

Does Electoral Accountability Make a Difference? Direct Elections, Career Ambition, and Legislative Performance in the Argentine Senate

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Studies analyzing the American Congress demonstrate that senators' attention towards voters substantially increased after the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which replaced their indirect appointment with direct election. Even though this finding seems useful for theoretical generalizations, expectations become unclear as concerns about career perspectives differ. Should politicians with nonstatic ambition shift their attention towards voters if they do not expect reelection? Making use of a quasi-experimental setting, I analyze the impact of the shift from indirect to direct election to select the members of the Argentine Senate. I develop an argument for why, in spite of the lack of systematic pursuit of reelection, elected senators have incentives to be more oriented towards voters. Through the analysis of about 55,000 bills, I evaluate senatorial behavior under both sources of legitimacy. The findings support the idea that audience costs make a difference in behavior, regardless of short-term career expectations.

“Politicians promise it’s going to be a Senate with fewer non-working employees and less committees; a Senate that will end the routine of working without publicity and under latent suspicions of corruption. Now, finally, senators’ legitimacy, designated by the popular vote, will force them to be closer to the people. A contract of trust between the society and the Upper House will be signed, (. . .) a body built up by agreements among party elites and divorced from citizens’ interests, until today” —*La Nación* (9/30/2001, date of the first direct election).¹

“In every crisis lies the seed of opportunity,” states the popular phrase, which seemed to mirror the expectations of the Argentine public opinion in late 2001, when a new mechanism for the choice of Federal senators was ready to be enacted. In an environment of explicit discredit of ongoing legislators, the direct election of the members of the Upper House provided an outstanding opportunity to improve the quality of political representation. The underlying causes of that hope made sense: presuming that politicians’ and citizens’ preferences tend to

differ, if delegates appointed by politicians tended to be responsive to those leaders, direct election by citizens should bring senators closer to people’s priorities. Beyond normative discussions about the superiority of popular legitimacy over indirect mechanisms, this rational yet unproved reasoning opens a space for scientific inquiries. Specifically, should it be expected that senators change their political and legislative behavior as a product of the new agency? In other words, should their activities be more citizen-oriented, rather than reflect party leaders’ interests?

These questions have already been formulated (and answered) by scholars analyzing a similar transition in another presidential system with a federal structure, where politics were controlled by party caucuses that were perceived as corrupt. This depiction illustrates the political atmosphere in which the 17th Amendment to the American Constitution was adopted in late nineteenth century. During the Progressive Era, U.S. politicians decided to take several measures to improve the legitimacy of the political system. One of these decisions was the adoption of

¹An online appendix with supplementary material for this article is available at <http://journals.cambridge.org/jop>. Data and supporting materials necessary to reproduce the numerical results will be made available at www.jpmicozzi.net no later than January 2013.

direct elections for the Senate. In keeping with the general findings from the literature, multiple empirical indicators of legislative performance have changed after the constitutional amendment, as a product of the rational adaptation of senators to the new political environment. However, an underlying axiom of the causal mechanism deserves particular attention: U.S. senators have been interested in reelection before and after direct elections. Thus, these elected members strategically altered their behavior to fulfill a conservative goal, namely, the desire of maintaining their current position.

Divergences over the expected implications of this theory emerge once the reelection goal is relaxed. If legislative posts were just another chain in the link of political careers, and politicians were more interested in pursuing other positions from their congressional seat, they might orient their activity towards different actors like other voters, interest groups, the president, a governor, party bosses, or any other political actor or institution. As an implication, it is unclear whether elected senators should mechanically adapt their legislative behavior and follow general voters' preferences and interests. Given this varied structure of incentives, it is necessary to think more in depth about the consequences of the direct election in such an environment. I assess in this piece, whether the introduction of direct elections in 2001, combined with multilevel ambition, made a difference in the activities of Argentine senators in the 1983–2007 period. Through the analysis of over 55,000 bills and the creation of a map of political careers, I analyze to what extent mandates' sources and career decisions affect the drafting process of bills. This scenario provides an almost unique opportunity to evaluate changes in legislative behavior as a function of an institutional reform and offers a quasi-experimental setting to test the validity of conventional wisdom in the field of legislative politics.

Representation, Ambition, and Legislator Behavior in Changing Environments

Elections are a necessary and fundamental component of democratic regimes (Dahl 1971; Schumpeter 1942). Through this mechanism, voters select other citizens to different public positions across time and have the possibility of regularly evaluating their representatives. One of the most utilized frameworks to assess the relationship between those who represent and those who

are represented are principal-agent models (Ferejohn 1999; Lupia and McCubbins 2000). Following this theory, the agency relationship between representatives and their constituents should make the former sensitive to the latter's preferences. The argument is straightforward: as the future is ultimately in the principals' hands, they have the power of rewarding or punishing past behavior whenever the agent faces a new electoral contest. However, such reasoning relies heavily on considerations of further expectations. If a politician expects to maintain her current office (static ambition), she should behave in a manner that enhances her reputation vis-à-vis current (and therefore prospective) constituents. However, if future goals or targets vary, the agency relationship might not only change, but even disappear.

Changes in revealed behavior have been associated in the literature with several political and institutional constraints. In particular, scholars have emphasized how varying patterns of ambition in different contexts (Schlesinger 1966; Squire 1988) tend to produce dissimilar behavioral consequences (Francis and Kenny 1996; Herrick and Moore 1993; Hibbing 1986; Maestas 2000). As widely acknowledged, in an environment where static ambition is the norm and a personal vote has been developed, U.S. congressmen tend to deliver goods to their constituents as means of guaranteeing successive reelections across time (Mayhew 1974). Similar patterns of behavior have been found in the performance of members of British Parliament (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1981). In a related vein, most legislators in European democracies are systematically interested in reelection but remain responsive to the party leadership in order to secure a spot on the ballot in the next poll and, if possible, get a future ministerial position. However, if this reelection assumption is relaxed, agency mechanisms and behavioral implications can change. Taylor (1992) and Carey (1996) show that Costa Rican legislators tend to be more responsive to their party's presidential candidate as a means of getting cabinet appointments in the next term. Ames (2000) and Samuels (2003) demonstrate that Brazilian legislators tend to seek subnational executive positions and orient their legislative activities to their respective territories. Micozzi (2009) shows that deputies tend to pursue gubernatorial and mayoral candidacies in Argentina and subsequently draft local bills to improve their prospective chances. In a different sense, Remington (2008) describes how Russian deputies with discrete ambition act on behalf of territorially concentrated interested groups in exchange for substantial financial rewards. From other standpoints, several pieces have shown how behavior can be altered under

dissimilar political incentives and circumstances. The “last period problem” was studied by several authors (Herrick, Moore, and Hibbing 1994; Lott 1987; Zupan 1990), and it was demonstrated that deviations from party mandates tend to increase when representatives do not expect to be reelected. Others (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2002; Nokken and Poole 2004) show that party switching has a noteworthy impact on legislators’ voting decisions on the floor. In sum, as stated, depending on rules, environments, and career expectations, legislators’ performance in office is likely to vary. Thus, extending the argument, changes in the principals should also prompt alterations in explicit behavior.

The Seventeenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

One of the major contemporary lines of discussion on legislative behavior was triggered by a historical change that altered not only a set of institutional rules but also the source of legitimacy of a particular office: the 17th amendment of U.S. Constitution. As a product of many pressures prompted in the Progressive Era, the United States substituted the original indirect mechanism for a popular election of the members of the Federal Senate after 1913. Given that senators used to be mostly² appointed by state Congressmen, it was argued that their representational linkages were only indirectly related to voters and fostered accountability to the members of their local legislatures. Therefore, senators should have originally behaved having the median legislator of their state House as a target of their actions. After the mentioned amendment, they should have started to care about the state median voter’s preferences.

However, this behavioral implication is clear and straightforward just under patterns of static ambition: namely, for senators who expect to remain senators. The specialized literature (Schiller 1995) states that the pursuit of reelection was, in fact, the norm for the Senate even before the reform. Empirical verification of the expected changes initially raised several controversies, but mostly went on the same direction. While some scholars find no effect after the amendment (Riker 1955; Rogers 1926), many others identify clear differences. Crook and Hibbing (1997) discover that “new” senators tend to have more experience in

government than their previous colleagues. Lapinski (2004) points out that the rate of retention of committee chairmanship became notably higher after the reform. Bernhard and Sala (2006) uncover that roll-call behavior turned out to be more moderate, as a function of a more comprised policy space and that the rate of reelection seekers considerably increased as well. In a related vein, Patty (2008) links direct election and predictability of senators’ voting records, something disregarded by Wawro and Schickler (2006). Gailmard and Jenkins (2009) find that electoral accountability made senators more responsible to state electorates. Schiller (1995) highlights how specific indicators of public performance have been altered after direct election—senators have had varying patterns of bill sponsorship as a function of seniority, proximity of reelection, size of state economy, committee membership, and committee positions. She also finds a strong correlation between electoral legitimacy and sponsorship of private bills (2006). These findings go in the same direction of Meinke’s (2008) argument that direct election intensified existing electoral incentives, which also increased sponsorship and participation among elected senators. In sum, most scholars expected and found substantive, measurable differences among elected and nonelected senators in the United States.

However, a few contributions have tried to analyze legislative performance in the American Senate when current officers have had other career goals. Van der Slik and Pernacciaro state that “senators with progressive ambition tend to accommodate their voting behavior to the constituency whose votes they need to win higher office” (1979, 221), and Treul (2008) shows that senators with presidential ambition tend to deviate more from their party’s votes. Beyond these studies, no other major related findings can be recognized in the literature, and questions on the empirical behavior of senators with multiple career ambitions still remain open. This unsolved puzzle in American politics leaves space for a higher-level question: should the adoption of elections affect legislative behavior in settings where current delegates expect a different position in the near future? This uncertain statement raises two sets of inquiries. First, do senators facing a popular or an indirect legitimacy show systematic variation in their observed patterns of behavior? Second, do specific career goals predict several regular attitudes and strategies in the legislative arena?

In order to evaluate these questions, I take advantage of a unique opportunity. Specifically, I analyze the quasi-experiment in which, after about a century and a half of indirect legitimacy, Argentine senators

²There was variation in the rules used to appoint federal senators. See Schiller (2006).

began to be popularly elected in 2001. This intervention is complemented with the fact that reelection rates for every federal legislative position have historically been so low that the assumption of static ambition does not hold.³ Therefore, a detailed analysis of variation in legislative behavior in the Argentine Senate before and after direct elections suggests an interesting contribution to the literature.

The Argentine Senate: Winds of Change?

In a seminal book about the political consequences of the foundational institutions, Botana (1977) highlights that federalism and the existence of a Senate were necessary conditions for the formation of Argentina as a unified nation. In a context of multiple territorially concentrated foci of power, the Senate not only fulfilled the role of imposing checks and balances and mediating the relationship between *underqualified* people and decision-making spheres, it was also the safeguard of provincial leaders' influence over national politics. This informal contract was enforced through an *iron triangle* by which governors affected the composition of state legislatures and therefore controlled whom they nominated for the federal Senate. That practice also ensured that governors had a guaranteed seat in the upper house after leaving office.⁴ Meanwhile, a relative or a loyal ally would safeguard the provincial executive position until the leader could retake control of the gubernatorial chair. Far from being just evidence of nepotism, this mechanism suggests that the composition of the Senate likely reflected these patterns of delegation and control. In fact, Botana points out that 43% of Senate members between 1880 and 1916 had been governors, while 3% had occupied the presidency. During their tenure, former governors would "watch over their province's affairs from that privileged position" (1977, 111).

Nonetheless, these patterns of office movements exceeded the so-called "*conservative order*." De Luca (2000) shows that rotation between the Senate and the provincial executive was also frequent between 1983 and 2000, with 14% of senators previously having served as a governor or lieutenant governor, and with 21% having run for the office of governor

from their seat in the Upper House. In a related vein, about 7% of its members have been direct relatives of governors or members of territorially concentrated families. Theoretical expectations of the foundational period could, then, be extended to the contemporary prereform age.

As already mentioned, the indirectly elected Senate of the original Constitution suffered a temporary adjustment in 1995, when a third member per province was appointed by state legislatures. This transitional period expired in 2001, the year when the entire Senate was renewed by citizens' votes. The new rules specified the election of three delegates by province, nominated in closed lists where parties cannot postulate more than two candidates. Accordingly, the list that obtains plurality gets two senators, while the runner up wins the minority seat (i.e., an incomplete list). In addition, a 50% gender quota was applied to lists, insuring that one of a party's two candidates is female. Given the substantial innovations experienced, several questions about expected behavior have arisen. In particular, the fact that senators' legitimacy moved to a popular source changed *de jure* the agency relationship. However, such an innovation must not necessarily imply a drastic behavioral breakdown. Theoretical reasons for this moderate expectation abound in the Argentine case.

First, as already pointed out, legislative careerism is not the norm in Argentine politics. Instead, individuals tend to look for subnational executive posts from their congressional seats (Micozzi 2009; Spiller and Tommasi 2007). Therefore, given that most subjects do not expect to stay in the same spot, there is no strict reason to think that they would mechanically become more oriented to state voters in general. Second, small-district magnitude and control of candidacies by governors reduce senators' degrees of freedom, as it is very hard to split and run from outside the party list. As an addition, direct election did not reduce governors' strength in the provinces, a fact that let them control who joins the list. Hence, because of endogeneity matters (only loyal people might get a spot), elected senators might still pay high attention to governors' and local leaders' mandates. Third, characteristics of the Argentine federal system provide state leaders with built-in structural advantages for controlling the allocation of offices at the national, provincial, and municipal level (Spiller and Tommasi 2007). Because of these constraints, opposing the boss could imply political death for agents with any kind of ambition. Thus, loyalty to leaders might still constitute the main strategy in equilibrium. As a result, first-hand expectations would not forecast substantive changes in senatorial activities.

³Reelection rate in the House is 22%, while only 19% of Senators served more than one period.

⁴It must be noted that most provincial constitutions forbade governors' straight reelection.

However, an alternative explanation might conceive of some deviations from the previous argument. Far from denying the role played by governors and leaders, there is a truth for democratic politics worldwide: politicians need to win elections to get, maintain, and increase political power. Once politicians have entered a poll, they become cues for voters (Popkin 1991). Unlike appointed senators, these new popularly elected senators must have already campaigned, made promises, criticized opponents, and smiled in advertisements. Whatever their next career step, their names/faces might be a focal point for further evaluation. The adoption of direct elections, thus, may strengthen ties between senators and voters, not necessarily as territorial descriptive mandates, but in terms of rational adaptations by a highly visible candidate foreseeing a campaign. In particular, given that the election fosters almost a personal vote, candidates become forceful references for retrospective evaluation at the moment of facing an electoral challenge. Thus, electoral considerations should be reflected in senatorial behavior after the reform (in agreement with Meinke 2008).

Legislative Performance Before and After the Reform

If electoral legitimacy and career ambition do matter, they should be reflected in the activities in which legislators are engaged. The literature has considered several proxies of congressional performance like unity scores (Carey 2008), convergence with constituents' preferences (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000), overall number of bills submitted (Schlesinger 1966; Van der Slik and Pernacciaro 1979), share of local bills submitted (Gamm and Kousser 2010), number of speeches (Rocca 2007), amendments offered to relevant bills (Cook 1986; Hibbing 1986), and cosponsorship (Alemán et al. 2009; Crisp et al. 2004).

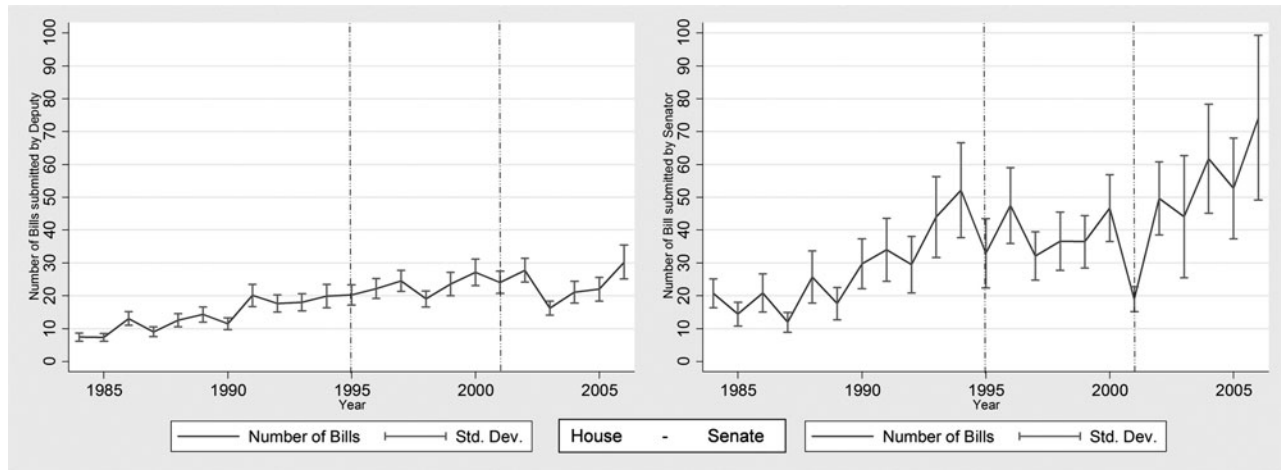
Empirical studies on the Argentine Congress demonstrate that the typical indicator of legislative activity, roll-call voting, is strongly conditioned by governors and local leaders (Jones and Hwang 2005). Notwithstanding, as pointed out by Jones (2002), agenda controls usually prevent bills with an uncertain result from reaching the floor, a fact that makes final passage votes an imperfect indicator of individual dissent in this case. Therefore, other dimensions of legislative performance might reflect individual concerns better. As discussed by several others (Ames 2000; Hill and Williams 1993; Schiller 1995), bill

drafting can be considered a political resource itself. Even though bill passage might be praised more by voters and interest groups, it is a function of a collective decision. On the contrary, bill sponsorship entails an individual action that can be used as a signal for personal credit claiming. In parallel, these devices are free of some of the negative externalities of other position takings, like negative voting or abstention in roll-call votes. Scholars have already identified bill drafting as a device to forge constituency connections in the U.S. House (Cooper and Rybicki 2002; Rocca and Gordon 2010; Schiller 2006), in U.S. subnational legislatures (Gamm and Kousser 2010), and also in comparative settings (Ames 2000; Crisp et al. 2004). In this piece, bill submission is treated as a proxy for the creation of political capital at the individual level. It is measured in two ways: as general levels of bill drafting (considered a device to demonstrate commitment and work to voters) and as the production of legislation targeting the senators' home districts (as an effort to communicate genuine representation to state electorates).

Recapitulating, should differences among appointed and elected senators' behavior be expected? What should the role of ambition be? In order to correctly assess these questions, it is necessary to compare activity in both periods. A handful for scholars have already analyzed senatorial performance in Argentina after 2001 (Dal Bo and Rossi 2008; Kikuchi and Lodola 2008; Llanos 2003), but none of them provide evidence on the pre-reform period. With that limitation in mind, I run the first comprehensive analysis about legislative behavior in the Argentine Senate between 1983 and 2007. I propose to evaluate not only whether (and how) ambition has affected legislative performance, but also how (and whether) changes in the legitimacy source of mandates have made a difference in senators' behavior. Specifically, I check if, *ceteris paribus*, senators elected by provincial legislatures have had a different propensity for bill drafting than their colleagues elected by popular vote. Additionally, I verify whether career goals influenced senatorial behavior distinctly in the two periods.

Basic descriptive statistics reinforce the idea that changes in the source of legitimacy have prompted behavioral differences. Figures 1 and 2 compare the temporal performance of general and province-targeted bill production by each legislator in the House and in the Senate. This contrast is useful, as it shows variation in legislative activities in a case with (the Senate) and without (the House) major institutional changes. Figure 1 illustrates that bill drafting

FIGURE 1 Number of Bills Drafted by Legislator – House and Senate



experienced marginal changes across time in the Chamber; in contrast, three clear periods can be distinguished in the Senate. The first era (48 appointed members) reflects an increasing trend in legislative production that stops in 1995, after the addition of a third member per district. This expanded body maintained a stable average of 40 bills per senator/year until the last year before the expiration of all the mandates. However, levels of productivity are not clearly distinguishable from the last years of the first period. In 2001, outgoing senators wrote as few bills as they did in 1985, which may seem counterintuitive for politicians in need of new positions. However, the fact that most of them either lacked personal capital or had other political roles in the body seems to make them completely abandon congressional activity.⁵ In contrast, from 2002 onwards, high increases in bill drafting became the norm until the end of the sample.

Figure 2 depicts a stable and modest targeted legislative activity by deputies. In fact, their peak of productivity equals the poorest year of their colleagues in the Senate. On the other hand, once again, senators have progressively increased their legislative outputs between 1984 and 1994. After the expansion of the body, moderate levels of local bill drafting have characterized the period, ranging between six and ten projects per capita. Next to the mentioned cuts in productivity of 2001, the activity recovered in 2002 and jumped thereafter to levels never reached in the past. Overall, two trends become clear in the pair of figures. First, senators have, in fact, increased their legislative productivity after the use of direct elections. Second, the supposition that the institutional

interventions provoked shifts in behavior seems compelling. It is unlikely that any other transformation in the political system (such as changes in party in government, levels of popularity, or economic crises) has affected both chambers in such a different manner.

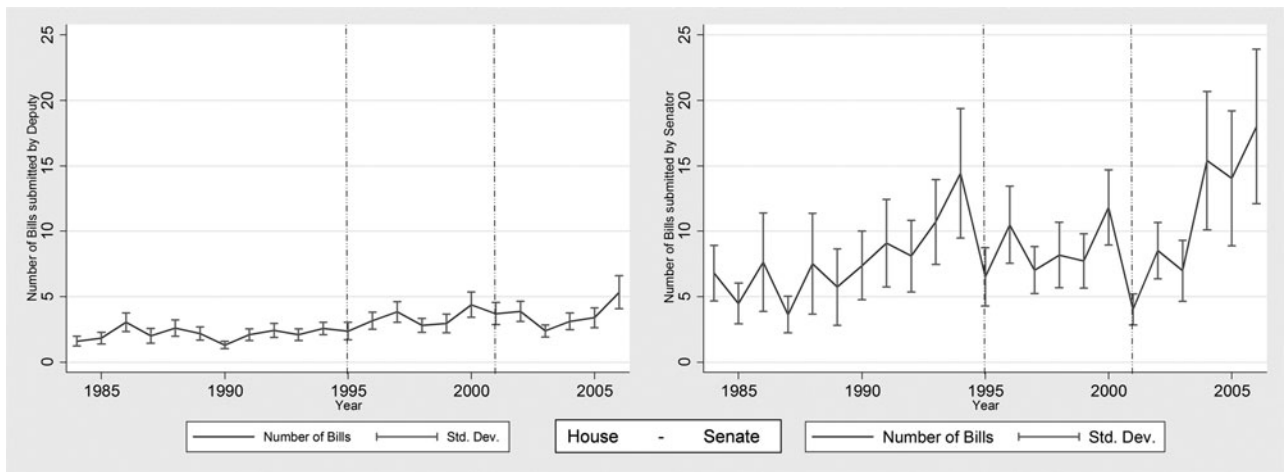
However, it could also be argued that differences among sets of legislators are due to cohort (i.e., new generations, new people in politics) or contextual factors (such as lessons learned from the crisis of representation), instead of rational adaptations to the new electoral environment. The best feasible indicator to demonstrate that behavior was truly adjusted is the performance of those individuals who occupied seats under both sources of legitimacy. This sample of senators equals 15 and shows interesting patterns of legislative activity. As Figure 3 displays, their general and local bill drafting propensities have remained quite stable during the whole appointed period, without noteworthy changes, until reaching the critical point of 2002. After a year of adjustment, individuals seem to have fully understood the new incentives and drastically increased the stock of bills they drafted. Moreover, a simple comparison of extreme values in both periods illustrates that patterns are undoubtedly different.

Evaluating Senators' Performance: Hypotheses and Data

Several hypotheses can be drawn from the theoretical discussions stated above. First, given the already mentioned audience-based argument, I expect elected

⁵See online appendix for additional clarifications.

FIGURE 2 Number of Targeted Bills Drafted by Legislator – House and Senate



senators to try to increase their visibility. Therefore, this goal should be reflected in the submission of more legislation overall and more bills targeting their provinces. I expect this effect to be particularly salient in case they also have gubernatorial expectations, given the relevance of the pursued position.

H1a: Elected senators are likely to submit more legislation overall than their appointed counterparts.

H1b: Elected senators with gubernatorial ambition are likely to submit more legislation than any other colleague.

H2a: Elected senators are likely to submit more provincially targeted legislation than their appointed counterparts.

H2b: Elected senators with gubernatorial ambition are likely to submit more provincially targeted legislation than any other colleague.

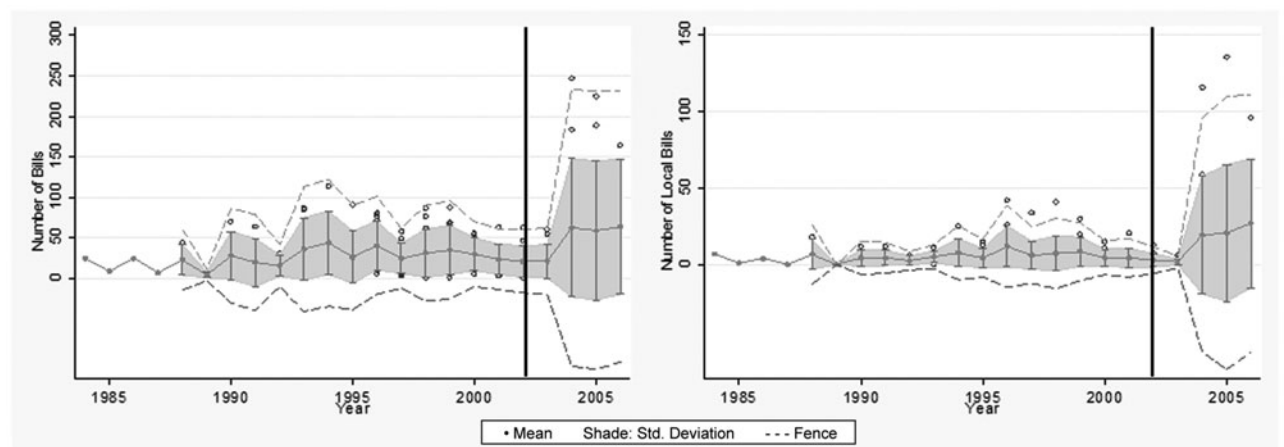
As mentioned, several former governors have occupied seats in the Senate in both periods. This career step may mean multiple things, including a temporary refuge after term limits or a strategic leave from adverse electoral conditions, among others. In any of these circumstances, their stay in the Federal Capital increases their distance from the voters who empowered them some time ago. In order to prevent their reputation from vanishing, I expect them to act defensively and draft more bills in general and also target their home state.

H3a: Former governors tend to increase the overall number of bills drafted.

H3b: Former governors tend to increase the number of local bills submitted.

As discussed, I utilize two dependent variables based on patterns of bill submission: total number of bills

FIGURE 3 Number of General and Targeted Bills Submitted by Legislators who Served in Both Periods



drafted (H1a-b, H3a) and number of provincially targeted bills submitted (H2a-b, H3b) by a legislator i in a year t . To create them, I collected information about each bill submitted by a senator between January 1984 and December 2007. Total observations equal 53,204, and have been drafted by 271 individual senators. The information is official and was gathered from the Argentine Congress' web site (www.hcdn.gov.ar). Valuable data is available at the bill level. A particularly useful piece of information is a one-paragraph summary of the content of the bill that made my second dependent variable possible. Through an automated coding scheme, I recognized whether a bill makes a reference to the home district of the sponsor⁶ and coded the variable "targeted bill" as 1 if it did, or 0 otherwise. I identified 13,204 bills with a provincial reference, 23% of the whole sample.

I specify several variables on the right-hand side of the equations. The first main covariate, the appointed/elected condition, distinguishes mandates before and after January 2002. The second, gubernatorial ambition, was performed through the creation of an enormous map of candidacies developed in Micozzi (2009). Using information on effective candidatures to a gubernatorial spot,⁷ I coded this variable as 1 if a senator ran for the position from her seat, or 0 otherwise. Data was updated using *Directorio Legislativo*, a publication that tracks legislators' backgrounds and individual attributes. The same sources have been used to create the covariate that reflects whether a senator was a governor before occupying her current seat (value of 1, or 0 otherwise).

Specific controls have been included in the estimations. Several legislators are members of a territorially concentrated family, which makes them a special kind of representative. Even though they may have personal aspirations, their career perspectives may depend on their relatives' decisions, or even their health, rather than on symbolic signals. Therefore, I expect these legislators⁸ to be less inclined towards

drafting targeted bills. Members of these families get a value of 1, or 0 otherwise. Following the literature, committee chairs are more likely to exert agenda controls and have their bills passed; therefore, they might be less concerned with inflating bill submission and more concerned with getting their relevant ones approved. Controls for the main political parties have also been included (see details on the online appendix) as a means of unfolding whether expected behavior is limited to certain collective actors. Tenure is also specified in the models, as congressional action may reflect a learning process, and therefore more advanced senators may have accumulated expertise that simplifies (and prompts inflation of) bill production. Also, a binary measure of the membership to the governor's party in the home province is included. Given the mentioned relevance of state executives in Argentine federal politics, delegates of the governor might be less likely to increase bill submission and concentrate more on getting their boss' preferred bills passed. Competitiveness of elections may be another determinant of bill drafting, as politicians in need of marginal votes may use legislation as a resource. Thus, I include a covariate measuring the margin of victory in the last election of the House, the only one that takes place every two years. The lower the gap, the higher the expected number of bills submitted. Finally, the share of the national population accounted for by each district acts as a scale control. It definitely takes more effort (and bills) to target audiences of millions of people (e.g., the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe, and Federal District) than electorates that are less than a quarter of a million (e.g., Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego).

Models and Results

Given that the theory predicts increases in legislative production as a function of ambition and legitimacy, and my dependent variables cannot be smaller than zero, I utilize event count models. To do so, I collapsed the information at the legislator/year level, which reduced the sample to 1,429 observations. After running regular Poisson models, overdispersion tests indicated that negative binomial models were the most suitable to evaluate my hypotheses. I report four different models for each of my two dependent variables (number of bills submitted by a legislator in a given year and number of projects targeting their home provinces in the same period). First, I compute a conventional pooled negative-binomial model in

⁶In this piece, only the sponsor of each bill is considered. See Alemán et al. (2009), and Calvo and Leiras (2010) for analyses of patterns of cosponsorship in the Argentine Congress.

⁷Of course, not only those individuals who reached the candidacy may have aspired to get it. However, systematic information on candidate selection mechanisms for subnational executives does not exist in Argentina. Moreover, variation (from primaries to party conventions and creation of new parties) across time makes data collection almost impossible. Given existing constraints, I opted for the more conservative and reliable measure of effective candidates.

⁸Spouses, children, siblings, uncles/aunts, grandparents, grandchildren, or relatives-in-law of a provincial leader are considered. Data was gathered from the mentioned *Directorio Legislativo*.

TABLE 1 Explaining Variation in General Bill Introduction

	Model 1 (NB)	Model 2 (NB)	Model 3 (RENB)	Model 4 (RENB)
Previous Governor	0.391*** (0.0862)	0.401*** (0.0862)	0.230*** (0.0628)	0.235*** (0.0628)
Gubernatorial Candidate	-0.128 (0.0784)	-0.00238 (0.0954)	-0.0378 (0.0627)	0.0402 (0.0772)
Territorial Family Member	-0.286*** (0.0996)	-0.270*** (0.0997)	-0.0362 (0.0868)	-0.0230 (0.0871)
Elected	0.565*** (0.0622)	0.616*** (0.0658)	0.244*** (0.0495)	0.273*** (0.0523)
Committee Chair	0.135** (0.0562)	0.137** (0.0561)	0.162*** (0.0465)	0.158*** (0.0466)
Peronist	-0.0906 (0.147)	-0.0925 (0.147)	-0.0497 (0.136)	-0.0274 (0.137)
UCR	0.0558 (0.146)	0.0579 (0.146)	-0.0399 (0.136)	-0.0189 (0.136)
Center-Left	-0.605*** (0.211)	-0.566*** (0.211)	-0.377* (0.205)	-0.369* (0.206)
Provincial Party	-0.0258 (0.165)	-0.0315 (0.165)	-0.0567 (0.151)	-0.0384 (0.152)
Governor's Party Member	-0.231*** (0.0583)	-0.239*** (0.0583)	-0.159*** (0.0478)	-0.162*** (0.0478)
Tenure	0.0529 (0.0455)	0.0401 (0.0457)	0.0618 (0.0379)	0.0490 (0.0387)
Population Share	-1.126*** (0.370)	-1.137*** (0.368)	-0.118 (0.412)	-0.124 (0.412)
Margin of Victory	-0.563** (0.231)	-0.567** (0.230)	-0.147 (0.189)	-0.145 (0.189)
Gub. Candidate*Elected		-0.415** (0.164)		-0.214 (0.132)
Constant	3.606*** (0.155)	3.611*** (0.155)	-0.0277 (0.142)	-0.0366 (0.143)
Observations	1,429	1,429	1,429	1,429

NB = Negative Binomial; RENB = Random Effects Negative Binomial.
Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

order to predict the expected number of bills submitted by senators with certain attributes. Second, I attempt to assess whether group-level variation (province in this case) is driving the results shown in the pooled estimations. Given that I am not interested in recognizing specific district-level particularities but simply in assessing if cross-sectional variation affects results, I follow Gelman and Hill (2007) and calculate a random effects negative-binomial model. Both estimations are rerun including an interaction of gubernatorial candidacy and the electoral legitimacy of senators, in order to match the theoretical argument as well as possible.

Results for the general patterns of bill submission are reflected in Table 1, showing significant consistency across models. First, elected senators tend to

draft substantially more legislation per year than their appointed colleagues, confirming the theoretical expectation stated above. In every single model, the strongest positive results are shown by this covariate; however, no evidence for strategic actions performed by ambitious elected senators has been found in the estimations. Rather, either irrelevant or negative coefficients characterize this combination.⁹ When the constitutive covariate measuring a gubernatorial candidacy is considered, it is not significant in any model. Thus, considering bill drafting overall, the effects of electoral accountability over legislative activity are unconditional to political ambition. In other words,

⁹The linear combination of each interaction maintains the sign and significance of coefficients.

TABLE 2 Explaining Variation in Local Bill Introduction

	Model 5 (NB)	Model 6 (NB)	Model 7 (RENB)	Model 8 (RENB)
Previous Governor	0.334*** (0.101)	0.345*** (0.100)	0.165** (0.0740)	0.178** (0.0740)
Gubernatorial Candidate	-0.0662 (0.0943)	0.179 (0.114)	0.0323 (0.0709)	0.203** (0.0850)
Territorial Family Member	-0.364*** (0.120)	-0.323*** (0.120)	-0.00623 (0.103)	0.0200 (0.103)
Elected	0.477*** (0.0753)	0.584*** (0.0795)	0.143** (0.0583)	0.213*** (0.0614)
Committee Chair	0.117* (0.0682)	0.118* (0.0677)	0.0934* (0.0542)	0.0867 (0.0543)
Peronist	0.620*** (0.190)	0.638*** (0.188)	0.287* (0.165)	0.320* (0.166)
UCR	0.447** (0.189)	0.483*** (0.187)	0.228 (0.164)	0.258 (0.164)
Center-Left	-0.0921 (0.266)	-0.0148 (0.264)	-0.234 (0.230)	-0.217 (0.230)
Provincial Party	0.629*** (0.207)	0.645*** (0.206)	0.253 (0.184)	0.278 (0.184)
Governor's Party Member	-0.199*** (0.0707)	-0.214*** (0.0704)	-0.209*** (0.0557)	-0.218*** (0.0556)
Tenure	-0.143*** (0.0553)	-0.177*** (0.0555)	-0.0681 (0.0453)	-0.0971** (0.0462)
Population Share	-3.726*** (0.494)	-3.760*** (0.490)	-0.869 (0.643)	-0.898 (0.642)
Margin of Victory	-1.158*** (0.285)	-1.159*** (0.283)	-0.236 (0.228)	-0.238 (0.228)
Gub. Candidate*Elected		-0.886*** (0.198)		-0.481*** (0.154)
Constant	2.056*** (0.196)	2.052*** (0.194)	-0.239 (0.177)	-0.240 (0.177)
Observations	1,429	1,429	1,429	1,429

NB = Negative Binomial; RENB = Random Effects Negative Binomial. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

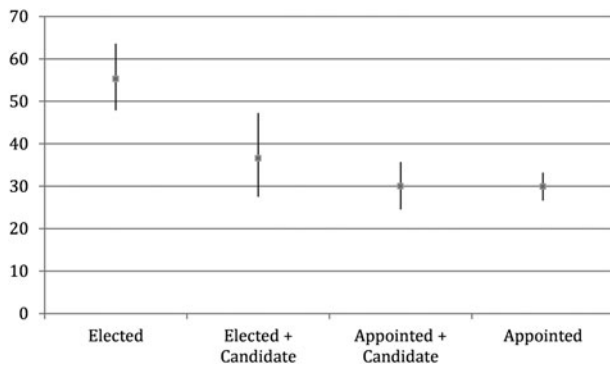
regardless of their immediate political expectations, senators designated by popular vote understood the need for forging stronger connections with their provincial electorates. On average across models, and setting all other variables to values close to real world, elected senators tend to write 55 bills per year, while those appointed used to submit about 30.

The defensive activity posited in Hypothesis 3a is also corroborated by the empirical analyses. Subjects who previously occupied a governorship and moved later to the Senate do draft substantially more bills than those who did not. Everything equal, the marginal difference between these groups shows a 17-bill gap in favor of former executives. Beyond strict hypothesis testing, two other covariates perform in interesting ways. On the one hand, more com-

petitive elections tend to boost general levels of bill drafting. On the other hand, there is a substantive decrease by those senators who belong to the governing party in their provinces, supporting the intuition that delegates of the governor tend to care more about getting provincial bills passed than about inflating the number of drafts.

Observing the results of the estimations that use the number of targeted bills as dependent variable, I find they perform quite similar to previous models: elected senators have higher propensities to draft projects centered on their home provinces, and career perspectives are sterile predictors of this strategic behavior. Moreover, the interaction of gubernatorial expectations and electoral legitimacy tends to decrease concentrated legislative activity. While the median

FIGURE 4 Predicted Number of Bills submitted by Legislator in a Given Year

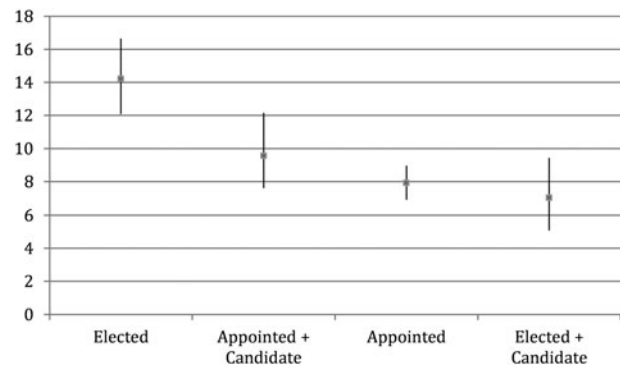


elected senator tends to write about 14 targeted bills, her colleagues seeking a governorship draft seven. Once again, the reinforcement of the invigorated electoral connection overcame the demands of short-term career goals. Considering previous experience as governors, coefficients also show a positive and significant impact over bill drafting. Following this finding, it might be concluded that these senators are trying to minimize the costs of being far away from their electorates.

In a related vein, Table 2 shows that allies of the provincial governor are less concerned with this activity as in previous models; however, in this case, several national parties are good predictors of bill drafting—coefficients for Peronists and Radicals are significant in most estimations, suggesting that members of parties that have greater success in subnational elections tend to care more about sending signals to state-level electorates. Not surprisingly, provincial parties perform in a similar way in the pooled estimations but lose significance in the random effects models. Given that their presence is restricted to just one of a few districts, it is likely that the effect is captured by the provincial-level slopes.

Figures 4 and 5 show the predicted number of bills drafted by senators in the 2x2 matrix of legitimacy and ambition. In the first figure, it becomes evident that the overall expected number of bills submitted by an elected senator is statistically different from every other category. As an implication, career perspectives are a weaker predictor of strategic legislative activity than the newly installed mechanisms of electoral legitimacy. Regarding local bill drafting, elected senators also stand out from every other category, and confidence intervals just barely overlap with those of appointed senators with ambition. Hence, the evidence in favor of the electoral linkage argument is resounding. It is surprising that

FIGURE 5 Predicted Number of Bills Targeting Her Home Province Submitted by Legislator in a Given Year



the expected highest group ends up being the least likely to draft targeted legislation, which suggests that either ambition is strictly uncorrelated with legislative production or that prospective activities from Congress are driven by other activities. In any case, electoral accountability is always a reliable predictor of increases in bill drafting in the Argentine Senate.

Concluding Remarks

Drawing from a survey of senators in 2002 (the first cohort of elected members), Llanos (2003) reports that 90% responded that they take the interests of the province's citizens into account at the moment of making decisions; 66% consider it very important to get resources for their districts; and 80% state that they would always vote according to the needs of the province in the event of a conflict with the party line. Optimistic observers might be tempted to interpret these responses as a consequence of the new electoral mechanism and therefore as evidence of improvements in the quality of political representation. However, the lack of a control group would inhibit such a generalization. In this article, I attempt to solve this problem by systematically assessing legislative performance in two distinct environments. In keeping with Meinke's (2008) contribution, results show that elected senators tend to draft more legislation overall and also to target to their provincial constituents, anticipating further rewards or punishments. Ultimately, these activities intensify a brand new *electoral connection*. The lack of support for the hypotheses of career perspectives does not invalidate the core theoretical argument. Actually, it shows that elected senators are more oriented toward state electorates regardless of progressive ambition concerns.

These lessons from the Argentine experience contribute in different ways to the understanding of legislative behavior in multiple settings. On the one hand, it reinforces the general finding of the U.S. literature that electoral accountability affects legislators' activities in a clear direction: they are more oriented to the voters who will decide their political fates. Such a realization simplifies further empirical approaches to other cases where citizens have become direct selectors of public offices. Contemporary reforms such as the move from appointed to popularly elected governors in Bolivia could be approached using this theoretical direction and similar behavioral expectations. On the other hand, the findings bolster the notion that legislative activities beyond roll-call position taking are useful at the level of an individual politician. As largely documented in the literature, different institutional rules simplify or complicate the processes of personalization and individualization. In this case, the results show that in a system where behavior is strongly conditioned by party elites and subnational executives, legislators can utilize bill drafting as a source of improving their personal positions.

Finally, the interaction between electoral accountability and the strategic use of bill drafting forces us to reconsider some of the conventional findings of the literature on electoral systems. Even though, as mentioned, several salient dimensions of congressional performance (i.e., final passage votes) are likely to be affected by how "personalized" the electoral rules are, there exist other activities politicians can do to overcome these constraints. This affirmation does not deny that centralized candidate selection mechanisms and closed lists may make legislators less likely to deviate from party dictates. Rather, it highlights that even within those settings, rational legislators can find ways to improve their individual reputations. Such rationality, clearly, relies on future considerations and the pursuit of a successful political trajectory. This work shows that once Argentine senators realized they would need popular support to maintain and improve their careers or the electoral chances of their party, their behavior became more voter oriented. In sum, in this case, electoral accountability made a difference.

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