# Choosing Legislative Candidates Via Primaries: The Pivotal Role of Executive Incumbency

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**Abstract**

How much influence does incumbency have on the way parties nominate candidates? I address this question in the context of Argentina, examining how political parties decide on candidate nomination methods for National Deputies. I argue that holding the governorship creates an imbalanced distribution of resources within a party, leading party factions to lean toward consensus in candidate selection and reducing the likelihood of choosing a primary election. Conversely, when a party lacks the governorship, its party leader may have a weaker influence in deterring primary elections. I also theorize the various situations and resources governors can employ to discourage primary elections, including potential coattail effects, the option of seeking reelection, control over the primaries' selectorate, and control of the electoral calendar. To test my expectations, I employ a regression discontinuity design, focusing on governors and those who finished as runners-up in lower chamber elections from 1985 to 2023. My findings reveal that governor incumbency decreases the probability of holding a primary election. I conduct further analyses by examining subgroups, considering the governor's circumstances and the resources I previously theorized as factors influencing primary deterrence. I find that incumbency only deters primaries when the governor and National Deputies elections are concurrent, when the governor is not term-limited, and when they have control over the electorate and the electoral calendar.

The selection of candidates and the control over the nominations determine who gains political power while empowering those who select the candidates. These processes underlie the relationship between those who get the nominations and the individuals they owe loyalty to. Consequently, it is reasonable for party leaders to assert their power of nomination. We can see, however, that numerous parties around the world use primaries as a mechanism to choose the candidates who run for executive and legislative offices instead of leaders' agreements. Thus, why do some party leaders succeed at nominating candidates while others resort to primary elections?

A particular case emerges when party leaders hold executive offices. Elected executive officials, such as presidents, governors, or mayors, are interested in controlling who gets nominated for the legislative branch in their territories and who gets elected. Having a unified government with candidates who owe loyalty to the executive branch facilitates the legislative process and prevents interparty gridlock (Krehbiel, 1996, 1998). However, despite the incentives incumbents of executive offices may have to nominate candidates for legislative office, the existing literature presents conflicting arguments and results on the effect of incumbency on the presence of primaries. Some scholars have argued that opposition parties are more likely to hold primaries than parties in office because they might use primaries to increase the valence of their candidates (Carey and Polga-Hecimovich, 2006). Primary elections serve as a mechanism for identifying and selecting competitive and more electable candidates. Opposition parties stand to benefit the most from utilizing primary elections as they seek to enhance their electoral prospects and increase their chances of winning elections (Serra, 2011; Adams and Merrill, 2008). Incumbent parties, conversely, may opt for other nomination procedures, such as elite nomination, because they do not need the primary "bonus" to attract voters (Slough, York and Ting, 2020). Furthermore, some scholars have argued that incumbency spoils leaders with institutional and informal resources that can imbalance the division of power within the party. Institutional resources include control over jobs and the budget in the provincial administration, while informal control devices include patronage and clientelism. These devices may discourage party factions from challenging incumbents (De Luca, Jones and Tula, 2002; Skigin, 2022). In contrast, parties whose leaders lack the resources that incumbency brings may be more likely to resolve factional disputes through primaries.

A second group of scholars has argued, conversely, that parties in office are more likely to hold primaries because they are more attractive to new candidates. While incumbent parties are, in general, electorally stronger than opposition parties, prospective candidates may prefer to run for office as members of an incumbent party to maximize their chances of securing a seat. Therefore, incumbent parties will have a large pool of candidates with diverse backgrounds and policy positions, and the most effective way for these parties to nominate candidates is through primary elections. For example, Ichino and Nathan (2012) show that for legislative elections in Ghana, incumbent parties are more likely to have intra-party disputes, and consequently, use primary elections to solve these disputes, due to their ex-ante higher likelihood of winning the office. Kemahlioglu, Weitz-Shapiro and Hirano (2009) present similar arguments for

Latin American presidential elections, adding that the indivisible nature of executive elections makes them more likely to hold primaries than legislative ones.

While the two perspectives lead to different policy implications, they share two shortcomings regarding the relationship between incumbency and primaries. The first shortcoming is methodological and consists of a potential selection effect. Incumbents are, by definition, the successful politicians in a previous election. If the factors that made them win their office—charisma, popularity, better fundraising network, etc.—are still present when the parties have to decide how to choose their candidates—i.e., whether to have a primary—then incumbents should be expected to be somewhat successful at influencing that decision. In a sense, not holding a primary could be "over-determined" by the same factors that had determined the incumbent's electoral victory—fundraising network, charisma, etc.—instead of an effect of incumbency. The second shortcoming in the literature comprises the mechanisms associated with incumbency. Although several studies have theorized about the resources that public offices spoil and situations that might affect holding a primary, no study has isolated the impact of those factors separately. In other words, we do not know empirically when and why incumbency matters.

In this study, I overcome these shortcomings by following the standardized way to address the effect of incumbency (Lee, 2008; Erikson and Titiunik, 2015). The empirical strategy consists of a regression discontinuity (RD) analysis between parties that barely won or lost the gubernatorial elections in Argentina. The outcome variable is the probability of holding primaries to select the legislative candidates for the National Lower Chamber in the two following elections.[1] The treatment—i.e., incumbency—is assigned based on a cutoff at the running variable: the margin of victory/defeat in the last governor election. Cases barely below the cutoff are approximately identical in most respects to those barely above. This way, I avoid the possible over-determination and confounding process on the outcome variable.

I further discuss the resources that governorship brings and the different situations that might mediate the relationship between incumbency and primaries. I identified three situations where incumbency should matter. Those situations are when the incumbent has **a)** the possibility of reelection, **b)** the possibility of coattail effects in concurrent elections, and **c)** control over the electoral calendar of primaries, or control over the selectorate that participates in the primaries. I conduct further subsample RD analyses for the different institutional settings.[2]

Consistently with my expectations, for the full sample, I find evidence that incumbent governors diminish the likelihood of holding a primary for the National Deputy election. When looking at the subsamples, I identify three findings. First, I find a deterrent effect of incumbency in primaries when the governor and national deputy elections occur in concurrent years, where spillovers from the governor's race could influence the national deputy. However, in midterm elections, where such spillovers are absent, I found no discernible effect of incumbency. Second, I find no effect of incumbency on the likelihood of holding a primary when the governor is term-limited but a negative and statistically significant effect when

[1] I look at the following two elections because the National Deputy Chamber in Argentina is renewed by halves every two years, while the governor appointment lasts four years. Therefore, two legislative elections are held under the same incumbent.

[2] As I will discuss later. Due to data limitations, these two situations cannot be isolated and are considered together.

the governor can re-run for office. Lastly, I also compare the periods before and after the introduction of mandatory primary elections in Argentina (2009), where the governors lost control over the electoral calendar and the selectorate that participated in primaries. I find that incumbency diminished the likelihood of holding primaries before the mandatory ones were introduced, but the effect disappeared once they were in place.

Argentina is a good case to test when incumbency matters because it offers variation in governors' situation and resources. Specifically, there is variation in three scenarios: reelection, concurrency of elections, and control over the electorate and the electoral calendar. First, some provinces have unlimited reelection, while others have a limited number of times a governor can run for reelection, and still, others have no reelection. In addition, candidates for the national lower chamber are elected by halves, which allows one to compare the effect of incumbency on midterm elections with the effect of incumbency on elections concurrent with the governor election. Finally, in 2009 the national government passed a primary law that made primaries open to everybody and on a unified date, removing the governor's control on the electoral calendar and the people participating in the primary.

This study is relevant for several reasons. Its empirical contribution is a clean identification of the effect of leaders' incumbency on holding a primary. Using regression discontinuity (RD) analysis, I exploit incumbency as a random effect to establish a causal relationship between incumbency and how candidates are nominated. To my knowledge, this is the first study to use a causal approach to address the presence of primaries. Second, this study theoretically contributes to our understanding of the institutional factors within the "big tent" of incumbency that may affect primaries. Although research on incumbency primarily focuses on the impact of holding versus not holding office, this effect can be influenced by contextual factors, which may or may not be accessible to incumbents. I contribute by identifying four different components of incumbency and testing how they affect the presence of primaries.

The paper is structured as follows. The following section describes the institutional background, the candidate nomination process in Argentina, and the provincial party leaders' motivation to influence the candidates' selection. Then, I theorize about the governors' resources that might affect the presence of primary elections, and I formulate the article's hypotheses. Next, I describe the empirical strategy to identify the incumbent effect on primaries. The results section presents the findings of the analyses. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the contribution and results of the study.

## Political careers and candidate nomination in Argentina

Argentina is a presidential and federal republic with 23 provinces and an autonomous federal capital in Buenos Aires City. Since 1991, the Argentine Chamber of Deputies has had 257 members elected to a four-year term, with no term limits. Each of the 24 districts elects its national deputies (NDs). The number of NDs in each district was calculated proportionally based on the 1980 census projections. The largest district has 70 NDs, while every district has a minimum of 5. NDs are elected using a closed-list

proportional representation system, and seats are allocated using the D'Hondt method. The Chamber is renewed by halves every two years, with each province electing half of its representatives in each electoral turn. In each electoral cycle, the district magnitude of the provinces varies between 35 and 2.

In addition to the representatives in the Chamber of Deputies, each province and the city of Buenos Aires elect their head of executive (governors and mayor, respectively) through direct vote using a simple plurality or a majority runoff system for a four-year term. Every other national deputy election is concurrent with a gubernatorial election. Provincial governments are extremely important political entities. They possess their own constitutions, control very large budgets, and exercise influence over vital areas of public policy (Ardanaz, Leiras and Tommasi, 2014; Calvo and Murillo, 2004).

Elections in Argentina are held using a ballot-and-envelope system that discourages split-ticket voting. Each party presents in a unified ballot all elective offices on the same election day. For example, if a city votes on the same election day for governor, national deputy, and president, the candidates for the three offices would appear together in the same unified ballot. For a straight ticket vote, voters must select the ballot and put it in the ballot box. However, for split-ticket voting, voters would need to alter the ballots by cutting them, typically with scissors they bring to the polling place, to select their preferred candidate for each office.

The National Chamber of Deputies, as well as the Senate, is one of the institutions where provincial party leaders influence national politics and obtain resources (Remmer and Wibbels, 2000). To pass their agenda, the president needs legislative support from national deputies (NDs), and they have fiscal resources to obtain that support. As previously mentioned, the careers of NDs largely depend on the provincial party leader so that they will respond to the latter. The president must negotiate with the provincial party leaders to obtain legislative support (Bonvecchi and Lodola, 2011). The president may also want to nominate candidates to reduce the cost of passing bills. At the same time, leaders from other factions of the same party might want to include their candidates in the ballots to gain power and relevance in their party and province. Both presidents and party factions press for more democratic mechanisms to select candidates, whereas governors would prefer methods with which they have the most control over nominations (De Luca, Jones and Tula, 2002). The interactions between the national government and provincial actors turn the selection of candidates for national deputies into a contested arena, where various actors are motivated to nominate as many candidates as possible (Cherney, Figeroa and Scherlis, 2018).

The combination of closed-list proportional representation, the difficulty of splitting the ballot, concurrent elections between national deputies and officials with higher hierarchy, and the extensive control over the candidate selection process by provincial party leaders make it difficult for Argentine national deputies (NDs) to cultivate a personal vote. As a result, NDs' political careers are not controlled by the voters. After their term in the Chamber, what comes next largely depends on the national or provincial party leaders. Consequently, rather than being accountable to the voters from their districts, Argentine NDs' behavior in the Chamber exhibits accountability to their party leaders (Jones et al., 2002; Gervasoni and Nazareno, 2017).

In the recent history of democratic Argentina, political parties have used three mechanisms to select legislative candidates: elite arrangements, direct primaries, and assembly elections (De Luca, Jones and Tula, 2002). Elite arrangements include a variety of methods, from a provincial party leader imposing a list to a negotiated list resulting from the agreement of several provincial party elites. Direct primaries are elections in which party members vote directly to select their candidates. Assembly elections are elections in which delegates to a party assembly, themselves directly elected by party members, elect the candidates.[3]

From 1983 to 2009, political parties ran the primaries elections, not the government. These primaries were usually held on a Sunday between two months and one year before the general election. They involved considerable mobilization efforts by the competing intraparty lists. Most of the time, the selectorate for these contests was party members alone. Occasionally, some non-affiliated citizens were allowed to participate in a party primary. However, even when non-affiliated citizens were allowed to participate, they only represented a small portion of the primary voters. In general, these non-affiliated voters were relatives or friends of party members who were brought along to vote for the list supported by the party member.

In 2009, a change in the nomination process took place. The National Congress passed Law 26.571, which imposed open, simultaneous, and mandatory primaries (PASO). This law introduced two crucial changes in the nomination process. The first one was the change in the selectorate for primaries. All citizens, regardless of party affiliation, are required to participate in the internal elections of one of the parties to select candidates for all national executive and legislative positions. The second change was the control over the electoral calendar. Since that date, PASOs have been conducted simultaneously for all parties between two and three months before the general election. All parties that want to compete in the general election must compete in the primaries and obtain at least 3% of the total vote share between all the party lists. However, not all parties have competitive primaries. Parties that choose not to use the primaries can present just one uncontested list in the primary elections.

## Governor's incumbency, resources, and primary elections

Primary elections are a way to choose candidates when there is disagreement among party leaders. As discussed in the previous sections, in Argentine politics, various actors, including provincial party leaders, factions within the party or coalition[4], and the national executive have incentives to nominate candidates for the National Deputy Chamber. For provincial actors, having legislators who own loyalty in the National Deputy Chamber facilitates the negotiation process with the National government, while for the National government, it reduces the cost of obtaining legislative support.

[3]Provincial party assemblies are relatively rare in Argentina. For 1983-2001, De Luca, Jones and Tula (2002) documented only 12 cases of party assemblies being used to select legislative candidates out of 610 observations.

[4]For the remainder of this article, the term "parties" comprises both individual parties contesting in an election and electoral coalitions that unite various parties. The dynamics of primaries, as discussed, apply equally to both entities. In either scenario, parties and coalitions may have internal factions vying for candidacy nominations

Does the governor's incumbency reduce the chances of having a primary? Anecdotal evidence suggests so. The *Justicialista* party in Argentina has held only one primary election to nominate candidates for national deputy in the provinces of San Luis and Formosa, where it has won all the gubernatorial elections since 1983. In contrast, the party has had to resort to primary elections in the provinces of Corrientes and Neuquén, where it has never won the governorship, in 44% and 47% of the cases, respectively.

In addition to the anecdotal evidence, there are theoretical reasons to believe that a governor's incumbency would reduce the occurrence of primaries. Previous literature has shown that several actors are interested in nominating candidates in ND elections, including national party leaders, provincial party leaders, and local leaders such as mayors (Gervasoni and Nazareno, 2017; Cherney, Figeroa and Scherlis, 2018). For a primary to occur, no single actor should have enough influence over the party to impose their candidates. If one actor possesses sufficient influence, they can force an agreement with other factions or impose their candidates unilaterally. The governor's incumbency is a factor that contributes to the power imbalance within the party (Jones et al., 2002; Eaton, 2006), enabling governors to impose their preferred candidates, co-opt potential intra-party challengers, and secure agreements with leaders of other party factions. In contrast, provincial-level party leaders in opposition have limited resources compared to governors, making their ability to deter a primary much weaker. Therefore, the governor's incumbency is expected to decrease the probability of holding a primary.

**Hypothesis 1** (H1)**.** Governors' parties are less likely to hold primary elections than parties without a provincial incumbent.

**When does incumbency matter?** Some scholars have argued that incumbency deters primaries because governors offer a set of resources that might unbalance the field between incumbents and their potential party challengers, to the benefit of the former (De Luca, Jones and Tula, 2002; Skigin, 2022). Those resources include but are not limited to control over the provincial public administration, electoral spillovers to other offices during concurrent elections, the possibility of running for re-election (and extending their control over the public administration), control over the electoral calendar for primaries, and influence on the selectorate that participate on the primaries.

I argue that incumbents have devices and situations that lead to primary deterrence, but these devices are not always available to all incumbents. As a second set of hypotheses, I analyze the impact of incumbency when some of these devices are available to governors. The resources under study are:

- a spillover effect during concurrent elections for governor and for NDs,
- the possibility of incumbent reelection, and
- the control over the electoral calendar and the selectorate participating in primaries.

The first situation I analyze is the potential coattail effect that the governor could have when the election for governor and national deputy are concurrent. During concurrent years, the provincial party tends to align with the candidate running for governor. When the governor or a candidate from the governor's party is running, most of the provincial electoral campaign revolves around the governor. This becomes more pronounced when the governor and the national deputies' elections are held on the same day (Oliv-

eros and Scherlis, 2004). Challenging the governor's list for NDs in a primary would imply incurring an expensive electoral campaign to compensate for the predominance of the governor election in a concurrent year. Therefore, in concurrent elections, the party factions are more likely to align and agree on the nomination of candidates with the incumbent because of the positive impact they could have on the ND election. In contrast, during midterm years, the elections are centered on the NDs, and the governor would not have such a crucial role. Therefore, a party faction would be more likely to challenge the governor in a primary because it would think that it has more chance of winning. Thus, hypothesis H2 states that for elections in concurrent years, I expect a larger effect of governor incumbency than for midterm years. [5]

**Hypothesis 2** (H2)**.** In years when elections for national deputy and governor occur concurrently, the incumbency effect on deterring primaries is greater than in midterm election years.

I expect something similar to happen when the governors are not term-limited. Governors who can run for reelection are likely to do so, with a good chance of winning (Caedarello, 2012). Their party views a non-term-limited governor as the person who currently controls the province's resources and also as the person who will continue to do so in the next term. As a result, a governor eligible for reelection will face less resistance from their party in determining who will represent the province in the National Deputy Chamber, compared to a party leader from the opposition party. In contrast, a term-limited governor may face more challenges from members of their party who are eager to take over as party leaders. A governor in Argentina can be term-limited due to two reasons. First, they can be term-limited because the province's constitution does not allow reelection for their office[6]. Second, a governor can be term-limited when, despite the province's constitution allowing for reelection, it does so for a limited number of times, and they have reached that limit[7]. I expect to see a strong effect of incumbency on the likelihood of a primary when the governor is eligible for reelection. On the other hand, when the governor is term-limited, I expect to see a smaller or no difference between the governor's and the opposition's parties.

[5] In this article, I refer to elections as concurrent when they are held within the same year, regardless of whether they occur on the same day. This approach derives from the lack of a clear theoretical expectation regarding whether a larger incumbency effect should be observed during same-day concurrent elections or during different-day but same-year concurrent elections. On the one hand, it could be argued that in concurrent elections, both within the same year and on the same day, incumbents might be more influential due to their ability to mobilize their party networks on a single day for both elections. As such, a stronger effect of incumbency on primaries might be expected. On the other hand, the decision to split the election is not random. Typically, stronger governors, who either do not require a positive coattail effect from a national party or want to avoid a negative coattail effect from a national government's poor economic performance, are more likely to split the elections. According to this line of reasoning, a larger effect of incumbency on primaries might be observed in split elections, which are only concurrent by year, thereby contradicting the first argument. In Appendix A2.9, I conduct further analysis on the heterogeneous effect of concurrency by dividing the data between elections held on the same day and those that were not. The results for both subsamples were very similar.

[6] Mendoza and Santa Fe are the only two provinces where the provincial constitutions explicitly prohibit the governor from seeking immediate reelection.

[7] There are several examples in recent Argentine history of governors who exhausted their constitutional chances for reelection in their provinces. For instance, Daniel Scioli in Buenos Aires province in 2015, after being governor for the periods 2007-2011 and 2011-2015. Another example is Mario Das Neves in Chubut in 2011, after having completed two terms as governor from 2003-2007 and 2007-2011

**Hypothesis 3** ($H_3$)**.** For election years when the governor can run for reelection, the impact of incumbency on the probability of deterring a competitive primary is larger than when they are term-limited.

The last of the resources I analyze here are the control over the selectorate, and over the electoral calendar. While passing the bill that made primaries open, simultaneous, and compulsory, the national government took two institutional resources from the governors related to primaries. First, governors lost control of the eligible primary voters. Before PASO, only parties' affiliated members from the province were eligible voters for the primaries. Governors had extensive control over the provinces' public administration and the ability to discretionary staff it. The party-based distribution of employment in the province administration gave governors high control to mobilize party affiliates to vote in primaries in her favor. This affected the primaries by increasing the governor's chances to defeat any challenger and discouraging potential challengers from running against the governor because of their few chances of winning.

Second, the PASO law caused the governors to lose control of the primary electoral calendar. Once the PASO law was enacted, all primaries from all parties, provinces, and offices were held on the same day. The governors do not have the power to choose the primary date discretionally or split the primary from other national primary elections such as the presidential. The control over the selectorate and the electoral calendar is expected to affect primaries in the same direction. These resources make party factions less likely to challenge the incumbent, as their chances of success are reduced compared to if the incumbent did not have these resources. For this study, however, it is empirically impossible to isolate these factors from one another or determine if one has a predominant effect. Therefore, for this part of the analysis, I consider them together. Given the above reasons, I expect to see a more significant effect on incumbency for the pre-PASO election, where the governor has a larger control over the primaries and a smaller or no effect after PASO is passed.

**Hypothesis 4** ($H_4$)**.** During election years without mandatory primaries, the effect of incumbency on the likelihood of deterring a competitive primary was greater than when primaries became mandatory.

# Design

I use a close-election regression discontinuity design to estimate the advantage of incumbent governors over non-incumbents on the probability of having a primary election for the Chamber of Deputies. The sample includes data from all the Argentina National Chamber of Deputies elections from 1985 to 2023. The running variable for a party $j$ is its vote share minus the vote share of its closest opponent. For the incumbent, I subtract the percentage of votes received by the runner-up in the gubernatorial election from their own vote share (giving a positive score). For the runners-up, I invert the order of the subtraction (giving a negative value). This allows me to estimate how close the governor and the runner-up were to losing or winning the election, respectively.

The time span under consideration extends from 1983, when Argentina transitioned to a democracy and began electing executives, to the most recent election in 2023. Given that my analysis focuses on the

incumbency advantage, I do not consider the first election year of each province because there was no elected incumbent. For most provinces, I begin collecting data for primaries in 1985, resulting in a total of 20 elections per province. However, there are two exceptions: Tierra del Fuego, which had legislative elections since 1993 –I start counting from 1995, leading to 16 elections–, and the city of Buenos Aires, which had legislative elections since 1995 –I start counting from 1997, resulting in 14 elections–. In total, $22 \times 20 + 16 + 14$ sums to 470 elections with a potential incumbent and a runner-up.

However, to address the clean effect of incumbency, some observations from those 470 elections were excluded from the analysis. I excluded eight elections held with incumbents previously elected using an electoral college, which could lead to the margin of victory being meaningless because it might not reflect how close the election was or even to the most-voted candidate not being elected governor. Also, six elections were omitted after the incumbent was removed or the provinces intervened.[8] The 2013 and 2015 elections of Rio Negro were also excluded from the sample because Carlos Soria, the governor elected in 2011, tragically lost his life just 21 days after assuming office. For all these cases, I removed all parties from these province-year elections from the sample. Furthermore, there were four instances in which an incumbent or a runner-up party did not present a list for ND elections. These cases include two incumbency situations: the Partido Social Patagónico from Tierra del Fuego in 2013 and 2015, where the governor, Fabiana Ríos, chose not to present a list for competing in the national lower chamber. Additionally, two instances occurred without a runner-up in 2021 and 2023 when the Partido Justicialista from Tierra del Fuego participated in the ND elections in the list of the incumbent's party, Gustavo Melella, from FORJA. For these situations, I only removed the party that did not run. Appendix A1.5 documents the cases excluded from the analysis.

After removing the elections with electoral colleges, interventions, or deceased governors (16 elections, 32 parties), and the cases where either the incumbent or the runner-up party did not run (4 parties), I arrive at a total of 904 year-province-parties in the final sample. 452 of these observations (50%) are associated with the incumbent party, while the same number refers to the runner-up party. The incumbent party had primaries on 144 occasions (31.86% of the time), while the runner-up party held primaries 232 times (51.33%).

The variable of interest is *primary*, which measures the presence of a primary election for the Chamber of Deputies election in either the governor's or the runner-up party $j$, in the province $k$. *Primary* is coded as 100 when a primary occurred and 0 when no primary was held. *Primary* refers to the primary election for the National Deputy, while the margin of victory/defeat refers to the gubernatorial election. I merged the value of the running variable from a given party and province to the same party running for the National Deputy in the same province during the two (midterm and concurrent) immediate posterior elections. This way, all incumbents and runner-up parties in each province running in National Deputy Elections have the margin of victory (or defeat for runner-up parties) of the governor in the previous election.[9]

[8] The 1991 election of Tucumán was excluded for a combination of these two reasons. First, the governor was elected in 1987 using an electoral college, and, in addition, the province intervened in early 1991.

[9] During the early eighties, governors in three provinces were chosen by an electoral college. This could result in the candidate with more votes not being chosen as governor, or the margins of victory being meaningless.

Specifically, I estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{(j,k)} = \beta_0 + \tau_{rd} \cdot I_{(j,k)} + \beta_1 \cdot \text{GovElecMargin}_{(g,k)} + \beta_2 \cdot I_{(j,k)} \cdot \text{GovElecMargin}_{(g,k)} + \epsilon_{(j.k,)}$$

Where $Y$ is the dichotomous outcome for having a primary for the National Deputy election in party $j$ and province $k$, the running variable, $GovElecMargin$, is the distance as a percentage between the incumbent and the runner-up in the closest previous governor election $g$. Following Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014), I determine the effect of interest using a non-parametric approach by fitting two separate regressions, one on each side of the cutoff. I utilize a triangular kernel to give more weight to observations that are closer to the cutoff. In contrast with fixed smaller bandwidths, which reduce bias by focusing only on observations close to the cutoff, the advantage of this method lies in its ability to balance bias and variance through the estimation of an "optimal bandwidth" (Imbens and Kalyanaraman, 2012; Calonico, Cattaneo and Farrell, 2020), and correcting its bias by giving more weight to the observations close to the cutoff. The effect of interest, $\tau_{rd}$, is the difference between the predicted regression values approaching the cutoff from the left (where incumbency, $I$, is equal to zero) and the right (where $I$ is equal to one). Additionally, the estimation includes a fourth parameter $\beta_2$ for the interaction between $I$ and $GovElecMargin$.

I test the effect of incumbency (H1) by fitting the previous equation for the entire sample. For the other hypotheses, I fit the equation using sub-samples of the data. For hypothesis H2, I split the data between concurrent and midterm elections. Then, for hypothesis H3, I split the data between elections where the governors can run for re-election and those where they are term-limited. Finally, for hypothesis H4, I sub-sample the data in two: the election years when primaries were not mandatory and those years after the introduction of mandatory primaries. All models include clusters at the election-province level.

Figure 1 presents all variables used in the analysis together. The $y$-axis shows the Argentine districts, while the $x$-axis displays the election years. For each election year, Figure 1 shows either a square, a triangle, a circle, or a cross. A square represents an election where both the incumbent and challenger parties held a competitive primary for the national lower chamber. A triangle represents an election where only the incumbent party held a primary. A circle represents an election where only the challenger party holds a primary. A cross represents an election where no primary was held.

The figure also shows whether the election for the lower chamber was concurrent with the governor election (red) and whether the governor had the chance of being reelected (blue). The intersection of the red and blue shades results in purple, representing the province-election years when the election was concurrent and the governor could run for reelection. If the intersection is not colored, the election was not concurrent, and the governor did not have the chance to run for reelection in that province-election year. Finally, the red vertical line between the 2009 and 2011 elections shows the introduction of PASO.

Also, on seven occasions, the federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship, removing the governor. Finally, three times, the governor's party did not present a list of National Deputies. All those cases were excluded from the dataset. However, as a robustness check, in Appendix A2.7 I conducted a set of fuzzy regression discontinuity analyses including all the observations.

Elections that are excluded are shown in gray, while those where either only the governor or the runner-up party competed are highlighted with a black square frame. In addition, Tables A1, A2 A3, and A4 presents descriptive statistics of the data for the full data, and for each of the subsamples. Table A5 shows statistics on the covariates for incumbents' and runner-up's parties. Finally, Appendix A1.4 presents a density analysis for the full data and each subsample.

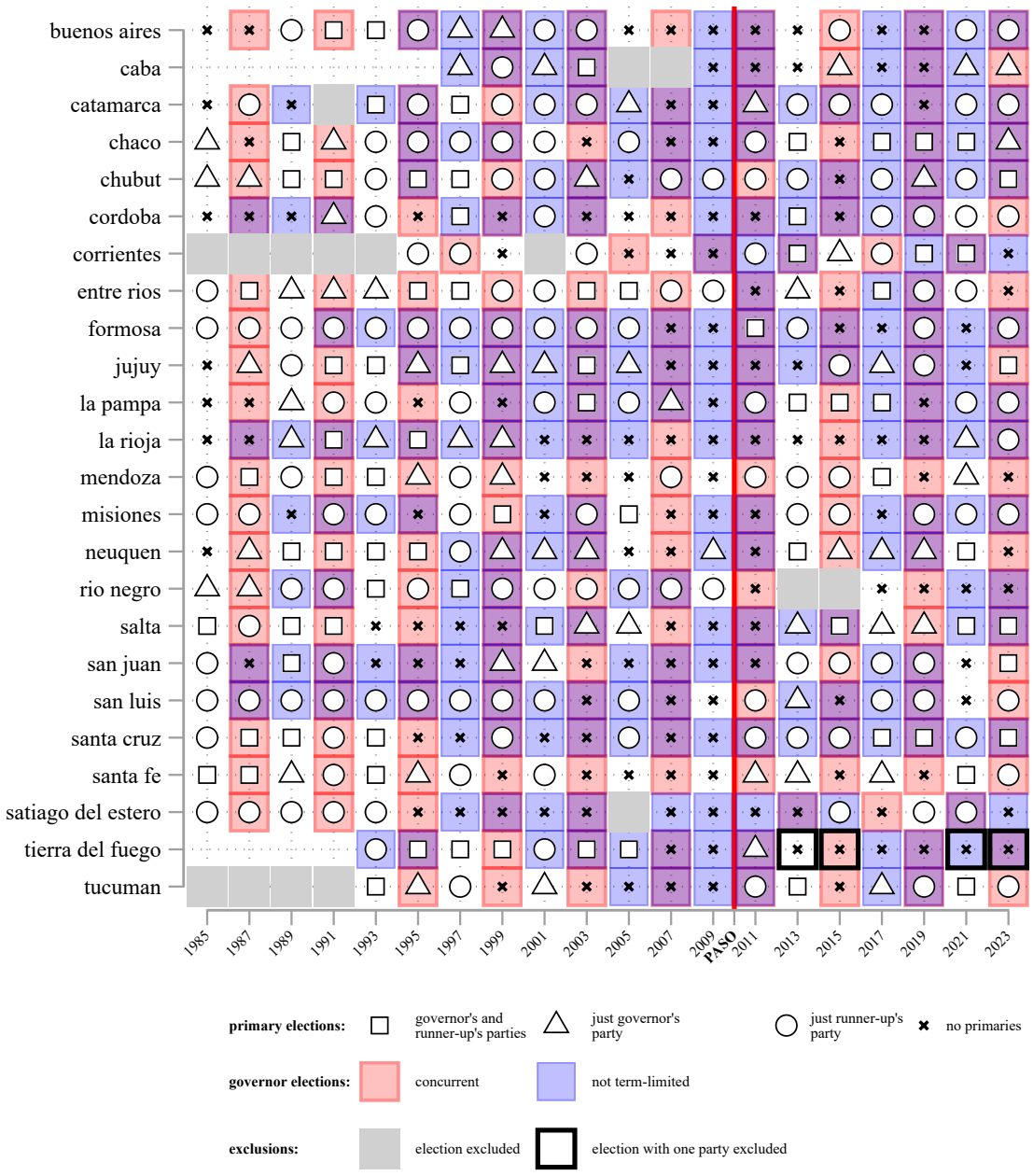


**Figure 1:** Overview of Argentine Primary Elections for National Deputy, 1985-2019. Squares denote the presence of a primary election in a given election year-province for both the governing and the runner-up parties. Triangles refer to primaries exclusively within the Governor's party, while circles represent primaries exclusively within the runner-up party. The use of red color indicates that in that election year, the National Deputy election was concurrent with the Governor's election, whereas blue highlights elections where the governor was not term-limited. For election years-provinces with both concurrent elections and non-term-limited governors, the area is further highlighted with an overlapping purple color.

# Results

To give readers a full picture, I begin by presenting the data in its raw state. Using a uniform kernel, I fit a fourth-order polynomial at each side of the threshold for all observations, regardless of the value of the running variable. Then, for the core analysis, the RD estimation, I use a non-parametric approach. I estimate two separate regressions for positive and negative values of the margin between governor and incumbent, with robust standard errors clustered by-election, using a triangular kernel that assigns more weight to observations closer to the cutoff value of zero. To minimize the mean squared error of the estimates, I only use the data included within the reported bandwidth (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik, 2014).

Figure 2 shows the results of the regression discontinuity (RD) analysis for the full sample, and the three pairs of subsamples. The $\hat{\tau}$ values show the difference, at the exact point of the discontinuity, between two fourth-order polynomials estimated separately at each side of the threshold, using all the data and weighing all observations equally. The results are consistent with my expectations. I find a negative effect of governor incumbency on the probability of having a primary in the National Deputy (ND) election in their party-province. However, the magnitude of the effect and the statistical significance varied by sample.

For the entire sample model (Figure 2a), I find that governor incumbency reduces the chances of a primary by 27%. Figures 2b and 2c show the results for the pairs of subsamples between concurrent and midterm years. As expected, the effect for concurrent years of the governor's incumbency reduces the probability of primaries by almost 32.2%. For midterm years, I was expecting a smaller or no effect. Indeed, the analysis documents a significantly smaller effect for the concurrent years, at 22%. Figure 2d shows the largest effect I documented in this research. For elections where the governor is not term-limited, the effect of incumbency is -44.1%. In contrast, for those elections where the governor was term-limited, the effect is -0.5%. For the comparison between the pre- and post-PASO subsample, I document a -33.6% effect in the election years before the introduction of the mandatory primaries, while a -15.2% for the election years when the law has passed (Figures 2 f and g). A Table with estimations used to construct Figure 2 can be found in Appendix A2.2.

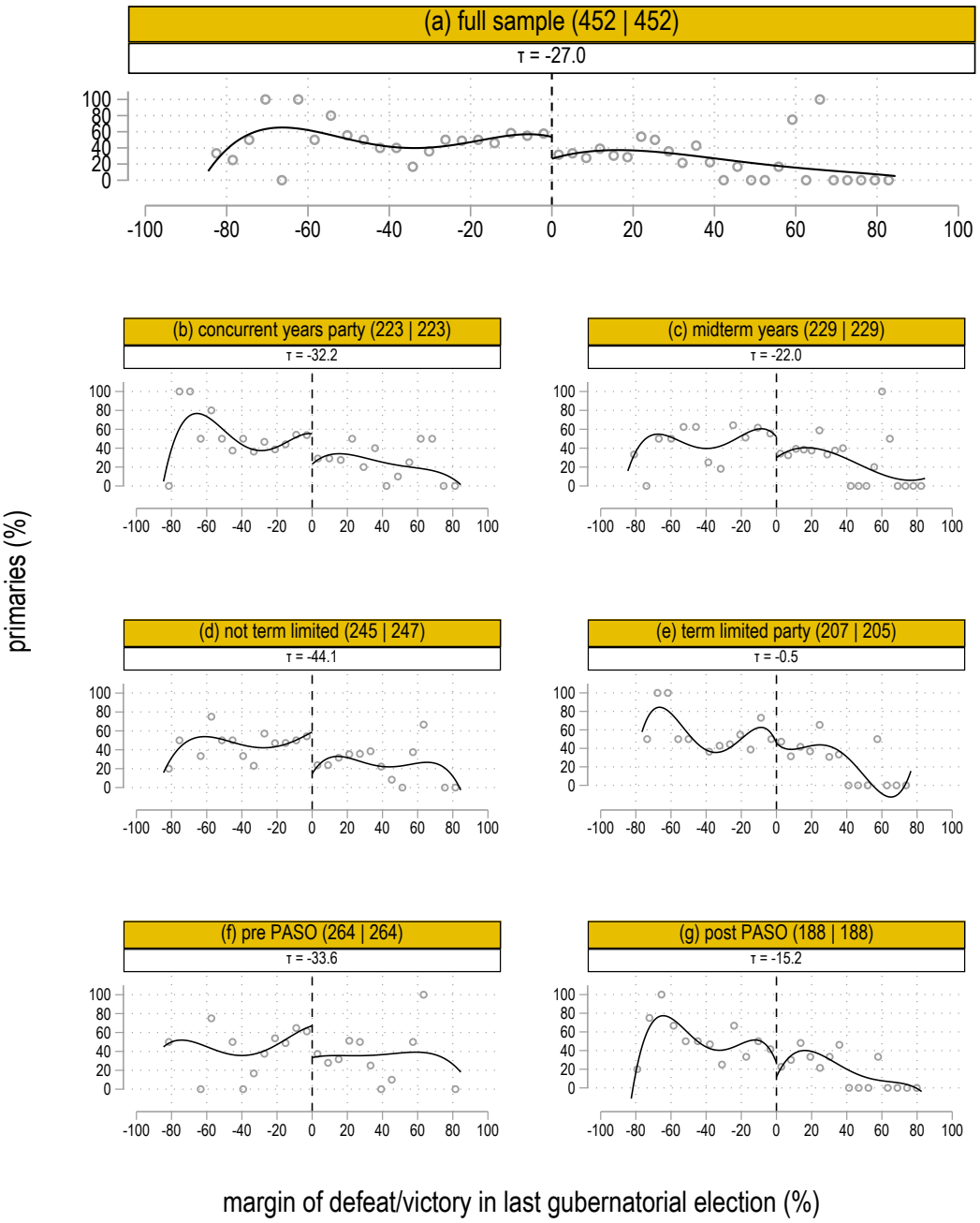


**Figure 2:** Mimicking variance RD plots with quantile-spaced bins (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik, 2015) showing the effect of governor's election margin on the probability of holding a primary for the ND election. Fitting lines show fourth-order polynomials estimated separately at each side of the cutoff, using a uniform kernel

Table 1 presents the main results of this study. The RD estimates, reported in Table 1, utilize a local polynomial and a partitioning method. They report the estimation of $\tau$ —i.e., the effect of incumbency—along with 95% confidence intervals and p-values, both estimated using robust standard errors clustered by election. The estimations in Table 1 exclusively use observations within the optimal bandwidth.

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -24.05 | (-40.91 — -2.98) | 0.02 | 18.39 | (272 — 272) |
| **concurrent** | -31.04 | (-57.96 — -6.22) | 0.02 | 24.43 | (166 — 166) |
| **midterm** | -17.85 | (-43.37 — 14.64) | 0.33 | 17.13 | (131 — 131) |
| **term-limited** | 11.14 | (-19.07 — 55.72) | 0.34 | 10.77 | (89 — 87) |
| **not term-limited** | -38.45 | (-65.27 — -16.99) | 0.00 | 19.43 | (151 — 153) |
| **pre PASO** | -25.60 | (-48.34 — .44) | 0.05 | 13.55 | (143 — 143) |
| **post PASO** | -15.48 | (-44.7 — 19.14) | 0.43 | 16.12 | (88 — 88) |

**Table 1:** Sharp (conventional) rd estimates, with robust cis and p-values based on the mse-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014) The running variable is *last governor election margin*.

Overall, the results from Table 1 tell a similar story to Figure 2 in terms of the magnitude of the effect of incumbency of primaries. I can see, however, that not all the estimations are statistically significant. First, for the full sample, I find a statistically significant effect of -24.1%. For the concurrent election years, the estimated effect of incumbency is -31% with a statistical significance of 95%. For midterm election years, the effect of -17.9% is not statistically significant. Again, the election years when the governor is not term-limited show the largest effect: incumbency diminishes in -38.5% the chances of having a primary, with a statistical significance of 99%. In contrast, election years with term-limited governors show a positive but not statistically significant effect of 11.1%. Finally, for the pre-PASO years, I document a significant diminishing effect of magnitude -25.6%, while in the post-PASO year, the effect of -15.4%is not statistically significant. In sum, consistent with my expectations, I document the effect of incumbency on holding primaries for the full sample (H1), concurrent (H2), not-term limited (H3), and pre PASO (H4). Appendix A2.8 shows that the results remain quite similar across a range of alternative bandwidths. Except for very small bandwidths –with the concomitant reduction in the number of observations–, the estimates remain very similar if I double the bandwidth reported in Table 1, cut it by half, replace it with the one proposed by Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012), or increase the bandwidths to up to 50 pp.

These results are robust to a wide variety of specifications –see Appendix A2–. First, I test whether the results remain consistent when applying a different threshold for competitiveness in the primaries. Following De Luca, Jones and Tula (2002), Appendix A2.1 presents the model's outcomes with a recoded dependent variable. Here, a *primary* is coded 100 only if the gap between the two main factions is smaller than 75%. Appendix A2.3 shows that controlling for whether it is the *president's party*, *partido justicialista*, or a *provincial party*, does not change the results. Employing a CER-optimal rather than a MSERD-optimal bandwidth does not change the results either –Appendix A2.4; see de Magalhães et al. (2020)–. Appendix A2.5– shows the second and third order polynomial RD regression discontinuity results. The results indicate a similar direction and magnitude; however, the levels of statistical confidence decrease in most cases. I also find similar results using the local randomization approach proposed by Calonico, Cat-

taneo and Titiunik (2015) –Appendix A2.6–, and in the fuzzy regression discontinuity in Appendix A2.7, which includes the previously excluded observations. Appendix A2.9 compares concurrent elections that occurred in the same year but not on the same day, with those that occurred on the same year and day. The results are not systematically different. Alternative causal mechanisms are discussed in Appendix A2.10 (party incumbency), and Appendix A2.11 (subnational undemocratic regimes).To underscore the relevance of employing the RD approach for estimating the effect of incumbency, Appendix A2.12 presents the results of the difference-in-means test along with their corresponding p-values.

# Conclusion

In this study, I set out to examine whether governorship incumbency deters primary elections within their parties, using Argentina's National Deputy elections as a case study. This question has been previously explored, yielding contrasting results and arguments. I identify two areas for improvement in prior studies. First, the factors contributing to a candidate's election victory may also impact their influence on the candidate nomination process. Therefore, what previous studies have found about incumbency might not have been isolated from confounder factors. Second, I argue that the mechanisms through which incumbency affects the candidate nomination process have not been thoroughly explored theoretically. While previous studies have analyzed incumbency as a *black box*, we lack an understanding of the specific elements of incumbency that exert influence over their parties.

I address the first shortcoming by applying a regression discontinuity approach that isolates the pure effect of governors' incumbency in primary elections. Second, I theorize that incumbents' influence is contingent upon the availability of the governor's resources. Specifically, I identify three situations that enhance the incumbents' influence over the nomination process for National Deputy elections. These situations are: when the incumbent can run for re-election, concurrent elections, and when the incumbent has control over the selectorate and the electoral calendar of primaries.

I tested this last argument by conducting six regression discontinuity analyses, including a pairwise analysis for each of three situations: one when the governor had resources that could influence their control over the nomination process, and one when they did not. Indeed, I found an incumbency deterring effect on the primaries when the governor was not term-limited; when the governor and National Deputy elections were held in concurrent years; and before the PASO law was introduced, which made governors lose control over the electoral calendar and electorate for primaries. When any of these elements of incumbency were missing, their influence over the primaries disappeared.

The findings of this study reconcile the contradictory results of previous research, and they offer an explanation to address the inconsistencies observed in earlier studies. In summary, it can be argued that incumbency does not always influence the method for selecting legislative candidates. By breaking down the elements that influence governors' control over the candidate nomination process, I have identified the specific situations where incumbency should matter.

Moreover, the results of this paper indicate that the advantage of incumbency extends beyond the incumbents' current office. While most studies on incumbency advantage have focused on dependent variables at the same office level as that of the incumbent, such as reelection, this study demonstrates that incumbents can also influence factors like candidate nominations for different offices. Furthermore, the case study presented in this paper shows that incumbency at the state level can impact higher-level offices, such as those of national deputies. Future research should explore additional patterns of incumbency influence beyond their current office and across different levels of government.

These findings, despite being grounded in Argentina's political context, suggest broader patterns that could be observable in other countries. For example, in contexts where previous literature has shown that governors wield significant influence over national politics in various countries, including Mexico (Bruhn, 2010) and Russia (Moraski, 2015). Furthermore, the Argentine primaries, despite their goal of making the candidate selection process within parties more transparent and democratic (Alles, Haime and Tchintian, 2021), had a side effect of diminishing governors' influence in their parties. This unexpected effect of the primaries might be observed in other contexts where mandatory primary laws have been widely implemented, as in Latin America (Slough, York and Ting, 2020). Finally, future research could build on this analysis by further exploring the role of incumbency, disentangling the factors that influence it, and testing the conditions under which it matters—taking into account variables such as reelection and the concurrency of elections.

While this study focuses strictly on one actor in the candidate nomination process for national deputies – specifically, the state party leaders—it is important to acknowledge that other actors are interested in who and how candidates are nominated. Notably, national-level party leaders also have incentives to influence the national legislative process. Among these actors are, of course, the presidents, who would benefit from having a large caucus that responds to them. Future research should aim to incorporate the role of these national-level actors in a multi-actor game where both federal and state-level actors compete for nominations.

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# Appendix

## Table of Contents

# A1 Descriptive statistics and balance tests

**Descriptive Statistics** Table A1 shows the descriptive statistics for the main variables of interest for the full sample.

**Descriptive Statistics by Subsample** Table A2, A3, and A4 show the descriptive statistics for the main variables of interest, disaggregated by sample.

**Descriptive Statistics for Governors and Runner-up Parties by subsample** Table A5 replicate the descriptive statistics from the previous section, disaggregated by runner-up's and incumbent's party.

**Density Analysis** The Regression Discontinuity Design would be an invalid approach if the units could decide to be treated or not. Figure A1 shows the margin of victory at election $t$ and defeat for the runner-up's and the incumbent's party, for each subsample used in the analysis. Each graph shows the $p$-value of the null hypothesis that the density of the running variable is continuous at the cutoff using the local density estimator developed by (Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma, 2018). The density tests for each party fail to reject the null hypothesis of no sorting.

## A1.1 Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Primaries** | 904 | 41.59 | 49.32 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 904 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 904 | 0.54 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 904 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 904 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 904 | 0.37 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 904 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 904 | 0.07 | 0.26 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 904 | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 904 | 43.23 | 13.95 | 2.7 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 904 | 0.03 | 25.78 | -84.5 | 84.5 |

**Table A1:** Descriptive statistics for the full sample. Reported number of observations indicate the *effective* sample size

## A1.2 Descriptive Statistics by Subsample

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Election Years with Term Limited Governor | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 412 | 46.36 | 49.93 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 412 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 412 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 412 | 0.52 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 412 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 412 | 0.38 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 412 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 412 | 0.09 | 0.29 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 412 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 412 | 42.53 | 12.45 | 6.2 | 86.3 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 412 | -0.01 | 22.69 | -76.5 | 76.5 |
| Election Years with No Term Limited Governor | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 492 | 37.60 | 48.49 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 492 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 492 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 492 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 492 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 492 | 0.37 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 492 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 492 | 0.06 | 0.24 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 492 | 0.03 | 0.17 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 492 | 43.81 | 15.08 | 2.7 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 492 | 0.06 | 28.12 | -84.5 | 84.5 |

**Table A2:** Descriptive statistics for elections where the governor was term-limited (top) and had the chance of reelection (bottom).

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Midterm Elections | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 458 | 43.89 | 49.68 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 458 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 458 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 458 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 458 | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 458 | 0.37 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 458 | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 458 | 0.08 | 0.27 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 458 | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 458 | 43.23 | 14.21 | 2.7 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 458 | 0.03 | 26.29 | -84.5 | 84.5 |
| Concurrent Elections | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 446 | 39.24 | 48.88 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 446 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 446 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 446 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 446 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 446 | 0.38 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 446 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 446 | 0.07 | 0.25 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 446 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 446 | 43.23 | 13.69 | 5.0 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 446 | 0.03 | 25.27 | -84.5 | 84.5 |

**Table A3:** Descriptive statistics for elections for election-years where the National Deputy election was not (top) and was (bottom) concurrent with the governor's election.

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre Introduction of Mandatory Primaries (PASO) | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 528 | 44.70 | 49.77 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 528 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 528 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 528 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 528 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 528 | 0.40 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 528 | 0.48 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 528 | 0.09 | 0.28 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 528 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 528 | 43.46 | 11.96 | 5.5 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 528 | 0.00 | 21.34 | -84.5 | 84.5 |
| Post Introduction of Mandatory Primaries (PASO) | | | | | |
| **Primaries** | 376 | 37.23 | 48.41 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Incumbent** | 376 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 376 | 0.65 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 376 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 376 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 376 | 0.34 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 376 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 376 | 0.06 | 0.23 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 376 | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 376 | 42.91 | 16.36 | 2.7 | 86.3 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 376 | 0.07 | 30.98 | -82.6 | 82.6 |

**Table A4:** Descriptive statistics for pre (top) and post (bottom) introduction of mandatory primaries.

## A1.3 Statistics for Runner-up and Governors' Parties by subsample

| | Runner-Up | | | | | Incumbent | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Full Sample** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 452 | 51.33 | 50.04 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 452 | 31.86 | 46.64 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 452 | 0.54 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.55 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 452 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 452 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 452 | 0.55 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.19 | 0.39 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 452 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.65 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 452 | 0.05 | 0.21 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 452 | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 452 | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 452 | 33.96 | 10.36 | 2.7 | 63.3 | 452 | 52.49 | 10.50 | 31.1 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 452 | -18.51 | 17.93 | -84.5 | 28.1 | 452 | 18.57 | 17.89 | -28.1 | 84.5 |
| **Election Years with Term Limited Governor** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 207 | 54.59 | 49.91 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 205 | 38.05 | 48.67 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 207 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 205 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 207 | 0.52 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.52 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 207 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.31 | 0.46 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 207 | 0.52 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.23 | 0.42 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 207 | 0.38 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.60 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 207 | 0.05 | 0.22 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.13 | 0.34 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 207 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 205 | 0.00 | 0.07 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 207 | 34.28 | 9.82 | 6.2 | 63.3 | 205 | 50.86 | 8.73 | 31.7 | 86.3 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 207 | -16.58 | 15.42 | -76.5 | 27.4 | 205 | 16.72 | 15.42 | -27.4 | 76.5 |
| **Election Years with Not Term Limited Governor** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 245 | 48.57 | 50.08 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 247 | 26.72 | 44.34 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 245 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 245 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.49 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 245 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.50 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 245 | 0.58 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.16 | 0.37 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 245 | 0.28 | 0.45 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.70 | 0.46 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 245 | 0.04 | 0.20 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.08 | 0.27 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 245 | 0.03 | 0.17 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 247 | 0.03 | 0.17 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 245 | 33.70 | 10.81 | 2.7 | 60.6 | 247 | 53.85 | 11.61 | 31.1 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 245 | -20.15 | 19.69 | -84.5 | 28.1 | 247 | 20.10 | 19.61 | -28.1 | 84.5 |
| **Midterm Elections** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 229 | 53.71 | 49.97 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 229 | 34.06 | 47.50 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 229 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.53 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 229 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 229 | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 229 | 0.54 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.20 | 0.40 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 229 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.65 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 229 | 0.06 | 0.23 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.10 | 0.31 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 229 | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 229 | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 229 | 33.83 | 10.62 | 2.7 | 63.3 | 229 | 52.63 | 10.70 | 31.1 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 229 | -18.78 | 18.38 | -84.5 | 28.1 | 229 | 18.84 | 18.35 | -28.1 | 84.5 |
| **Concurrent Elections** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 223 | 48.88 | 50.10 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 223 | 29.60 | 45.75 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 223 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 223 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 223 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 223 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 223 | 0.57 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.19 | 0.39 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 223 | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.66 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 223 | 0.04 | 0.19 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 223 | 0.01 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 223 | 0.02 | 0.13 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 223 | 34.10 | 10.11 | 5.0 | 63.3 | 223 | 52.36 | 10.32 | 31.1 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 223 | -18.23 | 17.48 | -84.5 | 28.1 | 223 | 18.29 | 17.45 | -28.1 | 84.5 |
| **Pre Introduction of Mandatory Primaries (PASO** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 264 | 54.55 | 49.89 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 264 | 34.85 | 47.74 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 264 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.47 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 264 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 264 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 264 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 264 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.24 | 0.43 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 264 | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.64 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 264 | 0.06 | 0.25 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.11 | 0.31 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 264 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 264 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 264 | 35.77 | 9.16 | 5.5 | 63.3 | 264 | 51.15 | 9.15 | 31.1 | 90.1 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 264 | -15.38 | 14.80 | -84.5 | 27.4 | 264 | 15.38 | 14.80 | -27.4 | 84.5 |
| **Post Introduction of Mandatory Primaries (PASO** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** | **Obs** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Min** | **Max** |
| **Primaries** | 188 | 46.81 | 50.03 | 0.0 | 100.0 | 188 | 27.66 | 44.85 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| **Not term-limited** | 188 | 0.65 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.66 | 0.48 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Midterm election** | 188 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.51 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Post-PASO** | 188 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| **U.C.R.** | 188 | 0.55 | 0.50 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.13 | 0.33 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **P.J.** | 188 | 0.31 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.68 | 0.47 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Provincial Party** | 188 | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.09 | 0.29 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Required Second Round** | 188 | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 188 | 0.02 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| **Votes in last Governor Election** | 188 | 31.44 | 11.39 | 2.7 | 60.6 | 188 | 54.39 | 11.91 | 31.7 | 86.3 |
| **Margin in last Governor Election** | 188 | -22.91 | 20.83 | -82.6 | 28.1 | 188 | 23.04 | 20.73 | -28.1 | 82.6 |

**Table A5:** Descriptive Statistics by Subsample and Treatment

## A1.4 Density Analysis

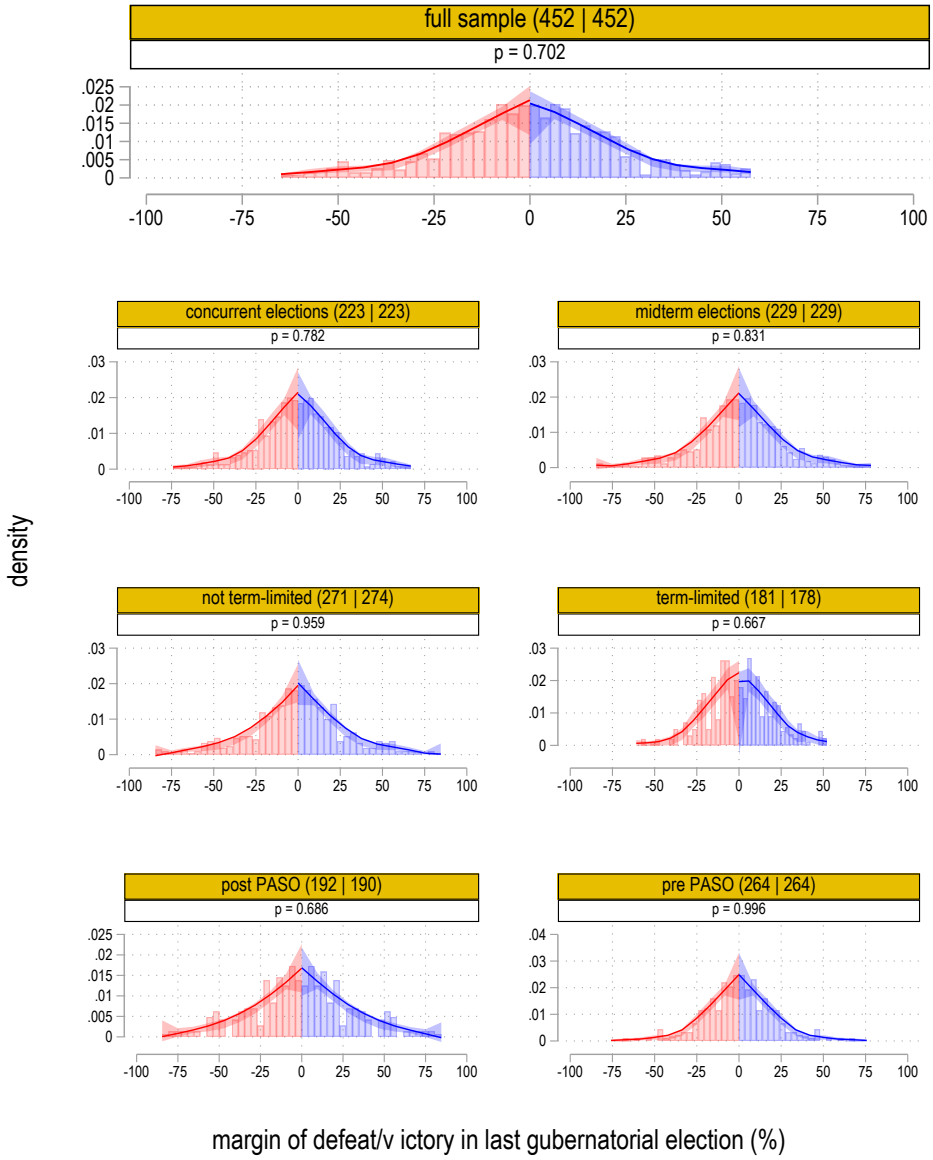



**Figure A1:** Density Test. The Figure shows the margin of victory/defeat in the governor election t-1. The top graph shows the full sample, while each of the other graphs shows the subsample detailed in their title. Each graph shows the p-value of the null hypothesis that the density of the running variable is continuous at the cutoff using the local density estimator developed by Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma (2018) The density tests for each party fail to reject the null hypothesis of no sorting for all samples.

## A1.5 Excluded observations from the analysis

**Excluded observations** Table A6 details the elections excluded from the analysis, highlighting the diversity of reasons behind these exclusions. It enumerates the provinces affected, the specific election years in question, and the names of the governors in office at the time. It provides a brief description of the incidents leading to each exclusion, alongside the exact dates these events took place. The exclusions stem from instances where the incumbent was elected under the electoral college or incidents such as the incumbents being removed from office due to impeachment, governors passing away shortly after assuming office, or the federal government deciding against placing a province under trusteeship.

| Province | Election Year | Elected Incumbent | Description | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BUENOS AIRES CITY | 2005 | Anibal Ibarra | Removed after impeachment. Previously suspended. | 11/14/2005 |
| BUENOS AIRES CITY | 2007 | Anibal Ibarra | Removed after impeachment. Previously suspended. | 11/14/2005 |
| CATAMARCA | 1991 | Ramón Saadi | Federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship | 4/17/1991 |
| CORRIENTES | 1985 | José Antonio Romero Feris | Elected under Electoral College | 12/10/1983 |
| CORRIENTES | 1987 | José Antonio Romero Feris | Elected under Electoral College | 12/10/1983 |
| CORRIENTES | 1989 | Ricardo Guillermo Leconte | Elected under Electoral College | 12/10/1987 |
| CORRIENTES | 1991 | Ricardo Guillermo Leconte | Elected under Electoral College | 12/10/1987 |
| CORRIENTES | 1993 | Raúl Romero Feris | Federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship | 2/4/1992 |
| CORRIENTES | 2001 | Pedro Braillard Poccard | Federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship | 12/20/1999 |
| SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO | 2005 | Carlos Juárez | Federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship | 4/1/2004 |
| RIO NEGRO | 2013 | Carlos Soria | Governor died 21 days after assuming office | 1/1/2012 |
| RIO NEGRO | 2015 | Carlos Soria | Governor died 21 days after assuming office | 1/1/2012 |
| TIERRA DEL FUEGO | 2013 | Fabiana Ríos | Governor did not present a list for ND | 10/27/2013 |
| TIERRA DEL FUEGO | 2015 | Fabiana Ríos | Governor did not present a list for ND | 10/25/2015 |
| TIERRA DEL FUEGO | 2021 | Gustavo Melella | Challenger party ran in the same list than incumbent party | 11/14/2021 |
| TIERRA DEL FUEGO | 2023 | Gustavo Melella | Challenger party ran in the same list than incumbent party | 10/22/2023 |
| TUCUMAN | 1985 | Fernando Pedro Riera | Elected under Electoral College | 10/30/1983 |
| TUCUMAN | 1987 | Fernando Pedro Riera | Elected under Electoral College | 10/30/1983 |
| TUCUMAN | 1989 | José Domato | Elected under Electoral College | 9/6/1987 |
| TUCUMAN | 1991 | José Domato | Elected under Electoral College, and Federal government ruled out placing a province under trusteeship | 9/6/1987, and 1/18/1991 |

**Table A6:** Elections Excluded from Analysis of Incumbency Advantage of having a primary on ND elections (1985-2023)

# A2 Additional results and robustness checks

**Bi-quadratic regression discontinuity** Table A8 presents the results of the bi-quadratic regression discontinuity analysis. Results replicate Figure 2.

**Alternative threshold for the dependent variable** Table A7 replicates the results of Table 1 from the manuscript, utilizing an alternative coding scheme. Instead of including all primaries, this analysis defines an event as a primary only if the difference between the two main factions is less than 75%. This criterion was used in De Luca, Jones and Tula (2002). The results obtained with this coding are consistent with those presented in the paper.

**Sharp RD estimates adding controls** Table A9 replicates the results reported in Table 1, but including controls for whether the party is *partido justicialista*, whether the party is *unión cívica radical* and whether it is a provincial party.

**CER-optimal bandwidth.** Table A10 replicates the results reported in Table but employing CER-optimal instead of MSE-optimal bandwidths, which may produce different results, as suggested by de Magalhães et al. (2020). As Table A10 indicates, cre-bandwidth estimations are consistent in magnitude and statistical significance with the mse-bandwidth estimations reported in Table 1.

**Second-order polynomials** Table A11 replicates the results reported in Table 1 but employs second-order polynomials instead of a local linear regression.

**Local randomization estimates** Table A13 replicates the results from Table 1 but following a local randomization approach (Cattaneo, Titiunik and Vazquez-Bare 2016) instead of a continuity-based approach.

**Fuzzy Regression Discontinuity** Tables A14 and A15 include the results of the fuzzy RD analysis. Table A14 displays the statistics for the sample, identifying treated observations below the cutoff and untreated observations above the cutoff. Table A15 presents the results of the analysis.

**Sensitivity to bandwidth choice.** Figure A2 shows that the findings reported are not overly sensitive to bandwidth choice. Except in the case of very small bandwidths –with the accompanying reduction in the number of observations–, the estimates remain very similar if I double the bandwidth reported in Table 1, cut it by half, employ the Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012) bandwidth, or increase the bandwidths to up to 50 pp.

**Analysis of Concurrent elections based on the day of the election.** Governors in Argentina have the power to split the gubernatorial election from the National Deputy election. Overall, this separation has occurred in 56.53% of the elections. Figure A3 shows the percentage of times this has happened by election year. Table A16 presents the RD results for all concurrent elections, including two subsamples for same-day concurrent elections and same-year but different-day concurrent elections. Despite the loss of statistical significance and the considerable reduction in the number of observations, both models present similar estimations relative to the grouped category: -30.0 for those same-day concurrent elections and -32.3 for the same-year but different-day elections.

**Alternative Mechanism I: Party Incumbency.** It can be argued that the deterrent effect on national deputies' primaries happens due to a party incumbency advantage (relative to opposition parties) instead of a governor incumbency advantage (relative to the opposition party leader).

To test for the existence of a party incumbency effect, I collected data for *party tenure* in office. *Party tenure* is measured as the number of national deputy elections held with the same party (but not necessarily the same governor) in office. For example, if a party wins the governorship in 1983, it will have a value of 0 for 1985, and 1 for 1987. Then, if the party wins again the governorship in 1987, *party tenure* will have a value of 3 in 1989 and 4 in 1991. I calculated *party tenure* for three parties: the two historical parties (partido justicialista and union civica radical), and the provincial parties. Figure A4 shows the *party tenure* for each election in the dataset. The panel on the left shows the aggregated distribution, while the right panel shows it by party

I further conducted two additional analyses. One for those elections where *party tenure* is equal to or less than 4 (two or fewer governorship periods), and a second analysis for those elections with more than 4 (more than two governor periods with the same party in office). If party incumbency matters, the effect of incumbency should be larger in those elections with *party tenure* $>4$. Table A17 shows the results of the general model (included in Table 1 in the manuscript), as well as the two subsamples based on *party tenure*.

The results of both models show minimal differences in terms of magnitude and statistical significance. While the estimation for the low *party tenure* model is -19.37 (p=0.23), the estimation for high party tenure is -24.65 (p=0.17). The results support the conclusion that the findings presented in the manuscript are a product of the governor's incumbency rather than party incumbency.

**Alternative Mechanism II: Subnational Authoritarian Regime.** Given the variation in the level of subnational democracy in Argentina, the presence of undemocratic regimes could be the factor explaining the use of primaries. More problematic for my argument could be that undemocratic provincial governments are explaining both incumbency and primaries.

To address this issue, I obtained the Subnational Undemocratic Regimes (SUR) Index (Giraudy, 2015), and merged it with my dataset. Lower numbers in the SUR Index indicate less democratic regimes.[1]

In the first step, I examine how many observations are included in each province in the sample I use for the RD analysis. Margins of victory are much more volatile variables than level of democracy, and I might expect some election in those regimes to fall inside the bandwidth. However, what I want to discard is that these regimes are biasing my findings. I proceed by collapsing the data by province. I aimed for the optimal bandwidth to exclude most of the undemocratic regimes and leave the more democratic ones. Thus, I expect to see a positive correlation between the level of democracy (larger values of SUR) and the number of observations within the bandwidth by province.

As Figure A5 shows, the more democratic, on average, a province is, the larger the proportion of observations of this province used for the analysis. This first piece of evidence supports the idea that the results are not being biased by the level of democracy in the province.

Second, I investigate whether the SUR index is associated with using primaries. Model 1 in Table A18 uses a linear regression model where the dependent variable is primary usage. Model 2 adds Incumbent as a predictor, as well as an interaction between Incumbent and SUR. If the SUR index is not associated with the use of primaries, this would add a second piece of evidence that the results are not biased. None of the coefficients for undemocracy is statistically significant. Similar results were obtained when using a logistic model.

Considered together, these two pieces of evidence support the idea that the results presented in the manuscript are not a product of the level of democracy in the province.

**Difference in means for all observations using sample.** Table A19 shows the difference in means of using all observations in the sample. For all cases, the difference is statistically significant. As expected, including all observations and giving them equal weight, regardless of the margin of victory or defeat, would lead to overestimating the incumbency effect. In contrast, the RD approach allows me to isolate the effect of incumbency with respect to factors that lead to this overestimation.

[1] One limitation of this index is that it only has data up to 2009, therefore, seven out of twenty elections in the analysis are not considered.

## A2.1 Alternative threshold for the dependent variable

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -22.24 | (-39.38 — -2.91) | 0.02 | 19.38 | (285 — 284) |
| **concurrent** | -25.67 | (-54.47 — 3.33) | 0.08 | 19.75 | (144 — 143) |
| **midterm** | -15.19 | (-40.87 — 16.6) | 0.41 | 16.55 | (127 — 127) |
| **term-limited** | 4.51 | (-25.13 — 46.78) | 0.56 | 12.51 | (101 — 99) |
| **not term-limited** | -32.22 | (-56.87 — -11.57) | 0.00 | 20.96 | (159 — 160) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -25.40 | (-49.03 — -.66) | 0.04 | 14.32 | (145 — 145) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | -9.45 | (-35.01 — 21.91) | 0.65 | 15.41 | (85 — 84) |

**Table A7:** Alternative Threshold for the Dependent Variable: Sharp (Conventional) RD Estimates with Robust CIs and P-Values Based on the MSE-Optimal Bandwidth Proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The running variable is the *last governor election margin*. This table replicates the results of Table 2, applying an alternative threshold of 75% between the two main factions to qualify as a primary.

## A2.2 Bi-quadratic regression discontinuity

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -27.036 | (-46.561 — -7.511) | 0.007 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **concurrent** | -32.162 | (-59.788 — -4.535) | 0.023 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **midterm** | -22.042 | (-49.838 — 5.753) | 0.12 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **term-limited** | -36.708 | (-60.953 — -12.463) | 0.003 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **not term-limited** | -2.335 | (-39.191 — 34.521) | 0.901 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -33.578 | (-58.643 — -8.514) | 0.009 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | -15.241 | (-47.255 — 16.772) | 0.35 | 84.539 | (452 — 452) |

**Table A8:** Bi-quadratic regression. The running variable is *previous governor election margin*. The estimates are calculated by fitting a separate bi-quadratic regression at both sides of the threshold, using a uniform kernel. The bandwidth includes all observations, and thus the *effective* and *overall* sample sizes are identical. The table presents the estimated plotted in Figure 2.

## A2.3 Estimations adding controls

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -25.52 | (-41.32 — -6.61) | 0.01 | 20.88 | (300 — 300) |
| **concurrent** | -27.29 | (-53.82 — 1.23) | 0.06 | 19.27 | (140 — 140) |
| **midterm** | -24.82 | (-47.55 — 4.41) | 0.10 | 20.15 | (143 — 143) |
| **term-limited** | 10.30 | (-18.22 — 54.91) | 0.33 | 10.84 | (89 — 87) |
| **not term-limited** | -38.89 | (-66.12 — -17.09) | 0.00 | 18.16 | (139 — 141) |
| **pre PASO** | -25.87 | (-47.43 — .83) | 0.06 | 13.00 | (139 — 139) |
| **post PASO** | -14.88 | (-44.05 — 16.41) | 0.37 | 18.62 | (94 — 94) |

**Table A9:** Sharp (conventional) rd estimates, with robust cis and p-values based on the mse-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The covariates used to determine balance are dummy variable for whether the party is the president's party, whether the party is *partido justicialista*, whether the party is *unión cívica radical* and whether it is a provincial party.

## A2.4 Estimations using a cer-optimal bandwidth

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -19.32 | (-38.55 — 2.032) | 0.08 | 13.05 | (210 — 208) |
| **concurrent** | -28.75 | (-56.572 — -2.057) | 0.04 | 17.99 | (133 — 133) |
| **midterm** | -9.30 | (-38.223 — 23.413) | 0.64 | 12.54 | (104 — 103) |
| **term-limited** | 5.79 | (-37.356 — 58.557) | 0.66 | 7.56 | (62 — 28) |
| **not term-limited** | -31.80 | (-56.811 — -8.419) | 0.01 | 16.17 | (129 — 195) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -29.33 | (-53.959 — -2.736) | 0.03 | 9.87 | (114 — 114) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | -5.52 | (-37.989 — 29.617) | 0.81 | 11.97 | (65 — 63) |

**Table A10:** Sharp (conventional) RD estimates, with robust CIs and *p*-values based on the CER-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The running variable is *last governor election margin*. The estimates are calculated by fitting a separate local linear regression at both sides of the threshold using a triangular kernel. The reported number of observations indicate the *effective* sample sizes.

## A2.5 Second-order and third-order polynomial estimations

| dv: primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -17.15 | (-38.6 — 9.61) | 0.24 | 20.51 | (294 — 294) |
| **concurrent** | -27.08 | (-60.51 — 9.78) | 0.16 | 22.38 | (156 — 156) |
| **midterm** | -6.15 | (-38.26 — 33.76) | 0.90 | 20.66 | (148 — 148) |
| **term-limited** | 13.53 | (-26.77 — 63.41) | 0.43 | 19.15 | (133 — 65) |
| **not term-limited** | -33.21 | (-62.85 — -6.15) | 0.02 | 27.72 | (181 — 271) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -24.50 | (-53.43 — 3.66) | 0.09 | 18.63 | (178 — 178) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | -12.54 | (-43.62 — 26.12) | 0.62 | 25.10 | (118 — 118) |

**Table A11:** Sharp (conventional) RD estimates, with robust CIs and *p*-values based on the MSE-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The running variable is *last governor election margin*. The estimates are calculated by fitting a separate second-order polynomial regression at both sides of the threshold, using a triangular kernel. The reported number of observations indicate the *effective* sample sizes.

| dv: primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -13.64 | (-37.53 — 14.27) | 0.38 | 29.14 | (361 — 361) |
| **concurrent** | -27.87 | (-68.77 — 11.72) | 0.16 | 26.75 | (172 — 172) |
| **midterm** | -3.60 | (-39.37 — 37.28) | 0.96 | 31.20 | (182 — 182) |
| **term-limited** | 20.92 | (-34.61 — 78.91) | 0.44 | 21.03 | (144 — 69) |
| **not term-limited** | -34.63 | (-66.83 — -5.53) | 0.02 | 38.07 | (203 — 303) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -26.21 | (-62.19 — 8.11) | 0.13 | 21.40 | (198 — 198) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | 2.33 | (-33.25 — 48.24) | 0.72 | 27.30 | (126 — 126) |

**Table A12:** Sharp (conventional) RD estimates, with robust CIs and *p*-values based on the MSE-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The running variable is *last governor election margin*. The estimates are calculated by fitting a separate third-order polynomial regression at both sides of the threshold, using a triangular kernel. The reported number of observations indicate the *effective* sample sizes.

## A2.6 Local randomization estimates

| | diff. in means | | k-s* | | rank sum | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **dv:primary (0/100)** | **estim.** | **p-val** | **estim** | **p-val** | **estim** | **p-val** | **bwd** | **N- — N+** |
| **full sample** | -27.04 | 0.01 | 0.27 | 0.01 | 2.75 | 0.01 | 2.90 | (53 — 51) |
| **concurrent** | -29.54 | 0.05 | 0.30 | 0.05 | 2.09 | 0.05 | 2.90 | (26 — 25) |
| **midterm** | -11.69 | 0.51 | 0.12 | 0.51 | 0.76 | 0.51 | 2.40 | (22 — 21) |
| **not term-limited** | -41.38 | 0.00 | 0.41 | 0.00 | 3.17 | 0.00 | 2.90 | (29 — 29) |
| **term-limited** | 18.82 | 0.47 | 0.19 | 0.47 | -1.05 | 0.47 | 2.00 | (17 — 15) |
| **pre PASO** | -26.67 | 0.06 | 0.27 | 0.06 | 2.09 | 0.06 | 2.40 | (30 — 30) |
| **post PASO** | -4.76 | 1.00 | 0.05 | 1.00 | 0.30 | 1.00 | 2.90 | (14 — 12) |

**Table A13:** Sharp local randomization RD estimates, calculated following the procedure proposed by Cattaneo, Titiunik and Vazquez-Bare (2016). Exact *p*-values based on 10,000 permutations. The running variable is *previous governor election margin*. The covariates used to determine balance are dummy variable for whether the party is the president's party, whether the party is *partido justicialista*, whether the party is *unión cívica radical* and whether it is a provincial party. The reported number of observations indicates the *effective* sample size. (*) Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic.

## A2.7 Fuzzy Regression Discontinuity

| | Below Cutoff | | | | Above Cutoff | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Runner-up-party | | Incumbent party | | Runner-up party | | Incumbent party | |
| **full sample** | 470 | 98.30% | 8 | 1.70% | 12 | 2.57% | 455 | 97.43% |
| **concurrent** | 231 | 98.72% | 3 | 1.28% | 7 | 3.02% | 225 | 96.98% |
| **midterm** | 231 | 98.88% | 5 | 2.12% | 5 | 2.13% | 230 | 97.87% |
| **term-limited** | 215 | 98.17% | 4 | 1.83% | 9 | 4.17 % | 207 | 95.83% |
| **not term-limited** | 247 | 98.41% | 4 | 1.59% | 3 | 1.20% | 248 | 98.80% |
| **pre PASO** | 274 | 98.56% | 4 | 1.44% | 9 | 3.25% | 268 | 96.75% |
| **post PASO** | 188 | 97.92% | 4 | 2.08% | 3 | 1.58% | 187 | 98.42% |

**Table A14:** Balance of Incumbent and Runner-Up Parties Above and Below the Cutoff

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -18.96 | (-42.33 — 5.61) | 0.13 | 7.88 | (139 — 136) |
| **concurrent** | -29.01 | (-62.7 — 4.97) | 0.09 | 9.06 | (80 — 78) |
| **midterm** | -2.47 | (-43.3 — 41.26) | 0.96 | 6.28 | (54 — 53) |
| **term-limited** | 58.67 | (4.36 — 113.57) | 0.03 | 3.69 | (31 — 29) |
| **not term-limited** | -26.36 | (-52.23 — -17.49) | 0.00 | 84.54 | (247 — 249) |
| **pre p.a.s.o.** | -27.29 | (-65.68 — 0.20) | 0.05 | 17.80 | (180 — 179) |
| **post p.a.s.o.** | -16.29 | (-36.52 — 38.96) | 0.95 | 17.61 | (92 — 92) |

**Table A15:** Fuzzy RD estimates, with robust CIs and *p*-values based on the MSE-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014). The running variable is *last governor election margin*. The models for election years with not **term-limited** incumbents, and fir **post-paso** election years did not have enough variability to compute the bias bandwith and the local polynomial. The reported number of observations indicate the *effective* sample sizes.

## A2.8 Sensitivity analysis

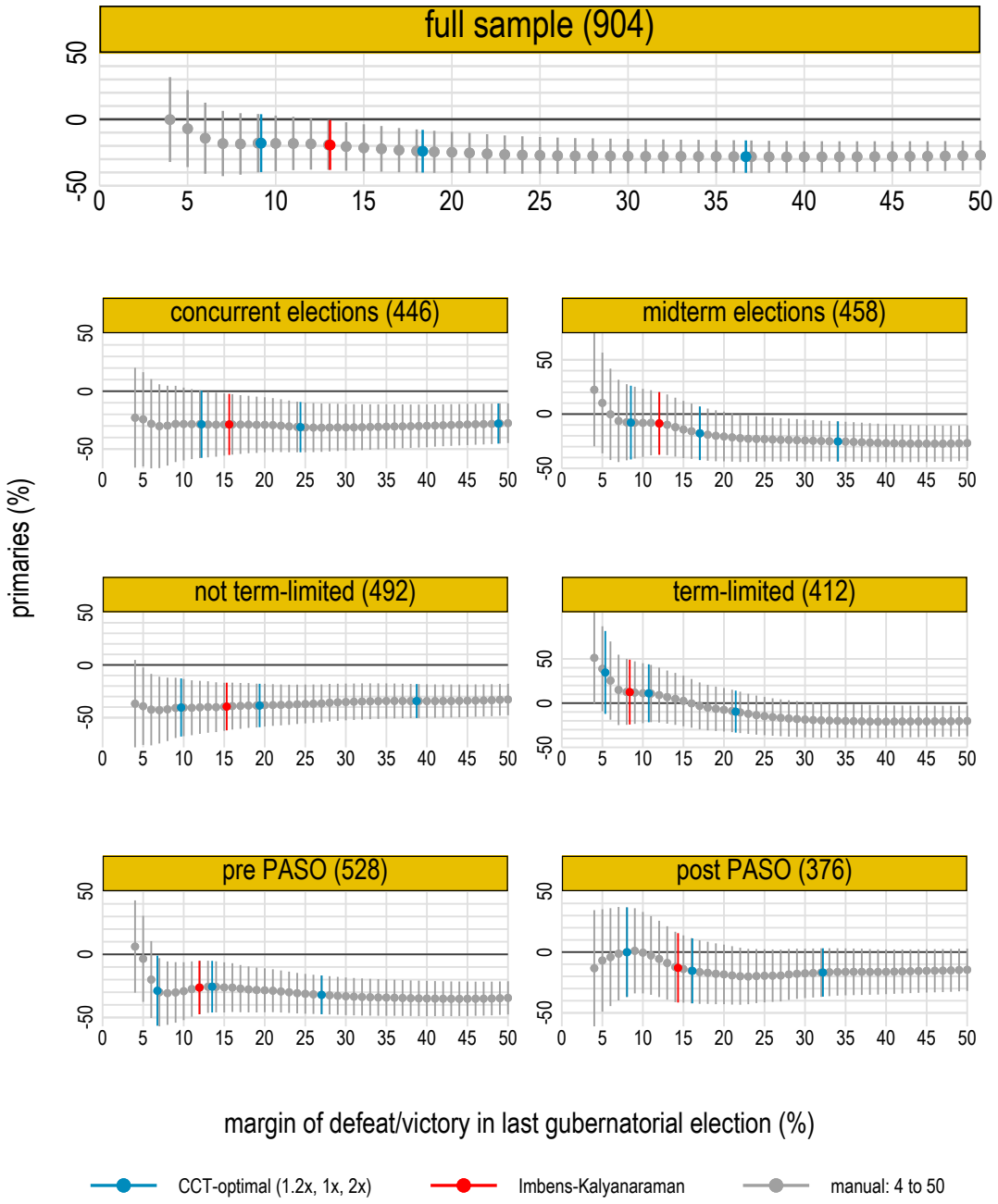
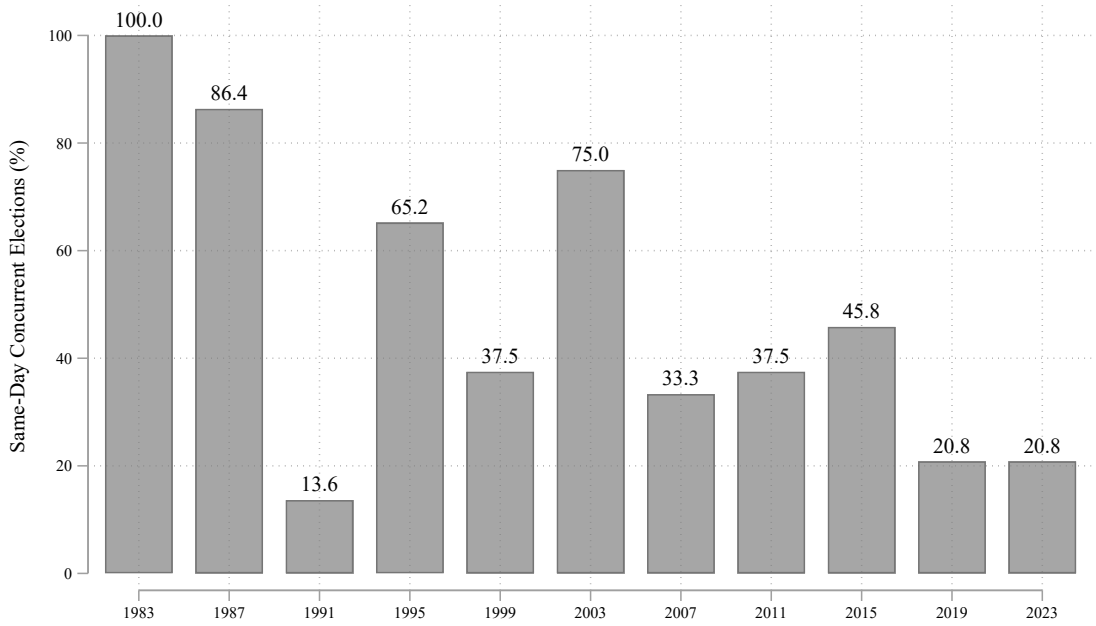



**Figure A2:** Sharp (conventional) rd estimates, with robust 95% cis. The running variable is margin in governor election in $t-1$. To calculate the estimates, I clustered observations by election and fitted a separate local linear regression at both sides of the threshold, using a triangular kernel. The cct-optimal bandwidth is the (mse-optimal) bandwidth reported in Table 2. Grey dots and lines report manual estimates from 4 to 5, cyan present 1x .5x and 2x of the estimate proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2015), and red show the estimate introduced by Imbens and Kalyanaraman (2012).

## A2.9 Analysis of Concurrent elections based on the day of the election




Note: Elections in Corrientes post-1993 and Santiago del Estero post-2005 are grouped with the following election cycle to align with uniform election years.

**Figure A3:** Percentage of same-day concurrent elections by election year

| dv:primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N- — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| all concurrent | -31.04 | (-57.96 — -6.22) | 0.02 | 24.43 | (166 — 166) |
| **concurrent year** | -28.11 | (-62.11 — 3.32) | 0.08 | 17.51 | (79 — 79) |
| **concurrent day** | -35.20 | (-71.69 — 5.48) | 0.09 | 22.91 | (66 — 66) |

**Table A16:** Sharp (conventional) rd estimates, with robust cis and p-values based on the mse-optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik (2014) The running variable is *last governor election margin*. Subsamples include all concurrent elections, same-day concurrent elections, and same-year concurrent elections

## A2.10 Alternative Mechanism I: Party Incumbency

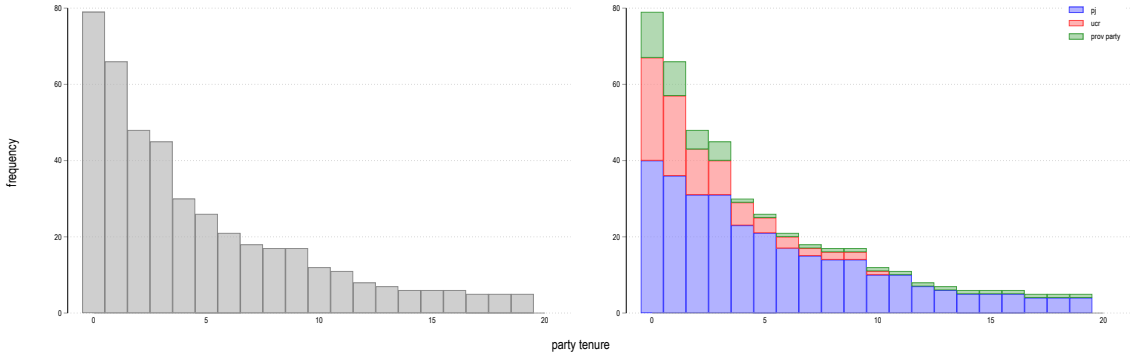



**Figure A4:** Distribution of *party tenure* by election and by party.

| dv: primary (0/100) | estimation | 95% ci | p-value | bandwidth | N — N+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | -24.05 | (-40.91 — -7.19) | 0.02 | 18.39 | (272 — 272) |
| **party tenure <=4** | -19.37 | (-40.33 — 1.59) | 0.23 | 12.46 | (140 — 140) |
| **party tenure >4** | -24.65 | (-63.20 — 13.90) | 0.17 | 17.82 | (90 — 88) |

**Table A17:** Analysis of *party tenure* and its effect on primary elections.

## A2.11 Alternative Mechanism II: Subnational Undemocratic Regimes

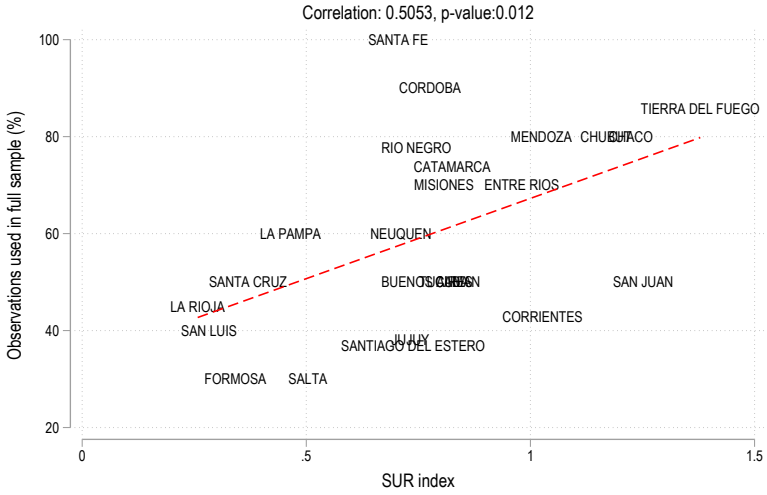



**Figure A5:** Correlation between democracy level and the proportion of observations used for analysis by province.

| Variables | DV: Primaries | | DV: Primaries | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SUR Index** | 1.818 | (5.556) | -2.667 | (7.746) |
| **Incumbent** | | | -24.19** | (9.410) |
| **Incumbent × SUR Index** | | | 8.975 | (10.95) |
| **Constant** | 40.34*** | (4.773) | 52.42*** | (6.652) |
| **Observations** | 551 | | 551 | |

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

**Table A18:** Analysis of the association between the SUR index and the use of primaries.

## A2.12 Difference in Means by Subsample Using all Observations.

| Sample | # Obs | Runner-up | Incumbent | Difference | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **full sample** | 904 | 51.327 | 31.858 | 19.469 | 0.000 |
| **concurrent** | 446 | 48.879 | 29.596 | 19.283 | 0.000 |
| **midterm** | 458 | 53.712 | 34.061 | 19.651 | 0.000 |
| **term-limited** | 412 | 54.589 | 38.049 | 16.541 | 0.001 |
| **not term-limited** | 492 | 48.571 | 26.721 | 21.851 | 0.000 |
| **pre PASO** | 528 | 54.545 | 34.848 | 19.697 | 0.000 |
| **post PASO** | 376 | 46.809 | 27.660 | 19.149 | 0.000 |

**Table A19:** Difference in means by subsample using all observations.