Institutional Opportunism: How Electoral Fortunes Shape Preferences for Power-Sharing Institutions in Latin America

Supporting Information

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Abstract. Drawing on approximately 4,000 face-to-face interviews with lower house members from seventeen Latin American countries, this article demonstrates how partisan considerations shape legislators' preferences for power-sharing institutions. Distributive models argue that reforming parties derive preferences based on potential advantages in power allocation, yet the role of individual legislators remains underexplored. The evidence reveals that legislators favor institutional arrangements that maximize their party's influence. Representatives from larger parties prefer electoral rules that reduce the number of parties in the House, while incumbent lawmakers support a stronger executive. Notably, party positions often shift following changes in electoral fortunes: Parties become more favorable of proportional representation after losing seats and advocate for reinforced congressional authority upon leaving office.

Keywords. Comparative political institutions; Institutional reform; Electoral rules; Presidential power; Political parties; Latin America.

Replication. Replication materials for all the results and findings are available at the Harvard Dataverse, at: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/8EEJTX.

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Appendix I: Dependent Variables

University of Salamanca's Parliamentary Elites in Latin America Project (from now on, PELA) has interviewed lower house legislators in every Latin American country (except Cuba) for up to nine survey waves (as of now) since mid-1990s.[1]

The dataset used in this manuscript comprises approximately 4,000 face-to-face interviews from 17 countries, conducted over 44 country-waves. Venezuela is not included in the sample because the questions of interests were not included in the conducted interviews; the remaining Latin American countries are all included. A detail of the distribution of interviews by country and year is reported in Table IV-1 and IV-2 (Appendix IV, below).

Two survey questions from the PELA data are used as the main dependent variables in this manuscript, one about the support of a stronger presidential authority, and the second one about the use of proportional rules in House elections.

a) Use of Proportional Rules

A question regarding the use of proportional rules in legislative election was included in 44 surveys; the question was asked to a total of 3,915 representatives.

Original wording, in Spanish

En la actualidad, se discute mucho sobre las ventajas e inconvenientes de los distintos sistemas electorales. Piense en las elecciones a la Cámara, ¿cuál cree que sería la posición ideal para su país?

Sistema **proporcional** que garantice la representación equitativa de todas las fuerzas políticas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Sistema **mayoritario** que garantice gobiernos fuertes y efectivos

Own translation (inverted scale)

Nowadays, there is considerable discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of different electoral systems. Considering the election of the House, what do you think is the best position for your country?

A **majoritarian** system that favors strong and effective governments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A **proportional** system that assures a fair representation of all political forces

[1] The PELA project's website provides information about the composition of samples as well as copies of the survey questionnaires. Available at: <https://oir.org.es/pela/>, accessed: 06/15/2024.

Responses were recorded on a 10-point scale. However, two corrections were adopted. First, the indicator was recoded into a 1-5 scale, to facilitate the comparison of results across outcome variables. Second, the response scale was reverted to make the interpretation of model results more intuitive: the lowest value represents the position most favorable toward majoritarian rules; and the highest score, the most favorable toward proportional representation.

Figure I-1. Distribution of legislator preferences over the use of proportional rules in House elections: Latin American House of Representatives, 2002-2012

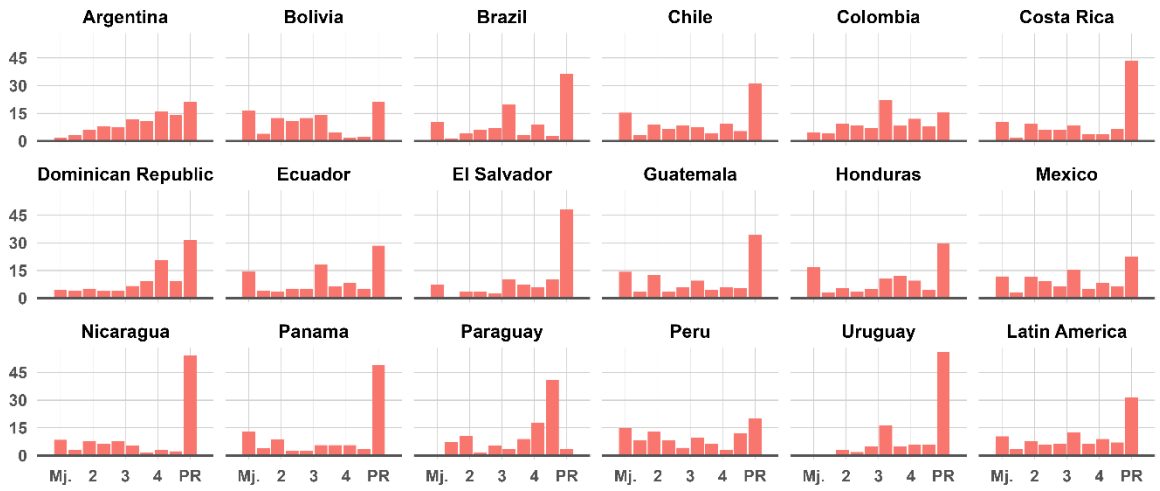


Figure I-1 represents the distribution of legislator's preferences over the use or proportional rules. Most of the interviewees manifests their preference for proportional electoral institutions, which is the dominant representation principle across the region. However, support for electoral proportionality varies significantly across countries: the distribution of preferences is significantly skewed toward the proportional pole in Uruguay, El Salvador and Paraguay, while it is much more even in Colombia, Honduras and Peru.

b) Power of the President

A question regarding preferences over the extension of presidential power was included in 43 surveys; the question was asked to a total of 3,864 representatives.

Original wording, in Spanish

Indique en la siguiente escala su posición personal sobre la forma de gobierno:

A favor de aumentar las atribuciones del **Presidente** en detrimento de la Cámara/Congreso	1	2	3	4	5	A favor de aumentar las atribuciones de la **Cámara/Congreso** en detrimento del Presidente

Own translation (inverted scale)

What is your personal position about the form of government? Are you in favor of:

Increasing the power of **Congress**, in detriment to the president	1	2	3	4	5	Increasing the power of the **president**, in detriment to Congress

Two different scales were used to code answers on this question: a 5-point scale in older waves (N=2681, distributed over 29 country-waves), and a 10-point one in more recent interviews (N=1159, over 14 country-waves). Responses recorded using a 10-point scale were recoded into the 5-point one; and the response scale was inverted to make more intuitive their interpretation: the lowest value represents the position most favorable toward increasing the authority of Congress; and the highest score, the most favorable toward strengthening the power of the president.

Figure I-2. Distribution of legislator preferences over the power of the president: Latin American House of Representatives, 2002-2012

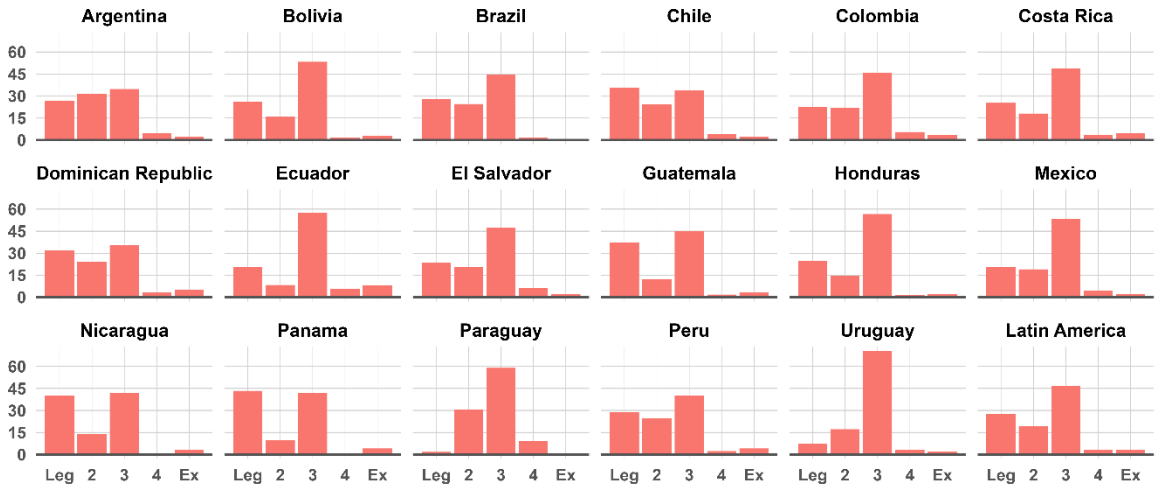


Figure I-2 presents the distribution of legislator's preferences over the Power of the President. Most of the interviewees manifests their preference for a stronger authority of Congress. However, support for delegating power on the president somewhat differs across countries: differently from most of the region, the distribution of preferences is concentrated around the mid-point of the scale in Uruguay, Mexico or Ecuador.

Appendix II: Model Equations, and Independent and Control Variables

This manuscript analyzes the preferences of Latin American legislators over two major elements of the institutional design (see Appendix I). The main empirical analysis is based on a series of linear mixed-effects models. Legislators in survey samples are anonymous; thus, the used models need to assume that each individual observation is a different legislator, even though some of them might have been interviewed more than once across survey waves.

Let j index countries, let k index survey waves, and let i index legislators. The cross-sectional analysis is captured by:

$$y_i \sim N\left(X_{j[i]}\beta, \sigma_y^2\right)$$

$$X_{jk[i]}\beta = \alpha_{j[i]} + \gamma_{k[i]} + \beta_1 size_i + \beta_2 incumbency_i + \beta_3 (size * incumbency)_i + \beta_4 {size_i}^2 + \delta Z_i$$

$$\alpha_j \sim N(\mu_\alpha, \sigma_\alpha^2)$$

$$\gamma_k \sim N\left(\mu_\gamma, \sigma_\gamma^2\right)$$

where the term y_i captures the preferences of legislator i regarding the use of proportional rules (empirical section 1) or the power of the president (empirical section 2), and its expected value is modeled over a normal distribution.

The models include two party characteristics of interest. The term $X\beta$ is a linear predictor, where $size$ and $incumbency$ are the main independent variables in the equation; a set of β captures the effect of these predictors; and δ captures the effect of a Z vector of potential individual confounders. Descriptive statistics of the model variables are provided in the next section.

Party magnitude ($size$) is measured as the seat share of the legislator's party at the moment of the interview. The incumbency status ($incumbency$) is captured through a dummy variable, indicating whether the party of the legislator is the same party of the president at the moment of the interview.

The Z vector of covariates includes individual-level data, such as age, gender, legislative experience and ideological position of the interviewees, as well as a proxy of party institutionalization such as party's age (logged), and country-level data, including measures of the legislative and non-legislative powers of the president, the ideological position of the president, and the president's approval rating. Complementary models additionally include measures of democratic consolidation (level of democracy, consecutive years of democracy) and macroeconomic performance (growth and inflation).

Models also include country- and wave-level varying intercepts: α_j is a country-level intercept for country j, and γ_k is a wave-level varying intercept for PELA wave k. These varying intercepts capture potential idiosyncratic country and time differences in support of alternative institutional designs.

Results of generalized linear mixed-effects models (Gelman and Hill 2007; Bates et. al 2015) are reported in Tables 1 and 2. The prediction intervals around the fitted regression lines in Figures 2 and 4 come from the posterior simulations of beta, over 50,000 independent simulation draws (Gelman and Su 2016). Observations in the complementary models (see Table III-3 and Table III-4) were weighted to replicate the party composition of the legislative assembly at the moment of the interview. Results do not differ substantively.

a) Legislator-level data

Legislator-level data comes from the PELA surveys. This data includes:

Legislator's ideological position. It is measured as the legislator's self-location on a 1-10 scale, in which the lowest value represents the extreme left.

Legislator's age. It is the age of the legislator at moment of the interview.

Women legislator (dummy). It is measured as the self-reported gender identification of the legislator. It is coded '1' for a female, and 0 otherwise.

First term as representative (dummy). The experience of the legislator is recorded in binary form. It is coded '1' when the legislator was in his or her first term in office, and 0 otherwise.

b) Party-level data

Party-level data comprises characteristics of legislator's party, such as:

Party seats (%). It indicates the percentage of seats of interviewee's party, according to PELA's record. The variable is missing for those legislators from unidentified parties (recorded as "Others" in the survey), or legislators without partisan attachment ("Independents").

Incumbent party (dummy). It measures whether the party of the legislator is the same party of the president, at moment of the interview. It is coded '1' for an incumbent party's legislator, and 0 otherwise.[2] In those cases in which the term of legislators starts some months before the presidential inauguration (e.g., Colombia), the party of the president is coded following the president-elect's party.

Age of the party (log). It is measured as the logarithm of the age of the party, at the year of the interview.

[2] In a limited number of surveys, legislators were asked whether they were aligned with the government or in the opposition (in Spanish, "¿Se considera Ud. del gobierno o la oposición?"). The self-reported measure is not used in the models because (a) from a theoretical standpoint, it blurs the line between being part of the coalition of the president, with being a member of her own party; and (b) from an estimation standpoint, it considerably reduces the number of observations in the models.

c) Country-level data

Country-level data mostly comes from four different sources: indicators of democracy come from Polity-IV and Freedom House; indicators of the incumbent party's ideology come from Murillo and coauthors (2011); measures of presidential power come from Negretto (2013); and indicators of presidential approval come from Carlin and coauthors (2023).

Country-level data is measured on a yearly basis, and it comprises:

Legislative Power of the President. It is an index of the concentration of legislative authority in the executive, including decree power and veto power. The variable consists of an index derived from categorical principal component analysis, whose values range continuously from 1 to 100, in which the highest score corresponds to the largest power concentration.

Non-Legislative Power of the President. It is an index of the concentration of executive power in areas different from policy making, such as government and appointed powers, emergency powers, and interbranch conflict powers. The variable consists of an index derived from categorical principal component analysis, whose values range continuously from 1 to 100, in which the highest score corresponds to the strongest non-legislative power.

Right-leaning President (dummy). It measures whether the incumbent party is considered right-leaning, including both right and center-right ones; and it is coded '1' for a right-leaning president's party, and 0 otherwise.

Left-leaning President (dummy). It replicates the previous measure, grouping together left and center-left president's parties, and 0 otherwise.

President's approval rating. It measures the approval rating of the president, on the quarter when the fieldwork was concluded, based on data from the Executive Approval Project.

Years of democracy. It is measured as the number of consecutive years the country has remained democratic, and it is considered that a democracy was established in the first year with (a) a Polity-IV score equal (or higher) to 6, and (b) a popularly elected executive. This second requirement includes not only direct elections, but also indirect elections through Electoral College (e.g. Argentina in 1983-89) and in Congress (e.g. Bolivia; or Brazil in 1985).

Freedom House average. It is measured as the average of Freedom House's 'Political rights' and 'Civil liberties' scores, in the year of the interview. The score is recorded in a 7-point scale, in which the lowest score corresponds to the highest level of democracy.[3]

[3] Score averages of 5 points or more are conventionally considered authoritarian countries. Freedom House score is built on a multidimensional idea of democracy, inspired by Dahl's (1971) influential conception: democracy consists of two attributes, contestation and participation. This measure is, however, not free of criticism, because of potential ideological bias against leftist governments (Mainwaring et al. 2001, Bollen and Paxton 2000), issues with aggregation of institutional dimensions (Munck 2009), and problems of comparability across time (Giannone 2010). For a review of alternative measures of democracy, see Munck (2009) and Munck and Verkuilen (2002).

Economic growth. It is the interannual change in country's GDP, based on World Bank data, lagged by one year.

Inflation rate. It is the interannual change in country's inflation, based on World Bank data, lagged by one year.

Appendix III: Model Results

a) Main empirical results

Tables in this section present the main empirical results. Models in Table III-1 examine the preferences of legislators over the use of proportional rules in the election of Congress.

Models in Table III-2 examine the preferences of legislators over concentration of power in the executive office. Models in both tables do not included weights.

Table III-1. Legislator's Preferences over Proportional Rules in Congressional Elections: Latin American Lower Chambers, 2002-2012. Mixed-effects regression models.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)
Party seats (%)	-0.0144***	-0.0248**	-0.0293***	-0.0299***
	(0.0020)	(0.0076)	(0.0086)	(0.0088)
Incumbent party	-0.0607	-0.0424	-0.0480	-0.0583
	(0.0592)	(0.1853)	(0.1944)	(0.1963)
Seats (%) x Incumbency		-0.0008	-0.0005	-0.0001
		(0.0054)	(0.0056)	(0.0057)
Party seats (%) squared		0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
		(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)
Legislative Power	-0.0071†	-0.0072†	-0.0086*	-0.0063
	(0.0043)	(0.0043)	(0.0042)	(0.0054)
Non-Legislative Power	-0.0049	-0.0050	-0.0075	-0.0067
	(0.0062)	(0.0062)	(0.0061)	(0.0083)
Leg.'s ideological position	-0.1020***	-0.0996***	-0.0962***	-0.0978***
	(0.0115)	(0.0116)	(0.0121)	(0.0121)
Legislator's age			0.0024	0.0020
			(0.0026)	(0.0026)
Female legislator			-0.0366	-0.0348
			(0.0624)	(0.0624)
No prior experience			0.0437	0.0588
			(0.0530)	(0.0534)
Party age (log)			0.0206	0.0126
			(0.0263)	(0.0265)
Right-leaning President			0.0377	0.0206
			(0.1757)	(0.2063)
Left-leaning President			0.1744	0.1328
			(0.1547)	(0.1785)
Presidential approval (%)			-0.0019	-0.0034
			(0.0026)	(0.0027)
Years of democracy				-0.0052
				(0.0106)

FH score (average)				0.1109
				(0.0966)
GDP growth (%, lag)				-0.0228
				(0.0192)
Inflation rate (%, lag)				0.0323*
				(0.0137)
(Intercept)	4.9385***	5.0452***	5.0317***	4.7715***
	(0.2953)	(0.3018)	(0.3727)	(0.5642)
Random effects				
	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.
Country	0.4186	0.4168	0.4056	0.5112
Wave	0.0988	0.0915	0.1152	0.1695
(Residual)	1.3293	1.3293	1.3279	1.3256
AIC	12,106.36	12,133.03	11,171.45	11,195.66
BIC	12,161.85	12,200.86	11,280.88	11,329.41
Observations	3,521	3,521	3,228	3,228
Groups: Country	17	17	17	17
Groups: Wave	4	4	4	4

† p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table III-2. Legislator's Preferences over the Power of the President: Latin American Lower Chambers, 2002-2012. Mixed-effects regression models.

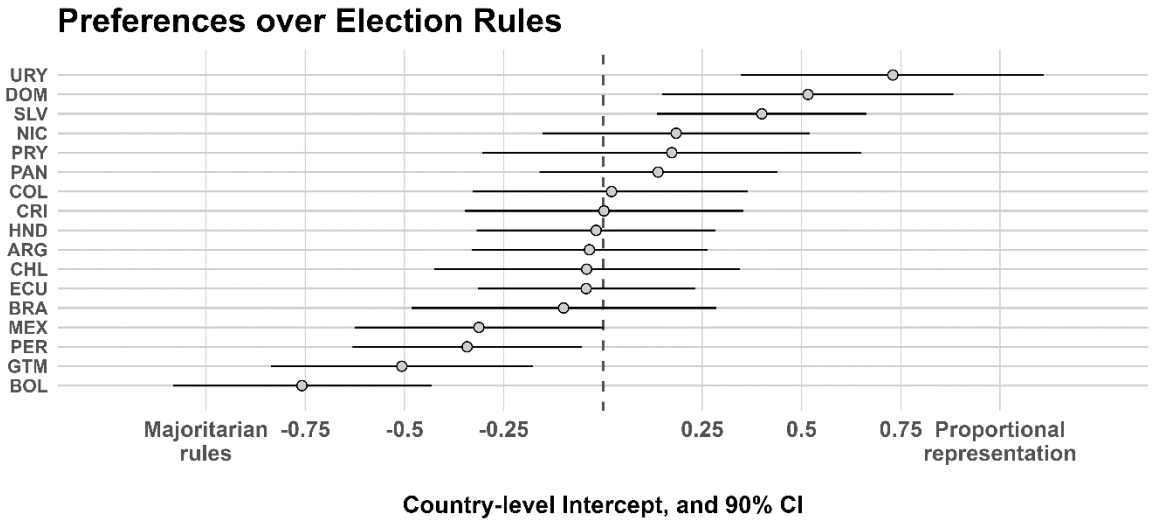
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)
Party seats (%)	0.0037*	0.0038	0.0066	0.0127*
	(0.0015)	(0.0056)	(0.0064)	(0.0064)
Incumbent party	0.3562***	0.5040***	0.4807***	0.4324**
	(0.0439)	(0.1367)	(0.1437)	(0.1443)
Seats (%) x Incumbency		-0.0044	-0.0036	-0.0019
		(0.0040)	(0.0041)	(0.0042)
Party seats (%) squared		0.0000	0.0000	-0.0001
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Legislative Power	0.0021	0.0021	0.0010	0.0017
	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0024)	(0.0027)
Non-Legislative Power	-0.0030	-0.0033	-0.0031	-0.0037
	(0.0032)	(0.0032)	(0.0034)	(0.0040)
Leg.'s ideological position	0.0253**	0.0253**	0.0276**	0.0277**
	(0.0085)	(0.0086)	(0.0089)	(0.0089)
Legislator's age			-0.0023	-0.0020
			(0.0019)	(0.0019)
Female legislator			0.0165	0.0109
			(0.0466)	(0.0464)
No prior experience			0.0042	-0.0163
			(0.0392)	(0.0394)
Party age (log)			-0.0310	-0.0273
			(0.0196)	(0.0196)
Right-leaning President			0.1891	-0.0870
			(0.1390)	(0.1660)
Left-leaning President			0.2324†	0.0079
			(0.1213)	(0.1426)
Presidential approval (%)			0.0005	0.0021
			(0.0020)	(0.0020)
Years of democracy				-0.0002
				(0.0056)
FH score (average)				-0.0408
				(0.0587)
GDP growth (%, lag)				-0.0527***
				(0.0134)
Inflation rate (%, lag)				-0.0173†
				(0.0096)
(Intercept)	1.9378***	1.9206***	1.9131***	2.3550***
	(0.1663)	(0.1766)	(0.2499)	(0.3355)

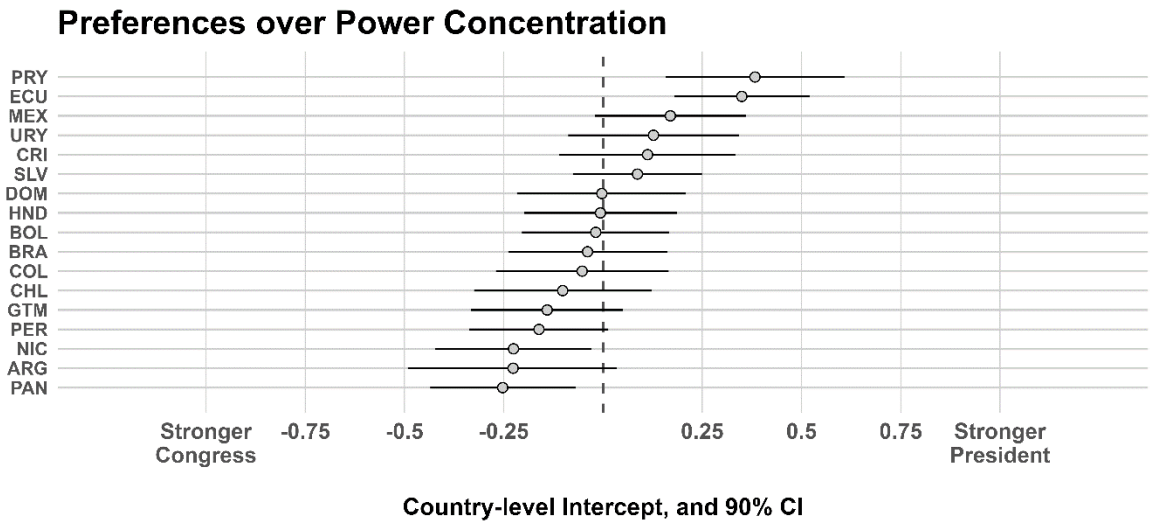
Random effects				
	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.
Country	0.2044	0.2084	0.2195	0.2302
Wave	0.1067	0.1125	0.1315	0.1203
(Residual)	0.9741	0.9740	0.9737	0.9695
AIC	9,685.80	9,714.42	8,957.21	8,961.65
BIC	9,741.09	9,781.99	9,066.21	9,094.88
Observations	3,440	3,440	3,151	3,151
Groups: Country	17	17	17	17
Groups: Wave	4	4	4	4

† p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Figure III-1 presents country-level intercepts and their 90% confidence intervals, for each country in the data, based on Model 2 in Table III-1 and Table III-2, respectively.

Figure III-1. Country-level average support, and 90% confidence intervals, over alternative institutional designs: Latin American lower chambers, 1998-2012





Note: Estimates of country-level intercepts and 90% confidence intervals are based on Model 3, in Table III-1 and Table III-2, respectively.

The upper panel reports the average support for alternative legislative election rules: on the one hand, legislators in Uruguay are those most favorable to proportional representation, followed by lawmakers in Dominican Republic and El Salvador; on the other, representatives in Bolivia and Guatemala are those most favorable to majoritarian elections.

The lower panel presents the average support for a stronger presidential authority: legislators in Paraguay and Ecuador are those most favorable to it, while lawmakers in Panama and Nicaragua are those most favorable to a stronger authority of Congress.

b) Complementary empirical results

Tables in this section replicate the main empirical results, based on weighted data: observations in the models were weighted to reconstruct the party composition of the legislative assembly at the moment of the interview.

Models in Table III-3 examine the preferences of legislators over the use of proportional rules in the election of Congress, while models in Table III-4 examine the preferences of legislators over concentration of power in the executive office.

Table III-3. Legislator's Preferences over Proportional Rules in Congressional Elections: Latin American Lower Chambers, 2002-2012. Mixed-effects regression models, with weighted data.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)
Party seats (%)	-0.0145***	-0.0254**	-0.0298***	-0.0302***
	(0.0020)	(0.0077)	(0.0087)	(0.0088)
Incumbent party	-0.0607	-0.0484	-0.0629	-0.0808
	(0.0592)	(0.1869)	(0.1965)	(0.1983)
Seats (%) x Incumbency		-0.0006	-0.0001	0.0006
		(0.0054)	(0.0057)	(0.0057)
Party seats (%) squared		0.0002	0.0002	0.0002
		(0.0001)	(0.0002)	(0.0002)
Legislative Power	-0.0072†	-0.0073†	-0.0086*	-0.0062
	(0.0043)	(0.0043)	(0.0043)	(0.0055)
Non-Legislative Power	-0.0051	-0.0052	-0.0075	-0.0069
	(0.0062)	(0.0062)	(0.0062)	(0.0084)
Leg.'s ideological position	-0.1019***	-0.0995***	-0.0956***	-0.0970***
	(0.0115)	(0.0116)	(0.0121)	(0.0121)
Legislator's age			0.0025	0.0021
			(0.0026)	(0.0026)
Female legislator			-0.0320	-0.0300
			(0.0624)	(0.0624)
No prior experience			0.0429	0.0583
			(0.0531)	(0.0535)
Party age (log)			0.0195	0.0113
			(0.0265)	(0.0267)
Right-leaning President			0.0460	0.0303
			(0.1769)	(0.2070)
Left-leaning President			0.1726	0.1302
			(0.1555)	(0.1790)
Presidential approval (%)			-0.0023	-0.0039
			(0.0026)	(0.0027)
Years of democracy				-0.0059
				(0.0107)

FH score (average)				0.1080
				(0.0969)
GDP growth (%, lag)				-0.0238
				(0.0193)
Inflation rate (%, lag)				0.0334*
				(0.0138)
(Intercept)	4.9502***	5.0645***	5.0539***	4.8109***
	(0.2956)	(0.3025)	(0.3772)	(0.5712)
Random effects				
	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.
Country	0.4176	0.4156	0.4102	0.5183
Wave	0.1044	0.0968	0.1206	0.1784
(Residual)	1.3318	1.3318	1.3314	1.3291
AIC	12,126.32	12,152.77	11,194.23	11,218.16
BIC	12,181.82	12,220.60	11,303.67	11,351.91
Observations	3,521	3,521	3,228	3,228
Groups: Country	17	17	17	17
Groups: Wave	4	4	4	4

† p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Table III-4. Legislator's Preferences over the Power of the President: Latin American Lower Chambers, 2002-2012. Mixed-effects regression models, with weighted data.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)	Estimate (Std. error)
Party seats (%)	0.0037*	0.0045	0.0067	0.0127*
	(0.0015)	(0.0057)	(0.0064)	(0.0065)
Incumbent party	0.3567***	0.4943***	0.4731**	0.4228**
	(0.0438)	(0.1376)	(0.1450)	(0.1455)
Seats (%) x Incumbency		-0.0041	-0.0033	-0.0015
		(0.0040)	(0.0042)	(0.0042)
Party seats (%) squared		0.0000	0.0000	-0.0001
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Legislative Power	0.0022	0.0023	0.0010	0.0017
	(0.0022)	(0.0022)	(0.0024)	(0.0027)
Non-Legislative Power	-0.0029	-0.0032	-0.0032	-0.0036
	(0.0032)	(0.0033)	(0.0035)	(0.0040)
Leg.'s ideological position	0.0251**	0.0249**	0.0269**	0.0270**
	(0.0085)	(0.0086)	(0.0089)	(0.0089)
Legislator's age			-0.0025	-0.0022
			(0.0019)	(0.0019)
Female legislator			0.0168	0.0107
			(0.0465)	(0.0463)
No prior experience			0.0058	-0.0157
			(0.0392)	(0.0393)
Party age (log)			-0.0262	-0.0220
			(0.0197)	(0.0197)
Right-leaning President			0.1878	-0.0914
			(0.1398)	(0.1661)
Left-leaning President			0.2400*	0.0121
			(0.1218)	(0.1427)
Presidential approval (%)			0.0001	0.0018
			(0.0020)	(0.0020)
Years of democracy				0.0005
				(0.0056)
FH score (average)				-0.0434
				(0.0588)
GDP growth (%, lag)				-0.0547***
				(0.0134)
Inflation rate (%, lag)				-0.0183†
				(0.0096)
(Intercept)	1.9242***	1.9010***	1.9178***	2.3713***
	(0.1677)	(0.1784)	(0.2531)	(0.3383)

Random effects				
	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.	Std. dev.
Country	0.2072	0.2111	0.2229	0.2322
Wave	0.1045	0.1107	0.1346	0.1241
(Residual)	0.9740	0.9739	0.9745	0.9699
AIC	9,692.26	9,720.92	8,968.67	8,970.46
BIC	9,747.55	9,788.50	9,077.67	9,103.68
Observations	3,440	3,440	3,151	3,151
Groups: Country	17	17	17	17
Groups: Wave	4	4	4	4

† p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

Appendix IV: Descriptive Data & Statistics

Table IV-1 presents the PELA samples included in the manuscript dataset. Table VI-2 reports the composition of the model data by country.

Additionally, Table IV-3 and Table IV-4 present a summary of the model covariates of model results in the previous section, in Table III-1 and Table III-2, respectively.

Table IV-1. PELA samples included in the analysis

Country	PELA	Fieldwork ended	n	Country	PELA	Fieldwork ended	n
Argentina	51	2004 Q2	105	El Salvador	48	2003 Q3	80
Argentina	67	2008 Q2	110	El Salvador	70	2009 Q3	68
Argentina	73	2010 Q3	70	Guatemala	38	2002 Q3	79
Bolivia	47	2003 Q3	80	Guatemala	52	2004 Q3	121
Bolivia	62	2006 Q3	98	Guatemala	68	2008 Q2	97
Brazil	55	2005 Q4	134	Guatemala	85	2012 Q2	87
Brazil	75	2010 Q3	129	Honduras	40	2002 Q4	102
Chile	42	2002 Q3	88	Honduras	57	2006 Q3	91
Chile	60	2006 Q3	90	Honduras	74	2010 Q2	91
Chile	77	2010 Q3	86	Mexico	50	2004 Q3	124
Colombia	46	2003 Q2	95	Mexico	63	2006 Q4	128
Colombia	59	2006 Q3	107	Mexico	79	2010 Q4	98
Colombia	83	2011 Q2	91	Nicaragua	39	2002 Q4	60
Costa Rica	43	2002 Q3	51	Nicaragua	66	2007 Q2	69
Costa Rica	56	2006 Q2	57	Panama	41	2002 Q3	64
Costa Rica	78	2010 Q3	56	Panama	53	2004 Q4	68
Dom. Republic	44	2003 Q3	118	Panama	71	2009 Q4	64
Dom. Republic	64	2006 Q4	93	Paraguay	49	2003 Q3	56
Dom. Republic	82	2011 Q2	78	Peru	61	2006 Q3	96
Ecuador	45	2003 Q2	98	Peru	80	2010 Q3	80
Ecuador	65	2008 Q2	98	Uruguay	54	2005 Q2	86
Ecuador	72	2009 Q4	95	Uruguay	76	2010 Q2	79

Note: Due to data limitations, the sample from Costa Rica 2002, PELA report #43, is not included in the analysis of presidential authority.

Table IV-2. Distribution of PELA Survey Respondents, by Country and Outcome Variable of Interest

Country	Use of Proportional Rules		Power of the President	
	Obs.	%	Obs.	%
Argentina	285	7.28	285	7.38
Bolivia	178	4.55	178	4.61
Brazil	263	6.72	263	6.81
Chile	264	6.74	264	6.83
Colombia	293	7.48	293	7.58
Costa Rica	164	4.19	113	2.92
Dominican Republic	289	7.38	289	7.48
Ecuador	291	7.43	291	7.53
El Salvador	148	3.78	148	3.83
Guatemala	384	9.81	384	9.94
Honduras	284	7.25	284	7.35
Mexico	350	8.94	350	9.06
Nicaragua	129	3.30	129	3.34
Panama	196	5.01	196	5.07
Paraguay	56	1.43	56	1.45
Peru	176	4.50	176	4.55
Uruguay	165	4.21	165	4.27
Total	3,915	100.00	3,864	100.00

Note: The number of respondents differs from the total number of observations in PELA data, given the questions of interest were not asked in every survey wave.

Table IV-3. Descriptive statistics: Table III-1

Variables	Valid Obs.	Mean (or %)	SD	Med	Min	Max
Dependent variables						
Use of Proportional Rules	3,874	3.507	1.394	3.667	1.000	5.000
Party variables						
Party seats (%)	3,624	30.101	16.513	29.577	0.769	61.538
Incumbent party	3,915	35.9%	--	--	0.000	1.000
Party age	3,572	49.003	44.911	34.000	1.000	174.000
Party age (log)	3,572	3.320	1.255	3.526	0.000	5.159
Institutional variables						
Legislative Powers	3,915	51.904	26.046	39.890	22.450	92.010
Non-Legislative Powers	3,915	18.135	17.804	9.370	1.000	45.340
Years of democracy	3,915	20.911	13.189	19.000	5.000	61.000
FH score (average)	3,915	2.485	0.872	2.500	1.000	4.000
Legislators' characteristics						
Age	3,858	47.858	9.949	48.000	19.000	86.000
Female legislator	3,904	18.4%	--	--	0.000	1.000
No prior experience	3,895	35.6%	--	--	0.000	1.000
Leg.'s ideological position	3,836	5.029	2.064	5.000	1.000	10.000
Political variables						
Right-leaning President	3,681	47.8%	--	--	0.000	1.000
Left-leaning President	3,681	46.0%	--	--	0.000	1.000
Presidential approval (%)	3,915	49.478	15.079	49.649	7.046	80.528
Economic variables						
GDP growth (%, lag)	3,915	3.519	3.052	3.348	-4.700	9.263
Inflation rate (%, lag)	3,915	5.995	3.190	5.603	0.072	13.798

Table IV-4. Descriptive statistics: Table III-2

Variables	Valid Obs.	Mean (or %)	SD	Med	Min	Max
Dependent variables						
Power of the President	3,791	2.359	1.021	3.000	1.000	5.000
Party variables						
Party seats (%)	3,573	30.144	16.604	30.000	0.769	61.538
Incumbent party	3,864	35.9	--	--	0.000	1.000
Party age	3,521	49.397	45.055	34.000	1.000	174.000
Party age (log)	3,521	3.332	1.251	3.526	0.000	5.159
Institutional variables						
Legislative Powers	3,864	52.224	26.067	39.890	22.450	92.010
Non-Legislative Powers	3,864	18.361	17.811	9.370	1.000	45.340
Years of democracy	3,864	20.488	12.747	19.000	5.000	61.000
FH score (average)	3,864	2.498	0.870	2.500	1.000	4.000
Legislators' characteristics						
Age	3,807	47.863	9.933	48.000	19.000	86.000
Female legislator	3,853	18.2	--	--	0.000	1.000
No prior experience	3,844	36.0	--	--	0.000	1.000
Leg.'s ideological position	3,788	5.029	2.069	5.000	1.000	10.000
Political variables						
Right-leaning President	3,630	47.1	--	--	0.000	1.000
Left-leaning President	3,630	46.6	--	--	0.000	1.000
Presidential approval (%)	3,864	49.343	15.132	49.649	7.046	80.528
Economic variables						
GDP growth (%, lag)	3,864	3.551	3.059	3.348	-4.700	9.263
Inflation rate (%, lag)	3,864	5.926	3.153	5.603	0.072	13.798

Table IV-5. Average swing in party positions between consecutive waves, by changes in party status

	Use of proportional representation		Strength of presidential powers	
	All parties	Large parties	All parties	Large parties
Stay in government	-0.0686	-0.1091	0.0202	0.0168
Stay out of government	-0.1097	-0.0332	0.0311	0.0993
Moved into government	-0.1991	-0.1985	0.5031	0.4416
Left government	0.4199	0.4721	-0.1277	-0.2126

Note: "All parties" includes all parties in the sample appearing in two consecutive waves. "Large parties" only includes parties with 10 or more seats in the baseline sample.

All parties appearing in two consecutive surveys in the dataset were identified. The average position on each dependent variable was recorded for each party, and the swing in their average position was calculated by determining the difference between waves.

These parties were coded into four groups:

(1) staying in office,
(2) staying in the opposition,
(3) leaving office, and
(4) moving into office.

Subsequently, the average swing for each of these groups was calculated.

The expectation is that the positions of parties not changing their status (i.e., staying in office or staying in the opposition) would remain relatively stable, close to zero. The evidence supports this, showing that these two groups present the smallest changes.

Conversely, the expectation is that parties changing their status (i.e., leaving office or moving into office) would show significant changes in position, moving in opposite directions. The evidence confirms this, showing that these groups present the largest changes, demonstrating a high level of opportunism among legislators.

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