have been incorporated. So, the walk from the CBA Mayor's office to the *Casa Rosada* appears to be much longer for Macri than it has been for the former president De la Rúa.

5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we aimed to contribute to the analysis of the difficulties of the Argentine partisan right to form a successful machine able to compete against the populist forces. Despite the traditional weakness of right-of-center forces in Argentina, the crisis of 2001 and the fall of the main parties in CBA represented a favorable structure of opportunity for the emergence of a new party. PRO took advantage of this situation, and did so with the added advantage of beginning its political construction at the subnational level. To be an outsider at a time when political parties and traditional leaders were seriously delegitimized was a competitive advantage, and PRO still attempts to present itself as the real "newness" in the post-crisis era. Born around the leadership of Mauricio Macri, PRO quickly incorporated elements of the partisan and non-partisan classical right, but it also recruited leaders from the national-popular major Argentine parties and from the world of think tanks and NGOs. In 2007, PRO won municipal elections in CBA and Macri became mayor; he was reelected in 2011. The PRO victory was possible due to a change of electoral strategies that promoted the enlargement of alliances and constituencies. So, PRO became a multiclass party, even if its core constituency remains in upper and upper-middle class zones of CBA.

The PRO seems to represent some kind of hope for the Argentine political right. But it does so at the cost of not being the party of the right, as the conservatives as well as the neoliberals would have wished. The PRO heterogeneity, that shows possibilities of being competitive and electorally powerful, brings the party near to post-materialist right values, but also close to the classic Argentinian *movimientismo*, including leftist and rightist actors in the same label. These ideological tensions have given PRO, so far, an original character, but also seem to have been obstacles to winning a large enough portion of the national electorate. In this context, the tensions tugging PRO currently are not few. It is not evident that the PRO will maintain

[78] Originally raised by the media, the expression "pink tide" was quickly adopted by the academic community to refer to the leftward shift in several Latin-American countries, Argentina included. Jon Beasley-Murray, Maxwell A Cameron and Eric Hershberg, "Latin America's Left Turns: an introduction," *Third World Quarterly* 30(2) (2009): 319–330.

[79] In January 2013, PRO leader Mauricio Macri announced that he would present his candidacy for the Presidency of Argentina in 2015.

or enlarge the success obtained since 2003. Nevertheless, it will be one of the main actors in the national political arena in the coming years. By the standards of the political history of Argentina, this fact is a novelty the understanding of which we have tried to contribute to in these pages.