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Provinces – Argentina

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## Provinces Strategy Flash: Chubut elections

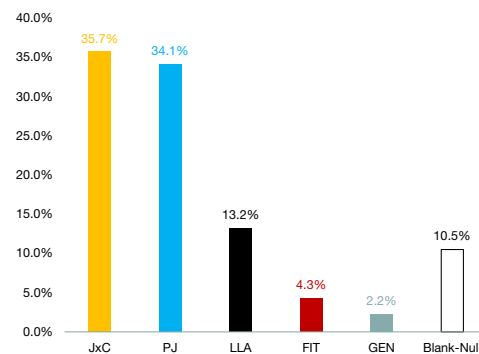
**In Chubut, JxC managed to edge Peronism by a narrow margin.**

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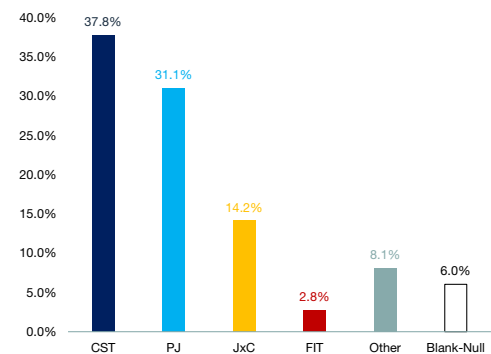
With the definitive results in hand, yesterday’s election ended nearly 20 years of Peronism in the province as Mr. Torres snatched a close win. The provincial election closely followed the trends showcased by the votes in other districts, as a weakened Peronism administration was ousted amidst low participation, a strong JxC election, and in the most surprising turn of events, a relatively solid result for La Libertad Avanza. The number of total voters amounted to 328,573, accounting for 69.28% participation, which was 3.8% lower than in 2019, when it amounted to 73.1% of the electorate. In this context, Mr. Torres, representing JxC, obtained 35.7% of the votes, with a unified Peronism coming in as a close second at 34.1%. In a relatively surprising turn of events, the liberal candidate Mr. Treffinger, obtained 13.18% of the votes, posting one of the strongest liberal elections in the provincial space up to now. Completing the results section, the FIT took home 4.27% of the votes, while GEN obtained 2.24%. Blank and Null votes also made a substantial apparition, coming in at 10.49% of the total votes, a figure which was mostly consistent with the observed trend in the recent provincial elections. While the final scrutiny left Mr. Torres as the winner, the final results were much tighter than the preliminary count suggested, as JxC led with nearly a 10pp margin at the start of the night. A very solid result for the administration in Comodoro Rivadavia, Chubut’s largest city and a Peronist bastion, balanced the results, adding some uncertainty as Mr. Torres’ advantage diluted. Ultimately, the difference came down to 5229 votes (1.6%), a narrow margin that Peronism debated. In fact, Mr. Luque, the Peronist candidate, initially demanded another vote count, stating that his party had won the election “by 800 votes” before admitting defeat early in the morning.

**Figure 1: Chubut 2023 and 2019 elections**

**Chubut Elections | 2023 results**



**Chubut Elections | 2019 results**



Source: TPCG Research based on Tribunal Electoral Provincia de Chubut

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The results were widely different than those exhibited in 2019, even if the results of the national legislative election in 2021 hinted at an opposition win in this electoral bout. The JxC win ended a 20-year supremacy of Peronism in the province. However, the electoral landscape changed significantly since 2019. That time, the provincial election was a two-horse race between FdT and the local provincial party Chubut al Frente (CST), led by Mr. Arcioni, who managed to edge the FdT competitors. In those elections, the local strain of Peronism

obtained 37.8% of votes, while the FdT managed to round up 31.1%. Coming in third by a very large margin, Juntos por el Cambio candidate Mr. Menna clocked in at 14.2% of the votes. In this context, the results of the current election more closely relate to the 2021 national legislative elections, where in Chubut, Juntos por el cambio led a 10pp advantage over the FdT, obtaining 38% of the votes against the FdT's 28.31%. Participation levels in 2021 also hovered around 69%, even if blank and null votes accounted for a slightly smaller portion of the electorate. In this context, the results of the current election more closely relate to the 2021 national legislative elections, where in Chubut, Juntos por el cambio led a 10pp advantage over the FdT, obtaining 38% of the votes against the FdT's 28.31%. Participation levels in 2021 also hovered around 69%, even if blank and null votes accounted for a slightly smaller portion of the electorate.

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We find the Chubut election came largely in line with our overarching view of the provincial results, where a weakened Peronist administration was unable to withstand the electorate's desire for change in a context of elevated voter dissatisfaction, which translated into low turnout figures (Chubut's historical figures hover round the 77% participation mark), and a high volume of null and blank votes. We believe this adds another dent into the already struggling Peronism at the national level. In terms of the JxC internal rift, this election does not shed further light on whether Mr. Larreta or Mrs. Bullrich are poised to win the primary, as both were seen supporting Mr. Torres last night, as JxC presented a unique candidate, as not to hurt its electoral chances, with Chubut not holding primary elections in this cycle. In terms of strategy, we believe the change should be credit positive if the change in political sign also corresponds to the one seen at the national level. With JxC polling as the frontrunner for the October elections, it seems the change in authorities could allow the province to have fluid relations with the national government in the next tenure. However, the robust nature of the oil-royalty trust should not be affected by the change in the province administration.

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