

Coattail effects in Argentine elections: Legislative and Gubernatorial coattail

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Abstract

A relevant question in the study federal politics is whether sub-national outcomes influence national outcomes. One important channel of influence is the possibility of a coattail effect in the electoral dimension. In this paper we analyze the specific case of Argentine election. We focus on the type of reverse coattail effect that runs from gubernatorial (state-wide) election to presidential (nation-wide) elections.

1 Background and motivation

In federal countries, local politics have been shown to influence national politics through several channels [[[Jones, 1997](#)],[[Cabrera, 1998](#)],[[Oliveros,](#)], [[?](#)]]. One of the channels which has received less attention in the literature is the study of how local electoral politics impact on national politics in federal regimes [[[Ames, 1994](#)], [[Cabrera, 1998](#)]]. In this paper we address this issue for the Argentine case during 2003-2011. Since the national executive was held by the same party throughout the whole period, it seems sensible to examine whether local politics had any influence on national politics.

In multi-tiered systems voters elect representatives at different levels of government and these elections may be concurrent or separate. If both governors and the president are elected concurrently, candidates to different offices from the same party may enjoy between-level electoral spillovers. This is known as the coattail effect in the literature. This effect may be also present in separate elections although the sequencing of elections becomes relevant in this case. This is particularly true if we look at whether party votes for state and nation representatives in two separate elections are related. Several authors have studied the existence and magnitude of

these effects indifferent countries and settings [[Calvert and Ferejohn, 1983], [Ferejohn and Calvert, 1984], [Ames, 1994], [Samuels, 2000], [Hogan, 2005], [Oliveros,], [Magar, 2012], [Meredith, 2013]]

Coattail effects usually arise due to the effect that a strong candidate identity has on the electoral performance of a lesser known candidate. These effects may also be embedded in the institutional design –i.e ballot designs that include a straight party option may result in larger coattail effects since voters are induced to select all candidates from the same party¹. In separate elections, however, while the identity of a candidate may still traction votes for the lesser known candidates, there are other factors that are behind this electoral spillovers. [Meredith, 2013] suggests that coattail effects may also arise from top-ballot candidates mobilizing a party’s supporters.

Early studies on coattail effects did not take into account some of the long- and short-term determinants of the vote share of different offices. In recent years this has been amended.

EXPAND ON LITERATURE and MOTIVATION (Marcelo, Lucas) HIGHLIGHT MAIN MOTIVATION FOR ARGENTINE CASE - PERHAPS MENTION LOCAL POLITICAL/ELECTORAL MACHINES; DURING KIRCHNERISMO, AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ELECTORAL POWER AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL STEMMED FROM MUNICIPALITIES/PROVINCES

1.1 Partisan alignment of governors

In the context of multi-tiered politics, it is common to refer to partisan (political) alignment when two governments from different tiers belong to the same political party. Partisan alignment may have effects on the distribution of transfers [[Larcinese et al., 2006], [Solé-Ollé and Sorribas-Navarro, 2008], [Lema and Streb, 2013], [Migueis, 2013]], legislative coalitions and the existence of coattail effects. Due to the characteristics of the Argentine party system it is not always possible to measure partisan alignment strictly², which makes comparing vote shares of parties across different elections difficult and not without arbitrarities. One possible workaround is to compare vote shares on the basis of a dichotomous partisan alignment measure, *core*³.

According with this measure, the number of provinces in the coalition aligned with the national government increased from 10 in 2003, to 15 in 2007

¹One obvious reason is to avoid making mistakes resulting in a void or null vote.

²Most of the time this is due to the party not competing in a lower-level election or running on a different list (coalition). This problem aggravated after the political representation crisis that ensued the economic meltdown in 2001.

³For details on the data sources and the methodology used in the construction of this measure see Appendix.

and to 18 in 2011⁴. Although our paper is not concerned with the study of the dynamics of partisan alignment between governors and the ruling party at the federal level, it is relevant to note that governors' alignment with the national government is not merely a matter of party politics but also an issue of political survival. Due to deficiencies with the functioning of the Argentine fiscal federalism, the share of automatic transfers received by the province level has decreased steadily thereby increasing disciplining of governors by trading their allegiance and votes for financial resources.

⁴Several provinces including Buenos Aires, Chubut, Entre Ros, Formosa, Jujuy, San Juan, Santa Cruz, Santiago del Estero and Tucumán were part of the national coalition from 2003 while others –Córdoba, Catamarca, Chaco, La Pampa, La Rioja, Mendoza, Misiones, Río Negro, Salta and Santa Fe– were during certain periods aligned with the national government. The only provinces that did not belong to the national coalition throughout the whole period were Corrientes, Neuquén, San Luis, Santa Fe.

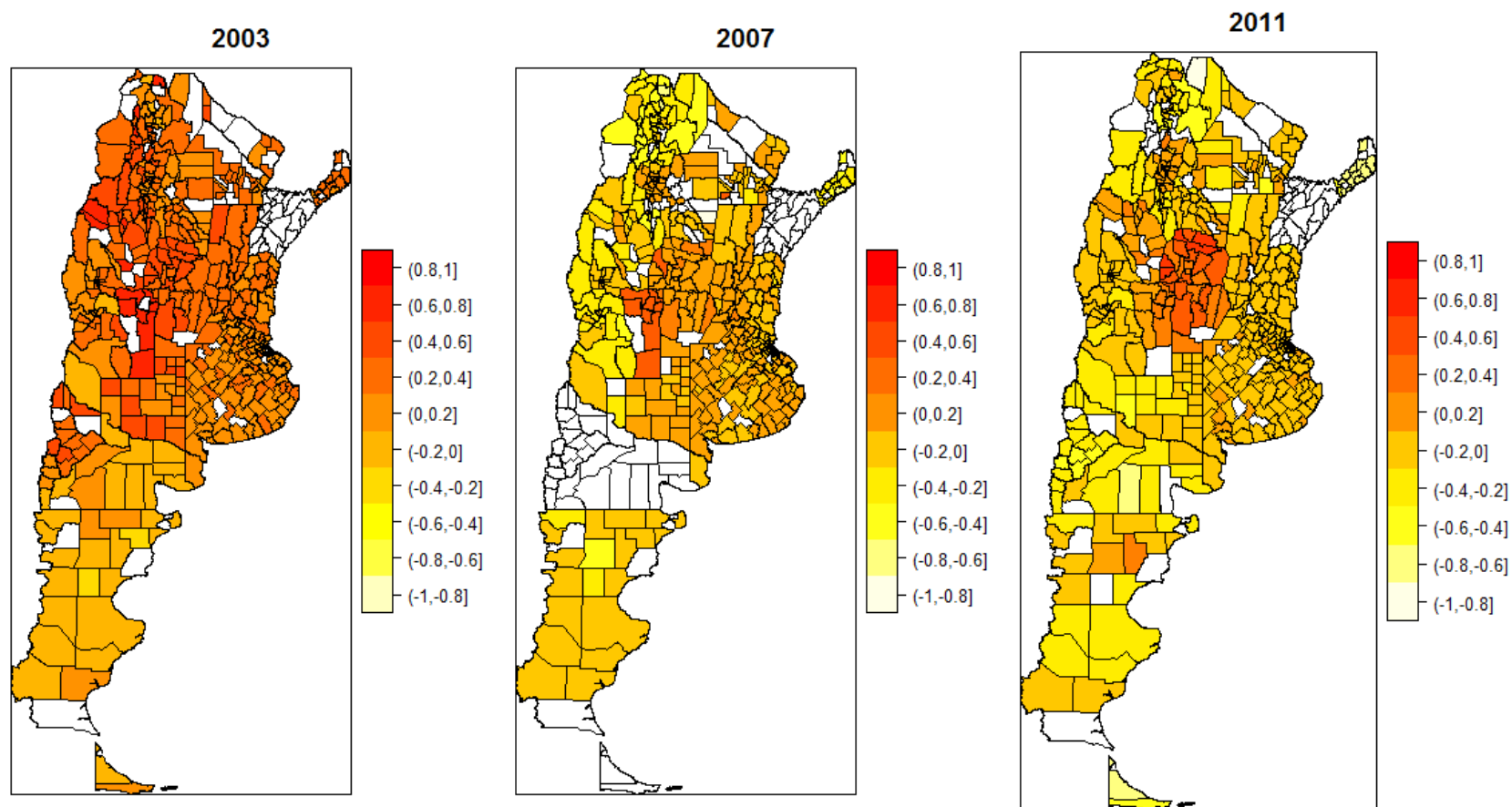


Figure 1: Difference between vote shares of winning governors and President (FPV) by department

2 Endogenous election date

[[[RANDOM THOUGHTS ONLY]]]

Electoral legislation affords a certain deal of autonomy to governors when it comes to setting the provincial election date. According to National Law 15262, provinces may decide whether to set their local election dates concurring with the national election date⁵. Provinces which decide to do so must inform the National electoral body. If provinces choose to run their election concurrently, they benefit from delegating part of the electoral management. On the other hand, political reasons may create incentives for setting a separate date.

RAW, STILL WORKING ON IT

There are two politicians, upper-level and lower-level. We assume that the utility of both politicians are monotonically increasing and linear in the number of votes. Timing: 1) upper level politician sets date; 2) lower level politician observes date and sets own date; 3) elections are held; 4) utilities are realized.

$$U^{ul} = f(v_i^{ul}) \quad U^l = f(v_i^l; d_i)$$

where d_i is distance to the national election date.

$$U^l = -\alpha d_i \quad \text{where } d_i = t_i^l - t_i^{ul}$$

The probability of winning the election for the lower-level politician is $p_i^l = \frac{1}{1+d_i}$ and $d_i = \log(v_i^l - v_i^{ul})$

If $d_i^l = d_i^{ul}$ then the lower level politician incurs no disutility. If $d_i^l \neq d_i^{ul}$, then she incurs a cost –this cost is monotonically increasing the further she sets the lower-level election date relative to the upper-level date.

3 Methodology and data

Our data come from several sources. National electoral data at the department-level⁶ were gathered from official sources. Gubernatorial electoral data were collected from the Atlas Electoral de Andy Tow as were the election date variables. Economic and structural controls at the department- and province-level come from Census data and other official statistics.

⁵This also applies to provinces which have constitutional provisions that are not consistent with this National Law in the sense that they may still set a concurrent date.

⁶Departments are the geographic and administrative divisions in which provinces are divided. They have little political relevance since they are not elective and therefore do not represent a constituency. One may think them as a rough equivalent to counties in the United States.

Our main dependent variable is the FPV Presidential vote share. There are two grouping variables: *department*, *province* and we have a time dimension. The nature of our data is suitable for the use of multi-level models to take into account the nested and hierarchical features of the data⁷. Ignoring the nested structure of the data has consequences in terms of underestimating the errors and failing to identify department- and province-level effects.

There are three possible approaches to modelling the model parameters. Two simple alternatives are *complete pooling* and *no pooling*. Complete pooling ignores differences between groups and no pooling. The third alternative is using some form of *partial pooling* which is achieved by using so-called *multilevel modelling*. One of the benefits of using multilevel modeling is that it allows us to account for differences between higher-aggregation levels which are not taken into account in the predictor variables.

Our specification is as follows:

$$shpre_{i,t} = shgob_{i,t} + core_{i,t} + encp_{i,t} + days_{i,t} + unemp_{i,t} + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

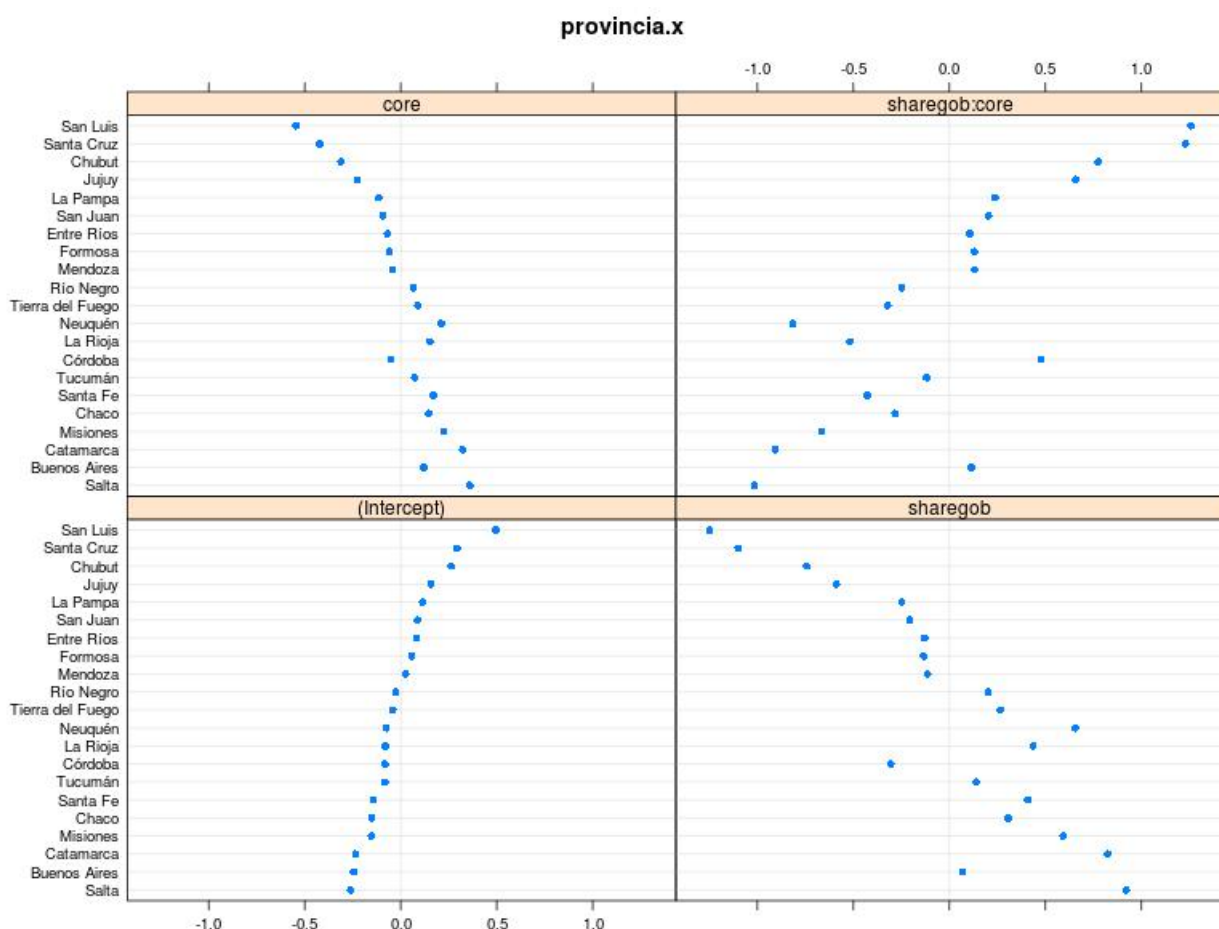
where *shpre* is the vote share of the president’s incumbent party in district *i* and election *t*; *shgob* is the vote share of the state-level governor’s incumbent party in district *i* and election *t*; *core* is a dummy representing whether the governor’s incumbent party is part of the core coalition; *encp* measures the effective number of competing parties (ENCP) in district *i* and election *t*; “PREZsvs” is a variable measuring the structural vote share for the President’s incumbent party in district *i* and is calculated as the mean vote share from years 2003 and 2007; and *days* is the number of days between gubernatorial and presidential election. The main variable of interest is the sign of the interaction term *shgob*core*, this is, the vote the coefficient associated with the vote share for governors aligned with the President’s incumbent party. If there is any sort of coattail effect, this coefficient should be positive and significant.

The gubernatorial election in each province can take place before, on the same date or after the presidential election. This is relevant since we are interested in testing whether there are

The equation considers measures of short-term and long-term determinants of the Presidential vote share.

Note that since the presidential election can take place before, on the same day or after the gubernatorial election, in order to test for coattail effects we

⁷We will also perform a fully-pooled regression on different-level covariates assuming they are all department specific.



need to look at the subset of gubernatorial elections that take place either before or on the same date as the presidential election.

***** TABLE USING ONLY SUBSAMPLE WHERE GUV ELECTION IS BEFORE OR SAME DAY AS PREZ ELECTION *****

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Table 1: Gubernational Coattails

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Presidential Vote Share					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
sharegob	−1.74*** (0.06)	−1.06*** (0.08)	−1.16*** (0.10)	−0.83*** (0.09)	−0.83*** (0.09)	−0.85*** (0.08)
core	−0.67*** (0.04)	−0.32*** (0.04)	−0.36*** (0.05)	−0.25*** (0.04)	−0.10** (0.05)	−0.21*** (0.05)
encpprez	−0.19*** (0.004)	−0.19*** (0.01)	−0.18*** (0.01)	−0.20*** (0.01)	−0.19*** (0.01)	−0.17*** (0.01)
log(days)		0.002 (0.01)	−0.003 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.003 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
PREZ_pre			0.02 (0.03)	−0.05** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.24*** (0.03)
pubemp				0.001*** (0.0003)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.0005)
desocupacion				−0.40 (0.45)	−0.24 (0.44)	0.28 (0.40)
icg_gov						−0.65*** (0.08)
sharegob:core	1.83*** (0.07)	1.07*** (0.08)	1.17*** (0.10)	0.83*** (0.09)	0.84*** (0.09)	0.86*** (0.08)
core:pubemp					−0.003*** (0.001)	−0.002*** (0.001)
Constant	1.69*** (0.04)	1.37*** (0.06)	1.39*** (0.07)	1.34*** (0.06)	1.16*** (0.07)	2.60*** (0.18)
Observations	501	374	357	346	346	346
R ²	0.87	0.78	0.80	0.86	0.87	0.89
Adjusted R ²	0.87	0.78	0.79	0.85	0.86	0.89
Residual Std. Error	0.06	0.10	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.07
F Statistic	849.5***	262.0***	226.5***	248.8***	240.8***	271.6***

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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