

Table 2
Results of the Guatemala legislative election, 6 September 2015.

Party	National list	Departmental list	Total	2011 seats	Change
LÍDER	7	38	45	14	31
UNE-GANA	5	27	32	48	–16
TODOS	3	15	18	0	18
PP	3	15	18	57	–39
FCN	3	8	11	0	11
UCN	2	5	7	14	–7
EG	2	5	7	3	4
CREO	2	3	5	12	–7
VIVA	1	4	5	3	2
CONVERGENCIA	1	2	3	0	3
PAN	1	2	3	2	1
WINAQ-URNG-MAIZ	1	1	2	2	0
FUERZA	0	2	2	0	2
FRG	0	0	0	1	–1
PU	0	0	0	1	–1
VICTORIA	0	0	0	1	–1
TOTAL	31	127	158	158	

Source: Tribunal Supremo Electoral, Guatemala (www.tse.org.gt/)

candidates, maintained a large share of power at the municipal level, with 130 and 75 mayors respectively, which represent around 60% of the total. FCN-Nación did not get any of its municipal candidates elected.

3.1. Outlook

On 14 January 2016 Jimmy Morales inherited a government so indebted that he was soon forced to declare a state of emergency of the public health services. As of mid February, barely a month after

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he took office, 19 Congress members had crossed party lines to join Morales' ranks, in spite of the fact that he had explicitly disapproved party defections. The new Congress members who joined FCN-Nación secured Morales 30 votes in the legislative chamber, a number still insufficient to pass the amendments to the Electoral and Political Parties Law, which is still pending approval, or to call the Constituent Assembly he promised, for which the Constitution requires a qualified majority of two thirds of the members. While increasing the size of FCN-Nación's group, the defections damaged the party's reputation and cost it a formal complaint for allegedly bribing members of other groups to join their ranks.

The ruling party's image further deteriorated after the leader of FCN-Nación in Congress, retired colonel Edgard Ovalle, was charged with serious violations of human rights one day before being sworn in, and the ministers of Defence and Communications were questioned for various irregularities just a few days after being appointed. Calls for demonstrators to take to the streets in demand of a real political change are starting to be heard again in Guatemala City.

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The 2015 Argentine presidential and legislative elections

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Argentina's three-stage federal election cycle ended on November 22, 2015 with the victory of Mauricio Macri in a presidential runoff election, the first runoff in Argentine history. This second round had been preceded by concurrent presidential (first round) and legislative general elections on October 25 and primary elections on August 9.

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December 10, 2015 marked the end of the twelve and a half year long Kirchner era in Argentina. On that date, Macri (2015–) was sworn in as president, replacing the term-limited Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–15), who in turn had succeeded her husband, Néstor Kirchner (2003–07).

1. Political institutions and electoral laws in Argentina

The Argentine president is elected for a four-year term and limited to two consecutive terms in office, but is eligible to run for re-election after a four-year interval. Argentina utilizes a modified version of the double complement rule to elect its president. A runoff between the top two presidential candidates from a first round is held unless the plurality candidate either wins 45% + 1 of the vote or wins at least 40% of the vote and at the same time has a margin of victory over the second place candidate of more than 10%.

The 72-member Argentine Senate renews by thirds every biennium, with eight of the country's 24 provinces (23 provinces and

one federal district) renewing all of their senators in 2015 (under Argentina's federal constitution every province is represented by three senators). Senators are elected from closed party lists using a semi-proportional allocation method, with the alliance/party receiving the plurality of the vote receiving two seats and the first runner-up one seat. At least one of the two senate candidates must be a woman, guaranteeing at the minimum a third of the senators elected will be women.

The 257-member Argentine Chamber of Deputies renews by halves (130 and 127) every two years, with all 24 provinces renewing one-half of their deputies (or the closest equivalent). While the distribution of deputies is constitutionally intended to be relatively proportional to a province's share of the national population, no seat redistribution has taken place since the return to democracy in 1983, and, by statute every province is represented by a minimum of five deputies. As a consequence, the number of deputies per capita in the country's most populous province (Province of Buenos Aires) is 223,216, almost ten times that in the least populous province (Tierra del Fuego) 25,441. District magnitude ranges from 2 to 35 (median of 3), with deputies elected from closed party lists and seats allocated using the d'Hondt formula with a vote threshold of 3% of registered voters at the district-level. A 30% minimum quota for female candidates on the party list is in force, with parties required to place women in electable list positions.

Voting is compulsory for citizens ages 18 to 69, but not for those who are 16 or 17 or for those who are 70 or older. Citizens who fail to vote in the general election and do not have a legally valid excuse must pay a fine of \$100 Argentine pesos (approximately \$10 US dollars in 2015).

Argentina holds a single-day all party/alliance federal primary that is mandatory for political parties and alliances and, compulsory for voters (\$50 peso fine). In order to be able to participate in the presidential election a party/alliance's candidate (or candidates combined) must garner at least 1.5% of the valid vote in the primary, while to participate in the respective district-level senate or chamber election the party list/or lists must also receive the support of at least 1.5% of voters.

2. The 2015 presidential campaign

President Fernández de Kirchner's hopes of reforming the Argentine Constitution to allow her to run again in 2015 were dashed in the 2013 midterm congressional elections, when the success of anti-Kirchner forces made it impossible for her to even attempt to cobble together the two-thirds majorities in the chamber and senate needed to begin the constitutional reform process. And, while she auditioned multiple loyalists to be the presidential candidate of her Front for Victory (FPV), their mediocre to poor standing in public opinion polls resulted in her having to reluctantly back the candidacy of Province of Buenos Aires governor Daniel Scioli, with whom she and her deceased (2010) spouse Néstor always have had a strained relationship.

The two other leading presidential candidates were City of Buenos Aires mayor Mauricio Macri (Let's Change alliance) and congressman Sergio Massa (A New Alternative [UNA] alliance). Like Fernández de Kirchner, Scioli and Massa belong to Argentina's large Peronist movement. While Scioli served as the standard bearer of the Peronist movement's pro-government wing led by Fernández de Kirchner, Massa was the informal leader of Peronism's opposition (anti-Kirchner/Non-FPV) wing. Macri was the only viable non-Peronist candidate, who allied his Federal Proposal (PRO) party with the Radical Civic Union (UCR), which for more than half a century has represented the country's political counter-weight to Peronism.

Scioli was the candidate of continuity, with Argentine policies expected to change the least from the current status quo under a Scioli presidency. Macri in contrast was the candidate of change, representing the most dramatic break from the status quo. Massa was the Goldilocks candidate, promising a greater amount of change than offered by Scioli, but not as great as that offered by Macri.

3. The 2015 election results

3.1. The presidential election: primary, first round and second round

Fifteen presidential candidates participated in the August 9 primary, with contested races in three of the 11 alliances/parties. Macri had two purely symbolic rivals in the Let's Change primary, senator Ernesto Sanz (UCR) and congresswoman Elisa Carrió of the Civic Coalition (CC), one of the alliance's junior partners. Massa competed against Córdoba governor Jose Manuel De la Sota. The other contested primary was in the far left Left Front (FIT) where congressman Nicolás del Caño challenged one of the radical left's historic leaders, Jorge Altamira.

In the primary, the FPV finished first with 38.67% of the valid vote, all won by Scioli. Let's Change placed second at 30.11%, with Macri contributing a lion's share (24.49%), followed by Sanz (3.34%) and Carrió (2.28%).¹ UNA garnered 20.57%, with Massa (14.33%) easily defeating De la Sota (6.25%). Three other alliances crossed the 1.5% minimum threshold required to earn their presidential candidate a place on the October ballot: the Progressives' Margarita Stolbizer (3.47%), the FIT's Del Caño (3.25%, with Del Caño winning 1.67%) and Federal Commitment's (CF) Adolfo Rodríguez Saá (2.09%). The remaining five candidates received 1.83% of the vote combined. An additional 5.06% of voters cast a blank ballot and 1.06% spoiled their ballot, with overall turnout at 74.98% of registered voters.

Scioli was the plurality winner on October 25 with 37.08%, but was forced into a runoff against Macri who won 34.15%. In spite of prognostications that UNA primary voters would defect to either Macri or Scioli, Massa's October 25 vote share (21.39%) surpassed UNA's August 9 tally. Bringing up the rear were Del Caño (3.23%), Stolbizer (2.51%), and Rodríguez Saá (1.64%). Compared to the primary, a smaller proportion of voters cast a blank (2.55%) or spoiled (0.77%) ballot, with turnout rising to 81.07%.

In the November 22 runoff, Macri bested Scioli, 51.34%–48.66%. All together, 1.18% of voters cast a blank ballot and 1.28% spoiled their ballot. Turnout dropped slightly to 80.72%.

Table 1 breaks down the support for the presidential candidates in the first and second rounds by region: the Buenos Aires region, the Central region, the Cuyo region in the center-west, the Northeast (NEA) and Northwest (NOA) regions and the Patagonia region in the south. The Buenos Aires, Central and (to a lesser extent) Cuyo regions are the country's economic engines, with above average levels of economic development, production and standards of living and below average proportions of government workers and inhabitants living in poverty. The Northeast and Northwest are economically depressed regions where a majority of the population depends on either a government (federal, provincial, or municipal) paycheck or on government social welfare benefits. The sparsely inhabited but geographically vast Patagonia combines above average wealth (primarily from oil and natural gas production) with an above average proportion of government employees (mostly provincial and municipal).

Macri owes his victory to the most economically dynamic regions of the country, narrowly besting Scioli in the second round in

¹ All electoral data come from official results provided by the Argentine *Dirección Nacional Electoral* (2015).

Table 1
The results of the first and second rounds of the 2015 presidential election by region.

Candidates	Parties/Alliances	National total		Percentages by region					
		Votes	%	Buenos Aires	Central	Cuyo	Northeast	Northwest	Patagonia
First round									
Daniel Scioli	Front for Victory	9,338,490	37.08	35.02	27.76	32.32	56.82	46.87	42.05
Mauricio Macri	Let's Change	8,601,131	34.15	35.86	43.06	34.56	25.73	22.79	24.11
Sergio Massa	A New Alternative	5,386,977	21.39	21.20	22.07	17.13	14.88	26.38	25.75
Nicolás Del Caño	Left Front	812,530	3.23	3.78	2.73	5.25	1.09	1.97	4.19
Margarita Stolbizer	Progressives	632,551	2.51	3.24	2.71	1.49	1.01	1.10	2.60
Adolfo Rodríguez Saá	Federal Commitment	412,578	1.64	0.90	1.68	9.24	0.48	0.89	1.31
Valid Votes		25,184,257	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Blank Votes		664,740	2.55						
Null Votes		199,449	0.77						
Total Votes		26,048,446	81.07	11,866,526	5,409,327	1,862,742	2,347,301	3,145,290	1,417,260
Second round									
Mauricio Macri	Let's Change	12,988,349	51.34	51.55	61.72	54.35	41.53	42.66	41.72
Daniel Scioli	Front for Victory	12,309,575	48.66	48.45	38.28	45.65	58.47	57.34	58.28
Valid Votes		25,297,924	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Blank Votes		306,471	1.18						
Null Votes		330,848	1.28						
Total Votes		25,935,243	80.72	11,808,547	5,407,705	1,849,697	2,347,871	3,117,713	1,403,710
Registered Voters		32,130,853		14,470,745	6,787,403	2,259,986	2,947,530	3,900,225	1,764,964

Note: The regions contain the following provinces. Buenos Aires: City of Buenos Aires and Province of Buenos Aires. Central: Córdoba, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, and Santa Fe. Cuyo: Mendoza, San Juan, and San Luis. Northeast: Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, and Misiones. Northwest: Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Salta, Santiago del Estero, and Tucumán. Patagonia: Chubut, Neuquén, Río Negro, Santa Cruz, and Tierra del Fuego. The voter turnout rates in the first (81.07) and second (80.72) rounds are in italics.

the Buenos Aires region (by a margin of 3.10%), obtaining a comfortable victory in the Cuyo region (8.70%) and racking up a landslide triumph in the Central region (23.44%). In contrast, Macri fared poorly in the more impoverished and less vibrant Northeast and Northwest, losing to Scioli by 16.94% and 14.68% respectively, while suffering defeat by a similar margin (16.56%) in Patagonia.

3.2. The legislative elections: senate and chamber of deputies

Argentina possesses a decentralized political party system with different alliance patterns across the country's 24 provinces (Jones and Micozzi, 2013). For example, while FPV allied candidates competed under the same banner in the 24 district-level chamber elections, chamber candidates ran under the Let's Change and UNA

banners in only 17 and 8 provinces respectively, with some subset of the alliance members running under a different label in 7 and 13 provinces respectively.

In the senate election, the FPV won 13 of the 24 seats in play (see Table 2), followed by Let's Change with nine seats (six occupied by UCR senators, one by a PRO senator, and two by senators with their own independent provincial base of support). UNA elected one senator as did the unaligned Peronist We're All Chubut (CHUSOTO). Nine of these elected senators were women (38%).

As of January 1, 2016, the FPV delegation was far and away the largest in the 72-member senate at 40. Let's Change, which maintained separate partisan delegations, was notably smaller with a mere 15 seats: 8 UCR senators, 4 PRO senators and three senators from minor parties: CC, Civic and Social Front of Catamarca (FCSC),

Table 2
The results of the 2015 legislative elections.

Party groups	Chamber				Senate			
	Votes	%	Seats	%	Votes	%	Seats	%
Front for Victory (FPV)	8,765,438	37.55	60	46.15	2,336,037	33.15	13	54.17
Let's Change	8,230,605	35.26	47	36.15	2,770,410	39.32	9	37.50
A New Alternative (UNA)	4,016,546	17.21	17	13.08	1,104,127	15.67	1	4.17
Left Front (FIT)	982,953	4.21	1	0.77	302,525	4.29	0	0.00
Progressives	803,610	3.44	2	1.54	324,636	4.61	0	0.00
Federal Commitment (CF)	174,795	0.75	2	1.54	23,904	0.34	0	0.00
We're All Chubut (CHUSOTO)	85,730	0.37	1	0.77	85,396	1.21	1	4.17
Unaligned Provincial Parties	72,197	0.31	0	0.00				
Others	210,536	0.90	0	0.00	99,582	1.41	0	0.00
Valid Votes/Total Seats	23,342,410	100.00	130	100.00	7,046,617	100.00	24	100.00
Blank Votes	2,418,716				621,928			
Null Votes	185,268				75,400			
Total Votes	25,946,394				7,743,945			
Registered Voters	32,130,853				9,815,549			

Note: The Party Groups consist of the following party and electoral fronts. **Front for Victory (FPV):** Front for Victory and Civic Front for Victory. **Let's Change:** Let's Change Alliance, Radical Civic Union (UCR), Encounter for Corrientes, Civic and Social Front (Catamarca), Pampean Civic and Social Front–Republican Proposal, Jujuy Can Change Front, Formosan Broad Front, and Union to Live Better (Santa Cruz). **A New Alternative:** United for a New Alternative Alliance (UNA), Union for Córdoba, Federal Renewal Front of Hope, New People (La Pampa), Third Position Front (Catamarca), Commitment with San Juan Alliance (San Juan), United Front Alliance (Misiones), Authentic Renewal Front (Tierra del Fuego), and Popular Union. **Progressives:** Progressive Alliance, Civic and Social Progressive Front (Santa Fe), Third Position Social Pole Movement of the People (Chubut), GEN, and Socialist Party. **Left Front (FIT):** Front of the Left and of the Workers, Party of the Laborer, and Laborer Party. **Federal Commitment (CF):** Federal Commitment and It's Possible (Córdoba, Mendoza, La Rioja). **Unaligned Provincial Parties:** Neuquino Popular Movement (Neuquén), Renewal Crusade (San Juan), Fueguino Popular Movement (Tierra del Fuego), and Patagonian Social Party (Tierra del Fuego). **Others:** Self Determination and Liberty (City of Buenos Aires), Communist Party, Citizens to Govern Party (Chaco), New October (Misiones), Popular Project (Misiones), Of Culture, Education and Work (Tierra del Fuego), and Citizen Participation Movement (Tucumán).

Popular Party. The remaining 17 seats were scattered among a variety of small non-aligned Peronist, center-left and provincial party delegations (most consisting of a single senator).

In the chamber election, the FPV and its allies won a total of 60 seats. Let's Change came in second with 47 seats, with Macri's PRO leading the way with 27 seats followed by the UCR with 18 and the CC and FCSC with one each. UNA and its allies won a total of 17 seats, eight in Massa's political base of the Province of Buenos Aires. Rodríguez Saa's CF won two seats, both in San Luis, which he and his brother (both Peronists) have run in a quasi-feudal manner since 1983. The Progressives (two), FIT (one) and CHUSOTO (one) won the remaining seats. Women accounted for 44 of the 130 deputies elected, or 34%.

As of January 1, 2016 the largest chamber delegation was the FPV at 95. The 89 Let's Change deputies maintained four separate party delegations under a broad alliance umbrella: PRO: 41, UCR: 40, CC: 5, FCSC: 3.

The UNA delegation consisted of 29 deputies, followed in size by the Civic Front for Santiago with six (all from Santiago del Estero) and the CF with four (all from San Luis). The remaining 34 deputies were scattered across 23 delegations, with three three-member delegations and 15 single-member delegations.

Party switching is common in the Argentine Congress (Jones and Micozzi, 2013), and, especially with a non-Peronist president, we can expect quite a bit of volatility in delegation membership over the next two years. Even in the short period between the October 25 election and their assumption of office on December 10, more than a dozen legislators switched their allegiance from one delegation to another.

4. An electoral first and governing as a minority party president

Every democratically elected president in Argentina since World War Two had, up until the election of Macri, belonged to one of two partisan families: Peronist or Radical. In addition, Macri's PRO is arguably the first Argentine political party in more than sixty years to establish a true national presence, the result of a dozen year party-building effort by Macri and his supporters. In addition to its control of the presidency, the PRO's 41 deputies represent 13 of Argentina's 24 provinces, with the party also occupying the

governorship of the Province of Buenos Aires and the de facto governorship (chief of government) of the City of Buenos Aires. Almost half (46.15%) of Argentines live in these latter two jurisdictions.

When Macri assumed office on December 10, 2015, he did so with his Let's Change alliance holding less than one-quarter of the seats in the senate and less than two-fifths of the seats in the chamber, with his own party, PRO, possessing a mere 4 of 72 senators and 41 of 257 deputies. These proportions represent record lows for an incoming Argentine president, significantly less congressional support for instance than that enjoyed by the only other non-Peronist to occupy the presidency in the last 26 years, the UCR's Fernando de la Rúa (1999–2001), who resigned two years into his four-year term.

If Macri is going to avoid governability problems, he will most likely need to eventually form alliances (short and/or medium term) with different Peronist factions and/or many of the 19 opposition governors, to whom many senators and deputies directly respond (Spiller and Tommasi, 2009). Unlike in neighboring Brazil, Chile and Uruguay (Chasqueti, 2008), Argentina lacks a history of successful coalition government (Jones et al., 2009), and Macri's presidency will be a crucial test case for whether or not Argentine politicians and parties are willing and able to successfully adopt some form of coalition model like their neighbors.

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The 2015 parliamentary elections in Venezuela

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1. Background

The opposition scored a convincing victory in the parliamentary elections held in Venezuela on December 6, 2015, a clear turning