

How political parties select their candidates for public office profoundly affects the types of people who are elected as well as how these people behave in office. This selection process also provides important insights on how parties function internally and on where political power is located within a country. Only a few comparative studies of nomination procedures exist, and none explain why some parties at some points in time select candidates via direct primaries and others do not. The authors analyze an original data set of 610 district-level nomination processes for the biennial Argentine Chamber of Deputies elections held between 1983 and 2001. They conclude that several specific institutional and partisan features have a prominent effect on the probability that a political party will choose its candidates at the ballot box (direct primary) rather than in a smoke-filled back room (elite arrangement).

## BACK ROOMS OR BALLOT BOXES? Candidate Nomination in Argentina

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**C**andidate nomination is one of the most important functions of political parties in a democracy. Many consider it an essential element of any

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definition of a political party (Key, 1956; Sartori, 1976; Schlesinger, 1991). Furthermore, the methods by which candidates are nominated have a powerful effect on the types of people who are elected as well as on how these people behave once in office (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997). Finally, a party's candidate selection process provides a considerable amount of information on how the party functions internally and more generally on where political power is located in a country (Katz & Mair, 1995; Ranney, 1981; Schattschneider, 1942).

Despite the importance of the candidate nomination process, the amount of systematic cross-national work on this topic is minimal: chapters by Epstein (1980), Gallagher (1988), and Ranney (1981), of which only Ranney's examined more than 10 countries. There is, of course, a considerable literature on primaries in the United States (e.g., Crotty & Jackson, 1985; Jewell & Morehouse, 2001; Key, 1956), but its utility for comparative work is limited due to the uniqueness of the U.S. party system (especially regarding candidate nomination) combined with this literature's nearly complete lack of concern with generalizing beyond the U.S. case.<sup>1</sup>

In the past decade, many parties throughout the world have employed primaries to choose their presidential, national legislative, and state/local candidates. Examples are numerous, but they include the selection of the presidential candidate by Costa Rica's Partido de Liberación Nacional (1997), Finland's Social Democratic Party (1999), Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Institucional (1999), and Spain's Partido Socialista Obrero Español (1998) (prime ministerial candidate). Other examples include the selection of national legislative candidates by Honduras' Partido Nacional (1996), Iceland's Independence Party (1995), Israel's Likud Party (1999), and Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (1995). Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of candidates are still chosen by the traditional method of elite arrangement.

This study's goal is twofold. First, we conduct the first empirical study of nomination procedures in Argentina, thereby contributing to a much better understanding of this vital aspect of the Argentine party system than has hitherto existed. Current scholarly understanding of nomination procedures in Argentina is limited, based solely on anecdotal evidence and a few province or primary-election specific case studies.

Second, we explain the differential use of distinct methods by political parties to choose their candidates for public office, in particular the decision to use primaries in place of elite arrangements: that is, to choose candidates at

1. There exists only a small number of relatively comprehensive studies of candidate selection in countries other than the United States (e.g., Gallagher, 1980; Hazan, 1997; Kristjánsson, 1998; Martz, 1999; Obler, 1974; Siavelis, 1998; Wu, 2001; also see selected chapters in Gallagher & Marsh, 1988).

the ballot box instead of in smoke-filled back rooms (rooms that in Argentina are quite literally filled with smoke). In doing so, we take advantage of the considerable institutional and partisan variance provided by Argentina's diverse federal system and nearly two decades-long democratic experience.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of this rich population allows us to make a valuable contribution to the development of a general framework for the study of candidate selection processes in countries where these procedures are not explicitly mandated by constitution or statute (as is the case in the United States), countries that represent an overwhelming majority of the world's democracies.

The article is divided into five sections. First, we provide a brief overview of Argentine political institutions. Second, we discuss the principal Argentine political parties. Third, we outline the methods of candidate selection used in Argentina. Fourth, we offer an explanation for the differential use by district-level parties of primaries versus elite arrangements to choose their candidates for Argentine Chamber of Deputies elections. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings for future comparative study of candidate nomination processes.

### POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN ARGENTINA

Argentina is a federal republic with 23 provinces and a semiautonomous federal capital.<sup>3</sup> It has a presidential form of government with a bicameral legislature and since 1983, has represented one of Latin America's most successful democracies. As this article examines the selection of Chamber of Deputies candidates, we focus on this institution.

The Argentine Chamber of Deputies has 257 (254 prior to 1991) members elected from multimember districts (the 23 provinces and federal capital) for 4-year terms. The deputies are elected from closed party lists using the d'Hondt form of proportional representation (PR). If a deputy dies or resigns, she is replaced by the next person on the party list who has yet to occupy a seat. One half (127 and 130) of the Chamber is renewed every 2 years, with every district renewing one half of its legislators (or the closest equivalent).<sup>4</sup> The 24 provinces receive a number of deputies (5 minimum) proportionate to

2. This approach parallels that of scholars such as Remmer and Wibbels (2000), who demonstrate how "subnational research can be useful for exploring issues of broad significance to the field of comparative politics" (p. 446).

3. Tierra del Fuego achieved provincial status in 1990. It and the federal capital (Capital Federal) are referred to as provinces in the text.

4. In 1983, all 254 deputies were elected simultaneously.

their population (based on the 1980 census). In any given election, district magnitude ranges from 2 to 35, with a median of 3.

Every Argentine province has its own constitution and a directly elected governor and legislature.<sup>5</sup> The provincial governments are very important political entities, controlling a relatively large budget (the provincial governments account for roughly two fifths of public sector expenditures) and exercising influence over vital areas of public policy.

### **POLITICAL PARTIES IN ARGENTINA, 1983-2001**

In the 1983 to 2001 era, Argentine political parties can be divided into four groups. First, there are the two parties that have dominated politics since World War II: the Partido Justicialista (PJ) (Peronists) and the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR) (Radicals).

Second, there are minor parties that achieved a national presence at some point between 1983 and 2001. We examine these parties only during their period of greatest prominence, because with the potential exception of three current minor national parties, all turned out to be “flashes in the pan” and are now, for all intents and purposes, electorally inconsequential. Furthermore, we analyze these parties’ nomination processes only in the provinces where they obtained their greatest electoral success. The parties in this category (with the period they are examined in parentheses) are: Partido Intransigente (PI) (1983-1991), Unión del Centro Democrático (UCeDé) (1983-1995), Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Independencia (MODIN) (1991-1995), Frente Grande/Frente por un País Solidario (FG/FREPASO) (1993-2001), Acción por la República (AR) (1997-2001), and Alternativa por una República de Iguales (ARI) (2001).<sup>6</sup>

Third, Argentina has a large number of parties that either solely or effectively compete in only one province, where they often are the dominant or main opposition party. We include all of the “provincial parties” that held the governorship in their respective province at any time since 1983: Acción Chaqueña (ACh), Cruzada Renovadora (CR), Fuerza Republicana (FR), Movimiento Popular Fuegoño (MPF), Movimiento Popular Neuquino (MPN), Partido Autonomista (PA), Partido Bloquista (PB), Partido Liberal (PL),

5. Governors are elected for 4-year terms. With a few minor exceptions, all gubernatorial elections were held in 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, and 1999.

6. FREPASO is an alliance of parties, the number of which has progressively decreased over time, that always has been heavily dominated by the FG (e.g., the FG has never accounted for less than three fourths of the FREPASO Chamber delegation). Given the FG’s predominance, we include it alone in our analysis.

Partido Nuevo (PN), and the Partido Renovador de Salta (PRS). We also include the most prominent provincial party that failed to win the governorship during this period, the Partido Demócrata de Mendoza (PD).

Fourth, there are a host of minor parties that were not relevant actors in Argentine politics during the period of 1983 to 2001. Our analysis focuses on the candidate selection processes of the first three sets of parties.

#### **PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA**

The PJ was founded by President Juan Perón after he dissolved the organizations that supported his 1946 presidential candidacy.<sup>7</sup> During Perón's first period in government (1946-1955), the PJ lacked a stable organizational structure and was almost completely subservient to its charismatic leader (Luna, 1984; McGuire, 1997). The party functioned as a mere electoral vehicle and was a minor appendage of the broader Justicialista Movement for which Perón considered the Peronist-dominated labor unions to be the "spinal cord." Perón exercised near-absolute control over the selection of the party's candidates for public office.

Historically, the PJ was characterized by a strong collective identity but at the same time by a weak level of formal institutionalization and a general lack of established rules for the selection of leaders and candidates (Levitsky, 1998). Candidate selection ranged from the imposition of the candidacies by Perón to the presentation of "unofficial" Peronist lists that competed with the "official" Peronist list. Since the mid-1980s, however, intraparty competition has become increasingly institutionalized, in part due to the post-1983 modernization efforts of the PJ's "Renovador" faction.<sup>8</sup>

#### **UNIÓN CÍVICA RADICAL**

The UCR traces its origin to 1890, when it emerged as a champion of liberal democracy and an opponent of Argentina's oligarchic regime. With the passage of legislation providing for free and fair elections in 1912, the UCR changed from an essentially protest-oriented movement to a powerful political machine designed to win elections.

7. Shortly after being founded, the party adopted the name Partido Peronista. The name Partido Justicialista began to be used in the 1960s.

8. Internally, the Renovadores demanded reforms to the PJ's candidate selection process (under the rules at the time, the only selection method was indirect via a party assembly), in particular the use of direct primary elections among party members to choose the party's candidates for public office.

During its 100-year existence, the UCR has been characterized by a high level of organizational institutionalization, a strong respect for liberal democratic institutions, a relatively smoothly functioning party apparatus, and a considerable degree of internal competition to select party leaders and candidates for public office. Nevertheless, the existence of strong leaders has not been alien to the UCR, as is evidenced by the extremely prominent role of some of its leaders during the apogee of their power (Manzetti, 1993).

#### **THE PJ AND UCR, 1983-2001**

The PJ and UCR both possess a strong national presence. Each is divided into 24 district-level organizations (corresponding to the 23 provinces and federal capital), with a national party office located in the capital. Both parties have an institutional presence in every municipality in the country.

The PJ and UCR possess a large number of members in every province. For example, in 1983 and 1999, 17% and 16% of Argentine registered voters, respectively, were PJ members, with comparable figures for the UCR, 8% and 11%.<sup>9</sup> No other party accounted for even 1% of registered voters at any time between 1983 and 2001. The PJ and UCR also dominated electoral competition in Argentina between 1983 and 2001. Combined, they won an average of 82% (PJ 47% and UCR 35%) of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 83% (PJ 61% and UCR 22%) of the governorships.

#### **MINOR NATIONAL PARTIES**

Although the Argentine party system has been dominated by the PJ and UCR during this period, other parties with a national focus experienced periodic electoral success (i.e., AR, ARI, FG, MODIN, PI, UCeDé). After obtaining a substantial number of votes in two or three elections (principally in Capital Federal and the province of Buenos Aires), historically these parties have failed to consolidate an important base of support and, eventually, effectively disappeared from the electoral map. This has been the experience of the MODIN, PI, and UCeDé, with the current prognosis for the other three parties ranging from pessimistic to uncertain.

#### **PROVINCIAL PARTIES**

The provincial parties can be divided into three categories: (a) parties that trace their roots to the parties of local notables that dominated politics during

9. All electoral and seat data come from the Dirección Nacional Electoral.

Argentina's oligarchic period (1880-1916) (PA, PD, PL, PN), (b) parties that trace their origins to either the UCR (CR and PB, which split off from the UCR) or PJ (MPN, a neo-Peronist party founded during the period of Peronist proscription), and (c) parties founded by former military officers who governed the province during the military dictatorship that ran from 1976 to 1983 (ACh, FR, PRS) (Mansilla, 1983). The only provincial party included here that does not correspond to one of these categories is the MPF.

Two general characteristics of the provincial parties are their relative lack of organizational structure (small membership, absence of a physical presence at the neighborhood level), particularly compared with the PJ and UCR, and their tendency to be dominated by a single person or small clique, with this dominance facilitated by the party's competing in only one province.

### METHODS OF CANDIDATE SELECTION

In Argentina, the organization and activity of political parties are governed by the 1985 Political Parties Law. This law requires that the parties have a party charter and hold periodic democratic elections for intraparty leadership positions (but not to choose candidates for public office).<sup>10</sup> It also requires that the party charter include dispositions related to the selection method of the party's candidates for public office, the requisites to be a candidate (e.g., party tenure, signatures of party members), and, in the event that primary elections are employed, the rules governing the allocation of candidacies.

Three methods of candidate selection were employed by the political parties between 1983 and 2001: elite arrangement, assembly election, and direct primary election. The first category includes a variety of types of elite arrangement, ranging from the imposition of a list by a provincial-level caudillo (e.g., a powerful governor) to a list that emerged out of a negotiation among provincial party elites. Instances in which this single list was presented to the party electorate in an uncontested primary or in which the list was ratified as the winner, without any contestation, in a party assembly are also categorized as an elite arrangement. The second category encompasses lists that were the product of a formal provincial party assembly in which delegates to the assembly chose among competing lists of candidates.

10. The district-level branches of the respective national parties all have their own charters that, though conforming to the broad outlines of the national party charter, vary considerably in many important respects. The party charters are flexible documents that are relatively easy to modify.

The final category includes only those cases in which two or more lists competed in a direct primary election.<sup>11</sup> Primaries are run by the political parties, not the government. They are held on a Sunday between 2 months and 1 year prior to the general election and involve a considerable amount of mobilization (get out the vote [GOTV]) efforts by the competing intraparty lists.<sup>12</sup> The electorate for these contests is either party members alone or party members and those not affiliated with any party (referred to as independents in Argentina). However, even when independents are allowed to participate, they account for a relatively small share of the primary electorate, rarely surpassing 25%. Furthermore, a large proportion of these independents are relatives or friends of party members who bring them along to vote for the list supported by the party member.

Vital to these GOTV efforts is the support of three groups. First, every list needs the support of its own machine (*aparato*) composed of regional and neighborhood-level leaders (*punteros*) who have established ties (normally fostered and maintained via patronage) with the leader or leaders supporting the list.<sup>13</sup> Second, lists seek the support of *punteros* not initially aligned with any of the competing lists. Third, lists seek the support of other organized groups with a strong ability to mobilize large numbers of people (e.g., labor unions, community organizations, soccer fan clubs/hooligans [*barras bravas*]).

In addition to obtaining the support of the aforementioned groups, to be competitive, a list must be able to carry out the following tasks. First, it must engage in campaign advertising.<sup>14</sup> Second, it must rent a large number of taxis and buses to transport voters to the polls. Third, it must deploy several

11. A variety of allocation formulas are used to distribute the positions on the party's closed list among the competing intraparty lists. These include winner-take-all arrangements in which the list that wins the plurality of the vote in the primary wins all of the positions and semiproportional methods in which the runner-up list (if it surpasses a threshold, normally 25% of the vote) receives every fourth (PJ in large districts) or third (UCR or PJ in small districts) position on the party list. Other district-level parties use the d'Hondt PR formula, often with a 25% threshold.

12. Even when primaries are held, the party will occasionally change the order of candidates on the list that emerges out of the primary process. These changes are, however, virtually always carried out with the consent, albeit at times grudging, of the affected individuals. These cases are coded as primaries, because the relevant point is that the primary took place.

13. *Punteros* are local-level party activists whose work is vital to the survival of the *aparato*. Specific tasks carried out by *punteros* include the creation and maintenance of block-/neighborhood-level party organizations, the recruitment of new members (i.e., registering people as party members), the mobilization of party members to attend meetings and mass rallies, and the distribution of material goods (e.g., food, clothing).

14. The principal advertising methods in primary election campaigns are banners, posters, wall paintings, mass rallies, and "lit drops." Radio and television are rarely employed.

election monitors to every precinct to prevent the list from being the victim of electoral fraud.

Vital to all six of the aforementioned factors is the amount of financial and material resources at the disposal of the list's supporters to maintain their machine during an extended period of time, obtain the support of nonaligned *punteros* and other organized groups, pay for campaign advertising, hire a large number of taxis/buses, and staff the polls with election monitors.

### **CHOOSING BY A PRIMARY INSTEAD OF ELITE ARRANGEMENT**

In the next two sections, we explain the varied usage of these different candidate nomination procedures in Argentina. In doing so, we provide some of the first steps toward developing a systematic understanding of the decision by parties to employ distinct candidate nomination methods in countries where these procedures are not explicitly mandated by constitution or statute. Our analysis population consists of the nomination method employed to select the candidates on the lists presented by the PJ, UCR, minor national parties (during the specified periods) in their bailiwicks, and provincial parties (those previously listed) for the biennial Chamber of Deputies elections held between 1983 and 2001 (610 cases total).<sup>15</sup> A *case* is the method by which a party in a province selected its candidates for the Chamber election. Thus, the method used by the UCR in the province of Entre Ríos to choose its candidates for the 1999 Chamber election is considered a case.

#### **PRIMARY ELECTION**

Our dependent variable (primary election) codes all Chamber of Deputies nomination processes carried out using a direct primary as 1 and codes all nominations that were the product of elite arrangement or a party assembly as 0.<sup>16</sup>

15. Depending on the year, province, and party in question, the nomination process occurred either in the year of or the year prior to the election. We refer to the nomination election year in terms of the year of the relevant general election. Information on our data sources is located in the Appendix.

16. The use of party assemblies is so infrequent (2% of our cases) that they are not treated as a separate category and instead are merged with elite arrangement. Excluding the party assembly cases has no substantive effect on our findings. We also created a dependent variable for which we coded all primaries (23 total) when the difference between the vote percentage of the winning list and that of the runner-up was greater than 75% (i.e., very noncompetitive primaries) as 0 instead of 1. Use of this variable provided results very similar to those presented here. All unreported results discussed in this article are available from the authors.

We hypothesize that there are seven principal factors that explain a party's decision to use a primary or an elite arrangement to choose its candidates for Chamber elections.<sup>17</sup> The theoretical logic behind these factors' hypothesized influence and information on their operationalization is provided below.

#### PROVINCIAL OPPOSITION PARTY

Several authors (Eaton, 2000; Jones, 1997; Spiller & Tommasi, 2000) argue that Argentine governors exert a profound amount of influence over their party at the provincial level. The presence of a governor should reduce the probability of the district-level elite of his party being seriously divided, a division that often results in a primary election being held (Jones, 1997). We therefore expect district-level parties in provinces where the party controls the governorship to be more likely to choose their candidates via elite arrangement than via primaries (Key, 1964).<sup>18</sup>

The governor has important institutional and political resources at his disposal, converting him into the key actor in his party's candidate selection process. First, the governor heads the provincial public administration and thus has the ability to staff it. Jobs in the provincial public sector, known as "contracts" in party vernacular, are distributed on a strict party-based criteria, going to party activists (or their relatives) and rank-and-file party members. These contracts often represent a family's only income source.<sup>19</sup>

Second, the governor exercises considerable influence over public policy (either through his direct control of the provincial budget or his discretionary

17. In unreported analysis, we examined the influence of the level of provincial development. Factors associated with a higher level of development such as a robust middle class, a large independent mass media, and a population less dependent on state employment could lead to increased popular demands for intraparty democracy. To test this hypothesis, we created a development variable, with Argentina's five "advanced" (World Bank, 1990) or "metropolitan" (Gibson, 1997) provinces (Buenos Aires, Capital Federal, Córdoba, Mendoza, Santa Fe) coded 1 and all others coded 0. In a model identical to that used here, this variable had no noteworthy effect on the probability of a primary being held. Furthermore, a log likelihood ratio test indicated that its inclusion did not significantly improve the fit of the model. Given these results, as well as some modest collinearity problems engendered by its presence, the development variable is not included in the main analysis.

18. Although Key's specific focus (on the competitiveness of U.S. primaries) is somewhat distinct due to the different statutory environment in which these primaries were held, his theory regarding competitiveness can easily be extended to the decision to employ a primary or elite arrangement.

19. The mean number of provincial public employees per 1,000 inhabitants in the 24 provinces during the 1983-2001 period was 51, and the mean percentage of provincial revenue accounted for by provincial employee salaries was 72 (Jones, Sanguinetti, & Tommasi, 2001).

control over the execution of national government-funded programs) in the areas of education, health, public safety, public works, social welfare, and transportation. This influence allows him to obtain/maintain the loyalty of his machine through the granting of privileges in the distribution of material/economic subsidies, low interest loans, scholarships, and so forth. It also allows him to construct a relationship with a wide variety of other organized groups (e.g., sports clubs, community improvement associations, mutual aid societies).

Finally, with a few exceptions, the governor (or one of his trusted associates) is president of the provincial branch of the party. This provides him with symbolic, bureaucratic, and material benefits (e.g., the party headquarters, party staff positions, public funds allocated to the party).

The combination of the governor's control over jobs in the provincial public sector and over the provincial budget (along with control of the party) makes him an extremely powerful force in provincial politics. Governors can only be challenged by other politicians within the party who have access to the level of resources necessary to construct and maintain their own machine and to withstand efforts by the governor to co-opt their supporters. Potential challengers with such resources are relatively scarce but would include mayors of large cities, some national senators and deputies, and particularly those members of the former two groups supported by the national party leader, especially if the party leader is also president of the Republic.

Given the governor's powers, he should be able, in many instances, either to impose his candidates, co-opt potential opponents, and/or successfully negotiate an agreement with other party factions. As he is likely to bear a disproportionate share of the costs of any divisive primary, the governor has both the incentive to and the means by which to arrange a negotiated list of candidates. In contrast, when the district-level party is in opposition at the provincial level, it is much less likely to possess an undisputed leader, and moreover, even if it has one, the resources at the disposal of its leader are minimal compared with those of a governor. Opposition parties instead are generally characterized by several high-profile leaders, all of whom possess important but limited machines.

Provincial opposition party is coded 0 if the party controls the governorship and 1 if it does not. We expect a positive relationship to exist between this variable and the probability of a primary election being held.

#### **INCUMBENT GOVERNOR/REELECTION**

The rules regulating gubernatorial reelection vary by province in Argentina and have been the focus of considerable reform efforts during the

post-1983 era. Currently, 18 of the 24 provinces provide for the immediate reelection of the governor. All but 4 of these 18 provinces limit the governor to two consecutive terms. Of the 33 times since 1983 that an incumbent governor (who had been elected) was eligible to seek immediate reelection, in all but four instances the governor ran.<sup>20</sup> In 25 of these 29 elections, the incumbent was victorious. Given this success, these 33 incumbent governors are likely to be among the most influential because not only do they control the provincial administration, but it is also extremely likely that they will continue to control it for the next 4 years. As such, these governors should be able to avoid the recourse of a primary election to a much greater extent than other governors (all of whom are lame ducks) (Jewell & Morehouse, 2001; Key, 1964). We would thus expect a party whose governor was eligible to seek immediate reelection in the upcoming election (coded 1) to have a lower probability of holding a primary to select its Chamber candidates than a party whose governor was not eligible to seek reelection that year or was at the midpoint of his term (both coded 0, as are all cases in which the party did not control the governorship).

#### **NATIONAL GOVERNING PARTY**

When a party's national leader (de facto, if not also de jure) also holds the office of president of the Republic, he has additional resources (e.g., the granting or withholding of financial transfers, subsidies, or public works and the ability to make political appointments) with which to influence candidate selection at the provincial level (Jones, 1997). The national party leader is thus more able (and therefore more likely) to involve himself in the nomination procedures of his party at the provincial level if he is president of the Republic than if he is in the opposition. The addition of this important player to the provincial-level nomination game is likely to increase the probability of using primaries as opposed to elite arrangements, as the president intervenes in support of opponents of the dominant local party faction if it does not support him (Jones, 1997). Instances in which a district-level party was also the party of the president of the Republic (UCR for 1985-1989 and 2001, PJ for 1991-1999) are coded 1, and all other instances are coded 0. We expect a positive relationship between this variable and the probability that a party uses a primary to select its Chamber candidates.

20. Of the four governors who declined to run, two did so primarily due to their advanced age (82 and 77), with the latter's son running in his place, while another ran for president (had he lost he would have presented for reelection).

### CONTAGION

One distinct explanation for the employment of primaries is contagion, particularly contagion stemming from the use of primaries by another party in the province to select its candidates for the upcoming election. If primaries are viewed as a device designed to engender a greater amount of support among the electorate and to portray the party as a transparent and democratic organization, then a party should view a rival's use of primaries as a potential threat and respond in kind by holding a primary.<sup>21</sup> By also holding a primary, a party would eliminate the potential advantage that the use of a primary might provide the opposition (through critiques of the party that employed an elite arrangement as undemocratic) in the general election (Ware, 1996). Cases in which another relevant party in the province used a primary to select its Chamber candidates for that year are coded 1, and all other cases are coded 0. We expect a positive relationship between this variable and the probability that a party holds a primary.

### 1983 ELECTION YEAR

The Argentine military dictatorship (1976-1983) prohibited any form of major party activity and also harassed, imprisoned, and murdered numerous party activists, especially Peronists. Thus, major party activity between 1976 and 1982 was in effect frozen. Party activity began to thaw only in mid-1982. In a time frame of approximately 1 year, the parties had to restore their organizational structure; hold intraparty leadership elections; select candidates for national, provincial, and municipal offices; and campaign for a general election. This limited time period may have encouraged the use of elite arrangements in place of primaries.

We therefore include a variable (1983 election year) for which all nomination processes for the 1983 election are coded 1 and all other processes 0.<sup>22</sup> We expect an inverse relationship between this variable and the probability of holding a primary.

21. Advocates of primaries in Argentina justify their support on the grounds that it is more democratic than traditional methods such as elite arrangement (Tula & De Luca, 1999). A prime example is a series of editorials by the national newspaper *La Nación* between 1996 and 2001 promoting the use of primaries.

22. The percentage of the PJ and UCR provincial-level branches that chose their candidates via primaries for the 10 elections is (PJ/UCR): 1983 (0/13), 1985 (33/52), 1987 (35/65), 1989 (57/65), 1991 (52/83), 1993 (71/71), 1995 (56/54), 1997 (58/71), 1999 (54/38), and 2001 (38/46).

**UCR IN ALIANZA**

One other important temporal variable is related to the formation of the UCR-FREPASO Alianza, which presented a single Chamber list in 14 provinces in 1997, 23 in 1999, and 16 in 2001. The Alianza represented Argentina's first experience in the 1983-2001 period of a programmatic alliance between two relatively equal partners that were also relevant national political actors.

Because the UCR would eventually need to negotiate the list positions with FREPASO, there may have been a tendency to bypass the primary process due to the uncertainties surrounding this final stage (e.g., it was unclear for what positions the candidates in the UCR primary would be competing; a primary might weaken the UCR's bargaining leverage with FREPASO). Although our information on the consequences of these types of major alliances in presidential systems is limited, one effect may be to discourage the use of primaries and encourage the use of elite arrangements to choose legislative candidates.<sup>23</sup> We code all cases of UCR candidate nomination in 1999 and 2001 as 1 and all other cases as 0.<sup>24</sup> We expect an inverse relationship between this variable (UCR in Alianza) and the likelihood of holding a primary to choose candidates.

**PJ, UCR, MINOR NATIONAL PARTY, PROVINCIAL PARTY, MPN-MPF**

We use five binary variables to control for party fixed effects: PJ, UCR, minor national party, provincial party, and MPN-MPF. The first three variables are straightforward, following our previous discussion of the parties. All cases of PJ party nomination processes are coded 1 and all other cases 0.

23. Evidence from Chile's experience with these types of coalitions since 1989 leads to a similar conclusion (Siavelis, 1998).

24. In 1997, the Alianza was formed at the last minute in late July and early August. By this time, all of the UCR provincial branches had completed their candidate nomination processes. In 2001, the UCR and FREPASO ended up presenting a joint list in 16 provinces. However, as was the case in 1999, negotiations between the two parties took place throughout the primary season in all of the provinces. In the end, these negotiations failed in eight provinces primarily due to the UCR's refusal to grant FREPASO a list position that guaranteed it the election of a legislator, which, given FREPASO's marginal vote contribution, was considered an excessive concession by the UCR. Also playing a prominent role in this failure in several provinces was the desire of many FREPASO members to distance themselves from the policies of President Fernando de la Rúa (UCR).

We employ a similar coding scheme for the UCR and minor national party (AR, ARI, FG, MODIN, PI, UCeDé) variables.

Two provincial parties that do not conform to the previous general characterization of these parties (small membership, limited physical presence, dominated by a single person or small clique) are the MPF and MPN.

The MPF's origins are distinct from those of the other parties and have contributed to the party's divided leadership throughout its history (Tula & De Luca, 1999). The MPF was formed from the union of two municipal parties from Tierra del Fuego's two cities: Río Grande and Ushuaia. The conflict between the factions from these two cities has been a constant ever since.

The MPN is distinct from the other provincial parties in that it is the only one that possesses an important mass base and strong neighborhood-level presence. Its average percentage of members during the 1983-1999 period (25%) is more than double that of the next largest provincial party, and in 1999 its members represented 36% of Neuquén's registered voters (the closest other provincial party had 10% of its province's voters as members).

Given the distinctive nature of the MPF and MPN, we create two variables for the provincial parties. The variable MPN-MPF is coded 1 if the party in question was the MPF or MPN and 0 in all other cases. The provincial party variable is coded 1 if the party in question was ACh, CR, FR, PA, PB, PD, PL, PN, or PRS and 0 in all other cases.

Our only strong hypotheses for these party variables are as follows. First, we expect provincial party, due to these parties' distinct organizational and leadership structure, to have an inverse effect on the probability of holding a primary. Second, given its pre-1983 use of primaries and the emphasis it places on the importance of liberal democratic institutions, we expect the UCR to be more likely to hold a primary than the historically "verticalist" and uninstitutionalized PJ.

Summary statistics for all of these variables are provided in Table 1. Of particular note, the dependent variable, primary election, is almost evenly divided between cases in which a primary was employed to select the Chamber candidates and cases in which an elite arrangement or party assembly was used.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2 provides the results of a binary probit analysis of the probability that a district-level party employed a primary (as opposed to an elite

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics*

Variables	Mean	SD
Primary election (1)	0.448	0.498
Provincial opposition party (1)	0.644	0.479
Incumbent governor/reelection (1)	0.054	0.226
National governing party (1)	0.357	0.480
Contagion (1)	0.618	0.486
1983 election year (1)	0.092	0.288
UCR in Alianza (1)	0.079	0.270
Provincial party (1)	0.123	0.329
PJ (1)	0.392	0.489
UCR (1)	0.387	0.487
Minor national party (1)	0.072	0.259
MPN-MPF (1)	0.026	0.160

*Note:* The number of observations is 610. UCR = Unión Cívica Radical; PJ = Partido Justicialista; MPN = Movimiento Popular Neuquino; MPF = Movimiento Popular Feuguino.

Table 2  
*Holding a Primary in Argentina, 1983-2001*

Independent Variables	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	Minimum to Maximum
Provincial opposition party (1)	0.448*	0.137	0.180
Incumbent governor/reelection (1)	-0.668**	0.271	-0.181
National governing party (1)	0.203	0.126	—
Contagion (1)	-0.045	0.124	—
1983 election year (1)	-1.769*	0.282	-0.433
UCR in Alianza (1)	-0.705*	0.215	-0.266
Provincial party (1)	-1.381*	0.241	-0.408
UCR (1)	0.264	0.139	—
Minor national party (1)	-0.566**	0.236	-0.169
MPN-MPF (1)	0.893**	0.353	0.377
Constant	-0.207	0.156	
Log likelihood	-345.695		
LR CHI2 (10)	147.52		
Number of observations	610		
Method—binary probit			

*Note:* The excluded party is the PJ. The minimum-to-maximum values were calculated with the variables set to their mean, except in those instances when it would be logically impossible for the variable to take on its mean value (e.g., when incumbent governor/reelection equals 1, provincial opposition party must equal 0) or when the theoretical comparison requires specific values (e.g., for UCR in Alianza). Clarify (10,000 simulations) was employed to calculate the minimum-to-maximum values (King, Tomz, & Wittenberg, 2000). UCR = Unión Cívica Radical; MPN = Movimiento Popular Neuquino; MPF = Movimiento Popular Feuguino; PJ = Partido Justicialista.

\*Significant at the .05 level for a two-tailed test.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level for a two-tailed test.

arrangement/party assembly) to select its Chamber of Deputies candidates in a given election year between 1983 and 2001.<sup>25</sup>

Whether or not a party is in the opposition at the provincial level clearly influences whether it selects its candidates using a primary or an elite arrangement. Provincial opposition party has a strong positive effect on the likelihood of a primary. Holding other values at their mean or zero (if the mean is a logically impossible value), when a party is in the opposition at the provincial level, it is 18% more likely to hold a primary than is a party that is in government at the provincial level.

We expect the reductive effect of a party's being in government at the provincial level to be even greater when the governor is eligible to present for reelection that year. Incumbent governor/reelection has a significant inverse effect on the probability of holding a primary election. When the incumbent governor is eligible to present for reelection that year, the likelihood of the incumbent governor's party holding a primary is 18% less compared to when the incumbent governor is unable to present for immediate reelection (or when the governor is at the midpoint of his term).<sup>26</sup>

We find no strong support for our hypothesis regarding the influence of national governing party on candidate selection at the provincial level. When a party's national leader (de facto, if not also de jure) is president of the Republic, there is not a significantly greater probability that the party will hold a primary than when the party's national leader is not the president.<sup>27</sup> This finding is robust to a variety of alternative specifications, including when it is assumed to have an effect during only the administration of President Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989), President Carlos Menem (1989-1999), or President Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001).

Contagion does not have a significant effect on the probability of holding a primary. It would appear that whether another party in the province held a primary was not relevant for a party's decision to hold a primary. The use of pri-

25. The time-series cross-sectional nature of our data is a potential cause of concern. Methodologies for dealing with this type of data when using maximum likelihood estimation, particularly in unbalanced settings, are relatively undeveloped. However, several diagnostic exercises, such as including temporal fixed effects variables and running population average and random effects models, suggest that the results presented here are robust.

26. In analysis restricted to gubernatorial election years, when the incumbent is eligible to present for reelection, the probability of the governor's party holding a primary is 30% less than when the incumbent governor is unable to present for immediate reelection (i.e., is a lame duck). This relationship could not be examined in the full population analysis for methodological reasons.

27. Although insignificant, the estimated coefficient does nevertheless suggest some support for the hypothesis, albeit very modest support.

maries may not be driven as much by external pressures (e.g., the perception of the party's internal functioning by the voters vis-à-vis that of other parties) as by intraparty politics.

1983 election year has a significant inverse effect on the probability of holding a primary.<sup>28</sup> A party in 1983 was 43% less likely to choose its candidates using a primary than was a party in any other year.

In 1999 and 2001, the UCR was significantly less likely to hold a primary than in other years. Due in large part to its role in the Alianza, the UCR district-level parties were 27% less likely to choose their candidates via a primary in 1999 and 2001 than they were between 1983 and 1997.

We hypothesized that the provincial parties (provincial party) would be less likely to hold primaries than other parties. We find support for this hypothesis, with the provincial parties 41% less likely to hold a primary than the other parties. Additional analysis (based on the data used in Table 2) indicates the provincial parties are significantly less likely to hold a primary than all of the other parties and groups of parties. The provincial parties' distinct organizational and leadership characteristics appear to make a difference for the method of candidate selection they employ.

As for the relationships between the four other party variables (PJ, UCR, minor national party, MPN-MPF), the only significant differences detected (in additional analysis similar to that above) are that the MPN-MPF are more likely to hold a primary than the PJ, UCR, and minor national parties and that the PJ and UCR are more likely to hold a primary than the minor national parties. In spite of the differences in the popular characterization of the UCR (liberal-democratic, institutionalized) and PJ (verticalist, uninstitutionalized), the UCR is not significantly more likely to hold a primary than the PJ.<sup>29</sup>

28. Log likelihood ratio tests indicate that including temporal variables to control for the other election years does not significantly improve the fit of the model. In all instances, analysis conducted excluding all data from 1983 provided results not substantively different from those presented here.

29. Analysis limited to the PJ and UCR cases provides results extremely similar to those presented here (except, of course, for the other party variables). Note that to correctly calculate the PJ-UCR difference in Table 2, one has to examine the combined (and insignificant) effect of the UCR and UCR in Alianza variables. By way of illustration, in analysis identical to that in Table 2, except that UCR in Alianza is excluded, the  $z$  statistic for the UCR variable is a mere 0.96. Given the FG's media/self-portrayal as a "modern" party (contrasting its approach with the PJ and UCR's "old school" methods), it is also interesting that 90% of the FG nomination processes in this study were elite arrangements.

To better understand the substantive significance of the results in Table 2, we calculated the probability of a primary being held under six scenarios (see Table 3).<sup>30</sup>

1. When a PJ district-level party is in the opposition at the provincial level and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 61%.
2. When a PJ district-level party is in government at the provincial level, it is either the midpoint of the governor's term or the incumbent governor is not eligible to present for reelection that year, and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 43%.
3. When a PJ district-level party is in government at the provincial level, the incumbent governor is eligible to present for reelection that year, and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 21%.
4. When a UCR district-level party is in the opposition at the provincial level and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 69%.
5. When a UCR district-level party is in government at the provincial level, it is either the midpoint of the governor's term or the incumbent governor is not eligible to present for reelection that year, and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 52%.
6. When a UCR district-level party is in government at the provincial level, the incumbent governor is eligible to present for reelection that year, and it is not 1983, the probability of it holding a primary is 27%.

The particular configuration of these partisan and institutional variables has a powerful effect on the probability of holding a primary.<sup>31</sup> For example, in a scenario such as 1, there is a 61% probability that a PJ district-level party will hold a primary, though in scenario 3, there is only a 21% probability. Similarly for the UCR, in scenario 4, the probability of a primary being held is 69%, but in scenario 6, it is only 27%.<sup>32</sup> These are important substantive differences and indicate that factors—such as whether a party is in the opposition at the provincial level or an incumbent governor is eligible to run for reelection—have a salient effect on the likelihood of a district-level party employing a primary election to choose its Chamber candidates.

30. All party variables not explicitly mentioned are set to zero, and the mean values for contagion and national governing party are used (for scenarios 1 to 3, UCR in Alianza is set to zero, and for scenarios 4 to 6, its mean value is used). The probability is the expected value obtained from the analysis in Table 2 using Clarify (King, Tomz, & Wittenberg, 2000).

31. The probabilities for scenarios 4, 5, and 6, if they are limited to the 1985-1997 period (i.e., excluding the Alianza years), are 71%, 54%, and 29%, respectively.

32. Additional analysis (excluded for reasons of space) that examined the gubernatorial and nongubernatorial (i.e., midterm) election years separately provided findings that are substantively similar to those presented here.

Table 3  
*The Probability of a Primary Being Held Under Six Common Scenarios*

Scenario	Party	Provincial Government Status	Is Incumbent Governor Eligible for Reelection?	Probability of a Primary Being Held (%)
1.	PJ	Opposition	No	61
2.	PJ	Government	No	43
3.	PJ	Government	Yes	21
4.	UCR	Opposition	No	69
5.	UCR	Government	No	52
6.	UCR	Government	Yes	27

*Note:* The above scenarios are applicable to any year but 1983. Contagion and national governing party are set at their mean values. The probability is the expected value obtained using Clarify (10,000 simulations) (King, Tomz, & Wittenberg, 2000). PJ = Partido Justicialista; UCR = Unión Cívica Radical.

## CONCLUSION

Our findings underscore the point made elsewhere (Gibson, 1997; Gibson & Calvo, 2000; Jones, 1997; Levitsky, 2001; Spiller & Tommasi, 2000) that the key to understanding the functioning of the Argentine party system during the post-1983 era lies at the provincial level. We highlight the provincial-centric nature of the party system as well as the powerful effect that governors have on their party at the provincial level. Our results also indicate that, with the exception of the MPF and MPN, the internal functioning (especially candidate selection) of the provincial parties is distinct from that of other parties.

Obviously, data from one country have their limitations. Nonetheless, the combination of Argentina's federal form of government, decentralized party system, and relatively extensive history of continuous democracy provides an excellent population with which to begin to better understand candidate nomination procedures. With this caveat in mind, four important general lessons can be drawn from our work regarding a party's decision to choose its candidates via primaries instead of via elite arrangement.

First, parties in the opposition are more likely to hold primaries than parties in government. Second, among parties in government, instances in which the executive cannot stand for immediate reelection are likely to lead to a greater use of primaries than those in which the incumbent can run for reelection. Third, the establishment of stable alliances between two relatively equal partners is likely to reduce the probability that legislative candidates will be chosen via primaries. Fourth, the smaller the size of a party's membership

and extent of its institutional presence and the larger the degree to which it is dominated by a single person or small clique, the lower the probability that it will hold primaries to choose its candidates for public office.

These four conclusions await further empirical testing in other countries, testing that will provide an assessment of the generalizability of the findings derived from the Argentine experience. Fortunately, given the growing popularity of primaries throughout the world, cross-national analysis similar to that presented here is likely to be feasible within the decade.

The future portends an increasing use of primaries, not a decrease, as political parties, facing internal and external demands for intraparty democratization, opt for primaries to choose their candidates for public office. It is thus imperative that we continue to improve the discipline's rather meager understanding of this vital yet understudied process.

## APPENDIX

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There is no public record maintained of the candidate nomination process in Argentina. Among the parties, only the UCR maintains any noteworthy provincial-level records, and even they provide information on only a miniscule fraction of the processes. Our principal sources were thus national and provincial newspapers. Because there is no legislation governing the timing of candidate selection, we consulted the newspapers for a period beginning at least 1 year prior to the general election and ending 1 week after the general election. In all cases, paper editions and, in many instances for the 1998-2001 period, Internet editions of the newspapers were reviewed by at least one of the authors or 1 of our 15 research assistants, page by page in search of information related to the candidate nomination process. In all, approximately 3 million newspaper pages along with numerous other sources were examined. The following is a list of our sources:

1. Government offices: Dirección Nacional Electoral, Ministerio del Interior, República Argentina and Dirección de Información Parlamentaria, Honorable Congreso de la Nación, República Argentina.
2. Party offices: Comité Nacional de la Unión Cívica Radical, Archivo Histórico y Centro de Documentación de la Unión Cívica Radical, Consejo Nacional del Partido Justicialista.
3. National and provincial party charters and party publications.
4. National newspapers: *Ambito Financiero* (1983-2001), *Archivo Periodístico* (1992-1995), *Clarín* (1983-2001), *Crónica* (1983-2001), *La Nación* (1983-2001), *La Razón* (1997-2001), *Página/12* (1987-2001).
5. Provincial newspapers: *El Día* (1983-2001) and *La Nueva Provincia* (1983-1995) (Buenos Aires), *El Ancasti* (2000-2001), *Catamarca Actual* (2001), *La Unión* (1983-1995) (Catamarca), *La Voz del Interior* (1983-2001) (Córdoba), *El Libertador* (2001) and *El Litoral* (1983-1995) (Corrientes), *El Norte* (1990-2001), *El Territorio* (1983-1989) and

*La Voz del Chaco* (2001) (Chaco), *El Chubut* (1983-2001) and *Crónica de Comodoro Rivadavia* (2001) (Chubut), *El Diario* (1983-2001) (Entre Ríos), *El Comercial* (2000-2001), *La Mañana* (1984-1995) and *Opinión Ciudadana* (2001) (Formosa), *Pregón* (1983-2001) (Jujuy), *La Arena* (1983-2001) and *La Reforma* (2001) (La Pampa), *El Independiente* (1983-1995, 1999-2001) (La Rioja), *Los Andes* (1983-2001) (Mendoza), *El Territorio* (1983-2001) (Misiones), *El Diario* (1988-1999) (Neuquén), *Río Negro* (1983-2001) (Río Negro), *El Tribuno* (1983-2001) (Salta), *Diario de Cuyo* (1983-1995) and *Diario El Zonda* (2000-2001) (San Juan), *El Diario de la República* (1985-1995, 2000-2001) (San Luis), *La Opinión Austral* (1984-1997, 2001) and *Tiempo Sur* (1998-2001) (Santa Cruz), *La Capital* (1983-2001) and *El Litoral* (1983-1995, 1999-2001) (Santa Fe), *El Liberal* (1983-1995, 2000-2001) and *Nuevo Diario* (1991-1994) (Santiago del Estero), *El Diario del Fin del Mundo* (1995, 1999-2001) and *El Sureño* (1991-2001) (Tierra del Fuego), *La Gaceta* (1983-2001) (Tucumán).

6. Interviews with more than 100 party leaders and members.

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