Universidade de Brasília
Instituto de Ciência Política
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência Política

Minority report: decisiveness and accountability as drivers for good governance in Latin American minority governments

Fernando Moutinho Ramalho Bittencourt

Projeto de Qualificação de Doutorado em Ciência Política

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Projeto de qualificação apresentado ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciência Política, do Instituto de Ciência Política da Universidade de Brasília, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de doutor em Ciência Política

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1 Introduction

Most studies dealing with multiparty presidential systems have concentrated on the processes by which presidents form and keep majoritarian coalitions going, and on the main aspects of coalitions as political realities. Little has been said about the possibilities of other democratic arrangements not involving majority coalition-building, in spite of a growing awareness of the continuous existence of a relevant number of presidential governments who operate under minority conditions. Besides, the lenses through which those governments have been watched are massively those of the causes for their existence at all, their political survival and the different aspects of power-sharing they exhibit, while their effective results in terms of policymaking are seldom mentioned. Hence, this research aims at studying minority presidential governments in terms of their policy performance, exploring their determinants and how they relate to broader institutional features in presidential regimes.

To assess the performance of minority governments in Latin America (that is, those where the parties represented in the president´s cabinet do not hold a majority of seats in the legislative chamber[1]), we define as parameter of good governance a set of results in macroeconomic policy (inflation, Gross Domestic Product - GDP growth, employment and inequality rates) in each country-year, to be compared with the region´s average in the same year. On the causal side, we posit as theoretically expected reasons for any better-than-average policy outcome a bundle of features regarding the government´s capacity to make decisions and commit to them, associated with the existence of strong legislative checks in the form of congressional oversight. On one side, we expect the government decisiveness to be affected by different combinations of factors, according to each case: some relevant presidential powers (basically on the legislative process and over the budget outlays and other administrative measures affecting the relationship with legislators), by the possibility of reconciling other parties´ goals along several political dimensions ("policy", "office" and "votes"), by the policy congruence between the presidential coalition and the composition of the legislature, and by the firmer inter-party commitments stemming from pre-electoral alliances. On the other, a more intense activity by congresses in deploying their oversight capacities must provide the accountability without which the risks of troublesome policymaking raise exponentially in any political system.

[1] Or in at least one chamber, in case of bicameral systems.

1.1 Research design overview

This piece of research, as already indicated above, is interested in discussing minority presidential governments under the perspective of their substantive results in policymaking. Thus, its object consists in the performance of minority governments under presidential regimes in delivering good public policies.

Our main goal is pointing out factors that are positively associated with better policy performance under minority governments in Latin American presidential systems.

To that end, an intermediate, specific goal of a descriptive and instrumental nature is compiling a map of policy outcomes among minority presidential governments in Latin America (measured by a composite of economic indicators regarding GNP growth, inflation, unemployment and inequality rates), assessing good outcomes vis-à-vis the average of all presidential governments using the same time frame. Fulfilling this goal, will enable us to empirically assess the possibility of good policy performance among minority governments in presidentialism, that is, to disclose in a systematic way if there are significant instances of good policy results among the minority presidential governments studied.

The main goal leads to our research question, which has a causal nature and covers the determinant of any positive policy results compiled according to the intermediate goal. Here, we ask which sets of political and institutional determinant factors can account for better-than-average policy outcomes in minority governments ?

To answer the research question, we must forward the general view, to be further deployed in several specific hypotheses, that good policy outcomes are strongly associated with the existence, in each case, of a composite of decisiveness factors duly pointed out from coalitional presidentialism and minority parliamentarism literatures, combined with a strong horizontal accountability thrust by the legislature.

Chapters 2 and 3 fully develop the reasons behind such view. In Chapter 2, the broad lines of this decisiveness/accountability architecture are drawn, to be followed in Chapter 3 by the detailed specification of each one of the individual factors posited to be relevant to the causal analysis. That´s a clearly multifactor design we propose to assess the joint effects of those many candidate causal factors on governance outcomes, and the hypotheses will be fully specified within each causal relationship using a Qualitative

Comparative Analysis (QCA) framework, which is particularly well vocationed to convey designs like that (Mello, 2021; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Indeed, what´s been proposed is fully compatible with causal complexity paradigm embedded in QCA (Mello, 2011; Albala & Leal, 2022): we see conjunctural causation, since the outcome is related to specific combinations of conditions (not partially correlated to any of them irrespective of the others), and equifinality, since within this array of decisiveness and accountability, multiple pathways can lead to a given governance outcome. Besides, causal asymmetry will be considered by the separate pondering of positive and negative outcomes.

In this sense, the study will be fulfilling the explanatory usage of QCA, mostly developing theory by the integration of various theoretical strands who support the specification of each causal condition, to arrive at better explanatory accounts[2]. On doing this, those expectations will be testable, thus enabling the theory testing role of QCA.

To reach those purposes, hypotheses will be shaped here not in the rigid deductive statistical form, but in the looser sense of a tentative assessment of whether and how empirical results match theoretical expectations, in a dialogue between theory and evidence. In more theoretical terms, hypotheses will be first formulated for causal factors as "INUS[3]" conditions, that is, positing that their presence will be necessary among possibly more than one combination leading to the outcome (without needing advance specification of any other conditions expected to combine with it)[4]. Advancing them in a very short format, each decisiveness factor[5] will be suggested as an INUS condition (since they must combine in various ways to reinforce the government´s decision-making capacity), while effective accountability by parliament will be proposed as a necessary condition to go along with decisiveness.

After those first expectations are checked against empirical data, the results of logical minimization may allow further refining in terms of stricter necessity/sufficiency formats. So, dialogue between theory and data begins with modest directional

[2] In other words, conditions are explicitly drawn from different theories and integrated into a single stable set of conditions.

[3] "insufficient but necessary part of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the result" (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012)

[4] That may be a way to hypothesize each variable´s isolated and partial relationship with the outcome without jeopardizing the causal complexity inherent in the model (Albala & Leal, 2022)

[5] As sketched in the previous section, those factors are presidential powers (legislative, budgetary and on the exchange of other favors), the reconcilability of parties´ goals along, the congruence between presidential coalition and the legislature, and the strong commitments from pre-electoral alliances.

expectations anchored in extant theory, to be examined set-theoretically in order to confirm expectations or – more likely – to discover specific combinations of conditions who deserve consideration to overhaul theory.[6].

This incremental approach also shows itself in the usage of "macro-conditions" who aggregate several related but independent factors into a single logical entity (Mello, 2021), in many of our causal conditions (such as "presidential powers" or "reconcilable party goals"). As we´ll extensively discuss later on, that´s a methodologically sound strategy to encompass under a single logical entity various dimensions of a concept who do interact very closely (usually allowing for several different combinations between them to generate the same causal effect). However, it brings some degree of abstraction to the conclusions, who will pivot around such theoretical aggregates, and not directly derive from individual, observable factors (that is, we might explain in terms of a composite "presidential powers" variable, instead of more empirically intuitive "constitutional legislative powers to the president"; "budget share under presidential discretionary control", etc.). Our assessment, then, will be a first step in understanding the outcome through the joint working of clusters of causal factors, which hopefully will be a stepping stone for further, finer examination of each "root cause" within those clusters. Anyway, if that´s how reality works[7], there´s no avoiding such analytical gradualism; indeed, it may be the only manageable way to begin to unfold the relationships between several interdependent conditions and the posited outcome.

1.2 Within the big picture - the windows of opportunity

To draw a first outlook[8] on how this research inserts into the theoretical debates on multiparty presidentialism, we must firstly point to a singular feature in it: most scholars[9] focus their research on polities and historical settings where a formal legislative majority under presidential command, and associated to the sharing of

[6] This incremental way of structuring research is suggested by Mello (2011) as a hedged, cautious approach which nevertheless provides a directional and clear way to formulate theoretical expectations. For other examples of QCA being used in the study of coalition theory, see Moury (2004), Albala (2020), Oppermann and Brummer (2020) and Santos, Pérez-Liñan and Montero (2014).

[7] Here, again, the analogy with multiple regression is mandatory: the several independent variables and their interaction terms, plus the several controls, also reflect attempts to capture joint explanatory effects in a separate way.

[8] To be fully developed in later chapters according to the main lines of enquiry to this research.

[9] For broader overviews on the whole theoretical debate on multiparty presidentialism, including the original concerns on its democratic feasibility and how it was overcome, see also Couto, Soares and Livramento (2021), Melo (2009), Bittencourt (2019) and Freudenreich (2016)

cabinet posts with the coalition parties, can be found – that is, they concentrate on how those settings work, or on the conditions required for such settings, or even on the presumed absence of working democracies without them. The majority assumption runs through two – radically opposed - visions of multiparty presidentialism (Rennó, 2006): both the original Linzian approach of the unfeasibility of democratic presidentialism outside US-like strictly bipartisan dynamics[10] and the generation of coalitional presidentialism theorists that followed[11]. Indeed, the former group fears for democracy precisely because presidents wouldn´t able to raise such legislative majorities (and, due to that, presidential systems can´t work properly); the latter argue that governability in multiparty presidential systems exist because, and only because, presidents keep adding new parties to the cabinet until reaching legislative majority status. As settled as those founding debates can be considered now, they underline the remarkable focus on getting and managing a majority status by the president as the key issue for policy-making and even for democratic stability in multiparty presidentialism. As a consequence, minority governments become automatically equated by those theoretical interpretations to an undesirable or, maybe, unconceivable phenomenon.

At the same time as the presidentialism controversies evolved, a booming literature emerged dealing with minority governments in parliamentary systems[12]. A feature that would seem at first sight contradictory or at most a frictional, temporary improvised device (since any parliamentary government should, supposedly, be born out of a parliamentary majoritarian support) has shown to be a surprisingly frequent occurrence. Several studies presented by Strøm (1990) set the number of minority governments covering from 30 % to 45 % of all governments in post-war advanced parliamentary democracies until 1990; including in such figures data from the last decades from now, König and Lin (2020) put this number in 32,19 % of governments all

[10] Or, in a less pessimistic but still very strictly conditioned view, outside very restrictive assumptions that ensured presidential majority in congress, including low party fractionalization and a very specific electoral design (plurality rule in presidential elections, closed-list proportional representation with moderate district magnitudes to elect legislators, and concurrent electoral cycles), leading to an almost non-existent empirical footprint (Negretto, 2004, p. 2). See Chasquetti (2008), for an extensive literature survey.

[11] In short references, Figueiredo and Limongi (1999, 2008), for the Brazilian case; Chasquetti (2008), and Raile, Pereira and Power (2010), for a broader Latin American context and an analytically more sophisticated approach; and Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power (2018) for a cross-national framework including most presidentialisms in the world and the general evolution in the literature towards a relative optimism regarding the regime's governance possibilities.

[12] See, for instance, Strøm (1990), Herman and Pope (1973), Keudel-Kaiser (2016); Ganghof, Eppner, Stecker, Heeß and Schukraft (2019); Thürk (2022); Anghel and Thürk (2021); Moury and Fernandes (2016).

the way from 1945 to 2017[13]. That is, minority experiences are no longer taken as undesired, random by-products of stalemate or ungovernability, but rather they´re seen as one more "government as usual" pattern[14], whose characteristics, origins and effects must be an object of study (Strøm, 1990; Elgie, 2001a; Ganghof et. al., 2019; Salom, 2003; König & Lin, 2020; Thürk, 2022[15]).

In the meantime, scholars did not restrain themselves to studying government systems separately: recently, the comparative literature on executive-legislative relations has undergone something of an analytical convergence between presidential and parliamentary systems, emphasizing that presidents and prime ministers share, as heads of the executive, a common purpose of managing the legislative branch to advance their policy goals, and that goal depends heavily on interbranch coordination instead of any turf war over power (Chaisty, Cheeseman & Power, 2020[16])

Nowithstanding, and regardless of the non-negligible occurrence of minority governments also in Latin American multiparty presidentialism (Reniu & Albala, 2012; Figueiredo, Canello & Vieira, 2012), studies about them have not yet reached neither the comprehensiveness nor the depth already featured by those dedicated to parliamentary regimes (Figueiredo et al, 2012, p. 840; Elgie, 2001a, p. 1). Hence, there´s the first window of opportunity for our study: in-depth exploration of minority government workings may add a new viewpoint on the very essentials of presidential systems´ feasibility and prospects.

This study profits from yet another theoretical window of opportunity by focusing on policy outcomes: most of the literature assesses, directly or indirectly, impacts of minority government on political institutions or on specific results regarding

[13] Still other compilations range from 33 % in all Europe to 41,1 % in Eastern Europe, and 39,1 % among Spanish regional parliamentary governments (Field, 2016, p. 2 and 73), or from 28% to 35% (Andeweg, 2011, pp. 192).

[14] Not that the resource to minority or "divided" solutions as stopgap interim measures has disappeared, or that some of those cases haven´t collapsed into political dogfight and impasse. Elgie (2001a) presents examples of both, although emphasizing their scarcity: divided or minority government as a routine matter is currently the main outcome, with heterogeneous results varying from lean decision-making to occasional gridlocks, in both parliamentary and presidential systems.

[15] In a more regional focus, Green-Pedersen and Thomsen (2005, p. 156) claim that minority governments ended up as one of the distinctive characteristics of Scandinavian parliamentarism.

[16] Acknowledgement to that reality may be found in earlier studies such as Laver and Shepsle (1991, p. 252): "*At a more general comparative level, political systems that might on the face of it appear to be constitutionally quite distinctive may exhibit similar patterns of practical political confrontation between different branches of government, each controlled by different constellations of partisan forces*". However, such acknowledgement doesn´t mean they are seen as undistinguishable in analytical terms, since their specific institutional features make some mechanisms and causal relationships to act differently on governance (Pereira & Melo, 2012, pp. 159-160; Amorim Neto, 2006, p. 436).

politics and political competition[17]. Little could be found, however, regarding the impact of political or other variables on policy outcomes under the specific conditions of minority government, other than a few works on the effects of minority government conditions on fiscal balances (Powell 2000; Pech 2004; Edin & Ohlsson, 1991[18]). Such scarcity of studies regarding minorities´ policy outcomes is also decried by König and Lin ("we still know very little about how minority governments sustain without the majority support in parliament" – 2020, p. 3), Field (2016), Schleiter (2020); Negretto (2004), and Thürk (2022). So, a study trying to fulfill such a reflection gap might not only shed light on minority governments´ policy performance and its determinants, but also provide some feedback into the consideration of strictly political variables themselves (that is, on the links between government performance and those institutional political variables who have, up to now, been the main focus of interest in the study of minority governance).

1.3 How this paper is organized

After this introduction, the following chapter will present a structured view on the literature on minority governments in presidentialism. The main rationale for such reviewing efforts is to sketch the wider theoretical backdrop on the central issue, from which a specific and focused theoretical framework is to be developed in chapter 3. Section 2.2 will deal with the extant literature on minority governments in general. To that end, Section 2.1.1 clarifies some definitions to be used along the research, while

[17] Under those broad categories of "impacts of minority government on political institutions or on specific results regarding politics and political competition", we might find studies on their association with democratic stability (Elgie, 2001a; Cheibub, 2002; Cheibub et al, 2004; Negretto, 2006a) and their performance in terms of specifically political variables: government duration (Deheza, 1997; Chaisty & Chernykh, 2017; Saalfeld 2008; Grotz & Weber, 2012; for Strøm, 1990, that´s a measurement of fulfillment of parties´ office goals); legislative success and dominance rates in lawmaking processes (Badillo, 2007; Strøm, 1990; Cheibub et al 2004; Field 2016); voting discipline on behalf of the Executive in parliament (Chaisty & Chernik, 2007; Albala, 2009); government termination reasons (Strom, 1990, who considers it as a measurement to the attainment of parties´ policy goals); pledge fulfillment by governments (Moury & Fernandes, 2018; Matthieß 2019; Klüver & Zubek 2017); government ability in getting oppositional support for the government (Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca 2006; Godbout & Høyland 2011; Louwerse, Otjes, Willumsen & Öhberg, 2017; De Giorgi & Ilonszki 2018); incumbent future electoral successes (Strom, 1990, considered as the metrics for parties´ vote-attracting goals; Field, 2016) or Executive-Legislative conflict at large, either as publicly-aired dissent or as extreme acts of mutual dissolution (Negretto, 2004)

[18] Heller (1997, p. 498) also incidentally assesses a government´s minority situation as a possible control for budget deficit, discarding it as "consistently statistically insignificant"

Section 2.1.2 brings a bird´s eye view on the main analytical paths who converged in the literature on the issue, followed in Section 2.1.3 with a summary of the main substantive findings in the literature regarding minority presidential governments on the ground, that is, what they posit regarding the existence and the mechanisms through which they work. Section 2.1.4 sums up the contents of this literature review.

Section 2.2 will build the conceptual framework to our research, discussing the relationships between decisiveness and accountability, and between both and good governance. Those will be the theoretical scaffolding supporting our research, whose dialogue with the literature on coalition presidentialism will illuminate, still in Section 2.2, the reasons for choosing Executive-Legislative relations as the center of empirical assessments, the exact location of our analysis within the majority/minority coalitions debate, as well as the nature of minority governments as a scope condition in the whole dissertation (that is, the precise theoretical reasons why minority governments will be chosen as the universe for our study).

Chapter 3 gets down to the precise causal models, defining in conceptual terms the outcome we intend to evaluate and the causal factors within the decisiveness and accountability fields and how to operationalize each of them, as well as their data sources. After that, in section 3.5 the whole research design is reviewed upon conclusion of the theoretical building process, and the model is summarized in a QCA framework.

Chapter 4 discusses other methodological issues related to data and methods, including the criteria for selecting Latin American cases, the data sources for the basic unit of analysis (presidential cabinets), and a preliminary assessment to the potential universe of cases available under those criteria. Finally, we discuss some of the theoretical and empirical risks facing this research effort.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Minority presidents: state of the art

2.1.1 Getting the names right: conceptual specifications

To explore in a more detailed fashion the substantive content of the minority presidential government literature, we must first go through a few notional definitions and classification frameworks to correctly locate the theoretical debate. Different ideas are encompassed in the literature by such expressions as "minority governments" or "divided governments". A very general definition is the one presented by Elgie (2001a, 2001b) and named "divided government", grounded on purely arithmetical terms: the situation where the executive (that is, the parties whose members formally enter the executive cabinet as first-range ministers[19]) fails to enjoy majority support in at least one working house[20] of the legislature (which does not require that the chamber in question be controlled by any unified opposition party or coalition). This definition encompasses the more traditional numeric "minority cabinet" concept used for parliamentary systems, when the parties participating in the cabinet do not themselves control a majority (50% plus one) of the seats in the legislature, despite having won the explicit or implicit support of a legislative majority in order to be installed in office. (Laver, 1999, p. 6; Field, 2016 p. 2).

A more fine-grained typology is provided by Negretto (2004, pp. 5-8) for specifically presidential settings, taking into account not only the floor arithmetic but also the policy location of the president´s party and the other parties represented in parliament. The key variable here is the party control of two pivotal positions in the legislature, the median legislator and the veto legislator[21]. If the presidents´ party (or coalition) controls both benchmarks, there´s a "presidential" government, which might be disaggregated into "unified presidential" (if presidential party has more than 50 % of the chamber) and "median presidential" (otherwise, in which case that might be the

[19] So, this definition of cabinet or "executive coalition" can be used interchangeably with the notions of "majority coalition" or "minority coalition", since the executive is depicted as having a cabinet composed by one or more parties (Negretto, 2004, p. 12).

[20] A "working house" is any chamber who has the prerogative to approve legislation. So, in a bicameral parliament, one chamber is understood as such even if the cabinet is responsible to the other one.

[21] Underlying that definition are the assumptions of a one-dimensional policy space in which to locate parties´ position; of disciplined, unitary parties; and of a unicameral legislature.

"functional equivalent" of a parliamentary minority government). "Divided government", in the sense given to that expression by Negretto in his framework, appears when another party controls the median legislator but the president´s still holds the veto legislator. "Congressional government", at last, emerges when the presidential coalition is away from both median and veto legislators, giving an extremely high decisional dominance by the legislature. This typological framework is summarized in the following table below, and its analytical implications in the context of our research will be further discussed below.

Table 1 – Governance typology by Negretto (2004)

	Controls Median Legislator	Controls Veto Legislator
Presidential government	PP	PP
Unified presidential (PP holds 50%+ of votes)		
Median presidential (PP holds 50%+ of votes)		
Divided government	OP	PP
Congressional government	OP	OP

Obs.: "PP" means presidential party (or presidential cabinet coalition, if any). "OP" means any other party represented in the chamber who doesn´t belong to the cabinet coalition.

Source: Negretto (2004, pp. 5-8)

There´s another segmentation developed by Strøm (1990, p. 62) which, although originally applied by him in his analysis of parliamentarism, can be useful in discussing presidential cases. It involves differentiating "formal minority" from "substantive minority" cabinets. In the former, the governing cabinet is externally supported, that is, enjoys the parliamentary support of any party not represented in the cabinet with enough seats to ensure a majority of the floor on the decision scope to it applies - provided such support is negotiated prior to the formation of the government, and takes the form of an explicit, comprehensive, and more than short-term commitment to the policies as well as the survival of the government. "Substantial minority" governments, on the other hand, are not affected by any such support arrangements[22].

[22] Definition also proposed by Thürk (2022, p. 8-10 who presents a sub-typology of formal minority situations according to the degree of binding commitment between its partners). Strøm will argue that formal minority governments have markedly different dynamics vis-à-vis substantive minority ones, and that claim will be deepened by the studies on "contract parliamentarism" which will be further developed in the following chapters.

Still dealing with definitions, another clear distinction to be made is between "cabinet coalition" (of "government coalition", or even "executive coalition"), made up by the parties who share cabinet posts in the executive, and "legislative coalition" or "floor coalition". The latter means the effective support, in votes, for the executive´s bills and other initiatives towards the legislature. Indeed, the very condition of the survival of any executive lawmaking agenda (and, to a great extent, the survival in office of a parliamentary government) is that it reaches a majoritarian legislative coalition, which may or may not coincide with its own cabinet coalition. Legislative coalitions can be shifting literally from vote to vote, and as such they can´t define the minority or majority status of governments for framing into the typologies presented here – however, most minority governance issues revolves precisely around the buildup of more stable legislative coalitions to pursue policymaking (Chaisty & Power, 2018, pp. 16-17; Chaisty, Cheeseman & Power, 2018[23]). This feature allows us to clearly distinguishing between a "minority president", an executive head whose party does not hold by itself a majority in parliament (Chaisty & Chernykh, 2017), and a "minority government", where the president is unable or unwilling to put together a cabinet coalition who collectively holds a working majority in the relevant chamber (Chaisty et al, 2018),

Other definitions are grounded on behavioral features. Laver (1999, p. 6) specifies "divided government" under this perspective as what happens when governance structures with independent sources of legitimacy have the potential to come into conflict (in which case the existence of significant overlapping powers between them creates the possibility of deadlock in the governmental system). Also on the dynamics of inter-branch cooperation and conflict, Haggard and McCubbins (2001) build the accountability mechanisms around the difference between the formal Lockean "separation of powers" among institutional actors having vetoes over policy and the more substantive "separation of purpose" among them, meaning that different institutions give different channels for representation of diverse societal interests[24], and in doing so remove the threat to the effectiveness of the legal checks which would raise if a single interest gained control of all the relevant offices or institutions. "Divided

[23] On the opposite view, Freudenreich (2016) argues that coalition-building in general (and minority ones in particular) arise from pre-electoral compromises aimed at increasing parties´ electoral perspectives before any given presidential election.

[24] To see the difference, even in parliamentary regimes (seen as completely lacking formal separation of powers), may offer separation of purposes through coalition governments or internally divided majoritarian partners.

government" in this sense would occur when no single political party[25] controls all separate powers (not just when the assembly and the presidency are in different partisan hands, as is the common view, but also when the two houses of a bicameral legislature are, or when the presidency and the courts are, and so forth). This behavioral approach clearly highlights the interaction of formal institutional powers and the individual stances of agents within them[26], under which the formally expected effects of constitutional designs can be twisted to a very significant extent.

Summing up those definitional issues, we must say that all those behavioral aspects are relevant in the causal assessment of minority governance. However, given their shifting, dynamic characteristics, extremely affected by each case´s idiosyncrasies, most of the literature follows some kind of numerical-based framework as a departing point for characterization and empirical treatment, a choice that we´ll follow along this research and that whose specification will be further developed in the methodological section.

2.1.2 Digging deeper: observable general patterns in the literature on minority presidentialism

Let´s move on, now, to the general theoretical patterns that can be subsumed from the extant literature on our general issue.

2.2.2.1 Reference frameworks and their correlated components

Those new segments of the literature that deal with minority presidentialism as an usual, recurrent phenomenon, seem to have an implicit or explicit reference framework for analyzing multiparty governance, while focusing on individual features within this broader frame of reference.

[25] Parties here seen as the best available proxy for specific interests: it´s possible that a party´s factionalization makes it a representative of several interests, or some parties are so tightly aligned that their separate control of office might be seen as a unitary one. That, however, would be a measurement error, not affecting the conceptualization based on "separation of purposes".

[26] A strong analogy here are the twin figures of Tsebelis´ (1995) "institutional veto players" (decisionmakers whose approval is formally required to a decision to be enacted, that is, their concurrence is a necessary and sufficient condition for policy change) and "partisan veto players" (to his model, the parties within a government coalition, whose agreement is, strictly speaking, neither necessary nor sufficient for policy change but whose action within the institutional arenas may give birth to multiple situations where decisions become stalled or bypassed *vis-à-vis* the planned governmental strategy).

Such broader approach might resemble the one advanced by Field (2016) multilevel framework, which extends a general model of party-based governance focused on "policy, office and votes" (Strøm & Müller, 1999) adding some qualifications from the already mentioned several "executive toolbox" approaches in coalitional presidentialism studies (Raile, Pereira & Power, 2010; Chaisty et al, 2018)[27]. The framework´s components are the factors that account for a given government´s ability to make significant, authoritative decisions regarding the country´s public policies, divided into three main groups (analytically separated, but interdependent in real life).

The first component is made of those institutional features who shape a government´s bargaining power in parliament. The first usually presented among them are the legislative formal rules and procedures regarding the balance of powers in lawmaking:

a) government legislative powers (both reactive, mainly veto powers, and proactive in the form of agenda and decree powers);

b) the centralization of decision rights and gatekeeping powers within parliaments; as well as

c) the lawmaking thresholds (in terms of the share of votes required for each decision[28]).

Still regarding institutional levers on behalf of presidents in parliaments´ balance of power, the electoral institutions at large have an indirect effect on the partisan bargaining circumstances for government and opposition, thus representing other features to be considered. Their effects rely basically on their strong influence on the country´s degree of multipartysm, on party discipline, and on the timing of elections.

The already mentioned "toolbox" approach adds some other features to this institutional slate of bargaining levers for presidents to use in pushing their agendas through congresses:

a) the cabinet powers (presidential prerogatives to hire and fire ministers and, occasionally, congressional capacities to influence on that by vetting or censuring ministers);

[27] Our goal at this point is not to fully explore the analytical potential of such framework, but just to delineate (in an almost stylized fashion) its main features, so as to create reference points to locate the several relevant aspects of that literature to the purposes of this section. Further on, segments of those frameworks will be built into our theoretical research model.

[28] Alemán and Tsebelis (2011) add, indirectly, congressional oversight powers as a conditioning factor in minority government formation, since its absence would deprive legislative parties from levers to pressure for office-holding.

b) the presidential powers over patronage at large (meaning the president´s prerogatives to appoint sub-cabinet positions in public administration, that is, choosing officeholders at top and mid-level bureaucracy posts);

c) the presidential powers over the disbursement of pork, basically through budget allotments;

d) a less delimitated (but not less important) category of informal "exchange of favours" which includes the beneficial treatment of allies´ interests by regulatory, policy or tax measures promoted by the executive within governmental discretion; the measures encompassed by this last category are expanded, in some models, to include any directly illicit form of exchange, such as direct payments to legislators (Pereira et al, 2008, 2011; Calvo, 2014, pp. 206-207) or a deliberately blind eye on the misuse of public resources by officeholders in sync with allied parties (Samuels, 2002).

Closing that list of the institutional component for minority government is the unitary or multilevel[29] structure of the polity: such governance is mostly about bargaining, after all, and the existence of more than one level of government exponentiates the number of possible bargains (Albala & Reniu, 2018). Multilevel states can offer negotiating parties several sources of payoffs to exchange, affect their relative bargaining weight and even open up a whole new dimension of policy space in reshaping the relative distribution of policy mandates and resources along different administrations[30].

The second group or component to this framework are parties´ goals and their potential for reconciliation, where the seminal influence of Strøm and Müller (1999) is felt more intensely. Instead of the older theoretical vision of parties as mere ladders for conquering ministerial-level posts, their goals can be assessed within a four-dimensional template: each party can have its preference curve deployed differently along each dimension[31], each having different priorities among parties (and along time). Two of those dimensions may be called "intrinsic", in the sense that, ultimately, self-interested agents[32] could only engage rationally in politics if this engagement brought one of them:

[29] Also described as "devolved", or "federalist".

[30] That is, the very definition of which policy jurisdictions and prerrogatives will be assigned to each level of government becomes a subject of negotiation (as in the Spanish "autonomic State" debate which is so central do Field´s arguments)

[31] The multiple possible party goals are present in Field´s framework with reference to the seminal work of Strøm and Müller (1999). The wider, four-dimensional model presented here (adding the "cohesion" dimension) is fully developed in Reniu (2011), which refers to Bergman (1995) as its original design (see also Aylott & Bergman, 2011).

[32] Either individually or acting collectively as parties.

a) office (the ability to hold and command government portfolios) or b) policy (bringing government policy as close as possible to their own preferred policies). All benefits to be reaped by agents and parties (including direct ones such as pork, patronage or favors) can only stem from either office or policy payoffs[33]. To reach those goals along time, other two "instrumental" goals may be posited: a) votes (the standing in the electoral arena, which means the potential support of voters in the ballot box); and b) party cohesion (which stands for a very crucial element in the party´s capacity as collective action vehicle to realize its member´s goals). The instrumental goals are, to some degree, necessary conditions for the intrinsic ones to be reached, and so they are frequently considered in a party´s strategy as benchmarks to be fulfilled by themselves.

Here, the essential connection to the framework is that party goals can be reconciled through multiple deals along one or more of the dimensions [34], and the traditional analytical effect of policy distances in spatial models can be fully factored in along that specific dimension. On a multilevel polity, this distribution of goals and priorities across dimensions for each party is compounded by different configuration along each dimension (i.e., a party can be moderately or partially policy-seeking in the national level and strongly office-seeking in the subnational arena[35]).

The third component group, closing the framework, is the consideration that any given government in real world will face contingent bargaining circumstances who will interact with both institutions and parties´ objective functions, resulting in the actual decisions. The first among those contingent circumstances is parliament´s arithmetic: exactly what is the seat share of the president´s party, his potential allies and his potential opposition (or, in multilevel structures, those same features in national and regional parliaments). Also the policy distances among parties, and between them and the government, themselves sought as a structural dimension, interact with parties´ numbers in parliament to determine their actual effect at each point in time (which decisively affects, for instance, a government´s ability to shift allies along the party

[33] Indeed, such traditional features of political payoffs as pork, subcabinet patronage or informal favours (as discussed in the "toolbox" concept) may be hard to impute unequivocally to either holding an office or getting beneficial policies per se. However, but for those two, no other source seems to be able to provide them.

[34] Although the "cohesion" dimension and, to a lesser extent, the "votes" issue are more difficult to frame as an explicit offer in a bargain; that is, they are implicitly present at the table as an element in the involved party´s calculation, but can hardly be explicitly put in an offer by the government – except, maybe, as promises of explicitly vocalizing support by the president to a given party´s electoral bids.

[35] That´s the case, Field argues, for her main object of study (Spanish regional parties and their role in supporting minority governments by nationwide parties at the national level).

spectre or its willingness to unilaterally propose policies to non-coalition parties deemed to favour them). There´s also the timing effect: the proximity to an election affects the balance between parties´ payoff calculation regarding joining the government and supporting policies[36].

The stylized shape of this more encompassing framework is shown at the figure below.

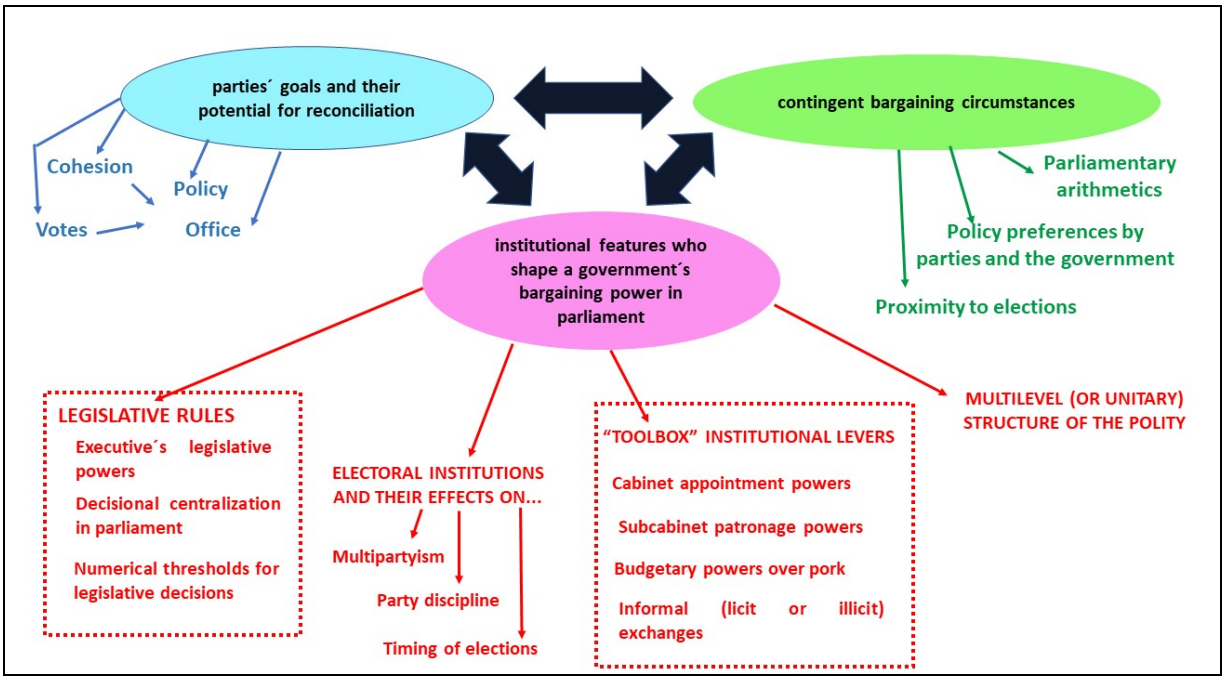

Figure 1 – Multiparty presidentialism governance applied to minority situations – The generalized reference framework

Source: The author

Those traits were generated from joining different partial frameworks in an integrated view. However, most individual models in the literature flexed one or more of this elements in the core of their causal arguments, as shown in the table below.

Table 2 – Multiparty presidentialism governance applied to minority situations – Applying specific elements within the generalized reference framework

COMPONENT	ELEMENT STRESSED	SOURCES	REMARKS
INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES	legislative powers by the president and congressional rules of	Borges (2014), Calvo (2014), Cheibub & Limongi (2002), Negretto (2006a); Figueiredo	

[36] This timing effect resembles the one described in Strøm´s (1990) seminal work on minority parliamentary governance regarding parties´ willingness to support the government without joining a formal cabinet coalition. Broader logical consequences of election timing on the accountability and inclinations of both government and legislators, as posited by Shugart (1995) or Manow and Burkhart (2007) can also fit this category.

	procedure	et al (2012).	
	The availability of the different instruments in the "executive toolbox", and their relative weights	Chaisty et al (2018)[37]; Chaisty & Chernykh (2017).	
PARTY MOTIVES AND GOALS	Party motives in bargaining, and party discipline	Cheibub & Limongi (2002); Fleisher & Bond (1996); Barnes & Jang (2016)	centering on intraparty factionalism as a strategic feature
		García (2008)	emphasizing the regional/provincial dimension of party motives
		Kellam (2015); Chaisty & Power (2018)	stressing the effect of particularistic dominance among potential partners´ motives.
CONTINGENT FACTORS	combination of parties´ preference position and their relative size in parliament	Chaisty & Power (2018), Cheibub, Przeworski & Saiegh (2002), Negretto (2006a, 2006b), Figueiredo et al (2012), Hix & Noury (2016)	
		Thürk, Hellstrom & Doring (2021)	highligting the restricting impact on coalition-building of new extremist parties acquiring sizeable parliamentary representation in recent European elections
	contingent timing of coalition deals (whether pre- or post-electoral)	Borges, Turgeon & Albala (2020); Chaisty et al (2018).	

Source: The author

2.1.2.2 Analytical patterns in the appraisal of minority presidential governments

Moving now towards more general analytical trends pervasive among most texts, the first point to make is the almost unanimous point of departure among all authors reviewed[38], converging with their predecessors who studied parliamentary systems: they take for granted that coalitions and single-party minority governments are far from being an aberration or a prelude for breakdown. On the contrary, both kinds of minority governments emerge as entirely normal features of presidential regimes, occurring regularly (often as a deliberate choice by the government and the parties) and meaning, per se, absolutely no sign of crisis or impasse.

[37] That´s hardly surprising, since this work is the most systematic and extended implementation to this "toolbox" approach to multiparty presidential governance so far.

[38] Although Cheibub (2002), Cheibub and Limongi (2002) and Cheibub et al (2002, 2004) are widely regarded as seminal works in reaching such scholarly consensus.

Another remarkable convergence is that all authors seem to vindicate, one way or another, some degree of the almost canonical view of the "inefficient secret" in presidentialism (Shugart & Carey, 1992), in which legislators with fragmented or particularistic perspective (and, correspondingly, localistic electoral connections) delegate national policy to the president. We say "some degree" because most of the literature, when modelling a president´s actions, is comfortable with an executive head whose main priority (and electoral connection) is invariably to pursue a nationwide policy agenda, and who faces a multifarious parliament where several kinds of interests are represented (policy-seeking national parties, particularistic parties and factions, individual legislators ready for personalistic dealmaking). From the point of view of congresses, however, there´s no claim for neither abdication nor unconditional delegation: on the contrary, the portrayed parliaments are remarkably involved in policymaking deals (Calvo, 2014; Casar 2013).

Finally, one more clear dominating position in the literature is the emphatic denial of previously assumed links from minority presidential governments to gridlock or legislative impasses (already taking into account the abovementioned absence of democratic breakdown fears). On the contrary, in one way or another, those governments managed to go on with their businesses (Cheibub, 2002; Cheibub & Limongi, 2002; Cheibub, Przeworski & Saiegh, 2002) and to advance national legislative agendas - although possibly not as bold as originally presented to voters (Elgie, 2008; Negretto, 2006b). Quite to the contrary, minority condition is even suggested by some authors as enabling, through better checks on presidential powers, an enhancement to democratic quality (Elgie & McMenamin, 2008; Elgie, 2008; Kim, 2015)[39].

2.1.3 Watching the world – minority presidential governments on the ground

Now we must focus on the substantive results of minority presidential government, are concerned. Inevitably, that´s a bird´s eye view centered much more on the descriptive view of minority governance elements and results; accordingly, the more detailed analysis of the causal factors who account for the very existence of minority

[39] Mexican case studies, in particular, seem enthusiastic in stating that the democratic transition of 1997-2000 brought both minority presidential governments and a surge in governance quality (Casar, 2013; Ferrel, 2019).

governments - that is, "why minority governments happen" -, which is probably the centerpiece of the extant literature) are only mentioned *en passant* when they relate to the other findings of the reviewed papers[40]. So, we now turn to the review of major pieces of research on what they add to the knowledge on minority governance in presidentialism (regardless of that being their main subject or, alternatively, a partial consequence of their analysis on another related phenomenon).

2.1.3.1 Cross-country, large-n studies with multi-regional scope

Some studies attempt a cross-country approach to the phenomenon, relying on a large sample of cases and regression-based inferences.

In what´s probably the most referenced paper crossing the issue and dealing also with presidential regimes, Cheibub, Przeworski and Saiegh (2004) try to assess, in a worldwide base of cases[41], how often government *formateurs* resorted to coalitions as a way to shape their administrations, and how successful they were in lawmaking.[42] They found that a single party majority of seats in parliament occurred in 43,2 % of country-years in parliamentary countries and 55,5 % in presidential ones (including 10,5 % where the congressional single-party majority was against the president – almost entirely recorded in the United States). Under minority conditions for the president or prime minister (other than the abovementioned oppositional single-party majority), some kind of coalition was formed in 78.1 % of the parliamentary situations, and in 53.6% of presidential situations - which means that they´re less frequent in presidentialism, but even so, are far from exceptional[43]). Indeed, presidents can – and do - live with cabinet coalitions and legislative coalitions, not necessarily equal, and not

[40] Clearly, the seminal work on minority governance is Strøm (1990), who focuses entirely on parliamentary systems. For that reason, it´s not reviewed here, although its features on the reasons and "nuts and bolts" in minoritarian governments pervade most of the following sections, either directly or as the departure point to more elaborate theories by theoretical disciples.

[41] In their own words (p. 565), "observing almost all democracies that existed between 1946 and 1999". A previous version on the same broad issue is Cheibub et al(2002).

[42] Their study also assesses the democratic stability of regimes (in terms of the probability of a democratic breakdown occurring), which is not substantially included here for lack of connection to our reviewing objectives. It should be noted that their metrics for legislative success is the raw approval rate of government-initiated bills, disregarding other dimensions as the amendments received by such bills, or the duration of the approval process.

[43] Adding to that is the finding that probabilities of democratic breakdown do raise under presidentialism as compared to the parliamentary systems, but that happens in a similar fashion across all coalition statuses. So, if presidential systems are more fragile, it would not be for its oft-quoted "incapacity to form coalitions".

necessarily on the same side of the spectrum[44]; as a matter of fact, presidential rules can sometimes make coalition-making easier, by dispensing with formal policy-based party negotiations and going along through invitations and more informal agreements. More to the point, their conclusions strongly reinforce the several mentions made here to the fully mainstream status of minority governments also in presidentialism: 79.1 % of cabinet coalitions under parliamentarism were found majoritarian, but only 59.7 % on presidential regimes –leaving 40,3% of presidential coalitions in a formally minority condition. Coherently with the literature in parliamentarism, party fractionalization raises the frequency of coalitions (in both systems), and when the *formateur* party is between one third and one half of the seats, coalitions become less frequent[45].

As for legislative prowess, Cheibub, Przeworski and Saiegh point that parliamentary governments are indeed more successful in terms of bills approved than presidential ones under every coalition status[46]. Single-party minority govts prevail over any kind of coalition in both systems (a hint on that they have the support of legislative majorities), but legislative paralysis happens to be very rare[47]. In short, they find that minority governments legislate at least as successfully as majority coalitions, and assign the occasional lower success rates originating mainly to circumstances of coalitions formed on the basis of granting posts to parties in exchange for policy support in parliament under polarized environments, which creates strong intra-coalitional cleavages around policy with some degree of party defection or indiscipline. This last finding, taken alone, might suggest there´s no need for revisiting minority presidentialism in terms of effectiveness, as we try to do here. That´s not true, though.

[44] As exemplified by some legislative support trends in the beginning of the Allende minority government in Chile.

[45] That may stem either from the *formateur´*s raised expectations to get by with a legislative share which is close to the majority threshold, or because, in more fractionalized situations, *formateurs* might prefer to spend cabinet posts than bargain in core policy content to gather support, since potential partners may be farther away from their own preferences – a trend increased by the absolute distance between their preferences, in line with classical minority government theory in parliamentarism.

[46] There´s a strictly mechanical causal path to part of those findings: presidentialism allows for cases in which a majority of parties in congress is against any possible presidential policy, and yet government stays in place (when in parliamentary systems the most likely outcome would be a government demise). For those reason alone, some degree of additional minority government outcomes - and of legislative defeats - are expected to be more frequent under presidentialism. Besides, the diminished risk of presidential demise on the loss of any vote (while defeat in major issues - like the general budget - can bring down prime ministers by force of rules or entrenched custom), presidents can be more reckless in submitting bills, thus raising the probabilities of their defeats.)

[47] The only example presented is a perfect storm of idiosyncratic blockage factors which have no direct link with the presidential system per se (the final leg of Allende minority government in Chile).

First, because this specific explanation is strongly dependent on the existence of only two possible party motives for support in their model (policy or office): other possible levers such as patronage, pork or others included in the "toolbox" version – that is, other possible strategies for presidential policymaking achievements - are not factored in their calculations. Last but not least, their focus is on "legislative success" in lawmaking, which falls short of the substantive policy results we try to gauge and measure.

In another cross-country study, Cheibub (2002) covers all presidential regimes between 1946 and 1996 (790 country-years, along 38 countries) to seek for the occurrence of minority governments[48], and deadlock situations where the opposition can pass legislation but not override vetoes[49]. They show a picture where minority presidents are 53 % of observed cases, while minority governments (whose cabinet-joining parties end up minoritarian) account for 40 % of them[50] - another instance showing the non-negligible existence of coalition-making also in presidential regimes. Deadlock, for its part, occurs only in 33,52 % of cases (far from being dominant), and (when the United States and Switzerland are excluded from the sample) are not affected by any of the causal factors which determine the occurrence of minority presidents[51]. Among the determinants of successful government formation and duration under minority conditions, Cheibub endorses the relevance of agenda powers already claimed by Figueiredo and Limongi (1999, 2000), that is, presidential control over the legislative agenda and congressional party leaders control over the information flows and opportunities to individual legislators; on the issue of party fragmentation, counter-intuitively, moderate pluralism is found to be less a support to democratic overall stability than instances of polarized pluralism[52], an outcome attributed to the lower

[48] Coherently with our definitional section, Cheibub includes here the instances where the governing coalition doesn´t hold a majority in any one of the relevant chambers.

[49] That´s another study who also assesses the democratic stability – now comparing presidential regimes vis-à-vis parliamentary ones, which is not substantially included here for lack of connection to our reviewing objectives.

[50] The inclusion of majoritarian countries as the United States (and others with very different institutional features such as Switzerland) explains such percentage of minority presidents, clearly behind the findings on multiparty (mainly Latin American) cases. As for the share of minority governments (even discounting for the US bipartisan "divided government"), shows a number that, to Cheibub, is higher than in parliamentary regimes, but not dramatically more.

[51] It must be noted that, although it´s an "outcome" in the last instance, such definition of deadlock is only a static, numerical condition (formal vote shares in parliament). So, in terms of policymaking, it´s only a potential to real decisional stalemates, who can be circumvented by means of negotiation and support gathering.

[52] Those criteria are deployed in the text under the mention to Sartori (1976), but referring exclusively to the number of parties (between two and five to moderate pluralism, over five as "conducive to polarized pluralism"). So, no consideration is made as to the intensity of preferences in applying those concepts.

incentives to power-sharing among three or four parties which are relatively strong and balanced among them, and so may be tempted to aggressively dispute for power instead of cooperating in government; another relevant factor in any causal relationship is also party discipline, without which the very act of counting party vote shares would be operationally meaningless. Yet on deadlocks, the institutional features of voting thresholds for approving bills, and the veto conditions are obviously very influential on the odds of such problems[53].

Chaisty & Power (2018) contemplate minority presidents in democracies and "semi-democracies" from 1974 to 2013 (amounting to 610 country-years), to search for the reasons for them to have chosen to form a minority coalition instead of pushing a one-party cabinet. They conclude that the most relevant variable are the congressional seat shares by the president´s party (which, if close to the majority, might disincentivize incurring in the costs of a coalition) and by the largest non-presidential party (which, beyond a certain threshold, inhibits this party´s incentives to join in instead of presenting as a power alternative, and lures other parties to its influence instead of the presidential one)[54].

Elgie´s (2001a) comparative attempt at studying minority governance[55] brings interesting points to our purposes. Instances of minority government have been found in every governmental regime across his cases[56], in relatively high frequency (making them a common, recurrent, widely known phenomenon, far from being mere improvised stopgap devices), mostly with a successfully negotiated outcome, but sometimes leading to some degree of gridlock[57]. He stresses in the literature the same cleavage we´ve been pointing in this chapter: on one hand, studies of American bipartisan politics at federal and state levels[58] point to several disfunctional courses of action by presidents who end up in blockages or sub-optimal last-minute compromises; on the sunny side of that street, observers of parliamentary minority governments, building on Strøm´s (1990)

[53] Which is, again, a consequence of the numerical definition of "deadlock" adopted by Cheibub.
[54] The authors claim that this crucial role of the "Largest Non-Formateur Party" is their most innovative finding.
[55] Defining his object more particularly as "divided government", or the arithmetic minimalist definition of whenever a government – parliamentary, semi-presidential or presidential – doesn´t control the majority of seats in at least one of the legislative chambers.
[56] 9 case studies featuring different regimes, including three (United States, Mexico and Ecuador) with purely presidential institutions
[57] As remarkable examples discussed in the book, the United States under the Nixon and Clinton administrations, Ecuador (as an almost permanent features) and the first years of Polish democracy under semi-presidentialism.
[58] Quoted from Cox & Kernell (1991a, 1991b) and Ware (2001).

seminal insights, paint a much less maladjusted picture of successful gathering of stable support from out-of-cabinet parties[59], and of tailored, policy-specific negotiations with opposition parties (specially under governments who occupy the median or pivotal position in parliament, allowing them to balance the oppositional extremes off each other), either in an "ad hoc" fashion over each issue or bill[60], or in a more structured way where legislative support coalitions revolve around whole policy arenas[61].

Another cross-country study on the democratic performance of semi-presidentialism[62] co-authored by the same author (Elgie & McMenamin, 2008) offers two findings who have direct relevance to minority government studies under the perspectives drawn in our own research. One is that the absence of formal checks on extreme presidential powers (depicted theoretically as "over-presidentialization") may induce detrimental behavior by presidents in disregard of the rule of law and extremely confrontational patterns of political interaction. The other is a non-finding: against the commonplace expectations that divided minority governments lead to immobilism, instability and undemocratic attempts to break stalemates, their sample data are inconclusive and don´t support any correlation between such conditions and any specific outcome.

[59] In exchange for policymaking powers and other goods and perks acquired without the reputational and electoral costs of being perceived as co-responsible for the government´s actions.

[60] The main examples here are the several US administrations (Eisenhower, Ford and, partially, Reagan) where a minority president handled significant policy agendas with a reasonable degree of success (although the shifting engagements here are not performed by parties, but by means of across-the-aisle adherents from the opposition majoritarian party); in parliamentary settings, Germany is more clearly associated with this issue-by-issue, give-and-take advancement, as well as some specific governments in Denmark (Elgie, 2011, p. 223).

[61] As examples, multiple Danish minority prime ministers alternating between an "economic policy majority" support joining center and center-right parties over mainstream economic policy measures, and an "alternative majority" among left and center-left parties who collude in foreign and defense policies and in social and environmental measures. In presidential settings, the Mexican president from 1997 to 2000 managed to get a core conservative support for economic and constitutional decisions and an expanded support bloc for public security measures (Elgie, 2001a, p. 223).

[62] Semi-presidentialism defined here, in a very formalistic way, as those instances where formally coexist, at the same time, a "directly elected president and a prime minister and cabinet who are responsible to the Legislature". The authors acknowledge the very limited substantive content of such definition (by which both Germany and Peru compose the sample, for example), but claim that any attempt to set a minimal threshold for presidential powers would lead to endogeneity and selection bias, since presidential powers are part of the explanatory model. The formal definition encompasses 57 countries, which resulted in 38 actual units of analysis after filtering for democratic level (excluding autocracies and "fully consolidated democracies", the lower tiers and the very highest one in Polity IV score).

2.1.3.2 Comparative studies in strictly Latin American contexts

We must now turn to specific Latin American settings, where findings on minority governments may be interpreted within a much more homogeneous historical, economic and institutional context than more broadly-based comparisons.

The first major assessment to be taken into account (chronologically as well as analytically) is a comparative study of 9 regional polities between 1958 and 1994 in South America, adding case studies for Bolivia and Brazil, by Deheza (1997). Here, we also see rather exhaustive attempts at examining the degree in which coalition governments are formed (now, due to the Latin American context, in clearly multiparty presidential polities), their coalescence and duration, and their effect on the stability of the president´s mandate (when compared to their formal terms of office). In spite of a considerable time lag for its data, this study still covers a significant part of the workings of Latin American presidentialism (including the "third wave" newly redemocratized countries), and its findings – albeit possibly deserving an overhaul by more recent assessments – may still illuminate relevant features of our object[63]. Indeed, several of the lines of inquiry identified in Deheza´s work will resurface, with more recent data and specifications, in our own further theoretical construction

The 123 governments measured in the sample had, with strong variability across countries[64], the following overall distribution as in the table below.

Table 3 – Distribution of democratic cabinet types in 9 Latin American countries (1958-1994) – Deheza (1997)

CABINET TYPE	ABSOLUTE NUMBER	%
Single-party	48	*39,02*
Single-party majority	22	*17,89*
Single-party minority	26	*21,14*
Coalition	69	*56,10*
Minimum winning coalition	17	*13,82*

[63] This might be the reason for the very frequent mentions to Deheza (1997) among other scholars debating multiparty presidentialism and coalition theory in it.

[64] While in Brazil all democratic governments formed were coalitions, in Argentina and Venezuela (since 1968) there were only single-party governments (Costa Rica, although not included in the working sample, is mentioned as another example of strictly single-party government all along the period, along with the prototypical case of the United States). A change in government, for the purposes of that summarizing, is counted whenever there´s a change in the presidency´s officeholder (for whatever reason), or there´s a change in the parties who make up the cabinet, of when congressional elections change the percentage of legislative seats commanded in the lower house by the parties represented in the cabinet.

Minority coalition		24	*19,51*
Oversized coalition		28	*22,76*
Interim governments		6	*4,88*
	Total	123	*100,00*

Obs.: "Coalition" means a government where any party other than the president´s own holds cabinet seats. "Majority" means a government whose parties represented in cabinet control more than 50% of legislative seats in the lower or sole house of parliament. "Majority" means a government whose parties represented in cabinet control more than 50% of legislative seats in the lower or sole house of parliament. "Oversized" means a government whose parties represented in cabinet control more than two thirds (66,6%) of legislative seats in the lower or sole house of parliament. "Minimum winning" means a government whose parties represented in cabinet control more than 50% and less than two thirds (66,6%) of legislative seats in the lower or sole house of parliament.

Source: Deheza (1997), Table 3.1, p. 67

Those numbers underline the tendency, now widely acknowledged in the literature, for Latin American multiparty presidential systems to produce majoritarian governments, but clearly through coalitions (around two thirds of them). Besides, such coalitions aren´t uniform at all: some conform to the strictly half of the chamber (or the number necessary for passing bills), but a very significant 19,51 % are minority ones, and even more (22,76 %) add up to beyond that level. This distribution strongly suggests that coalition governance is more than gathering majoritarian support (which is the cornerstone of traditional coalition theory in parliamentarism): a higher cost is incurred by many presidents to rally more parties than those strictly necessary for a minimum winning coalition[65], while numerous others attempt to gather support from others but not enough to reach a formal majority. This last point is particularly relevant to our analysis, since it suggests that minority coalitions may have a different, broader dynamics of formation: if such coalitions did not reach majority status, why should the president even bother to organize them ?

Another perspective unveiled by Deheza, which will be clearly reflected in several further theoretical strands recoiled in our model in the next chapters, is the ideological proximity between coalition partners (the coalition´s "connectedness"): the

[65] Costs broadly defined in terms of losing the benefits of office in the distributed cabinet posts and incurring in the agency costs of losing some degree of control over the policy handled by them. Some of the possible reasons for that in the literature are reaching legislative supermajorities to effect legislative changes under higher thresholds (such as amending the constitution); "national unity" governments formed to overcome serious factionalism who threatened democracy (such as Colombia´s National Front or the Betancourt government in Venezuela); or hedging against party indiscipline in crucial votes; or a numerical consequence of having to sustain bicameral majorities or yet keeping the ideological connectedness within the coalition (this very last point is to be discussed just below).

costs of adding a small party[66] to reach the minimum winning threshold, thus sharing as little office benefits as numerically possible, may be outweighed by the agency and transaction costs of sharing decisional power if the given party is too far away from the president´s preferences. In such cases, it may be preferable for him to add a bigger party (giving off more office benefits) who is closer to his preferences. That might explain presidential initiatives in some of the oversized coalitions – and, significantly, that might shed light on some important minority strategies where the costs of formally adding ideologically opposite parties to the cabinet in order to reach a majority might be heavier than the risks associated with sharing power with them. In this regard, "connected" or "compact" coalitions (that is, those whose members are contiguous along the considered ideological/policy space) make up for 44 (63,77) of 68 coalitional instances[67], representing 47,06 % if the minimum winning coalitions, 64,29 % of the oversized coalitions and an impressive 75 % of the minority coalitions. Those proportions entitle serious consideration to the "connectedness" argument in actual Latin American coalitions; more to the point, they reinforce the point that minority governance is heavily affected by policy-centered bargaining. This point is somehow reinforced by a relatively weak cabinet coalescence in the cases examined, which might point out to differences in party share of cabinet posts according to their policy stances[68].

Relevant to our purposes, also, are the findings that just 30,5% of inaugural coalitions[69] had origins in pre-electoral agreements, and that most post-electoral coalitions departed from a presidential share of votes lower than 45%. That finding is a strong suggestion that governments who surpass this "critical minority threshold" had incentives to try on a minority stance, since the added costs of getting more coalition partners (either agency costs or the simple loss of office benefits) to fill that small gap in seats may outweigh the expected benefits of a formal majority within the cabinet. As for the traditional associations between party system and coalition patterns, and in line with other authors presented here, the study found that coalitions are the more likely the more

[66] Here, "small" and "big" parties characterized by the size of their legislative share of seats.
[67] Data from Deheza (1997), Table 4.5, p. 104. We couldn´t locate the reason for the missing case when compared to the 69 coalitions recalled in Table 1.
[68] Although the author acknowledges the possibility of the weak numerical coalescence scores may be tweaked by not weighing the portfolios according to their policy relevance (the president´s party keeping a bigger share of the key policy jurisdictions to implement presidential agenda).
[69] That is, governments formed immediately after elections.

fractionalized[70], and the less polarized, the party system[71]. In this sense, the study argues that multipartysm "per se" is not the key to instability, but polarization: even in close-to-bipartisan systems (as Argentina) radicalization can lead to deadlocks.

On the nuts and bolts of minority coalition governance, several reasons are posited for the decision for presidents to forgo majoritarian coalition-building (or coalition-building at all): first of all, the already mentioned "critical minority threshold" (45% of seats) from where presidents may feel inclined to try "ad hoc" legislative coalitions (specially if they come from a median of pivotal party in congress); besides, political polarization may prevent significant potential partners from joining cabinet out of policy differences either regarding actual policy implementation or seeking reputational distance from the president; finally, when presidents see too much agency loss in sharing cabinet-level power positions. As already shown above, actual coalition results in South America can´t be explained by policy-blind minimum willing coalition theories based on purely office-seeking parties. Deheza claims that policy preferences matter a lot to that explanation: there´s a clear trade-off between size and cohesiveness in the coalition (mitigated by ideological proximity between partners). To our specific purposes of minority governance assessment, this trade-off might strengthen the rationale for a minority coalition when it holds close to a majority of the seats: an internally cohesive minority government may be more able to tackle *ad hoc* policy negotiations and raise external support than a faction-ridden formal majority who can´t put itself to agree on divisive issues.

Institutional characteristics also intervene, in the expected theoretical direction: veto powers (and veto overriding rules), decree powers, and even the limited dissolution powers assigned to the president in some countries[72]: having less of those powers raises the preference (or need) for coalition-building by the president. Bicameralism,

[70] This association is partially determined by the very fact that low fractionalization potentially raises the odds for a majoritarian single-party president. That would be also the effect of any kind of plurality rule in the electoral system, by inducing a smaller number of parties or, at least, the formation of pre-electoral coalitions. In that direction, some older constitutional provisions in which the congress elected the president if popular vote didn't produce an absolute majority (existing Chile until 1973 and Bolivia until 2008), together with the constitutional custom of confirming in parliament the first candidate in the popular vote count, made party incentives closer to such plurality settings.

[71] Specially because polarization increases the policy distance between the president and the potential partners, and among parties themselves, making them less willing to compromise over power-sharing.

[72] Constitutions in Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay allow, under limited conditions, congressional dissolution and the call for new elections by the president, if some reiterated stalemate points are reached without possible compromises.

demanding a majority of votes in both chambers, reinforces the need for coalitions: the partisan composition of each chamber may be different, which means more partners are needed to secure votes in each one (bicameral minority can make for the gravest instances of decisional paralysis).

Another landmark study in the Latin American context is the assessment of the probability of minority presidential governments performed by Figueiredo et al (2012). They explore several possible explanations why presidential governments in the region are formed controlling up to half of the lower (or only) chamber´s seats. Their theoretical departure is a behavioral insight: once one assumes that – under whatever system - presidents wish to govern effectively, and that needs some kind of congressional cooperation, they´ll look for broader partisan support regardless of any institutional disincentive that may be embedded in their country´s constitution (such as deplored by the anti-presidential Linzian theoretical tradition). Another very relevant insight is that the overall logic to the feasibility of minority governments in parliamentary systems inaugurated by Strøm (1990) does not include any feature or assumption who depends on specific parliamentarian institutional features, relying instead on the different goals by potential external support parties[73]. Since parliamentarism is the hardest testing ground for minority governance, given the ever present risk of government demise in parliament, and nothing in that widespread logic of minority governance relies on anything that can´t exist also in presidential systems, there´s nothing left to prevent these conclusions regarding minority governance from applying to presidential regimes as well. Indeed, 211 country-years of minority presidents in Latin America have grown into 30,0 % of minority coalition governments; if added single-party minority endeavors, the overall count of minority governments reaches 47,7 % of all cabinets. A very relevant portion of those governments is not a case of presidential extremism or isolation: 59% of them show the presidential party (or coalition) holding between 40% and 50% of lower house seats; the average seat share of minority governments is 42,5% (if single party) and 33,8 % (if coalition). That is, the most frequent pattern is a plurality president with gathers a considerable permanent support (yet not numerically majoritarian), although the lower seat share average for minority coalitions might suggest a non-negligible number of really isolated presidents

[73] To Strøm, relevant parties may be willing to support the government (either in investiture or in lawmaking, or both) without being part of it, thus allowing for successful minority governments, when they simultaneously see sufficient perspectives to influence policy from the opposition (thus attaining some policy goals) and they expect competitive forthcoming elections ahead, when their electoral goals will be better served as running from the opposition standpoint.

who fail to gather broader support (or dispense with it altogether). Naturally, there´s variance among countries: some show mostly majoritarian (coalition) governments[74], while others see minoritarian dominance[75].

Their empirical regression findings regarding the determinant factors of minority governments were not always in line with theoretical expectations: while greater veto powers were found significant in relation to higher probability of minority government formation, some other factors usually theorized as relevant to that outcome resulted inconclusive or non-significant: the availability of agenda and decree powers[76], presidential policy position (both extremist and median[77]) and ideological dispersion in parliament; lastly, party fractionalization had a very unexpected negative and significant impact on minority government formation.

As for the logic of government formation, they emphasize the absolute necessity of pondering a multi-dimensional incentive structure for parties to join coalitions and to offer support (the classical "office, policy and votes" framework)[78], without which the amount of minority governments found would be very hard to reconcile. Another relevant factor is the closeness of many cases to the majority threshold (presidents holding 40 % to 50 % of the house floor): the few missing votes required for legislative success are considered an admissible risk, so as to give up on forming increased coalitions to capture them. Veto powers, by their turn, have consistently shown their impact on presidential preferences for minority governance, provided the president controls the veto legislator (which makes him able to keep his vetoes from congressional overrule). Such powers might embolden the presidential bets for a minority coalition through a more optimistic risk assessment about congressional capabilities to impinge undesired policies on him (as well as about the persuasion effects that veto threats might have on legislators´ negotiating positions).

[74] Cases of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

[75] Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. Mexico has roughly 50% of country-years for each setting.

[76] That is, those proactive legislative powers would be useless to overrule congressional majorities, serving only as better negotiation levers without affecting the coalition calculations.

[77] Ideological distance among parties is usually thought to enhance coalition-building by reducing the likelihood of parties supporting the president´s agenda out of convergent preferences (thus requiring the enticement of office and associated perks). The same logic applies to the median condition of presidential party: its incentive to remain minoritarian raises since the odds of gathering legislative support for its policies from close-to-median external parties are greater.

[78] In other words, for the president cabinet appointments are necessary only to rally the support that doesn´t come from other means. If policy-based concessions, for example, suffice for a party´s policy or reputational motivations, having it in the cabinet may be unnecessary to have its vote in parliament.

Still on Latin America, Negretto (2006a) enquiries into the outcomes of minority presidents (whether or not coalition-makers) in terms of executive-legislative conflicts (their frequence and the number of premature ends to elected mandates[79]). From the oft-quoted finding that the small share (32%) of presidents elected in the continent who enjoyed a single-party majority didn´t bring democracies to collapse nor prevented decisive policymaking (including sometimes radical reforms), he concurs with the many other authors reviewed in that minority governments are not the most frequent result, but they did happen significantly (39 out of 80 cabinets sampled were minoritarian).

His key variable to assess those minority conditions is not the mere arithmetics, but the relative policy location of the president´s party and the parliament´s floor, operationalized by his typology of "unified presidential", "median presidential", "divided" and "congressional government" (as seen earlier). "Congressional" would be the most conflict-prone, entangling all the potential effects of Linz´s "dual legitimacy" curse: presidents see their electoral mandates hindered by the impossibility of turning them into law (worst, by the possibility of congressional imposition of opposite platforms), and may try to pursue their policy agendas unilaterally (either by their formal decree powers or by extraconstitutional actions). Negretto´s empirical findings corroborate, in broad terms, those expectations: the average number of interbranch conflicts raises from single-party majority to coalition majority to minority governments. Among the latter type, conflicts are much more frequent under "congressional" situations[80]. The same happens to democratic breakdown, suffered most commonly by far, under "divided" and "congressional" settings[81]. Variance is high, though, and there are important outliers: single-party governments show high conflict rates[82], suggesting it´s necessary to factor in the occasional intraparty factionalism that may distort the assignment of cases to each typological frame.

Negretto´s main message seems to be the relevance of the congressional configuration of parties (compounding size and policy position) for the likelihood of coalition-making and governance: if the presidential party holds a relevant seat share

[79] Conflict between branches measured by their mentions in political stories on the mainstream press. The premature loss of mandate (by the president or by congresses as a whole), either by legal or illegal means, is depicted as the terminal bankruptcy of interbranch cooperation. The time span to the cases sampled is 1978 to 2003.

[80] A prototypical case being the Collor government in Brazil.

[81] Besides some "divided" and "congressional" cases in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela where radical restrictive fiscal reforms failed and did not end up in democratic collapse, but scarcely, given the very bitter conflicts they provoked among branches

[82] Such as Cubas´ administration in Paraguay and Chamorro´s in Nicaragua

(say, 40%) and is centrally located, it will be an indispensable member of almost every conceivable winning vote coalition in congress, which leverages its ability to attract partners for a majority coalition or, alternatively, to pursue successful shifting legislative alliances as a minority government. This reinforces the centrality of president/parliament congruence as one of the main factors for governing capacity in minority situations, a vision that is shared also by Borges, Thurgeon and Albala (2020) and which will be also reflected, further, in our model. At the other side of the spectre, an extremist president with limited seat shares under his control would be extremely in need of ceding cabinet posts to many other parties (even so, under difficult conditions if their ideological distance is too big), or he will most probably be forced to try unilateral policymaking under the risks of congressional blockage and reprisals, in a highly contentious. On the other hand, those same conclusions are reassuring in the sense that minority conditions *per se* are not unavoidably associated with conflict and stalemate: a pivotal minority government who can nevertheless override vetoes can prevent unilateral imposition of a congressional agenda and find room for negotiating changes to the status quo closer to its preferences. One last warning is that congressional prerogatives to confirm (as in the United States) or remove cabinet ministers (as used in Ecuador as a common harassment tool over presidents) – an often overlooked detail among the institutional context of interbranch relations – can strongly restrict presidential capacity to organize coalitions - actually, any kind of cabinet (and, consequently, strongly jeopardize a country´s governance abilities).

Finally, Payne, Zovatto, Florez and Zavala (2007, pp. 104-109) offer an alternative data summary of minority coalitions´ incidence in Latin America counting the periods "during which the balance of power resulting from the previous election remained the same" (that is, from an legislative or presidential election to another one, to another kind of substitution in the presidency, or to a change in the partisan composition of the cabinet), resulting in 131 such periods in 18 countries. Within them, an average 43.8 % corresponded to a presidential majority (single-party or coalition-based) in both chambers of the legislature, evolving along time around the benchmark of 55% from 1984 to 1995, and later sharply increasing the volatility (between 40% and 70% until 2000, and from 60% to around 35 % in the first four years of this century). As a general trend, they point out that, although coalitions are ever more present as time

goes by, the share of majority governments tends to be slightly declining from 1984 to 2004[83].

2.1.3.3 Case studies

Some individual case studies also show important snapshots to the minority governance problems, and thus merit some attention here. The Mexican case resembles a "typical" one (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 299), exemplifying the stable, cross-case relationships between minority conditions and positive governance results described above as comparative findings. Badillo (2007), on his reflection on the Mexican transition to multiparty democracy, corroborates those findings pointing to acceptable legislative success rates, remarkable stability and a high degree of inclusiveness by giving the opposition a remarkable value in cooperating to democratic consolidation. In this particular national instance, a moderate and institutionalized party system allowed a high degree of consensus around the presidential agenda, in exchange for broad participation in policy decisions. Nacif (2006) is very vocal in stressing this relationship, pointing to almost nine years of uninterrupted presidential minority to question "what is wrong with paralysis ?". Here, by discussing the Mexican case, Nacif develops a full-fledged analytical point on policymaking effectiveness which will strongly influence the inner lattices of our own construction of accountability as a factor for good governance. Putting into question the substantive meaning of the usual lawmaking indicators of "presidential success"[84], Nacif suggests that "paralysis" be reconceptualized as the impossibility by any of the players to unconditionally impose its unilateral will on the others. Assigning an inherently negative value to such raw bill approval ratings is to assume (at least implicitly) a decisionist public policy model who

[83] Their definition of coalitions includes cases where "a formal agreement was reached between the president and the coalition partners" (besides those of formal cabinet membership by parties), thus being different from the specification used in most empirical works. Due to that, we don´t include their results in further usage of this section´s data along the paper .

[84] Paralysis (or legislative success) has been measured by the number of approved bills per legislature (which is meaningless, since not all have the same importance and merit), the "productivity rate" of bills approved into law (which is affected by the raw number of initiatives tabled by lawmakers, a highly variable feature, and might only be relevant in extremely low tiers so as to indicate the complete breakdown of parliament as a deliberative body), and by the approval rate of presidential bills. This last one is even more misleading: a high approval rate may cover up a strategic self-restraint on the part of the president, who refrains from sending bills he thinks won´t be accepted by the legislature (a case in point during the Fox government in Mexico); on the other hand, even if presidents approve a very high share of their intended decisions, this might simply mean a rubberstamp congress, with no benefit for overall policymaking.

advocates quick and concentrated changes operated by a cohesive majority, on behalf of the majority. However, and for several reasons we´ll see in detail in section 2.4, democratic stability and welfare derive from good policy results, and said results simply cannot be reached by unilateral *fiat*, requiring instead incremental, negotiated, policy decisions. That´s the lesson offered by the concrete Mexican experience: presidents who face an active parliament where they can´t force their decisions account for better and more moderate policies, negotiated with non-governmental parties and showing no hint of gridlock or decisional paralysis[85].

Another logical test to those theories, that of an expected result under very strained historical conditions, is brought by Chaisty and Chernykh´s (2017) analysis of post-soviet Ukraine from 1999 to 2012, where most features in the social, economic and geopolitical environment would seem unfavourable to yield good results. Ukraine adopted a multiparty proportional representation system, which was compounded by many severe regional or ethnic cleavages, and by electoral rules that incentivize the cultivation of personal votes. However, this political system produced multiple government coalitions, including minority ones, all of which benefited from a relevant and stable share of legislative support coming from parties not included in the cabinet[86]. Ukrainian presidents chose usually to form coalescent cabinets[87] who gradually became more and more disciplined, but crucially managed to form legislative coalitions who outnumbered the cabinet coalitions most of the time. That is, many other instruments were employed to attract external support in parliament, and a very disciplined support at that – allowing minority governments to successfully sail its agenda through parliament. The balance of instruments followed clearly the "toolbox" model of giving parties their preferred payoffs (policy influence to cabinet members; pork, informal business perks and patronage mostly to external supporters) plus adding unilateral decision-making powers to the policy process. In sum, Ukraine is portrayed as something of a showcase for the feasibility of governing by minority coalitions by means of deploying different tools commensurate to the party system dynamics. Given its harsh departure points in terms of almost every conceivable independent causal

[85] Such positive conclusions are also shared for the Mexican case by Klesner (2001).

[86] Although more formalistic definitions might see Ukraine as a case of "semi-presidentialism" (Elgie, 1999; Elgie & McMenamin, 2008), the almost absolute control by the president over the cabinets in the assessed time frame makes the authors treat it as a presidential system (a choice also adopted, for instance, by Chaisty et al, 2018).

[87] To whose coalescence the posts of prime minister and deputy prime minister were specially helpful, in that they accrued somehow enhanced powers to balance out the cabinet distribution.

factor, such smooth workings of the coalition management tools might be seen as an "extreme" case with very extreme values of any independent variables (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 301), thus making a robust statement on the minority governance theories.

2.1.4 Wrapping up – which profitable paths this general survey suggests

Summing up the takeaways to this reviewing exercise, drawn as a foundation to the building of a systematic theoretical framework to the research, we might say that the study of minority presidential governments still offers thriving prospects. The literature seems to be at an initial stage in the task of taking the more consolidated frameworks and tools already available to both parliamentary governments and coalitional presidentialism, and adapting them to its specific minority problems.

It seems clear, from what has been reviewed, that minority governments, both in parliamentary and presidential systems, are fully taken now as a relevant empirical phenomenon, whose existence is no longer considered accidental, frictional or improvised – on the contrary, it´s one of the mainstream political choices made by governing actors. On the other hand, there are relatively few attempts to deal analytically with its functioning aspects in presidentialism (at least when compared with parliamentary literature on the same subject), and even fewer covering the substantive policy outcomes of such governments.

Most of those attempts share a fruitful characteristic: their departure points are existing governance theories (remarkably, coalition theories) and the theorized instruments or strategies of decision-making in executive-legislative relations. Those levers are then assessed individually (or in partial batches) against their effectiveness over outcomes (mostly in the politics domain, not yet in the policy realm per se). So, there´s ample opportunity for further refining those theoretical foundations (both the general frameworks and the individual components). Those are the opportunities that this research will seize.

2.2 Minority presidents and (good) governance

The fundamental underlying issue to our study is: What brings good governance in presidential regimes? Naturally, our focus will be on the ultimate policy effect of some institutionally defined features who are strongly affected by the minority condition of a presidential government. This kind of approach follows an already established research interest regarding the impact of political institutions involved in Executive-Legislative relationship on policy outcomes[88], although it still constitutes "an analytically difficult task, given current data constraints and value judgements." (Mitchell, 2001, p. 205). With very few exceptions (Negretto, 2004; Shugart, 1995), we still know very little about the effect of minority cabinets over good governance.

Taking government outcomes as the dependent variable means cutting straight to the core of the "legitimacy vs. effectiveness" dilemma of democratic governance (Arbós & Giner, 1996, pp.14-16): effectiveness means, to governments, the fulfilling of their objectives, and since many goals are presented by social sectors as "general interests" (ex: full employment), but not necessarily will be regarded by the government as such, societal expectations can affect the assessment of government effectiveness (this way, affecting the legitimacy of public authority). Indeed, procedural legitimacy is the baseline in democracies for access to government office, but additional burdens are placed on every government to legitimate its exercise on power. Such burdens rely basically on its handling of the multiple contradictory demands who converge on it (i.e., what, when and how much to harness partial demands and translate them into "general interests") and on its coping with needs often above their capabilities to cater to. In other words, democratic governments need to show a modicum of capabilities to solve the most pressing collective problems if they want to uphold the system´s legitimacy[89].

That seems to us a remarkable improvement over the more traditional assessment of Executive-Legislative relations by means of "legislative performance"

[88] Or "on tangible government behavior" (Haggard & McCubbins, 2001, who add vast literature surveys on the relationship between political institutions and policy outcome); see also, on that subject, Haggard, Mccubbins and Shugart (2001, p. 319), Melo (2009, p. 32) and Altman and Castiglioni (2008)

[89] In other words, "an electoral mandate is merely the bedrock of democratic legitimacy upon which a structure of performance-based legitimacy must be built" (Heazle, Kane & Patapan, 2016, p. 3).

metrics of "success" and "dominance" rates[90] (see, for instance, Thürk, 2022; Montero, 2009, pp. 87-101), or even more sophisticated measures such as "legislative cartel" ones (Chasquetti, 2013): besides the intrinsic leakages given to influences such as MP´s amendments (Huneeus, Berríos & Cordero, 2006, p. 415), those measurements of legislative capacity do not account for the relative importance of different policies and neither explain how much the government parties had to move from their ideal positions in prelegislative negotiations (Field 2016, p. 78; Thürk, 2022, p. 13)[91]. So, regardless of their being more amenable to comparative studies[92], finding benchmarks with deeper meanings to tap into substantive outcomes seems a much necessary effort in order to better understand the impacts of institutional factors in governance.

2.2.1 Why focus on Executive-Legislative relations ?

Among the vast universe of factors affecting good governance, we are putting into the limelight those associated with the relation between presidential executives and their legislatures. The reasons for this choice must now be put out clearly.

First, there´s the obvious point that a minority condition is a specific feature of executive-legislative relations, thus being closely associated with our main theoretical concerns.

More broadly, presidents and parliaments[93] are closely intertwined in at least two crucial processes who shape the most crucial public decisions: lawmaking and oversight[94] (Sieberer, 2011, p. 748; Melo, 2009, pp. 41-45). Legislation, under the rule of law, is the moment when a society´s "general interest" is made concrete through a formal specification (Arbós & Giner, 1996, pp. 51-58) involving both actors (Amorim

[90] Respectively, the ratio of accepted government bills of all government proposals (the success rate of cabinet bills) and the ratio of enacted bills initiated by the government (either by cabinet as such or by any cabinet party members) to the overall number of enacted bills (the share of government policies of all enacted policies) – Thürk (2022 , pp. 13-14)

[91] Studies of political executives mirror-image that conceptual scarcity, there being no universally accepted standards for measuring the performance of political executives, but only proxy indicators, specially the similarly politics-centered 'longevity' in office (Helms, 2020, p. 647)

[92] "However, it allows for comparing government capacity across countries and time and is independent from partisan attributes. Moreover, looking at legislative performance in terms of passed policies is at the very heart of government capacity [..]." (Thürk, 2022, p. 13)

[93] Exactly as cabinets and parliaments under parliamentary regimes.

[94] Nowithstanding other important roles of legislatures such as the the *ex ante* selection of external officeholders, representation, legitimisation and providing a forum for public debate, besides the recruitment, socialisation, and training functions for political elites (Sieberer, 2011, p. 751).

Neto, 1998, p. 2[95]), while legislative oversight is the moment where such materialization is more strongly and legitimately examined in its actual implementation (Lemos & Power, 2013, p. 386; Pereira & Melo, 2012, p. 167). Indeed, the comparative literature on executive-legislative relations, formerly overemphasizing institutional differences between presidential and parliamentary formats, has recently converged in the view of both presidents and prime ministers as having a common central purpose of "managing the legislative branch to advance their policy goals" (Chaisty et al, 2020, p.421), a policy-centered approach which highlights that relationship as one of the main engines of any policymaking framework.

So, Executive-Legislative relations stand out as a relevant feature to be heeded when assessing the political determinants of good public governance.

2.2.2 Government decisiveness as the key answer in presidential theory

The traditional answer regarding governance capacity in presidentialism stresses its capabilities to provide (or not) a government with decisiveness, that is, the ability to authoritatively make decisions. In more detail, according to the framework by Cox and McCubbins (2001)[96], the ability of a government to enact and implement policy change. Its absence means ungovernability, which stems from several conditions: the inability to decide (undecisiveness), the inability to stick to a decision once made (irresoluteness), or the pursuit of inconsistent policies by different "subgovernments" ("balkanization", whose actors may be legislative committees, or parties, or delegated corporatist interest groups). In our theoretical context, the relevant dimension of decisiveness is the effect of executive-legislative interaction, that is, the combined effects of both branches´ actions and powers in terms of the decisional outcomes (in the simple words of Melo, 2009, in terms of governments´ ability to approve their agenda)[97], and the more common expressions of "gridlock".

[95] Amorim Neto (1998; 2006) stresses that policymaking by statute is one among several strategies available to the executive (deploying unilateral decree powers, or negotiating directly with private societal actors are other potential tools to the president, according to each country´s specific institutional and social features). Even so, statutes are the most frequent and stable among those strategies, and even the other two involve some degree of consideration regarding the legislature´s stance.

[96] That study will be the reference to this whole section 2.2.2, unless otherwise specified.

[97] Which means discarding, for analytical purposes, other possible conflicts between empowered agents (e.g., the Judiciary), or even the sheer powerlessness of government as a whole (as in a civil war).

The analogies with the classical "veto player" approach (Tsebelis, 1995) are very clear, and indeed "veto players" are a logical underlying feature to this framework. However, the main focus is not to gauge "policy stability" as a value in itself (as Tsebelis tipically does), but to understand decisiveness factors as dynamically embedded in governance outcomes. There´s a clear trade-off between "decisiveness", as described above, and "resoluteness", i.e., the ability of a government to commit to the maintenance of a given policy, and that is strongly linked to the number of veto players involved: for policy change, more of them mean more transaction costs, more decisional delays and more costs involved in any logrolling necessary for every player to accept the ultimate deal. On the other hand, such slower negotiations make for a more transparent policymaking environment, and the deals, having stood negotiations with more veto players, will stand as more credible (Shugart & Haggard, 2001, p. 96-97).

Both extremes of the trade-off are dangerous: on one hand, the incapacity to decide (or to quickly adapt decisions to changing circumstances) is a severe governance handicap; on the other hand, the absence of any credible commitment to whatever decision is made is also handicapping, because other social agents may not regard government decisions as predictable and reliable parameters for their own decisions (e.g., private investment); besides, any actor may be incentivized to invest its resources in pressing for the reversal of decisions already made, instead of acting under the frames of previously agreed-upon policies (Haggardx, McCubbins & Shugart, 2001, pp. 320-321)[98].

So, decisiveness (with all the tradeoffs it involves) will be necessarily one pillar of our theoretical construction for the determinants of good governance in presidential systems. In very short parlance, we´ll survey around what has been nicknamed the need for "strong presidents" (Melo, 2009, p. 41) for good policy results, even when they must be coupled with other institutional conditions to perform adequately in policymaking and democracy-building.

[98] Several historical examples are at hand to show the above perils: regarding of undecisiveness, the bitter conflicts over budget impoundment during Nixon´s two terms in office, or the hugely expensive and ineffective policy "draws" which arise from polarized divided government in contemporary United States (McCubbins, 1991, for spending policies; Cox & McCubbins, 1991, for taxation); as for balkanization or policy unilateralism, the covert actions performed by the Reagan administration to supply arms to rebellious factions in Nicaragua against congressional decisions (the "Iran-Contra scandal"), or the several attempts of deep market-friendly economic reforms by Latin American right-wing presidents such as Collor and Menem (which yielded different degrees of decisiveness and ultimate results).

To conclude this section, a few caveats deserve to be mentioned. Cox & McCubbins (2001) insert in their assessments the tradeoff "private-" vs "public regardedness" of policy produced by a system, positing that some policymaking activity is distributive in intent (in the forms of both pork proper and rents), while other kinds aim to provide public goods, improve allocative efficiency, and to promote the general welfare. Those policy outcome features are then correlated to the existence of more veto players in decision processes[99]. Under this framework, an institutionally undecisive system must raise the amount of private goods´ exchange with politicians (typically, as we saw above, legislators) as a means of bidding their agreement on some public-goods programme. Sensible as those issues may be, we choose to appraise them indirectly: our study of substantive policy outcomes will convey in those very results any analytical corollary of "privately-" or "publicly-oriented" measures. That is, by measuring aggregate results such as economic growth or inflation rates, we´ll focus on empirical aspects who in themselves try to capture the public-good orientation of the policymaking process).

For the same reasons, it´s theoretically important to decouple decisiveness frameworks from any assumption regarding the alleged national or local/particularistic inclination of presidents and legislators. Most traditions on presidential studies follow Fiorina´s pluralist approach (Fiorina, 1991, pp. 90-91) under which "[f]rom the president to the lobbyist, the breadth of politicians' concerns will follow the dictates of the size and homogeneity of their constituencies*",* and thus presidents will adopt "a more national, public goods orientation to policy questions" and "members of Congress must vigilantly weigh a policy's selective costs and benefits for the local constituencies they serve."[100]. Others may see party politics in presidentialism as more policy-centered (Figueiredo & Limongi, 2008; Cox & McCubbins, 1993), joining the overwhelming

[99] On the grounds that the more actors can block a decision on general issues, the more targeted benefits they may extract in exchange for their agreement, thus rendering the resulting policy more private-oriented.

[100] As for the multiparty presidentialism versions of that approach, see for instance, the extreme scenario of endless pork-barrel demands pictured for Brazil in Ames (2000); Santos´ (2003, p. 245) vision of an "agenda maximizer" Brazilian president focused on a "coherent national development project", or Shugart and Haggard (2001, p. 66) recasting presidentialism´s "irony" in which even the same party can be fractured into a presidency interested in providing public goods for its nationwide constituency and legislators committed to regional or targeted goods for much more restricted constituents. For a more geographically remote example, Chen and Haggard (2001) found that the emergence of electoral competition in Taiwan since 1992 shifted government expenditures from nationwide goods (such as defense) to pork and particularistic projects, since presidents now had to take into account the electoral interests of their own party´s legislators (and those, by their turn, asserted stronger prerogatives in the budget legislative process with precisely the same goal).

majority of parliamentary studies (see overviews in Dumont, Lieven & Andeweg, 2011, or Strøm & Nyblade, 2007) who see coalescing parties in cabinets as interested basically in implementing national policies. Our assessment will not depend on neither assumption. Actually, several of the causal factors will explicitly admit that different parties can – and probably will – show different motives for engaging in electoral and parliamentary politics (Strøm & Müller, 1999; Field, 2016), and that legislators can be attracted – or not – by particularistic policies (Chaisty et al, 2018)[101]. In sum, the particularistic or national orientation of both executive and legislature will be treated as a variable within the decisiveness framework, not as a requisite postulate to the analysis.

2.2.3 Majority coalitions as a conventional proxy for decisiveness

The received wisdom in presidential literature equates such decisiveness attributes with coalition-building: the short version of it is that building – and keeping - stable majority coalitions by presidents is necessary and sufficient for reaching decisiveness, and that would mean good governance. Conceptually, coalition may be understood as credible understandings between political parties (either by explicit written agreement or tacitly agreed practice) to share political resources and reach common goals - here, in the specific realm of coordination in government (Couto, Soares & Livramento, 2021; Reniu & Albala, 2012). This underlying strategy is, however, hard to observe empirically: coalitions have to be traced in real life indirectly, generally through the empirical assessment of how much cabinet-level appointments follow partisan logic, that is, they reflect an agreement between the president and the minister´s party regarding his or her nomination (Amorim Neto, 1994, 1998; Chasquetti, 2008). In parliamentary scholarship, a several studies emphasizes the relative novelty of explicit support agreements within cabinets (Christiansen and Pedersen, 2014) and with external supporters (Bale & Bergman, 2006; Andeweg, 2001; Aylott & Bergman, 2011; Thürk, 2022; Krauss & Thurk, 2022; Matthieß, 2018) designated "contract parliamentarism". This relatively new phenomenon[102] encompasses formally minority

[101] Shugart and Haggard (2001, p. 64-65) provide several extreme cases of each configuration in Latin American politics: nationally-focused presidents facing highly particularistic legislatures (Brazil and Colombia); highly polarized parliaments disputing national politics inch-by-inch with the president and his party (Chile during the Allende presidency); one-party domination of both national and particularistic politics so as to render separation of powers meaningless (Mexico under PRI rule until the democratization in the early 2000´s), while most presidential cases tend to lie in-between.

[102] Not that they´ve been unknown: Strøm (1990) had a specific category of "formal minority governments" to designate minority cabinets with binding external support agreements. The

governments (either single party or coalition) which have relationships with their 'support' parties that are so institutionalized through formal, written, explicit agreements that they come close to being majority governments. Chaisty et al (2018, ch. 3) discuss the actual existence of stable support arrangements in the legislature that may not include cabinet sharing, yet stressing the extreme difficulty of developing comparative metrics for them, since qualitative, case-by-case empirical assessments are necessary to identify them (portfolio-based definitions being the only practicable solution for studying coalitions in large-N analyses). For our purposes of discussing the extant views on the issue, and taking into consideration that this methodological choice has been absolutely majoritarian in all the assessed literature (with very few exceptions, remarkably the abovementioned case-based work by Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power), we adopt such cabinet-based definition.

Traditional first-generation "pro-presidentialism" positions saw effective government as conditioned by presidential majority in Congress, which in such early days seemed dependent on low party fractionalization (allegedly, on an effective number of legislative parties below four). That last, in turn, relied upon electoral design (plurality rule to elect presidents, closed list proportional representation with moderate district magnitudes to elect legislators, and concurrent electoral cycles), which was crucial to raise the presidential party´s legislative weight and to decrease the obstacles to occasional coalition. That, however, diverged from most empirical findings of successful coalitions without such electoral features[103] (Negretto, 2004, p. 2).

Further research emphasized the need for coalition-building as an unsurmountable step to give presidents a legislative majority, offsetting their party´s minoritarian legislative share and the institutional limitations they face in unilaterally pursuing a policy agenda (Martínez-Gallardo, 2012; Chasquetti, 2008) – once assumed that presidents wish not only to stay in power, but also have their policy ambitions (Figueiredo et al, 2012). Such majority will then be the main conduit for obtaining legislative decisions according to presidential preferences – or, at least to the preferences broadly accepted by the president during previous coalition negotiations (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2020; Chaisty et al, 2018). Indeed, under these perspectives, majoritarian coalitions seem to emerge as the one path available to

novelty is the centrality recently detected for such agreements in minority prime minsters´ governance strategies.

[103] Such restrictive features do look like an unspoken longing for a Latin American version of US political systems, with hardly any empirical footprint beyond some limited resemblance in Costa Rica or during the *Puntofijo* system in Venezuela.

presidents to collaborate with the legislature and get policy made through statutes, a stabler and more persistent implementation tool, in whose absence presidents can only try to use decree or unilateral powers which frequently bring with them strong political tensions and policy instability (Amorim Neto, 1998; 2006)[104]. All those theoretical reasons are corroborated by the opulent empirical findings of coalition-making across almost every presidential system outside the United States, already discussed in sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2[105].

That´s where the literature stands nowadays: coalitional presidentialism, "a strategy of directly elected minority presidents to build stable majority support in fragmented legislatures, specifically via the coordination of two or more legislative parties by the president" (Chaisty et al, 2018, p. 14)[106], is the privileged way to ensure the coordination presidentialism needs for policy-making, the presidents´ tool *par excellence*. The cutting edge to this research agenda is how presidents do that, that is, what are the factors and instruments to form and manage those coalitions (Chaisty et al, 2018; Couto et al, 2021).

This view apparently converges to the conclusions by the literature regarding parliamentary coalitions, which evolved from seeing them as mere vehicles to access to government office (minimizing costs via "minimum winning coalitions") to more nuanced assessments of coalitions as means for smooth decision-making according governmental and oppositional policy preference distributions (Dumont et al, 2011; Strøm & Nyblade, 2007; Andeweg, 2011).

That is, coalitional presidentialism revolves around making and maintaining coalitions who ensure legislative majorities, and that ends up being implicitly equated with good governance results.

There´s no doubt that such strong relationship between coalition-making and governance is consequential: one of the most crucial negotiations in government is the

[104] Cavalcante (2012) correlates good performance indicators for public policies in Brazilian municipalities with a higher share of seats belonging to parties associated in an electoral coalition with the mayor´s party.

[105] To quote just the most relevant ones, see the empirical findings by Cheibub et al (2004), Chaisty and Power (2018), Deheza (1997), Figueiredo et al (2012) or Chasquetti (2008), all mentioning the frequence, duration and legislative success of coalitions under presidentialism.

[106] It´s worth underlining the long distance that such a procedural, analytically sharp definition, holds to the original, historically-based contents to this expression when originally coined: *[..] o Brasil é o único país que, além de combinar a proporcionalidade, o multipartidarismo e o "presidencialismo imperial", organiza o Executivo com base em grandes coalizões. A esse traço peculiar da institucionalidade concreta brasileira chamarei, à falta de melhor nome, "presidencialismo de coalizão" [..]* (Abranches, 1988, p. 21-22)

one around who takes office, for it means defining, to a great extent, who shapes policy – so relevant a decision, by the way, is solely in the hands of directly elected representatives (either by parliamentarians as a body, or by directly elected presidents). So, coalition theory expanded to encompass presidential governments as well (Schleiter, 2020), in an integrated framework where the institutional variables of both systems "have been downgraded from fetishes to control variables" (Chaisty et al, 2020, p.421). What´s more, the emphasis has been shifted from coalitions *per se* to their causal factors, that is, the embedded elements in the political system that conditioned coalition-building outcomes. It´s necessary to put the lenses not only on parties´ motives to accept cabinet posts (as the canonical models of parliamentary cabinet-making), but on a great list of other variables. Those include: parties´ and presidential policy preferences (typically described in spatial models); the transaction costs of working together in a coalition environment; the institutions which structure the process of coalition negotiation and confer distinct bargaining powers to different actors. After a coalition deal has been struck, it´s even necessary to look at some of its ongoing features, such as the institutions who affect how parties will act within the coalition to reach their own goals (which involve things like ministers´ control over their portfolio´s policy outcomes; bicameralism; supermajority requirements for a policy program; strength of oppositional policy influence from legislative committee systems), and the adaptability presidents´ institutional prerogatives grant them in the face of contingent legislative pressures.

However, there´s one very strong underlying pattern in that theoretical evolution, a pattern whose unveiling is the key point to this section: the literature – both in parliamentary and presidential systems – has evolved towards the search for causal factors for majority coalition-building and management, in the form of institutional and societal preconditions, and the search for tools they offer for actors to deploy in coordinating interbranch relationship. That´s the approach we intend to follow in our research: instead of concentrating on an intermediate condition (the majority coalition) and assuming it to be the key to decisiveness on policy decisions, we propose to cut straight to the requisites that might account for that decisiveness.

That is, coalition-building might be considered an intermediate analytical step which, until now, was somehow taken as a proxy for decisiveness. In other words we are interested in coalitions´ nuts and bolts, or what makes their existence relevant after all. That will allow us to circumvent the necessity of considering the majoritarian or

minoritarian status of cabinet coalitions as an independent variable per se, focusing instead on underlying causal factors that stand for the decisional capacity of any presidential government, using minority governments as our testing ground to that assessment.

2.2.4 The missing link: accountability

Decisiveness, however, is not the only game in town: governance may require another twin dimension. Presidents must have decision powers, but those powers must be wisely used, and political institutions must provide conditions who strongly favor this wisdom to be shown.

Melo (2009, pp. 30-31) warns that concentration of powers in (and abuse of powers by) the Executive ranks very high in the governance problems of contemporary Latin America, including some very troublesome undemocratic drifts in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. Presidential abuse, unchecked, has meant clear de-institutionalization, under various forms: disintegration of party systems (Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina); a surge in the number of street protests and premature ousting of presidents (Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela)[107].

Indeed, such one-sided concentration of powers in the hands of (very decisive) presidents was classically theorized by O´Donnel (1994, 1998), in a general model, as "delegative democracy", the plague of early democratic transitions[108], who cumulated the absence of full-fledged democratic institutions with heavy socioeconomic hurdles as a legacy from authoritarian rule. Periodic elections are established and contestable, but in-between no institutional constraints to presidential will are in place, leaving presidents to rule as they fit, subject only to "hard facts" of power relations (such as market or foreign exchange pressures), unhindered by any influence by legislatures, courts or any other political institution.

[107] In this regard, reliance on street demonstrations to deter misuse of presidential or partisan powers does not mean stronger checks and balances, but the opposite ("spasmodic accountability"): institutions´ failure in performing their duties - even when legislatures were the ones who, formally and eventually, performed the sanctioning acts (Melo, 2009 p. 45; for an attempt at mapping the extreme reliance on such last-resort arrangements in the Bolivian case, see Mayorga, 2014, pp. 74-86).

[108] Notably in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia), but elsewhere as well (Phillipines, South Korea).

O´Donnel´s model offers a sobering view over the flaws that the absence of accountability introduces into good policymaking. It surely refers to extreme cases, more common to the newly democratized Latin America in the 1990, but it´s a first warning of what decisiveness alone can bring, when deprived of its counterweights. This hardball game of delegative democracy in presidential systems begin with majoritarian elections leading candidates to pledges who raise high expectations among usually distressed citizens and businesses. That induces the winner into voluntaristic, high-risk policy packages, which are applied unilaterally and without neither consensus-building nor proper institutional feedback on implementation capacity. That´s a perfect recipe for gross mistakes (by fraud or error), hazardous implementation and, eventually, blame-targeting in the presidential figure. The (likely) failure of such attempts induces, in a vicious cycle, uncooperative, unilateral short-term behavior in all agents, depriving social and economic reform attempts from broad cooperation they need and inducing adversarial responses from citizens and business (low private investment, excessive wage and price demands, overhauled efforts at tax and foreign exchange evasion) – all of which, in turn, generate more failure. As a matter of fact, presidents who are the sole actors in the policy process hold also the sole responsibility (and blame) for the policy attempts, whose failure jeopardizes their legitimacy to try amendments or new initiatives. On the other hand, when occasionally successful in their attempts (at least in the short term[109]), the individualization of credit on the presidential figure may incentivize him or her to waste the added political leverage gained by any policy success into reforms aimed at reinforcing power concentration and on getting re-election franchises, instead of much-needed structural and conjunctural solutions for economic and social malaises.

The harmful logic of a unilateral decisionist policy process is expressed in more general terms by Nacif (2003). To be sure, decisions must be reached, and in some circumstances (as in the 1980´s and 90´s crisis-ridden Latin America who epitomized O´Donnel´s model) quick and intense changes may have to be produced. Indeed, deciding in a concentrated way by a cohesive majority may be occasionally necessary, and such majoritarian view still ensures the prevalence of the majority´s will. However, democratic stability and public welfare will stem from favorable policy end results, not from mere swiftness in their adoption. And that´s the crux: any such majoritarian

[109] The classical example to that, although not nominally mentioned by O´Donnell, might be the first years of Menem´s convertibility plan in Argentina - albeit such views are not espoused by Shugart & Haggard (2001, pp. 74 and 78).

decisional model presupposes that policies can be designed, and implemented without negotiation, by a fully rational and disinterested policymaker, and that this kind of behavior would accrue coherence, efficiency and accountability to government action. This is a wildly strong assumption, and hardly realistic in any setting[110]. Indeed, every policy change is an experiment of sorts, facing extreme uncertainty between measures adopted and its consequences. Besides, adds Nacif, politicians and bureaucrats are too far away from benign do-gooders: left without restraints, they´ll end up using power to pursue their own partial (individual or group) interests, twisting the policy results for the public at large[111].

Now reframing the question in positive terms, the missing link seems to be the need for horizontal accountability in successful governance. The "microphysics" for accountable policymaking are suggested by Nacif (2006): incremental, negotiated, muddling-through[112] approaches are the best to deal with unanticipated effects, to incorporate legitimate interests into policy design[113] and to prevent abuse from power. The dispersion of power moderates changes, multiplies stakeholders and even – for that matter - veto points[114], translated in incremental changes who accumulate into great transformation. This step-by-step decision-making can acknowledge and tackle the actual limits to rational calculations, (for example, receiving information and experiences from all sides) while opening up checkpoints against abuse from powers along the way[115].

[110] The spectacular failures of central planning and social engineering in totalitarian societies suffice to dismiss such overarching claims.

[111] Framing it in terms of fiscal policy results, Wehner (2004,p. 3) warns:

Generalized arguments against legislature involvement in the budget process presume that executives automatically want to govern well and in the best interest of the public. Unfortunately, too often this has proven a naïve assumption. In particular where executive benevolence and integrity is not firmly entrenched in the culture of governance, and where electoral accountability is weakly developed, the absence of meaningful legislative checks and balances opens the door to waste and corruption and leads down the road of poor budget outcomes (Burnell 2001). In a few countries with deeply rooted and sound budgeting practices, it might perhaps be possible for the legislature to largely withdraw from the budget process without risking noticeably declining executive integrity. However, legislative withdrawal can be highly detrimental to fiscal health where the executive has not thoroughly internalized norms and standards of due process and an ethic of performance is largely lacking.

[112] For original references to "muddling through" as a public policy framework, see Lindblom (1959, 1991).

[113] Preventing such stakeholders from an active or passive resistance to the policies enacted.

[114] It must be said that the mention to "veto points" in this argument is clearly different from the more widely known Tsebelis´ "policy stability" framework: vetoes here are part of the negotiating process into change, and stability is not seen as the dependent variable to the analysis.

[115] Quoting O´Donnel himself, Nacif claims that this kind of inter-agent conflict in the political arena has for policymaking similar effects than those of competitive markets for economic activity

From an institutional point of view, O´Donnell (1998, 2003) unifies those traits under the concept of horizontal accountability[116], a network of state agencies[117] who, working together in an integrated fashion, are legally empowered, hold the political incentives and possess the technical capabilities to act (either by routine supervision, by legal sanctions or even by removing the involved agent[118]) against actions or omissions from other state agents or agencies that may be qualified as unlawful or wrongful in terms of policy design or execution[119]. Those are the instruments for a polity to solve the fundamental (and universal) trade-off between two equally rational desires: decisiveness and control. In one hand, power must be endowed and deployed to solve collective action problems; on the other hand, those same powers must be kept at bay since its holder may abuse it in his own benefit[120].

On the ground, such mechanisms produce, first of all, information about the making and implementation of policy[121]; much more comes from them, though. This web or institutional actors may produce rather dramatic and visible intervention when agents at the top of the power chains (such as congress) react and contain other top-level

[116] Mainwaring (2003) posits also "oversight" or "superintendence" as roughly equivalent terms to horizontal accountability. For an abstract formal model of accountability within a principal-agent framework, see Brandsma and Schillemans (2013). Such formal models are fully compatible with O´Donnel´s more institutionalist design, but fail to disclose the concrete social and political links we´re trying to highlight the context of Latin American presidentialism. That´s why our approach will rely on that theoretical strand as presented in the main text for this section.

[117] Melo (2009, p. 46-48) adds independent (non-state) media to that slate.

[118] Mainwaring (2003) plausibly establishes that the availability of sanction and removal powers is indispensable for the whole web of institutions to be able to perform its intended role, but is not a requirement to each and every one of them. So, an audit institution or a parliamentary inquiry committee may be effective as horizontal accountability agents by just having investigative powers, provided the whole system has other agents (such as prosecutors and judges) who can act upon their findings and pursue coercive measures to stop malpractices. On the other hand, the formalistic requirement that an institution must have to concur in a policy decision to be considered an "oversight" institution - such as the joint concurrence of executive and legislature for a bill to be signed into law (Arzuaga, 1999) - is not present at all under this framework here, remarkably when dealing with presidential systems. On the contrary, the whole idea to this theoretical build-up is that horizontal accountability arrangements help to offset presidential abuse of his own powers (not only the ones he occasionally shares with other branches).

[119] The original texts conceptualizing horizontal accountability (O´Donnel, 1998, 2003) frame those acts or omissions only as unlawful ones (i.e., acts of power encroachment or corruption). We follow here a broader version of the concept, already implicit in the author´s argument for countervailing forces to delegative democracy to check fraud and illegality as well as errors in policy decisions (O´Donnel, 1994). That´s also the scope given to the concept by Mainwaring (2003), Melo (2009), and Lemos (2005a).

[120] In a more minimalist fashion, Croissant (2003) identifies weak, reactive presidential legislative powers and strong veto players (both partisan and institutional) as the way to prevent the functioning of delegative democracy (using a comparison of South Korea and the Phillipines as a showcase).

[121] Including the opportunity for the thorough discussion, explanation and justification for policy decisions which remains in the core of the "deliberative" stances of accountability in parliament (Sanders et al, 2017, pp. 3-4)

decision-makers (such as the president); however, they may intervene also as routine checks when agencies with specific mandates locate and counter a plethora of "street-level" illegal or wrongful misdeeds, usually under more technical assessment parameters. Horizontal accountability effects can be felt also by the deterrent effect that the expectation of such checks has on public officeholders. Pereira and Melo (2012, p. 158-159) express in other, very simple terms, this convivial logic of accountability within the decision-making process in presidential systems:

> Three things explain multiparty presidentialism's unexpected success: the powers of presidents; the availability of trade-worthy coalition goods (cabinet posts, "pork," patronage, and the like) that executives can use to gain legislators' support; and the strength of institutional checks on the executive's discretion. Good governance hinges on the delegation of extensive powers to both presidents and autonomous institutions that can and will check the executive branch. Where presidents concentrate powers without congress's consent, what is happening is not delegation but usurpation.

For the sake of good governance, such mechanisms may, potentially, slow down policy decisions, shape them much more incrementally, and even enlarge the possibility of gridlock[122]. Such risks, however, tend to be vastly offset by their roles as vaccines against gross mistakes and as catalysts to successful implementation (by way of enhancing cooperation amongst stakeholders and retrieving proper transaction-level information)[123]. A study on Brazilian state governments, for instance, pointed out that "better developed checks & balances have a strong impact on the choices of governors to increase public goods and restrict the provision of private goods and the pursuit of personal benefits." (Alston, Melo, Mueller & Pereira, 2008, p. 15). Still on the positive side, accountable policymaking means sharing the responsibility for remaining mistakes among several actors, thus reducing the possibility that policy failures are charged only on executive heads, converting them into out-of-date "lame ducks" (O´Donnel, 1994).

Horizontal accountability has still a deeper, institutional meaning, far beyond being a simple information shortcut or decision-making technique, and it´s worth discussing how it has broader implications for democratic stability. This notion embodies a significant component of the very concept of checks and balances from classical democratic theory: putting overlapping competences in the hands of different institutions and agents with different motivations, so that one can contain others´

[122] In Mainwaring (2003) more analytical description, they always have transaction costs.

[123] Payne et. al. (2007, p. 87) predicate that the optimal functioning of presidential democracy requires that "legislatures share lawmaking power with the executive and develop the capacity to regularly oversee the implementation of government programs and regulations". For a broader presentation to the development of oversight theories, under the general perspective of principal-agent modelling, see McCubbins, 2014.

occasional abuses of power[124]. This is far from denying the core accountability in democracy, the one due to voters (Przeworski, Stokes & Manin, 1999; Strøm, Müller, & Bergman, 2006), called vertical accountability under O´Donnell´s framework: without such responsiveness to the electorate, there would be no democracy to begin with, so the very notion of accountability would be meaningless. Horizontal accountability only has meaning within this democratic background, and interacts with vertical accountability - at least, by generating parts of the flows of information who are necessary to voting decisions[125], whose availability is one of Dahl´s assumptions on poliarchy[126].

Horizontal accountability steps in as a core piece of a democratic polity when we recall that vertical institutions alone cannot ensure full accountability: elections are held in fixed time intervals, temporarily insulating elected officials from the effects of voters´ reprimand; many state agents, such as most bureaucrats, are only indirectly submitted to electoral censorship (that is, they´re responsible only to the elected government heads, and some, like judges, not even to that); the sheer complexity of the state apparatus creates informational hurdles to overseeing government actions who are in practice unsurmountable to the most well-meaning and devoted citizen; in extreme cases, politicians´ or parties´ gatekeeping role on the supply of electoral offers may imply in collusive behavior which makes impossible to sanction or deter abusive acts relying only on electoral competition. That is, without the joint workings of both vertical and horizontal accountability, democratic accountability simply cannot exist (Lemos & Power, 2013; Maravall, 2009; Mainwaring, 2003[127]).

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[124] *But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. The provision for defense must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place.* (Madison, 2008, p. 256)

[125] That is, *ex post* electoral accountability depends on strong conditions: voters must be able to observe representatives´ performance (an informational problem), and their vote must be cast accordingly, at least potentially – that´s to say, voting cannot be exclusively based on identity, and politicians must see at least the risk of retrospective voting implying potential electoral volatility" (Strøm, 1997, p. 51)

[126] In very simple terms, that´s how Dahl himself (2001, p. 111) puts it:

Como a liberdade de expressão, diversos critérios democráticos básicos exigem que fontes de informação alternativas e relativamente independentes estejam disponíveis para as pessoas. Pense na necessidade de compreensão esclarecida. Como os cidadãos podem adquirir a informação de que precisam para entender as questões se o governo controla todas as fontes importantes de in formação? Ou, por exemplo, se apenas um grupo goza do monopólio de fornecer a informação? Portanto, os cidadãos devem ter acesso a fontes de informação que não estejam sob o controle do governo ou que sejam dominadas por qualquer grupo ou ponto de vista.

[127] Alston et al (2008, p. 15) emphasize that strong checks and balances amplify the virtuous effects of electoral competition on the quality of policymaking.

2.2.5 Parliaments and horizontal accountability

Given our theoretical focus now on horizontal accountability, what´s the rationale behind assessing them along the executive-legislative relations axis ? It´s very clear that horizontal accountability is meant to be pursued by a web of institutions working together (including courts, prosecutors, audit offices, ombudsmen). Yet, without disregard to the role of any one of them, parliaments stand as the centerpiece of that web - not the least because they´re simultaneously anchored in the vertical and horizontal accountability chains (Miller, 2002, p. 15; West, 2020).

First of all, legislative oversight is a stronghold of formal and political legitimacy to the horizontal accountability circuit (Lemos & Power, 2013, p. 386): oversight is almost universally entitled to legislatures as a constitutional or legal prerogative and mission, and those bodies are subjected to the vertical accountability to electors (which is hardly the case of any other organizations or authorities in the accountability web), thus being almost the only direct link in the core delegation chain from voters to officials. In practical terms, legislatures feature as strong stabilizers in the policy-making process, either by sharing its very inception acting as "arenas of perpetual fine-tuning of conflicts" (Alemán & Tsebelis, 2011, p. 25) - through its lawmaking prerogatives or even by means of oppositional criticism strong enough to influence otherwise unilateral decisions by the executive (Kriner & Schickler, 2016) - or by actively overseeing implementation (Pereira & Melo, 2012, p. 167; Melo, 2009, pp. 41-45; Sieberer, 2011, p. 748). Still in operational terms, parliaments are endowed with institutional and organizational resources to perform both of the pathways of oversight described just above: the top-ranking interbranch decision checks and the routine, "street-level" supervisory routines on the administration. Although there may be formal and material limits to both styles of intervention (such as the monopoly of most coercive powers by the judiciary, or the limitation of human and informational resources available *vis-à-vis* specialized investigative or audit agencies), legislatures are deeply embedded in the oversight potential in almost every horizontal accountability action (to the extent that Mainwaring (2003) considers the accumulated literature on oversight by the US Congress as the mandatory starting point for developing further theories on horizontal accountability).

Even within the coalition-oriented literature, and even from the point of view of parties in government, legislative scrutiny is seen as a key governance resource: Martin

and Vanberg (2004; 2014) posit that any parliamentary coalition cabinet is surrounded by the moral hazard stemming from the possibility of individual ministers "drifting" from agreed-upon coalition deals within their portfolios´ jurisdiction in favor of their own party´s policy position; such moral hazard can be mitigated basically through the possibility of longer scrutiny in parliamentary committees by legislators belonging to coalition partners[128]. Freitas (2013) extends this "insider watchdog" role to presidential coalitions in Brazil, presenting congress as the reviewing instance for coalition partners to "keep tabs" on the overall legislative results, striving to get them nearer the coalition´s median position – under even less certain circumstances, given that presidential coalitions usually lack explicit coalitional deals and almost always lack any cabinet-type mechanism for at least formal inter-party approval of proposed bills.

Moreover, assertive parliaments both in policymaking and oversight are an empirical reality in Latin America, offering a wide range of features and performances to be assessed in our research (Payne et. al, 2007, p. 103). For all those reasons, parliaments represent a meaningful share of the horizontal accountability, and any assessment who focuses on their relationship with the executive under this perspective will profitably shed light on the polity´s governance. That´s the reason we´ll operationalize the accountability factor in our model through the oversight activities of parliaments.

2.2.6 What about minority ? Minority governments as a scope condition

In section 2.2.3 we argued that the majority coalitions´ assumption which comprise the core of the literature might profitably be replaced, as governance (or even decisiveness) explanatory variables, by their underlying causal factors. First, such coalitions are not always a necessary condition for good governance, since there are multiple instances of democratic survival, under regular operations, other than in majority situations. Second, none of the assessments found regarding coalitions in presidentialism portrayed any linkages between coalition-building and horizontal accountability – on the contrary, judging by O´Donnel´s accounts, the concentration of powers in the president who could be achieved by securing a strong majority status in

[128] Those "policing" devices in the legislature may become even more important than other possible resources as ministerial committees, party leadership summits or the cross-appointment of junior ministers by coalition partners, because parliament (specially in standing committees) tends to be endowed with the informational resources and the formal amendment powers to effectively scrutinize and amend the legislation at hand to enforce back coalition agreements against ministerial drift (Martin & Vanberg, 2014).

parliament could only jeopardize government into the risks of delegative democracy. So, we now need to clearly establish now the reasons for choosing the universe of minoritarian governments to study decisiveness and accountability in presidential governments.

The overall logic is simple: under minority contexts, decisiveness is subject to a harsher benchmark, since (at least *ex ante*) not having a formal legislative majority on behalf of a president or cabinet is clearly a least favorable condition for them to enact any kind of policy. The emphasis of the extant literature on the need for majority coalitions suggests authors see at least a strong correlation between them and decisiveness – so, when we examine situations where this variable *prima facie* doesn´t exist, the bar imposed on any other decisiveness factor is set much higher.

The accountability side is expected to be the opposite: in a majoritarian coalition status, parliament will probably check the government in a less intense way than if the executive faced minority conditions. Our main argument is that the more active a parliament is, and the more effective its control, the clearer is the horizontal accountability in the system and the better are the policy outcomes; so, if majority coalitions enfeeble the oversight activity of parliament, they´ll be less prone to yield accountability in policymaking. According to Lemos and Power (2013, pp. 383-384), a relevant part of the literature based on the concepts of horizontal accountability is highly pessimistic regarding the possibility of achieving it through the legislature, since institutionally powerful executives are prone to eliminate, co-opt or neutralize formal oversight agencies[129]. So, among minoritarian governments, we expect to face a greater *ex ante* probability of finding cases where parliaments perform strong accountability duties[130]. That does not imply, by any means, the removal of negative cases from the

[129] For an extreme version of that argument in the Brazilian case, see Figueiredo (2003). For a generalized theoretical assumption that this congressional powerlessness stems from the alleged lack of tools for parliamentarians (and parliamentary party leaders) to decide on national policies, condemning them to operate exclusively on the brokerage of particularistic goods, see Mello and Spektor, 2018 (albeit those authors present very little in terms of empirical support or testing for their argument).

[130] *Conversely, under conditions of minority government or divided government, scrutiny of the executive is likely to be more intense, and the potential for legislative effects on budgets can be greater [..].* (Wehner, 2014, p. 520). Wehner (2010, p. 73-75) provides historical examples of such association between divided government and a congressional effort to strengthen legislative tools and prerogatives for oversight in the United States, Mexico, South Korea and Canada. Moury and Fernandes (2016, p. 350-351) point to testimonies on behalf of stronger oversight on the governments under minority situations in Portugal. Sieberer (2011, p. 747) explains an otherwise unexpected strength of the Danish parliament´s oversight activities by mentioning that Denmark´s minority cabinets were quite frequently confronted with an 'alternative majority' in parliament that had strong incentives for *ex post* control. For a review of theoretical expectations that a

assessment: there´s concern in the literature about the effects of majority coalition-building on accountability[131], but the issue is far from settled. There are even authors who associate minority governments to weaker legislative oversight, on the grounds that the absence of oversight mechanisms, legislators lack tools to demand and get cabinet participation (Freudenreich, 2016, p. 4), as well as those who see little impact of a very difficult minority condition (an oppositional control of the US Congress) on oversight activities (Mayhew, 1991). In their recent survey of the literature, Chaisty et al (2020, p. 433) stress precisely the missing points that need to be addressed, advocating an approach very similar to what we are advancing:

> However, while fascinating, the attitudes of members of parliament towards coalitional politics raise as many questions as they answer. One question is whether our informants are correct to believe that coalitional presidentialism reduces accountability. It could be that our legislators, all of whom operate in coalitional contexts, exaggerate the impact of coalition formation and maintenance, blaming it for a range of ills that may actually have other drivers. To rule this out, it will be necessary to collect objective indicators of legislative scrutiny and presidential ease of governance to compare our cases with similar political systems in which minority presidents seek to govern without a coalition, and those in which the president enjoys an absolute majority and so does not need to form coalitions at all.

That´s why minority contexts are useful testing grounds for propositions regarding both decisiveness and accountability. In the first domain, the persistence of decisional capacity without formal numerical majority[132] will strongly illuminate its determinants that persist and thrive even in such dire straits. In the second, minority conditions will provide more opportunities to actually find and test cases where strong oversight is present. That´s far from "selecting on the variables" (either dependent or independent), since we simply direct the empirical tests to a universe where some relevant conditions will more likely to be found.

So, minority status for presidential government is treated here neither as a dependent nor as an independent variable, but instead as a scope condition for the

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divided government would create a favorable environment to horizontal oversight, see Lemos (2005a, p. 154)

[131] *There is also an emerging debate over macropolitical externalities generated by coalitional presidentialism. Does the co-optation of opposition parties weaken their development and so undermine the evolution of the party system? Does the continual need to convert a minority of seats into a majority of votes lead to dubious exchanges of favours, perhaps shading into political corruption? Do minority presidents who resort disproportionately to their own agenda-setting powers undermine parliamentary scrutiny and hence political accountability? In other words, does coalitional presidentialism involve a tradeoff between governability and accountability' (Chaisty et al. 2014), that is, generating stability while undermining the quality of democracy?* (Chaisty et al, 2020, p. 424-425)

[132] Which, as we saw in section 2.1.3, is a strong empirical finding in the literature.

general governance propositions[133]. That´s a very cautious approach: scope conditions, after all, are those outside which theory is not assumed valid (Mello, 2021, pp. 20-21; Gertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 193), or those who define irrelevant cases as those where causal processes are not homogeneous (Goertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 182). In choosing such scope, we´re by no means arguing the irrelevance of any on the mentioned causal condition and mechanism in another context, that of of majority governments (in fact, few – of none - of them would be expected to become irrelevant by the mere fact of a majoritarian situation for the president). The boundaries here established serve only to prevent formal generalization outside the strict universe of minority governance cases, where the above circumstances offer a privileged observation point to the causal processes of interest[134]. However, heeding Peters´ (1998) advice that comparative politics requires the selection of particular cases in the pursuit of general theory, prospects for potential generalization are also privileged: choosing minority instances means that whatever factors found for good governance won´t be conditioned by a particularly favourable parliamentary arithmetics (allowing for stronger generalization). Indirectly, this may mimic the effects of a selection of "influential cases" in Seawright and Gerring´s (2008) typology of techniques, that is, those leveraged *vis-à-vis* some larger cross-case theory (here, the prevalence of majority-based reasoning)[135]. Last but not least, this case selection criterion, not being based on the values of neither dependent nor independent variables, allows for variance in both dependent and independent variables, avoiding any pitfall of choosing cases on the outcome values as pointed out by King, Keohane and Verba (1994, ch. 4)[136].

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[133] *Thinking about additional variables as a scope condition is very congenial to a causal mechanism view of case studies because it encourages the researcher to evaluate where and when the causal mechanism is likely to work or not. If the case study is more exploratory, then the researcher may choose S to be those instances where the causal mechanism is easy to see or more likely to have the predicted effect. If the researcher feels pretty convinced of the validity of the causal mechanism then she might choose S to be as broad as possible. This makes sense of the "crucial" or "most difficult" case idea that occurs often in case selection justifications. The argument is that if the case study works for S near 0 (assuming for the moment that S runs from 0 to 1) then it is certain to work for cases of S near 1* (Goertz, 2017, p. 82)

[134] The same will be true for the selection of Latin American cases, as shown below.

[135] In a slightly different typology, a "critical cases" selection strategy to get cases that "if theory is not valid for this case, it won´t apply for any" (Flyjberg, 2006). At first sight, choosing minority governments might be seen as using the "extreme case" hypothesis (present in both typologies). However, that´s not true: "extreme" cases are measured on the values of dependent or independent variables, and the minority criteria is not related to any one of them (neither policy performance nor decisiveness and accountability factors).

[136] As the development of the following sections will show, the search for good governance factors will be pursued by aligning causal configurations along all kinds of minority governments (with better or worse policy outcomes), as is inherent in QCA research designs.

There´s another corollary for this methodological choice of assessing minority governments: if good policy results are found and explained in their settings, the mainstream argument that majority coalitions solve presidentialism´s governance and democratic stability problems will be strongly weakened, since other causal paths to good government will be shown who dispense with the need for co-opting a formal cabinet majority.

3 Causal relationships and hypotheses

The operational development to the theory will be presented along this section, following the main premise already sketched above: since good governance stems from the existence of both decisiveness and accountability, the specific causal propositions must implement the idea that the existence of decisiveness and accountability factors has causal impact on the existence of good policies. We must also insist on the full compatibility that position holds with the causal complexity embedded in QCA and underlined in section 1.1: conjunctural causation (since we posit a combination of different conditions to generate causal impact); equifinality (since several pathways of decisiveness and accountability may give rise to the specific governance outcome) and causal asymmetry (since outcome and non-outcome will be assessed, from the beginning, as potentially deriving from different configurations).

Decisiveness and accountability factors will be recollected from different theoretical traditions within both traditions of presidential and parliamentary studies (those last, among those centered on minority parliamentarism). This heterogeneous sourcing relies on QCA methodological practice of developing theory through the integration of different theoretical strands in support of each causal condition to be joined in the proposed configuration. It´s also attentive to the several warnings in the literature that the study of policy outcomes of presidential systems should take into account several contextual factors, institutional or agency-based, that jointly interact to produce governmental decisions, in a "policy-making system" as described by Haggard and McCubbins (2001, p. 319):

> Further, the contributors to the volume shared the sense that many institutional analyses have operated in a vacuum, isolating particular institutional elements (such as legislative committees), without locating them within a context of other institutional actors with whom they interact. For example, critics of presidentialism worried about the effects of divided government. But the deleterious effects of divided government may be partially offset if the president has proactive and reactive powers. We have tried to avoid this problem by looking at the different elements of presidentialism as constitutive of a policy-making system; the various powers of the president interact not only with his legislative interlocutors but with the political parties in which both executive and legislative action is embedded.

To honor such claims, the causal modelling presented in the following sections will strongly adhere to Carey´s view of a deliberative interaction within, and

presidential bargaining with, legislatures, encouraged by presidential powers (Melo, 2009, p. 40), further refined by Melo himself (2009, p. 32) to present as "key to effective governance and democratic stability" precisely the "combination of strong presidents[137] with robust checks and balances, and the rule of law".

Each component in the causal relationship will be defined in this Chapter 3 in precise theoretical terms, followed by their operationalization and planned data sourcing; Chapter 4 will discuss other cross-variable data issues.

A common feature in many sections will be that conditions and outcome often are conceptualized as "synthetic" composites of several different empirical metrics. That choice has both methodological and substantive reasons. First, logical variables in QCA´s truth table are to be kept as limited as feasible without hindering the completeness of their modelling the phenomenon of interest. Indeed, for many of them (such as the outcome measured in economic policy results), we couldn´t even find theoretical grounds for anything but one set for it to belong, whatever the variant. So, it makes full sense to aggregate several related factors into a "macro-condition" (Mello, 2021) who can better reflect the various dimensions of our concepts[138]. And multidimensional they are, in substantive terms, as will be shown in each section. So, our end result will include causal relationships involving high-level, relatively abstract constructs as "economic performance" or "presidential powers", whose theoretical meaning will be construed according the corresponding sections in this chapter.

3.1 Defining the outcome: good governance

Theoretical foundations

The first definition to this research is the expected outcome, that is, what might be seen as the occurrence of "good governance". To follow QCA methodological guidance (Mello, 2021; Goertz & Mahoney, 2006), we must begin by conceptualizing positive cases, to be followed by the explicit assessment of negative cases (such as the negation of a successful policy to deal with a problem being either ill-suited measures,

[137] As will be clearly shown, our conceptualizing of government decisiveness will extend beyond the mere sum of presidential powers, although those are indispensable components to it.

[138] Strong examples of "built for purpose" multidimensional aggregates used to structure theoretical discussion are to be found in Albala (2017), featuring QCA conditions such as "Institutional conditions", "Powers of the President" and "Context condition", and Montero (2009) building the composite variable "Institutional Legislative Power Index" (IPIL) for synthesizing presidential powers in the legislative arena.

or dela-yed responses or no response at all). Finally, irrelevant cases, that is, those who present some characteristic that make the outcome of interest impossible must be stipulated so as to be purged when occurring.

A first general, broad description of what we mean by governance[139], for illustrative purposes, is provided by Payne and others:

> The concept of democratic governability entails the capacity to make and implement decisions that respond adequately to a country's pressing social and economic problems. The term implies that these decisions also be democratically legitimate and sustainable; that is, that they be adopted on the basis of an open, participatory process. In addition, the government should carry out its duties efficiently and in a manner that upholds the broader public interest. One aspect of democratic governability is policy efficiency, meaning the capacity to adopt policy changes directed at improving social and economic conditions. However, this is not sufficient in itself, since the essential requirements of democratic government are that decisions respond to public preferences and interests, both of individuals and organized groups. In addition, the government must execute laws and implement policies efficiently, fairly, and honestly. (Payne et. al., pp. 86-87)

That may be understood as the grassroots, year-on-year material projection of the relationship between political institutions and economic development, about which several different and long-ranging models abound (Marquand, 1990). This broad landscape gives little in the way of measurement, though – we´re left with the search for proxies that cling on some sides of this multifaceted dome.

As we have already pointed out, most studies regarding governance in minority situations emphasize some classical political procedural variables such as democratic regime survival, government duration and termination, legislative success and dominance rates in lawmaking processes, or voting discipline on behalf of government; others point to more dynamic, results-based, measures, but still strictly in the realm of politics: pledge fulfillment; oppositional support collected by the government; incumbent future electoral successes; party objective´s fulfillment or Executive-Legislative conflict at large. Our purpose, on the other hand, is to explore the outcome in terms of politics´ end results over policies.

[139] In this section, we´ll circumvent the whole discussion regarding "governability versus governance". If "governability" might be a wider composite of legitimacy and effectiveness (*"[..]dos condiciones esenciales y que ha de cumplir cualquier gobierno para que su existencia no sea precaria: la legitimidad y la eficacia. Ambas son necesarias para la estabilidad del gobierno y del orden social. Así, la gobernabilidad consiste simplemente en la capacidad de un gobierno de ejercer a la vez estas dos funciones*." Arbós & Giner, 1996, p. 4-5), it´ll be clear from this point on that we focus on the effectiveness component, more commonly studied under the headlines of "governance".

There´s a great number of different repositories of indicators which refer to themselves as governance (United Nations Development Program - UNDP, 2012; UNDP & Eurostat, 2008) each emphasizing some of the multiple possible dimensions of such concept. One plausible operationalization within our purview might be the specific Worldwide Governance Indicators developed by the World Bank (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2010[140]). That source, albeit extremely relevant and widely used to depict governmental quality[141], is not adequate to our purposes. On empirical grounds, their time series goes as far back as 1996, which would miss a very relevant portion of the Latin American democracies´ contemporary trajectory. More importantly, under a theoretical perspective, their indicators encompass elements of civic culture and trust who go far beyond our institutional boundaries[142]; on the other hand, some of the individual indicators[143] are precisely components of governance akin to those which we assess as causal conditions, thus creating the strong risk of endogeneity in the causal reasoning. Other attempts at measuring the quality of government include an exhaustive survey of multidimensional statistics on rule-of-law attributes, economic variables and a plethora of sectoral policy outputs in health, education and other domains (Lane, 2008, ch. 2; Rothstein & Sören, 2014). However, in attempting such wide arrays of measurements, we would fall short both of the empirical resources to gather and process

[140] Full repository accessible at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/

[141] For a very recent example of WGI usage, see Nakatani, Zhang and Valdes, 2022.

[142] *We draw on existing notions of governance, and seek to navigate between overly broad and narrow definitions, to define governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (b) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (c) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.* (Kaufmann et al, 2010, p. 4)

[143] [..] *1. Voice and Accountability (VA) – capturing perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. 2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism (PV) – capturing perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically-motivated violence and terrorism. [..] 3. Government Effectiveness (GE) – capturing perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies 4. Regulatory Quality (RQ) – capturing perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. [..] 5. Rule of Law (RL) – capturing perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. 6. Control of Corruption (CC) – capturing perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.* (Kaufmann et al, 2010, p. 4)

so many data and of the theoretical groundwork with which to justify why some indicators were chosen and many others remained absent[144].

We follow instead an older tradition of assessing government quality through global economic policy results, described by Sáez (1995, pp. 28-29 and 122-124) as those who have been basically the governability measures in the literature outside the abovementioned strictly political variables[145]. Although possibly reductionist to some degree, macroeconomic indicators present a very comprehensive end result of a whole arrange of government decisions and outputs, available in long time series (presenting very few availability limitations), compiled and presented in a remarkably uniform way across countries. Good governance means decision makers continuously and credibly use their power and resources to provide public goods conducive to economic growth, instead of spoiling the machinery of government towards private goods (Cox & McCubbins, 2001, p. 21). Besides, as Peters (2022) recalls, some government outputs influenced by the change in top government orientation would impact on all features of economic and social reality and are the most frequently assessed in the literature (basically, GDP and economic inequality)[146]. Indeed, political stability has previously been correlated with good economic policy decisions (Pech, 2004, pp. 1-2 and 17), while its absence brings uncertainty to economic agents, resulting in less investment and hiring decisions (García-Uribe, Mueller & Sanz, 2021) – to the point that Amorim Neto (2006, p. 430) uses economic distress conditions such as inflation and low growth as proxies for social crisis situations; Meireles (2016, p. e0001 – 15/31) presents inflation as a proxy for presidential popularity, and Helms (2020, p. 653-655) points to economic performance as the key variable to explain citizens´ attitude towards any incumbent government and – at least in recently democratized polities - to democracy itself.

[144] A valuable attempt at using multidimensional measurements of fiscal management, effectiveness and efficiency of management results in very specific social policy areas as the assessment of public policy results for Brazilian municipalities has been performed by Cavalcante (2012). However, our overall choice to highlight the joint causal effects of key decisiveness and accountability factors wards us off from using his quantitative multivariate approach, who aims at measuring the partial, incremental effects that several (electoral, party and participatory) political variables have individually on each specific policy domain.

[145] *Como se ha señalado, sin la comprensión de que la economía no puede funcionar sino dentro de un marco político y con intervenciones gubernamentales, y que la política gira en gran medida en torno a cuestiones económicas y es altamente sensible al comportamiento -y manejo- de la economía, no es posible comprender las variables de las cuales depende la gobernabilidad de los países (Tomassini, 1993: 16).* (Sáez, 1995, p. 122)

[146] Peters´ specific research questions in his study involve the effects of populist governors in social and economic performance of their US States.

So, we take as outcome a composite of four aggregate measures of economic performance: inflation, unemployment, growth and inequality reduction. That´s the first of many synthetic, composite conditions made up from different empirical components, as discussed in the introduction to this section 3.1. That aggregation of several related factors offers a "macro-condition" incorporating various dimensions of our concept of economic policy results. Indeed, substantively, economic policy often has competing and contradictory objectives: inflation per se can be profitably reduced, but, if that´s made by means of a recession, growth and employment are jeopardized; on the other hand, some kinds of expansionary policies can compromise economic sustainability through uncontrolled inflationary pressures, which often have negative distributive effects after a very short time lag. That is, any one isolated indicator could be a misleading (or too reductionist) ruler (specially the more common one, growth rate), which requires a careful assembling of those competing returns into one single indicator.

As a result, we blend those four economic indicators of growth, inflation, unemployment and inequality reduction. We begin by comparing, for each indicator and each country-year, minority governments to the overall performance of Latin American economies in the same time frame (as a way to level off international commodities or financial cycles who could distort a within-country assessment). The comparison benchmark here will be the whole Latin American region, regardless of the minority or majority condition of governments, since the whole region faces the same similar external pressures, while decisiveness and accountability factors may act independently in each country. The quantitative assessment and logical conversion into one QCA fuzzy set will be set down in detail in section 4.1.1.

As for the negative outcome, the opposite of a good economic performance does not need to be a particularly disastrous outcome: our overall goal is to find causal factors to specially good governance circumstances; so, anything that does not correspond to such circumstances is substantively a negative outcome. Particularly tricky, as expected, will be the undefined when an equal number of a government´s outcome dimensions is below and above Latin American average performance– that, however, would be an interpretative challenge under whatever methodological resources we might be using in the research ("if a government delivers good growth and low inflation at the expense of employment and greater inequality, does that mean good or bad governance ?").

The irrelevant cases are those where no possible governmental action affected by the theory´s causal factors in the theory might have reached the outcome. From a strictly theoretical point of view, the only *ex ante* hypothetical situation (related to the causal mechanisms per se) that foresees such conditions would be the descent of a country into non-democratic realms, when former governmental measures to which governance factors are relevant are voided by further authoritarian decision packages. That may happen, in our design, in cases where the lagged effect of one government´s year in office has to be measured by the following year data, and during that following year the country is no longer democratic[147] - such cases must be excluded from the truth table. Besides, there are empirical events that may turn one year´s results mostly unconnected to previous governmental actions: first, any possible unpredictable tail event of war or natural disaster that fundamentally affects a single country´s overall economy without any causal links to previously adopted courses of action[148]; second, is such degree of dependence from a given international commodity´s price that any other government measures are irrelevant to the country´s economic results[149]. The first point will have to be detected in an *ad hoc* fashion when gathering data; the second one will be dealt with in the selection of cases according to criteria discussed below on chapter 4.

Operationalization

To operationalize the concepts defined in this section, the indicators are, first, the percent rate of economic growth, on an year-on-year basis over the previous year; second, the inflation rate for the given year (in this case, scoring positive if it falls below

[147] Such crisp distinction might seem odd in recent times, when the most common trend away from democracy is a long, decrementalist authoritarian drift by democratically elected presidents. In this background, one could imagine that Fujimori´s *autogolpe* would not fundamentally affect the governance conditions established by him in his previous years in office. However, exactly because of such gradualistic undermining of democracy, one should not risk contaminating the sample with so much uncertainty. Of course, there´s no thinking of such doubts when assessing the results of the same year as the government involved, since by design non-democratic polities are excluded from being taken as cases.

[148] The only possible case that comes out at first glance and deserves specific empirical assessment is the Chilean earthquake in 2010 (Haiti is not included in the sample because it´s not a presidential system). Other extreme events, such as draughts and hurricanes, cannot be considered as such since they´re part of the policy landscape of many countries in the region, and must necessarily be taken as given in each government´s actions year after year. The Covid-19 pandemic, likewise, negatively affected all countries in the region and can´t be considered something unaffected by governmental measures (on the contrary, policy responses were essential to determine how the negative effects of the pandemic were fought by each country).

[149] As previously suggested, that may be the case of Venezuela against the oil price (the extent of which will be discussed in section 4.3.1.

the region average); third, the percent of change in the employment rate, on an year-on-year basis over the previous year[150]; lastly, the percent of change in income inequality (also, scoring positive if below regional average, which will mean a reduction – or smaller growth - in income inequality). We might establish here a simple Boolean yardstick of good performance if the government in question yields higher results than the region´s average rate[151] (and zero if that condition doesn´t hold).

Then, each of those scores will be fused into one, organized into five fuzzy thresholds: 1 if all four indicators score 1; 0,75 if three of them do so; 0,5 if two score 1; 0,25 if just one holds up and 0 if no indicators comes better than the region. That deployment of thresholds follows the abovementioned logic of competing goals in economic policy: if "market-friendly" results as low inflation and high growth add to "pro-poor" reducing inequality or growing employment, the economic results can be considered clearly better (and policy approaches more comprehensive) than if only one subset of such results is achieved[152].

Those steps will be performed twice[153], using the values to the year each government is in office and the values to the following year, to take into account the possible time lag in the effects of government policy. So, two positive outcomes are to be assessed independently: the immediate governance results and the one-year lagged results.

The negative outcome means anything that does not correspond to such good performance. As already discussed, a particularly troublesome step will be to theoretically translate the undefined value of 0,5, equivalent to two dimensions above Latin American performance and two dimensions below – that, however, would be an interpretative challenge under whatever methodological resources we might be using in

[150] Regarding those two last items, one could think about using the absolute values of each rate. However, the absolute rates of employment/unemployment and income inequality are affected by the whole accumulated trajectory of the country, and governments in two different countries would start their years from very different departure points. On the other hand, the relative change in the variables seems much more levelled among countries, allowing for a clearer view on the specific effects of contemporary government policy (growth and inflation rates are themselves measures of relative changes, and have the same effect).

[151] We could have imagined thresholds for fuzzy values (such as 1 to results better than one standard deviation above the average, 0,66 between that point and the average, and so on). However, the complexity will be structured in the composite index; for individual components, beating Latin American averages seems an already harsh test.

[152] So, our fuzzy variable is entirely defined in its values by theoretical reasoning, which makes QCA calibration as such unnecessary, since the empirical values in each case will always coincide with one of those thresholds.

[153] That is, by means of two different truth tables.

the research ("if a government delivers good growth and low inflation at the expense of employment and greater inequality, does that mean good or bad governance ?").

As for the negative outcome, the opposite of a good economic performance does not need to be a particularly disastrous outcome: our overall goal is to find causal factors to specially good governance circumstances; so, anything that does not correspond to such circumstances is substantively a negative outcome. Particularly tricky, as expected, will be the undefined value of 0,5, equivalent to two dimensions above Latin American performance and two dimensions below – that, however, would be an interpretative challenge under whatever methodological resources we might be using in the research ("if a government delivers good growth and low inflation at the expense of employment and greater inequality, does that mean good or bad governance ?").

Finally, the data sources abound for most of the variables mentioned here. The World Economic Outlook database by the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2022)[154] has precisely the three first variables (GDP growth, inflation and unemployment rate) on an annual basis, both in absolute values (including GDP in nominal and constant prices) and in percent change, to all countries in the region, dating as far back as 1980. To cover any occasional gap in the data, we must rely on alternative repositories by the World Bank (IBRD, 2022)[155] and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL, 2022)[156]. For income inequality, availability is more restricted, but there´s the newly developed series[157] in the World Inequalities Database (WIL, 2022)[158] generated by the World Inequalities Lab[159].

3.2 Decisiveness conditions under minority governments

As discussed at length in section 2.2.2, the capacity to enact and implement policy change, avoiding the inability to come to decisions, the lack of resolution to

[154] Available at https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/index.aspx.
[155] https://data.worldbank.org/topic/economy-and-growth?view=chart
[156] https://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/estadisticasIndicadores.asp?idioma=e
[157] Namely, the Gini Index (Adults / Total population) for Pre-tax national income. It would be preferable if there were data for Post-tax national income, but those are not available for Latin American countries in the repository. If alternative data sources can be found that incorporate tax and subsidies policy, they´ll be used instead. Meanwhile, it´s better to have some measure of inequality, however limited, than none at all.
[158] https://wid.world/data/
[159] https://inequalitylab.world/en/

enforce them when reached, and the "balkanized" pursuit of different decisions by different actors inserted in governmental actions, is recognized by the literature as one of the key drivers of good policy results (or, to many authors, the key driver of good policy). Such capacities will be called by us "decisiveness". We have already elaborated there that decisiveness might turn out as a necessary, although not sufficient, condition to good results, after matched with accountability, and this section 3.2 will focus on decisiveness conditions. That statement is a preview of a set of hypotheses that will be formally laid down around each of such decisiveness conditions.

Our perspective is focused in its executive-legislative interaction dimensions, or the combined effects of both branches´ actions and powers in terms of the decisional outcomes (either in reaching decisions and in implementing them). The vast literature emphasizing decisiveness is mirrored in countless causal claims as to which other institutional and contingent factors mean a decisive government action. That´s the rationale behind our picking not one, but a cluster of several logical preconditions as the embodiment of decisiveness, putting them front and center in the analysis - that is, instead of "decisiveness" at large, we´ll posit that a group of other antecedent causal factors are the conditions who must be reflected in the truth table as the logical equivalent of a decisive government.

Here, we must emphasize again the advantage point of our minority government scope conditions: besides the many "coalition management" resources found in presidential literature (which, as we argue in in section 2.2.3, has been using majority coalition-building as a proxy for sharp decision-making), we may also incorporate several strategies that the literature on minority parliamentarism has developed to account precisely for decision-making under the duress of not holding a formal legislative majority.

Since there are countless decisiveness factors to heed, how many of them should we choose as relevant conditions? In selecting decisiveness conditions, we take into account the trade-off between the theory´s completeness in covering all relevant explanations and the empirical and logical complexity brought by a large number of conditions: the number of conditions (which might be found abundantly in the literature as possible factors influencing governmental decision-making capacity) must be contained in as many as feasible to the analysis (Mello, 2021; Goertz & Mahoney,

2006[160]). To this end, several strategies may be pursued: first, scope conditions in themselves may limit the analysis to a certain domain or level (such as institutional frameworks, disregarding political culture); similar or related factors may be replaced by one of them who suffices for research purposes; or several independent factors may be aggregated into indexes ("macro-conditions") to take into account various dimensions of higher-level concepts[161]. This kind of *ex ante* tuning of condition selection does not prevent neither over-specification (which will be worked out in logical minimization) nor omitted variables (which will show up in undecisive consistency values for cases, to be solved only by theoretical refinements); however, that´s an inevitable step in the first sketches of a proposed explanatory configuration (Radaelli & Wagemann, 2019).

Since individual conditions mentioned in the literature will be aggregated into clustered "macro-conditions", as we already discussed in section 1.1 and in the paragraph above, many of them will end up as intellectual constructs in themselves, meaning the joint interaction of lower-level conditions. So, they must be interpreted accordingly, that is, the conditions built here mean the joint effect of several identified subcomponents (usually different combinations of them)[162]. That may be an intermediate step into full explanation of the outcome, but a necessary one: knowing the intermediate condition´s effect and behavior gives leverage to future understanding of the individual aspects of its component parts.

The rest of this section will be devoted to laying out each of the selected decisiveness conditions considered in our QCA analysis.

3.2.1 The "executive toolbox" of presidential influence on the legislature

[160] *In qualitative research, investigators usually develop parsimonious theories in which the number of independent variables is relatively limited. For example, five or fewer independent variables often constitute the core of the theory, whereas it is rare for more than seven or eight independent variables to be included* (Goertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 186)

[161] That´s a QCA-style implementation of the recommendations by Lijphart (1971, p. 687) to "reduce the ´property-space´ of the analysis" by "combining two or more variables that express an essentially similar underlying characteristic into a single variable" and, in carefully justified circumstances, reducing "the number of classes into which the variables are divided (for instance, by simplifying a set of several categories into a dichotomy)"

[162] It may be claimed that the huge emphasis on coalition-building and maintenance pointed out in section 2.2.3 follows precisely this same logical path; coalitions may be directly observed in the empirical word, but their analytical connection to governance results is as "intermediate" as the macro-conditions we´re presenting here.

The first decisiveness condition to lay out is the set of instruments available to presidents to negotiate support for their policies. Coalition presidentialism, after all, means a strategy minority presidents have to build stable majority support in fragmented legislatures on behalf of their policy agendas[163]. And powerful they are: Morgenstern, Polga-Hecimovich, and Shair-Rosenfield (2013) place Latin American presidents as being more endowed with power resources, even when compared to the (in practice, although maybe not formally) already strong US presidency.

That often includes one main instrument for coordination: the sharing of cabinet posts, which grants involved parties with at least partial control over policies and financial and administrative resources (Amorim Neto 2006; Sobrinho, 2018). That instrument, however, is essentially the starting point of governance initiatives: after forming them in day one of their term (or in subsequent reshuffles), presidents start the game and deal with the changed circumstances that follow. Cabinet nominations imply strong agency costs through party control of portfolios (which imply at least some party control of their policy and resource decisions) and legitimacy costs in terms of identifying part of the presidential agenda with coalition partners in the eyes of the public. For our comparative purposes, however, cabinet appointment powers – foundational as they are in what, after all, is *coalitional* presidentialism – are not specially adequate as causal conditions. First, because they play basically the same role in every country assessed, which would lead to less than remarkable variances for such causal factor[164]. In particular, the variance of formal presidential appointment powers to the cabinet is minimal in Latin America: 6 out of 18 countries have some degree of parliamentary censure powers over ministers, while none has the previous requirement of legislative approval for nominations (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo - PNUD, 2004, p. 74). Of them, a contemporary description of the experience with such powers point to them causing significant political effects only in

[163] The following paragraphs, as well as the whole section 3.2.1, will be essentially based in Chaisty et al (2018) and in the coalition arguments already discussed in section 2.2 (mostly sections 2.3.3, 2.2.4 and 2.2.6). Other sources will be specifically referenced in the text when appropriate.

[164] Not that there are not differences in the way such appointment powers are employed by presidents and perceived by legislators, as Chaisty et al (2018, Ch. 6) qualitatively describe, including the differences in each portfolio´s relative importance (Oppermann & Brummer, 2020). However, such differences are basically understood as much less pronounced than those between the cabinet appointment "tool" and other tools, and countries (and presidential strategies within them) differ basically in the degree of usage of each different tool, and in the substitutability between them (that view of a somewhat homogeneous kind of governance resource in the hands of president is explicit in the modelling by Raile et al, 2010, and Araújo, Pereira and Raile, 2010, 2008).

Ecuador[165], with all others being only latent (Payne et. al., 2007, pp. 92-95)[166]. Second, because our empirical universe encompasses precisely minority governments, that is, those cases where the president hasn´t been willing (or able) to use this appointment power as his or her main thrust towards majority support. So, cabinet appointment powers must be seen by us as institutional background settings for our causal analysis: subject, of course, to contingent presidential strategies in each instance, but not a condition per se.

Another relevant power might be the president´s partisan powers, that is, the control they have over their own party members, including hierarchical, disciplinary and even harsher pressures (such as harassment of dissidents by party supporters). Together with the presidential party´s size, that will determine the degree on which the president must rely on support from other coalition members or external supporters. Although very feeble discipline in his own backyard may be a severe weakening factor for any president[167], there are strong analytical factors that recommend they be excluded from our causal model. As already discussed above, party discipline is not an assumption: minority presidents may find fertile grounds for closing deals with a factionalized party system, in which they hold a stronger hand due to their unified institutional capacities (Amorim Neto, 2006, p. 422). Besides, we´re dealing with presidents who have already a minority share of seats under their belts, which decreases the main case for the centrality of party control (the possibility of a hipermajoritarian party imposing by its own action the presidential will directly upon parliament, as in Mexico´s PRI years and in Taiwan´s Kuomintang dominance - Shugart & Haggard, 2001, p. 81). Moreover, the party control variable would be strongly interlocked with electoral system variables (incentives to personal votes; reelection franchises; candidate selection mechanisms) who do not figure in our theoretical purview (Melo, 2009, p. 43; Saiegh, 2014, p. 500). As a consequence, that possible variable must also be dropped.

Quite a lot of other levers are in the hands of presidents, though – that´s the idea of a "presidential toolbox", seen by Chaisty et al (2018) as instruments of "coalition

[165] Which will be excluded from our sample of cases, due to reasons explained in section 4.3.1.

[166] More recent overviews might possibly see some destabilizing effects of such features in Peru, but as one more factor in a bundle of instability factors in that country´s politics in the last few years.

[167] We might recall the very recent predicament of Alberto Fernández in the battle against the *kirschnerista* faction of his Peronist party in Argentina as a case in point.

management", that is, of rallying stable support on behalf of the president´s policies[168]. In the following sections, we´ll discuss three groups of such tools, later unifying them in a concept of "presidential powers": "legislative", "budgetary" and "informal exchange" powers . For the sake of clarity, we´ll present each subcomponent of each groups individually, and a final section will explain their assemblage into one overall construct of "presidential power".

3.2.1.1 Legislative powers

Theoretical foundations

The first instrument to be found in the toolbox are the presidential legislative powers, that is, any formal legislative prerogative of the executive branch that enhances the influence of the president over the agenda of the elected assembly (Chaisty et al, 2018)[169]. These involve a very large array of different rules and instruments[170], where the main ones will be listed individually in the operationalization subsection below.

Since the seminal work by Shugart and Carey (1992)[171], legislative powers have been the focus of several studies regarding their policy influence (and, somehow less, their effects on coalition decisions), which is unsurprising, because they allow presidents to pursue many important political goals[172]. Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power (2018) provide several examples where presidential powers were used to streamline the trustful implementation of previous within-coalition deals; to change or fine-tune executive bills to perceived floor coalition strong preferences, or adjusting them to yet

[168] As exhaustively discussed all across the paper, not as tools to build formal majority cabinet coalitions, but stable legislative support for presidential initiatives.

[169] Some budget measures, as well as some procedures regarding the appointment of some officials, involve decisional interaction with the legislature. However, those two specific domains will not be included here, the first one featuring a specific section and the second not considered in the model as exposed in the paragraphs immediately above.

[170] In the comprehensive list by Chaisty et al (2018, ch. 5): decree authority, urgency and fast-track provisions, amendment rights, package, partial and "amendatory" vetoes (the latter are powers to suggest revisions to the bills that have been vetoed - Chaisty et al, 2020, p. 426), partial promulgation, the right to introduce legislation directly in the assembly, priority of executive bills over assembly-initiated bills, exclusive initiative of legislation in certain policy areas, the power to summon the legislature into special session, and the power to convoke plebiscites or referenda.

[171] For a focused literature review on that specific relationship, see Montero (2009, pp. 29-)

[172] Cox and Morgenstern (2001) present a broader typology of "presidential legislative strategies" according to the perceived attitude of parliamentarians towards presidential initiatives ("reactive", "proactive", etc.). We emphasize here the examples by Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power because they shed light precisely in the mechanisms by which legislative powers are employed to pursue those overarching strategies.

unsolved intra-coalitional friction after the tabling of the bills[173]; buying time by blocking or retarding opposing measures, or by creating new "*faits accomplies*" in the hope to keep executive preferences afloat for a while until some time-dependent expectation realizes; or even to try to recompose some of the lost ground after significant defeats on the floor (usually out of intra-coalition conflicts). All those possibilities mean decisional leverage for the president in negotiating legislation piece by piece, as well as opening a strong avenue for the occasional parochial-oriented legislature to delegate to the president the authority on national policy issues (and the associated reputational costs for often unpopular measures)[174]. Compare that with the huge collective action problems faced by individual legislators and parliamentary groups, who usually face an uphill battle both to initiate and to respond to legislative initiatives (Morgenstern et al, 2013; Kriner & Schickler, 2016), and the salience for the president of legislative powers within the chambers´ deliberative processes will be evident.

Besides all those interactions with parliament (that is, when presidential powers are used to influence within-parliament decisions and procedures)[175], legislative powers have another very important potential prerogative: some degree of unilateral action in lawmaking, either in response to time-sensitive demands (such as dealing with emergencies and international, security, natural or economic crises), or in the risky (but empirically relevant) choice for unilateral enactment of some of the president´s agenda (Carey & Shugart, 1998). Here, even if the decrees[176] are submitted to the legislature for ratification, they typically change the legislative status quo (and the corresponding reversionary state) immediately, which can change the balance of power around the bill

[173] Those two usages interact strongly with any "agenda cartel" strategy that the given president might be attempting (Chasquetti, 2013; Amorim Neto, Cox, & McCubbins, 2003; Freitas, 2013), specially when the cartel fails in the cabinet stage and bills go to parliament still as an object of intra-coalitional controversy. In a strong coalitional environment, presidential legislative powers can (and usually are) compounded by the coalition parties´ joint agenda power in parliament, building an even stronger position for the coalition´s agenda (Crisp & Shibber, 2014,p.633)

[174] The so-called "inefficient secret" model (Shugart & Carey, 1992; Negretto, 2004).

[175] Our analysis is centered on Executive-Legislative relations, not including the possible interaction with other institutional players as the Judiciary in shaping and enforcing decisions enshrined into law, as found in Morgenstern et al (2013).

[176] Of course, "decree" is used here as the unilateral enactment of substantive decisions by the president. It does not involve "delegated" decree authority assigned to the president by parliament on an *ad hoc* basis (when used within the boundaries set by such explicit delegation), nor the duties of detailing and regulating the implementation of decisions already codified in statutes (Shugart & Carey, 1998; Montero, 2009, pp. 168)

in several occasions[177]. Following this line of reasoning, vetoes are also unilateral powers, since they directly affect legislation outcome (subject or not to later overriding by congress) Regarding decree powers, while unconditionally recognizing their importance (Amorim Neto, 2006, p. 421), there´s a clear debate over the incentives they give presidents, whether to "go alone" and seek unilateral policy enactment (Amorim Neto, 1998, p.4) or to use them as facilitators of horizontal bargaining as coordinating mechanisms for intra-parliamentary decisions, still seeking to implement policy by legislative approval (Pereira, Power & Rennó, 2005). Unilateralism (usually combined with "paraconstitutional resources" such as direct appeals to the public for support – Riggs, 1988; Morgenstern et al, 2013, pp. 41-42) means the possibility of getting policy made in a fast and uncompromising way, giving presidents their preferred package immediately[178], while risking loss of legitimacy[179], as well as instability, since policies won´t be embedded in formal statutes, and legislators weren´t called into the decision process (Amorim Neto, 1998, 2006[180]).

The overall trend in the literature is considering those unilateral powers as one more tool in the interbranch game, not solely a presidential attemt to impose his own will. Meireles (2016, pp. 20-31) finds that empirically that presidents with strong legislative powers are more likely to form oversized coalitions (suggesting the possibility of those powers serving as coordination devices). Crisp and Shibber (2014, p. 640-641) present numerous relevant studies, besides the already mentioned Pereira, Power and Rennó (2005), showing the strategic usage of decree powers by presidents and legislators in their interaction patterns, instead of mutually excluding themselves from negotiation. However, they do open the possibility of occasional "going alone" presidential attempts (with all the risks and rewards they offer), and have a very strong

[177] Negretto (2004, pp. 13-14) points to that prerogative as one of the relevant reasons in the presidential choice for minority coalitions, mentioning conclusions by Amorim Neto and Tafner (2002) and Amorim Neto (2002) showing a relationship between the use and existence of decree powers and coalition-making strategies. Shugart & Haggard (2001, p. 100) also state thar decree powers´ effectiveness is much more pronounced as coordinating devices for collaborative policymaking (citing examples such as Collor in Brazil and Yeltsin in Russia, when trying to go alone by force ended up badly), while unilateral powers where effective only under a narrow range of circumstances".

[178] Something important in emergency circumstances, such as in economic crises (Amorim Neto, 2006, p. 420)

[179] Reeves and Rogowski (2022) find that American voters surveyed prefer that presidents implement their policies through legislation instead of any other unilateral measure, even if there´s a risk of decision gridlock in Congress.

[180] Another risk is incompleteness: formal decree power may give cover to some of the policy measures deemed necessary, but not to others (Amorim Neto, 2006). Examples of unsuccessful unilateralism in US politics are available in Cox and Kernell (1991a, 1991b) and Ware (2001).

impact on the negotiating dynamics under parliamentary procedures. For those reasons, they deserve to be operationally identified and pondered separately from the others.

Operationalization

To operationalize our concepts of presidential legislative powers, we follow the framework already laid down by Montero (2009, mostly ch. 4): a full specification of powers and regulations (either constitutional or granted by legislative by-laws) that directly or indirectly affect presidential capacity to influence legislative activity, summarized in an institutional legislative powers index ("*Índice de Potencia Institucional Legislativa – IPIL*")[181]. After reviewing antecedent surveys of the same concepts, she proposes a collection of 14 variables to be compounded into an overall additive index (converted into a 0-1 scale), finding it reasonably correlated with all but one of the precedent indexes (Montero, 2009, p. 183). We´ll fully adopt the conceptual and empirical inputs from Montero´s model, but not the intermediate grouping of variables (which she structures on a sequential division along the basic legislative procedure) nor the final algorithm for adding up the concepts. That choice comes from a different theoretical design (we´re combining legislative with other presidential powers into one single political dimension, to explain outcomes that go far beyond formal lawmaking outputs) and from a different methodological context (we´re discussing causal relations in necessity/sufficiency terms, instead of evaluating statistical relationships between continuous variables[182].

So, we present in the Tables below the individual indicators (taken strictly as presented by Montero), and their combination (among them and with the other presidential power variables) into higher-level constructs will be shown in section 3.2.1.4. According to the conceptual foundations above, we´ll group them into two clusters: those prerogatives that allow unilateral action by presidents (albeit, in some cases, temporary or subject to some congressional *ex post* ratification) and those who

[181] In Montero´s model, that index combines with party system variables to explain numerical legislative process variables (basically, the traditional "success" and "dominance" rates already discussed in our section 2.2.

[182] That strategy was already suggested as profitable in early reviews of Montero´s book:

> *Por outro lado, se tomados de maneira desagregada, os indicadores do índice podem, separadamente, também ser vistos como variáveis explicativas. É dizer, os indicadores ajudam a responder qual (ou quais) desses conjuntos de atributos do desenho institucional podem ser eles mesmos, comparativamente, as causas individuais ou combinadas que determinam o sucesso legislativo.* (Santos, 2010, p. 113)

entail only a better position for presidents at the negotiating table in parliament. For the sake of clarity, the specific values of each indicator won´t be listed at the table (all numeric indicators are already organized into 0-1 ordinal scales reflecting different levels of presidential power, and they´ll be converted into fuzzy variables valued accordingly).

Table 4 - Legislative powers - Related directly to negotiation

	DESCRIPTION	HOW IT AFFECTS PRESIDENTIAL POWER
Exclusive initiative (p. 120)	The range of issues in which legislative initiative belongs exclusively to the president.	In these issues, the president can choose when to change the status quo by introducing legislation (even if parliament can amend the draft bills received)
Agenda-setting in the floor – default procedure (p. 125)	Actors who select the bills who will be voted on in each plenary session	Concentrated procedures (few actors with decision power) are more likely to give presidents more weight on the floors´ agenda[183]
Agenda-setting in the floor –requirements for overriding (p. 128)	The kind of majority needed to override the default procedures and insert bills on the plenary vote in a given session	Higher majority requirements favor the president, since they make it harder to change the default agenda (which assumedly bends towards him[184])
Committee membership selection (p. 135)	How committee members are selected	Concentrated procedures (few actors with decision power) are more likely to give presidents more weight on committees´ nomination[185]
Direct recall of a bill to plenary vote (p.139)	Stringency of requirements for sending a bill directly to floor consideration, bypassing committees gatekeeping power	Committees are the legislature´s main informational and negotiating resource. Any enfeeblement to their grip on decision-making is a reinforcement of presidential relative power
Committee	Committee powers on legislative	Committees are the legislature´s main

[183] That assumption is made considering a high frequency of majority coalitions (which correlate with parliamentary leadership also aligned to the coalition). For minority presidents, it must be relativized: under an oppositional majority, concentrated decision-making is the least favorable position to the president (the typical landscape of "divided government" in the United States Congress). Otherwise, for multiparty, fragmented legislatures (the most frequent scenario), the expectations assume that the president (and his coalition) tends to be a relevant player, able to influence parliamentary leadership at large, and thus to be in a better position than in a very decentralized procedure where access to the floor is distributed proportionally to a party´s share of seats, or on a first-come, first-served basis - although this advantage is clearly smaller than if the president holds a majority status and organizes a "legislative cartel" in his coalition (Amorim Neto et al, 2003). Anyway, concentrating parliamentary powers in some agents (the Speaker, committee chairs, parliamentary whip) is seen by the literature as a strong way to tackle coordination problems and empowering presidential influence on the legislature (Shugart & Carey, 1992; Palermo, 2000, p. 8; Figueiredo & Limongi, 1999, p. 21-23; Lyne, 2008, p. 295; Nobrega Jr., 2008, p.13)

[184] The same caveats apply.

[185] The same caveats apply. Here, the direct election of members by the floor may allow log-rolling directly among individual members, resulting in the self-selection membership that is seen by the distributive literature as a powerful independence factor of the US Congress from the Executive (Mayhew, 1974)

prerogatives on bills (p. 142)	process (to issue opinions, to veto, to approve by delegation of the floor)	informational and negotiating resource. Any enfeeblement to their grip on decision-making is a reinforcement of presidential relative power
Presidential urgency requests (p. 146)	Executive ability to impose urgency consideration of bills, shorter than the standard legislative procedure	Presidential priorities get earlier responses, and substitute for those set by the chambers themselves
Bicameral symmetry (p. 153)	Degree of similarity in the decision-making powers of both chambers, in bicameral systems	A fully symmetrical bicameral structure means another veto point, requiring presidents to double any political investment in the legislative process.
Resolution of disagreement between chambers (p. 156)	Whether one chamber´s decision prevails over another, or they must agree to approve a bill.	The more consensual the required process, the more symmetrical will the bicameral structure be.[186]
Summons of extraordinary congressional sittings	Who can summon extraordinary legislative sessions and prevent adjournments (the president, or some leadership or majority threshold in parliament, or both concurring)	If presidents alone can summon extraordinary sessions, they hold sole discretion over any extension of parliamentary time for consideration of bills, thus controlling an important factor in pushing their own angenda.

Source: Montero, 2009

Table 5 - Legislative powers - Related to unilateral action

	DESCRIPTION	HOW IT AFFECTS PRESIDENTIAL POWER
Veto powers (p. 163 and 166)	Whether the president has the prerogatives to veto legislation (entirely or partially, individually considered), and the majority requirements to override it	Vetoes (and the mere threat of them) are key to the presidential stance in legislative negotiations, and they´ll be stronger the more legislators are required to strike them down. Partial vetoes favor the president, since allows more flexible negotiating strategies over bills[187].
Decree powers (p. 172)	The reach of formal presidential powers to legislate unilaterally by decree (involving both the prerequisites for such actions and the effects of further congressional decisions over them)	If decree powers can be used in a vast number of issues and circumstances, and/or if they suffer little interference from congress such as the possibility of being revoked, presidential power to adopt unilateral decisions is nearly unfettered.

Source: Montero, 2009

A few clarifications are needed regarding those indicators. First, direct democracy features such as the calling of plebiscites and referenda are not considered,

[186] Montero acknowledges that this indicator may be seen as part of a symmetry measurement, but detaches it from all the others due to other theoretical considerations in her model. Since the information is relevant and there´s no way to simply reinsert it on an overall symmetry index, we must consider both indicators individually.

[187] "*It is a much more potent than the blunt package veto, because it allows presidents to undo (and therefore stop before they are started) legislative logrolls. For instance, if the president excises a legislator's favorite project, then that legislator has little incentive to enter into a deal with a second legislator. In sum, the partial veto complicates dealmaking and should thus severely limit the ability of legislatures to solve collective action problems and overturn presidential edicts.*" (Morgenstern et al, 2013, p. 60);

following the precedents of Montero (2009) and Amorim Neto (1998). Indeed, while the powers to invoke such mechanisms could at first sight be seen as enhancing presidential powers in pursuing unilateral courses of action, they tend to be used "under extreme state of affairs" (Amorim Neto, 1998, p. 2), and they still face extreme uncertainty in the literature as to their expected institutional and political meaning, specially when they are initiated from above, by the extant institutional authorities (Altman, 2010, 2019). So, including them in our analysis would introduce a highly unstable, theoretical uncertain variable. The other point regards the factors linked to bicameralism (symmetry and disagreeement resolution): bicameral conditions *per se* will not be taken as a specific condition (as discussed in section 3.2.6). However, the mentioned indicators are, substantively, a clear influence on the presidential legislative stances, objectively described, and as such they shouldn´t be excluded from consideration – that is, presidents facing symmetrical bicameral congresses face more hurdles in their legislative negotiations than those negotiating with just one chamber[188]. So, they ought to be included in the model as one more feature of legislative negotiating powers.

Finally, as per data sources, Montero (2009) provides a comprehensive survey of each indicator, which can be further cross-checked against other partial repositories in Shugart and Carey (1992)[189], Payne et al (2007, pp. 87-96), Fish and Kroenig (2009, on veto and initiative powers), Cheibub (2002, p. 290, for veto powers), PNUD (2004, p. 76, for initiative, veto and decreee powers), the V-Dem repository (Coppedge et. al, 2018; Chaisty & Power, 2018, for veto powers), Freudenreich (2016, p. 10), Negretto (2013), Amorim Neto (2006, for decree and veto powers), and Melo (2009, p. 35-36)[190].

3.2.1.2 Budgetary powers

Theoretical foundations

The next relevant presidential power relates to the budget. That´s mostly a way to persuade legislators, as Kellam (2015, p. 517) puts in simple terms:

[188] Precisely because of that, the value of each indicator will be assigned 1 if the legislature in question is unicameral.

[189] That early compilation may be specially helpful in searching for occasional differences for countries in the 70´s and 80´s.

[190] Other raw repositories of constitutional formal provisions, mentioned by Heller and Branduse (2014, pp. 341), are the University of Richmond's Constitution Finder Database http://confinder.richmond.edu/index.html, and Hein Online World Constitutions Illustrated, http://home.heinonline.org/content/list-of-libraries/;

> When presidents control substantial material resources, including discretionary funds and budget appropriations, they have greater ability to entice cooperation in government (Amorim Neto and Santos, 2001; Mejía-Acosta and Polga-Hecimovich, 2011; Pereira and Mueller, 2004).

At stake here is the ability of presidents to decide on the delivery of resources to fund "pork goods", that is, net benefits[191] that are perceived by voters as having been awarded by the intercession of a legislator or group of legislators [192], and by that serving as a strong incentive for legislators to trade their floor votes for them[193]. That´s a very powerful tool indeed[194]: as Chaisty, et al (2018, ch. 8[195]) describe in detail, the delivery of pork under presidential control brings an immediate payoff effect to legislators, entails very little agency costs[196], is very scalable in volume and adaptable to party, group or individual demands, and allows its recipients to benefit directly from cooperation with the president with less reputational exposure to presidential image[197]. In a word, pork disbursement is "coalition fine tuning" *par excellence*, available during all presidential term (although sometimes subjected to recurrent budgetary timetables). It must also be said that the leverage brought by budgetary powers does not depend on the "inefficient secret" assumption (Shugart and Carey, 1992, p. 167-205) of a president seeking nationwide public policy against particularistic parliamentarians (Santos, 2003, p. 245; Amorim Neto & Santos, 2003, p. 662-663): presidents may have to design policies to contemplate partial interests in the negotiation with legislators, as well as use their powers to persecute their own particularistic interests (Shugart & Haggard, , 2001, pp. 100-101).

[191] Benefits that come with a perceptible direct price tag to recipients, instead of having diffuse costs (or otherwise obscured from taxpayers´ notice), can hardly be included in this concept.

[192] The classical pork in the literature is targeted, "conferred on a specific geographical constituency small enough to allow a single congressman to be recognized as the benefactor" (Ellwood & Patashnick, 1993, p. 23). However, there may be broader allocations to special groups, such as regions, business interests or ethnic groups, who might be presented to the social-electoral basis of parties or factions as having been brought by them, just like an individual legislator claims a pork benefit to his or her district.

[193] For a broader literature review on the logic of pork bargaining as a way to rally legislators´ support, see Bittencourt (2019, pp. 28-33)

[194] The authors mention that, during the first years of his presidency, Putin kept a whole and stable parliamentary coalition majority in Russia only based on pork, with no cabinet sharing at all.

[195] Among many other concrete and explicit examples on the presidential use of budgetary pork for bargains with legislators, see Filc and Scartasini (2004, pp. 13-14; 2007, p. 177).

[196] Raile et al (2010) conclude that presidents rationally prefer to share more cabinet posts with parties closer to their own policy preferences, and over-compensate more distant partners with pork, due to the smaller risks of agency loss from this instrument.

[197] Something important in circumstances of unpopular or "lame duck" presidents.

Not less important is the fact that control over budgets can serve presidents also directly, by allowing them freedom and discretion to funding their own policy proposals, without having to deviate from their purposes to cater to legislators´ own policy or expenditure interests.

By control over budget, or presidential budgetary powers, we mean here a range of institutional elements that determine control of public spending, which mutually interact, sometimes offsetting, sometimes compounding their individual effects; those elements are spread along budget preparation and its approval by parliament, as well as its implementation (Scartascini & Stein 2009; Wehner, 2010). Most studies on budget institutions (including the ones who conceptualize and measure presidential and legislative control over the budget) have macro-fiscal outcomes, such as overall spending, deficits and debt levels, as their focus[198]. Here, we look at a subset of such institutions, those who tilt the balance of power in favor of the executive (or the legislature) on budget macro- and micro-outcomes.[199]

Operationalization

To assess what those budgetary powers are in operational terms, we follow mostly Wehner (2010), an explicit attempt to build an unified, cross-country framework[200]. Not that there has not been previous attempts to systematically collect and organize information regarding budget institutions before (see Lienert, 2005, 2010, as well as the several other data surveys mentioned in this section). Wehner, however, remains the most elaborate conceptual framework for structuring and explaining the relevant information in this regard, incorporating and refining previous attempts in a

[198] Notable in this literature are Alesina, Hausmann, Hommes and Stein, 1999; Alesina and Perotti, 1996; Hallerberg and Marier, 2004; a very comprehensive survey of such scholarship can be found in Wehner, 2010,p. 44

[199] Two clarifications are in order. First, studies usually translate the issue in terms of congressional (or legislative) control of budget; evidently, that´s simply the specular image of presidential control, since the powers that one agent loses will be transferred to the other. Anyway, our recoding of some conditions will always reflect higher values to stronger presidential power vis-à-vis congressional ones, resulting in inverted scales when compared to the original sources. Moreover, control on "macro" budgetary features, such as spending levels, is necessarily interrelated with control on the "micro" allocation of resources such as pork disbursements, since the instruments to get the former will affect the latter (and, possibly, will be materially the same).

[200] "*Existing comparative work on legislative budgeting contributes selected country studies (Coombes 1976; LeLoup 2004), but lacks systematic analysis on the basis of a common framework. Moreover, while the literature on the US Congress is extensive, legislative budgeting in parliamentary systems and developing countries in particular remains understudied (Oppenheimer 1983).*" (Wehner, 2010, p. 44).

systematic fashion. His 2010 book is usually the main source referred by later works on budget institutions. Empirically, Wehner´s works focus on data for OECD member countries, but his framework influences most surveys and other repositories where Latin American data is available[201].

The author divides budgetary control into "a critical number of institutional prerequisites", grouped in "formal authority" and "organisational characteristics" (p. 46).

Regarding the first group, three main factors embody budgetary formal powers. The first power is the "reversionary state", that is, what happens by default if the presidential draft budget is not approved by congress. The consequences of rejecting the budget bill have a very strong impact on the relative position of president and congress in its negotiation[202]: the reversionary point can be totally favorable to the president´s expenditure choice (the adoption of the president´s draft bill); entirely against his interest (a complete refusal of spending authorization, taking to some kind of shutdown); or intermediate positions (the temporary or definitive adoption of the previous year´s budget, or the *ad hoc* voting of interim partial spending authorization bills)[203]. Those positions are the benchmarks for that component of presidential budgetary power, described in a fuzzy logical variable with values 1 (if reversal is to presidential draft bill[204]); 0,66 (if reversal is to last year´s budget[205]); 0,33 (if new

[201] In some cases, other repositories may have slightly different specifications of values to each variable or condition, but they´re reconcilable to the categories presented by Wehner (or, alternatively, their own categories may be used, without loss of theoretical mening).

[202] Cox (2014) see the reversionary state as the key to maintaining the legislature's power over the purse. He warns that deliberate de-engineering of the budget process by creating reversionary points and their triggers that favor the executive is the surest and strongest way to circumvent legislative abilities to check on the Executive (without openly changing parliamentary rights of budget approval and amendment, something politically costly). His case study is the 17th century English Westminster parliament, whose actual control over the Crown consolidated only after a long procedural battle created reversionary points that gave the Commons an upper hand in the final decision over the possible disbursements by the King. Further empirical research by that author (Cox, 2012) claimed that executive-favorable reversions lower the life expectancy of democracies, a phenomenon that becomes more and more disseminated (Cox, 2012a), sometimes under the guise of "rationalizing parliamentarism", but is deplored as "fiscal autocracy countervailing the better-known waves of electoral democracy". Chaisty et al (2018), Payne *et al* (2007); Baldez and Carey (2001) and Alesina *et al*, 1999 also mention the reversionary state as one of the benchmarks of budgetary powers.

[203] *I group the responses into four categories: the executive budget or highly punitive consequences such as new elections [O], vote on account [3.3], last year's budget [6.7] or no spending [10].* (Wehner, 2010, p. 48)

[204] The other circumstances suggested by Wehner (new elections, fall of the cabinet) have no significance in presidential systems.

budget authority will be granted by partial, interim votes); and 0 (if no authority to spend is granted to the president as a result). Empirical data for that condition are to be found in OECD (2005), and PNUD (2004).

The second kind of budget powers covers how much changes can the legislature impose on the president´s draft bill. On receving the presidential proposal, parliament can face a take-it-or-leave-it vote for its entirety, or face limits on the amendments it can approve (such as not raising expenditures or the overall fiscal balance), or suffer no constraints at all on the amount of change they can effect[206]. This prerrogative strongly conditions which actor has the final say on the shape of the approved budget. We operationalize power through a fuzzy variable amounting to 1 (if the legislature has only the option of accepting or rejecting presidential budget as tabled); 0,66 (if legislative amendments are limited to reducing proposed expenditures); 0,33 (if funds can be shifted, but subjected in practice to strong macrofiscal constraints such as not raising deficits or total expenditures); or 0 if there are unfettered amendment powers[207]. Empirical data for that condition are available from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD (2005), PNUD (2004) and Filc & Scartascini (2007), as well as a specific table in Wehner (2010, pp. 89-92) based on his own independent data collection.

The last kind of budget powers to be inducted into our analysis is what Wehner (2010) calls the "executive flexibility during implementation", that is, the possibilities open for the president to unilaterally change budget allocations after these have been approved by the legislature. If such prerogatives are ample, they can can realign budget priorities and aggregate sizes away from those approved by the legislature, strongly jeopardizing congressional grip on the ultimate destination of public resources. Here, we emphasize the unilateral nature of such powers: allocational changes are foreseeable (even unavoidable) in each modern economy, but if they have to be approved by the

[205] Under the assumption that the previous budget, as outdated as it may be, has already been the product of negotiations and is more predictable than the outcome of a new round of bargain under unfavorable circumstances.

[206] *I code the answers in accordance with the five categories of amendment powers analysed in the previous chapter, that is, the legislature may only accept or reject the budget as tabled [O] it may cut existing items only or has otherwise significant1y contained amendment authority [2.5] it may shift funds as long as this does not increase aggregate spending [5] or the deficit [7.5] or it has unfettered powers [10].* (Wehner, 2010,p. 47)

[207] Our coding differs here slightly from Wehner´s since his original rank ordering is defined by the expected effect of amendment powers on aggregate fiscal outcomes, while our assessment focuses solely on the relative powers to change the budget. Under this perspective, there´s little difference in deficit- or expenditure-based constraints.

legislature the balance of power between the branches does not alter fundamentally[208]. That change is distributed along three basic categories of procedural powers in the president´s hands (Wehner, 2010, pp. 31-37):

- virement powers allow the executive to reallocate resources between the previously defined expenditure items; this authority can be explicit in legislation or embedded implicitly in the structure of the budget documents (by means of broadly defined line-item structures which allow strong executive discretion on how to distribute allotments); it can be also allowed for the entire amount of allotments defined in the budget, or through intermediate percents for reallocating each allotment individually;
- budget "decree" powers that allow presidents to disburse funds beyond authorized spending levels to each line items, or on new, unlisted, line items; those powers tend to be limited (in OECD countries at least) both in the circumstances they can be used (limited to emergency situations) and in the amount they can add up to (usually a percentage of authorized spending)
- impoundment powers allowing the president to permanently withhold funds from authorized expenditures, refusing in practice to make them (or to carry over their execution to the next fiscal year, delaying them). This kind of powers has very strong impacts on the aggregate spending policy (Alesina et al, 1999, p. 259), and fundamentally on the composition of expenditures (since presidents can refuse to materialize pork or other kinds of expenditures decided by congress)[209]. This kind of prerogative is pervasive along the OECD

[208] Although other aspects, such as the final spending biases, can be influenced by the shape of the decision process for budgetary changes in parliament (as proposed by Alesina et al, 1999). Those deliberation procedures can even alter slightly the relative position of president and legislature (such as requirements for legislative *ex post* approval to unilateral allocations by the Executive), but we don´t find theoretical reasons to state they´ll change the overall decisiveness position of the president. In the example of legislative *ex post* validation, Brazilian experience (a constitutional provision named "*créditos extraordinários*") suggests that, if authorization is to be granted *a posteriori*, a significant share of such expenses can be materially incurred in the time between its enactment by the president and the corresponding congressional deliberation.

[209] Involved here are the presidential discretionary powers to impound, not the mandatory nature of some expenditures (such as servicing debt and paying social security dues). Although a high share of such non-discretionary portions of the budget does affect fiscal policy in countless ways, this will be a constraint imposed on both president and congress in broadly the same fashion, thus not altering the relative bargaining power inherent in the decisiveness condition assessed here.

countries, but has been the axis of highly contentious battles for the US Congress during and immediately after the Nixon administration, and the absence of presidential impoundment is now considered one of the strongest levers of power held by that legislature (Wehner, 2010, p. 34-35 and 73; Schick, 2007 pp.120 and 284-289; Oleszek & Oleszek & Rybicki & Heniff Jr, 2016, p. 71 and 83-84; Lee, 2008). Recent initiatives to introduce partial impoundment restrictions in Brazil since 2015 have also been remarked as strongly affecting the balance of power between the branches (Mendes, 2022; Mendes & Dias, 2014, Souza, 2019; Chaisty et al, 2018).

As we can seee, all the three prerogatives can have very fine-grained features, with subtly different effects on executive-legislative balances of power. That, however, poses the methodological difficulty of how to build up scales commensurate to that granularity. To that effect, we must conform to the still limited theoretical precedents (who themselves influenced the survey structures used for data collection), pointing only to crisp values of existence or not of each of these powers[210]. So, each one of the three powers (virement, decree and impoundment) will be computed as 1 if they exist to any degree, or 0 if they don´t exist at all. Data can be sourced basically from the OECD Latin American survey (OECD, 2005) and, for the earlier 1980-1992 period, Alesina et al (1999, p. 260), complemented for cross-checking by PNUD (2004) and Filc & Scartascini (2007); data on impoundment powers are also recorded in Fish and Kroenig (2009), and – for updates on the very recent Brazilian case – Mendes (2022). Those numerical repositories can also be checked by qualitative descriptions on budget powers and processes in Stein, Tommasi, Echebarría, Lora amd Payne (2007)[211], Montecinos (2003)[212], and Hallerberg, Scartascini and Stein, 2009[213].

[210] *The OECD asked (a) whether there is scope for appropriations to be reallocated from one programme to another without parliamentary approval (b) whether the executive may withhold funds that are appropriated, but not available on a legal or entitlement basis, without legislative consent and (c) whether the annual budget inc1udes any central reserve funds to meet unforeseen expenditures. To construct the composite variable, I assign each answer to the above questions a score of 3.3 if it is negative, as a positive answer implies executive flexibility to vire, impound and authorize fresh funds respectively. The sum of the scores for each case can range between zero and ten and constitutes my indicator of executive flexibility during budget execution.* (Wehner, 2010, p. 48-49)

[211] For Brazil, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

[212] For a very detailed assessment of the Chilean budget process.

[213] For chapters specifically dedicated to the budget decision-making in each Latin American country.

To close this section, we must briefly justify why some indicators present in the literature were not chosen to reflect budgetary contribution to presidential decisiveness conditions. Strøm (1990) assesses governments´ legislative performance through the degree of changes in budget through parliament. Although there might be data for Latin America regarding the number of amendments made to the budget and the total proportion of spending involved (OECD, 2005), those statistics may be misleading, since they can´t measure the salience of the changes effected [214]; moreover, they reflect the end results of both presidential/congressional powers and contingent factors as the president´s majority status or political leverage due to factors such as high popularity. We choose, then, to focus on the "tools" rather than their measured effect.

Even so, some tools are not to be selected. Two of them are discarded by Wehner (2010) himself. First, presidential veto powers on the budget (and their incidence on individual line items or only on the budget as a whole) are depicted as specific to presidential systems (while his focus is on cross-system issues in the whole OECD countries), as well as bein controversial in the literature regarding their relevance. For our purposes, however, the main argument against it is that vetoes as a whole are already considered in the computation of legislative powers, which might engender some kind of double-counting in assessing the necessity and sufficiency of conditions. As for the presidential exclusive initiative for tabling the budget, it´s discarded on the grounds of little empirical importance, given the practical unfeasibility of congressional drafting on the budget bill (so, any variance in formal prerogatives would bias the analysis, since there would be no actual variance in any case[215]).

The other relevant choice against indicators is the absence of several organisational legislative features in their internal budget process, associated with the reduction of transaction costs in legislative deliberation over the budget (Wehner, 2010). They involve the time allowed to the legislators to deliberate on the received budget draft, the involvement of specialized legislative committees in budget deliberations, and the quality of the budget information on the budget provided by the Executive. All those features are indeed relevant (a legislature who is unable to organize its decision procedures is also unable to make use of its formal powers), and there´s roughly some

[214] For instance, a change in inflation forecasts between tabling and enactment dates may have massive effects on the overall budget (in the amounts of debt servicing or social security payments, mainly) without direct relationship with pork bargaining.

[215] Indeed, the only mention we could find of a possible case of claimed congressional production of a draft bill involves the Brazilian budget for 1950 (Bittencourt, 2019, p. 301), which is scarcely relevant for the analysis of contemporary cases.

degree of empirical information on them (OECD, 2005[216]). However, we must put them aside, for two main theoretical reason: within-house budget procedures and practices are legislatures´ exclusive choices, hardly dependent on the Executive for them to be implemented, so they can´t be assigned to an overal institutional balance of power but to strategic, contingent decisions made by each parliamentary majority at each fiscal year (moreover, they can´t be counted on by presidential strategies, since they´re mostly independent from his intervention)[217]. As a consequence of this first reason, such variables are potentially very volatile along time, changeable in very short time spans. That implies the unsuitability of using our main sources of information available (non-recurrent budget surveys), which can cope with stabler institutional variables, for very time-specific organizational data[218]. So, our approach to institutional budgetary powers by the president will not take into account the internal legislative budget process.

3.2.1.3 Informal exchange powers

Theoretical foundations

One last presidential power to consider is the president´s ability to dispense with a large array of particular material benefits for legislators which stem (directly or indirectly) from his actual executive authority (Chaisty et al, 2018, ch. 9). Those include: access to electoral resources (campaign finance and administrative assistance); favorable state treatment of allies´ business interests (in the form of loans, contracts, tax breaks or exemption from due compliance); the awarding of lucrative or influential positions outside cabinet and first-level government hierarchies (such as appointments to parastatal companies or shareholder company boards); as well as plainly illicit forms of exchange (such as direct side payments). All of them are possible due to presidential influence over the collection and disbursements of resources and powers along the

[216] The quality of budget documentation is proxied by the available staff dedicated in the legislature to budget research tasks.

[217] Morgenstern, et al (2013, p. 43) suggest another layer of uncertainty in considering those aspects: "This limit itself could be the topic of investigation. Why do legislatures not vote more resources for themselves ?"

[218] In fact, even the preferential sources of legislative primary data mentioned in section 3.3 (yearly parliamentary reports) would be unlikely to provide information on such minutiae regarding internal work processes.

administration and the private entities who are dependent or strongly influenced by it[219]. All of them are all "informal", in the sense that they´re not part of the official political system, are not regulated by the constitutional, legal or coalition formal documents[220]. When used systematically, however, this suite of resources can be a relevant "coalition tool", even if many facets of them can´t be made public. In this sense, it´s plausible to think of them in terms of "informal institutions", that is, "rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced outside the officially sanctioned channels" and that, nevertheless, "shape how democratic institutions work" for they "reinforce, subvert, and sometimes even supersede formal rules, procedures, and organizations" (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006, pp. 1-2). There´s probably a correlation between strong formal presidential powers and the corresponding informal leverage over such exchange of favors, but the latter can´t be reduced to the former: on the contrary, informal exchange will tend to begin working where other resources (including customizable ones, like pork) stop; in the case of illicit favors (such as bribes and bid-rigging) they are, by definition, incompatible with the simultaneous exercise of formal powers.

They´re also basically targeted as individual favors to benefited MP´s or small factions, hardly perceptible (or claimable) as collective goods by any party – thus, serving as complementary tools for coalition management to be deployed *in tandem* with others in a wholesale strategy. However, their existence can´t be ignored in our model[221]: for one, several case studies describe specific "informal institutions" involving presidential administrative powers exchanged for coalitional stability or *ad hoc* congressional support in Latin America (Chaisty et al, 2018; Siavelis, 2006; Carey & Siavelis, 2006, Mejía-Acosta, 2006; Pereira, et al, 2011) or elsewhere as in Malawi (Patel, 2016) and post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine (Chaisty et al, 2018). Besides, as we´re dealing with minority governments, any coalition resource that might be used in lieu of power sharing through cabinet nominations is even more important, since there´s less of this starting point (cabinet posts) for presidential strategies.

[219] Including the sources for illicit payments, which wouldn´t be available from purely private sources unless those were forced to fund them by fear of government reprisals or expectation of government favors.

[220] Of course, formal presidential command over the state resources is the ultimate source for most of them. However, the discretionary deployment of such command to suit tailored bargains with politicians (instead of other, policy- or public-goods-oriented "ideal" criteria) is not formally inscribed in any law or regulation.

[221] Mello & Spektor (2018, p. 118-119) see those resources (appointments to state-owned companies and regulatory agencies with a grip on contract and regulation awarding) as unavoidable "pot sweetening" of coalition deals in search of legislative support in Brazil (without providing any empirical assessment, though)

Operationalization

Informal institutions are, by definition, very hard to measure. Outright bribery, vote-buying or other illicit activities are even harder. Saiegh (2014, pp. 495-496) has to go back to 18th century Georgian England to provide an actual example of parliamentary vote-buying; Pereira et al (2008) describe the existence of the "*mensalão*" bribery scheme in Brazil using the explicit metaphor of "black holes" whose presence can be detected by the observation of indirect effects on other variables. In their comprehensive volume on informal institutions in Latin America, Helmke and Levitsky (2006, pp. 25-27) present three main strategies for establishing their existence: 1) the "black hole" one, that is "to generate hypotheses about behavioral patterns that are consistent *only* with the existence of a particular informal institution, and then test empirically for the existence of those patterns"; 2) focusing directly on actors' expectations and mutual understanding about the informal rules of the game, with ethnography as the most relevant resource, but making use of survey research in some studies; and 3) trying to figure out mechanisms for their enforcement (sanctions triggered by violations of the informal expected behavior), which will tend to be subtle, hidden, and even illegal (ranging from social or cultural disapproval, dismissals, threats of "going public" with illicit deals, up to the naked usage of extrajudicial violence).

Here, the only option available to us is the usage of survey results, since whatever other strategy would require concentrating empirical efforts in this one subcomponent only[222]. Indeed, a pair of questions in the V-Dem questionnaire (Coppedge et. al, 2018, pp. 132 and 227) probe on the overall engagement of politicians (and specifically legislators) regarding corrupt practices in office, which may offer a first approximation to the demand for such exchanges by MP´s and to the pervasiveness of illicit transactions in the administration (which fixes at least a ceiling for the potential supply of informal exchanges). Question 3.5.11 asks "Do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain?[223]", and its responses are already organized into

[222] That would be the end result of promoting ethnographic research to cover every Latin American country, or finding out which possible informal exchange of favors might be relevant to each country and designing empirical tests for it.

[223] *Clarification: This includes any of the following: (a) accepting bribes, (b) helping to obtain government contracts for firms that the legislator (or his/her family/friends/political supporters) own, (c) doing favors for firms in exchange for the opportunity of employment after leaving the legislature, (d) stealing money from the state or from campaign donations for personal use*. (Coppedge et al, 2018, p. 132)

an ordinal scale easily converted in a fuzzy variable[224]. Question 4.0.10 gauges "To what extent do political actors use political office for private or political gain?[225]", offering a continuous interval[226] from "low" to "high" (0-1). The fuzzy benchmarks here will have to be extracted in calibration from the overall distribution of those values in all the V-Dem sample (that is, assigning fuzzy 0 to the lowest value, 0,33 to the mean minus standard deviation, 0,5 to the mean, 0,66 to mean plus standard deviation and 1 to the highest corruption score available).

Another dimension that must be captured here is patronage power at large, or the capacity for handing out public sector jobs. This prerogative can be traded for support with both individual legislators seeking personal advantage and parties seeking to control chunks of policy influence within the administration (even if cabinet posts have already been allocated). This does not mean, in itself, corruption, and must be assessed separately in order to capture the possibility of a country that is well-guarded against corruption may still offer presidents a widespread bargaining chip by looting the administration beyond formal sharing of top-level cabinet posts[227]. To that end, there´s also a proxy in V-DEM´s question 3.9.8 (Coppedge et al, 2018, p. 173) that surveys opinions on the criteria for appointment decisions in the state administration[228] ("*To what extent are appointment decisions in the state administration based on personal*

[224] Associating fuzzy values 1; 0,66; 0,5; 0,33; and 0, to the following responses: "0: Commonly. Most legislators probably engage in these activities"; "1: Often. Many legislators probably engage in these activities"; "2: Sometimes. Some legislators probably engage in these activities"; "3: Very occasionally. There may be a few legislators who engage in these activities but the vast majority do not."; and "4: Never, or hardly ever."

[225] *Clarification: In systems of neopatrimonial rule, politicians use their offices for private and/or political gain. This index relates closely to V-Dem's political corruption index (v2x_corr), but focuses on a more specific set of actors – those who occupy political offices - and a more specific set of corrupt acts that relate more closely to the conceptualization of corruption in literature on neopatrimonial rule.* (Coppedge et al, 2018, p. 227)

[226] Extracted from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for executive embezzlement, executive bribes, legislative corruption and judicial corruption (Coppedge et al, 2018, p. 227).

[227] That seems to be the case for the Chilean "*cuoteo*" mechanism to distribute subcabinet posts – ones that nevertheless hold some decision-making authority – to coalition members as a means to mutually balance off their powers (Siavelis, 2006), a strong informal practice within an otherwise highly institutionalized political and government system. This usage of the appointment criteria to gauge the degree of sheer patronage and its insertion in the logic of a political systems is to be found, for instance, in Lafer´s assessment of the rise of Brazilian developmentalism under the Kubitschek administration (Lafer, 2002, pp. 71, 77-80 and 107-108).

[228] There´s also the same survey regarding appointments in the armed forces (question 3.13.76 - Coppedge et al, 2018, p. p. 219). We don´t use that information, because none of the theoretical sources referred above points to the military payroll as a relevant arena for such bargains between presidents and legislators.

and political connections, as opposed to skills and merit?"[229]), and whose responses are also ordinally presented ready to convert to a fuzzy variable[230].

Since the informal powers measurement is so notoriously subject to uncertainty, it´s prudent to demand at least the coincidence of supply and potential demand to admit its existence in an empirical instance, at least in the illicit or corrupt features: the resulting logical condition for the two first variables must then be the intersection (logical "AND") from those two indicators (that is, we recognize informal powers when expert surveys see clearly both widespread corrupt transactions in public business and pervasive MP´s practice of tolerance and/or incentives for it. After that, the end result will be the union (logical "OR") between the joint condition on corruption and the specific condition on patronage (owing to the fact that both are alternative sources of presidential leverage that may occur independently).

3.2.1.4 Composing the presidential powers condition

At last, with all disaggregated indicators laid out, we must compose them into a composite form of "presidential powers". As Doyle (2020) extensively describes, the search for conceptualization and measurement of "executive powers" has been a strong focus of interest in the literature, still far from reaching consensus. For presidential systems, relatively more convergence has been established along the pioneering lines of Shugart and Carey (1992), but methodological debates are still pervasive (Metcalf, 2000) and a great many of proposed classifications can be found (see a compilation on Doyle, 2020, pp. 390-391). In a very wide landscape view, most frameworks admit to the multidimensional nature of such powers, roughly divided into "constitutional" or "entrenched" powers inscribed in formal legislation, partisan powers of command over

[229] *Clarification: Appointment decisions include hiring, firing and promotion in the state administration. Note that the question refers to the typical de facto (rather than de jure) situation obtaining in the state administration, excluding the armed forces.*

[230] Associating fuzzy values 1; 0,66; 0,5; 0,33; and 0, to the following responses: 0: All appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal or political connections. None are based on skills and merit. 1: Most appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal or political connections. Only a few are based on skills and merit. 2: Approximately half of the appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal or political connections. Approximately half are based on skills and merit. 3: Only few of the appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal or political connections. Most appointment decisions are based on skills and merit. 4: None of the appointment decisions in the state administration are based on personal or political connections. All are based on skills and merit

party members in the legislature and the cabinet, and other behavioral practices that influence presidential grip on policy. Our indicators fall mostly within the "entrenched" division, which is compatible with such trends[231], albeit some of them ("informal powers", for instance) go beyond that. Most of all, we follow Doyle´s advice (2020, p. 398) in "drawing upon the wide array of existing measures already out there", while tailoring, as much as possible, the measures to the aspects of presidential power specified by the underlying theory (specifically, the "toolbox" notion by Chaisty et al, 2018).

As for the possibility of year-to-year changes in the indexes, as compared to mostly static sources of formal constitutional power data (which provide results of one-off surveys), they´re a possible measurement error issue, to be mitigated by two factors. One is the relatively more stable nature of such rules as budgetary and legislative powers, since they have an institutionalized nature (Alesina et al, 1999; Montero, 2009; Wehner, 2010)[232]. The other is the usage of every source available to cross-check the main repositories, trying to capture occasional changes along time (according to the sources´ collection and publication dates).

Given the methodological choices outlined above, our presidential powers index will be built on a particular interaction strategy among the different individual components presented in sections 3.2.1.1 to 3.2.1.3, grouping them into several combinations who make it possible to propose a typology of presidents according to their relative powers, who in turn will guide the assignment of fuzzy values to the

[231] *The clear majority of studies focus on the formal constitutional powers of the president and so therefore, 'most of the unresolved debate in the literature focuses on which powers should be considered as defining features, rather than on a comprehensive approach to capturing the concept of executive strength' (Fortin 2013: 92*). (Doyle, 2020, p. 387)

[232] *Budgetary institutions are all the rules and regulations according to which budgets are drafted, approved and implemented. [..] However, budgetary institutions are relatively stable over time so that at least in the medium run measured in, say, up to a decade or more they can be considered fixed. Since it is costly and complex to change institutions, the existing ones have to be very unsatisfactory, before it is worth changing them; in other words there is a strong 'status quo' bias in institutional reforms. If institutions are relatively costly to change, then they can be considered predetermined explanatory variables*. (Alesina et al, 1999, p. 256)

The fact that fundamental reform of parliamentary amendment powers is extremely rare suggests that they are very costly to change. Anecdotal evidence supports the argument that fiscal performance has to be extremely unsatisfactory in order to overcome the status quo bias of budget institutions (Stein et al. 1998: 21-5). This is also illustrated by the accounts of the reform of legislative budget institutions in the following chapter. In Sweden, the trigger was an unprecedented macroeconomic crisis, while South Africa's redesign followed a fundamental regime change and even in these unique circumstances took more than a decade to negotiate. On balance, I conclude that the problems posed by the possibility of institutional endogeneity should not be exaggerated in this particular context. It is reasonable to treat legislative amendment powers as exogenous in at least the short to medium term (see also Alesina and Perotti 1996: 4). (Wehner, 2010, pp. 92-93)

"presidential powers" condition. That also takes into account the accumulative (or sometimes substitutive) nature of such individual powers: they usually add up on behalf of presidents, but in some cases a number of individual powers can compensate for the absence of others. The first step will be to organize the individual components of presidential powers according to the mechanisms by which they affect the balance of powers between president and congress, that is, if they allow presidents to unilaterally implement decision and change the *status quo* (although potentially subject to some form of ex post ratification by parliament), and those who only change the relative bargaining position of presidents within the legislative decision-making process[233]. This is done in the following table.

Table 6 - Presidential powers - Individual components

UNILATERAL POWERS		EXCLUSIVELY BARGAINING POWERS	
LEGISLATIVE	Veto powers	LEGISLATIVE	Exclusive initiative
LEGISLATIVE	Decree powers	LEGISLATIVE	Agenda-setting in the floor – default procedure
BUDGET	virement	LEGISLATIVE	Agenda-setting in the floor – requirements for overriding
BUDGET	budget "decree"	LEGISLATIVE	Committee membership selection
BUDGET	impoundment	LEGISLATIVE	Direct recall of a bill to plenary vote
		LEGISLATIVE	Committee prerogatives on bills
		LEGISLATIVE	Presidential urgency requests
		LEGISLATIVE	Bicameral symmetry
		LEGISLATIVE	Resolution of disagreement between chambers
		LEGISLATIVE	Summons of extraordinary congressional sittings
		BUDGET	Reversionary state
		BUDGET	Amendment power
		INFORMAL	Informal exchange of favors

Source: the author

The extensive discussion in the previous sections points to a special salience from the unilateral powers, since they both allow for direct presidential enactment (which can have either positive consequences or very negative risks) and strongly reinforce presidential bargaining power within parliament. So, those presidents who hold those powers to a considerable extent, besides strong levers in the other powers, might be considered the strongest between all. So, a first category in our typology

[233] We say "only", because the first group or unilateral powers also strongly affect presidential bargaining powers in legislative decision-making processes.

would be those very strong presidents: we propose that those who hold the highest possible value of membership in at least half of the unilateral powers (3) and hold positive[234] values in at least half (7) of the others are the top category, followed by those who hold positive values in at least 3 unilateral and 7 bargaining components.

Then follows the category of presidents who do not hold unilateral powers but show strong bargaining powers (positive values in at least 7 bargaining ones[235]), being powerful players in parliament. Below that, the category of those who have positive unilateral powers (3 or more components) but not on bargaining powers. This specific ordering of the two categories follows the theoretical findings pointing that the more relevant application of unilateral powers is to give an upper hand in negotiations rather than forcing lone action, so that a president whose incentives are only those for trying to go alone would be in a less favorable position than those who are expected to bargain with some weight in parliament.

In the lower strata are those who have some positive values for both kinds of powers (but not the majority in either of them), and those with definite negative membership in both. The precise specification to the typology is presented in the Table below, with the corresponding fuzzy value to the composite "presidential powers" condition.

Table 7 - Presidential powers – Typology and composite condition´s values

ORDER	UNILATERAL POWERS	BARGAINING POWERS	Fuzzy value
1	Highest possible value in at least 3	Positive values in at least 7	**1**
2	Positive values in at least 3	Positive values in at least 7	**0, 88**
3	Less than 3 positive values	Positive values in at least 7	**0,75**
4	Positive values in at least 3	Less than 7 positive values	**0,63**
5	Positive values in 1 or 2	Positive values in 1 to 6	**5**
6	No positive values	Positive values in 1 to 6	**0,25**
7	Positive values in 1 or 2	No positive values	**0,25**
8	No positive values	No positive values	**0**

OBS: 1) Categories are not given qualitative names, being identified only by their ranking order;
2) "Values" mean the fuzzy values of each component, as specified in the previous sections; "positive" values mean numerical fuzzy values higher than 0,5
3) categories 6 and 7 yield the same fuzzy value because we found no reason to posit a substantive difference in the presidential powers compounded by them
4) "Fuzzy value" column means the fuzzy values assigned to the resulting composite "presidential powers" condition

Source: The author

[234] Positive fuzzy values, meaning a positive degree of membership (higher than 0,5).
[235] That might well be the Chilean case, as contrasted with the Brazilian one in Bittencourt (2016)

3.2.2 The reconcilability of party goals

Theoretical foundations

Some early influential models of government formation and maintenance in parliamentarism (classically represented by Riker, 1962, and Laver & Shepsle, 1991) rely on very restrictive assumptions regarding the motivation behind the choices by the main actors in the executive-legislative interaction (political parties). They are seen as exclusively policy-oriented unitary agents, whose payoff is only the grip on policy allowed by holding each cabinet portfolio[236]. After the bargain is struck, each cabinet has full control of policy outcomes, and each minister within it a very high degree of discretion over her own jurisdiction, while legislatures have nothing more than the ultimate check of breaking the government (that is, cabinets run the country subject only to the risk of a vote of no confidence)[237]. More recent views have stressed that this far from the only objective nurtured by the parties. In his seminal work on minority governments, Kaare Strøm points that "political parties are not motivated solely by office (power) considerations, but also to a significant extent by opportunities for policy *influence*" (Strøm, 1990, p. 38[238]). And that´s not all: as already discussed in section 2.2.1, the literature has evolved to posit at least four dimensions in parties´ "objective functions". Two of them are the fundamental motivations for being in politics at all: a) office (the ability to hold and command government portfolios, deployed along the twin lines of the corresponding benefits in terms both of power over policy and other material perks stemming from the posts, as pork or patronage); b) policy (bringing government policy as close as possible to their own preferred policies, which can be achieved either directly by ministerial powers, or indirectly through several other levers for influence[239]). The last two are instrumental to the fundamental ones, and can be

[236] Riker´s models of Minimum Winning Coalitions are specified in terms of office holding, but there´s no contradiction between this view and the understanding of it in terms of getting more powers to implement policy, and not only on direct office perks (Strøm, 1990, p. 34, calls it "the office-seeking or power-seeking assumption")

[237] Such models are relevant to minority government, since that would be one possible equilibrium (when a divided opposition can´t agree on a new government, or – extending it to presidential settings as a metaphor – when the president remains in office but can´t pass legislation.

[238] The same author offers a more formalized analytical model covering some of his main conclusions on the issue (Strøm, 1997). However, the essential ideas and the essential of his empirical analysis can be found in the more influential 1990 book, widely quoted in the literature covering minority governance issues.

[239] *Following Strøm (1990), parties can be either vote, office or policy seeking. We assume that parties are first and foremost policy-seeking actors. This is due to two reasons. First, policies are 'the principal outcome of a political system' (Tsebelis 2002: 6). Hence, influencing policies is at the very heart of the political process. Second, the fact that there are legislative support coalitions calls*

taken as driving forces when in a dynamic perspective in time[240]: c) votes (the potential or expected support of voters in proximate elections); and d) party cohesion (required for the party´s collective action, preventing internal fragmentation) [241].

This is not only relevant for government formation, but to policy-making as well. The key point to our modelling is that the cultural and institutional environment under which governance occurs may allow more or less potential for reconciling those goals among parties. Such reconcilability of goals will allow presidents (crucially, but not exclusively, minority presidents) to rally legislative support not only by handing out ministries, but by putting on the table every other possible factor who might entice the interest of potential partners. Deals can include multiple offers (along any of the four dimensions[242]), which multiplies the bargaining space and the odds that the president will end up with a package that induces parties to support his agenda and his decisions.

Under this framework, party discipline *per se* (essential to the original strict assumption of parties as unitary actors) is, oddly enough, not an expected condition for decisiveness in presidential systems. In parliamentary systems, Laver (1999) highlights theoretically the interlocking games of parliamentary leaders among themselves (in coalition formation and cabinet decision-making) and between them and their own parties´ backbenchers: there are plenty of opportunities for party leaders to fail to enforce legislative discipline on behalf of collective cabinet positions with which they[243] or their rank-and-file disagree, while coalition government keeps on as usual due to the fact that the issue is not enough to induce coalition partners to lose office by withdrawing from government[244]. Laver and Schofield (1990, p. 24) point out the delicate balancing act that parliamentary party leaders (and prospective ministers)

for the policy-seeking goal since we should not expect to see these sorts of coalitions if parties were mainly office seeking. (Kraus & Thürk, 2021, p. 5)

[240] For instance, not holding office under an unpopular government in order to ensure a better share of votes in the following election.

[241] Field (2016) referring to the seminal work of Strøm and Müller (1999), who stress, precisely, "Policy, Office and Votes". The "cohesion" dimension is fully developed in Reniu (2011), which refers to Bergman (1995) as its original design (see also Aylott & Bergman, 2011).

[242] As already said, "cohesion" and, to a lesser extent, "votes" are more difficult to be directly deployed as a bargaining offer (except as openly expressed support for a party´s electoral stances, which might be relevant when coming from a president enjoying high popularity). However, any party will probably consider how any explicit offer from the president reflects on those prospects.

[243] That´s the case where a party´s leaders disagree with a cabinet decision, but out of collective responsibility demand legislators´ compliance, only to half-heartedly threaten dissidents with measures known or expected not to be enough to dissuade defections.

[244] Herzog and Benoit (2015) present a milder version to that movement: economic hardship (and the resulting austerity measures) generates tensions (expressed in verbal criticism, albeit not reflected in voting indiscipline) against major cabinet decisions even within solid majority coalitions in the disciplined Irish party system.

inclined to policy compromises that may put them closer to going into government must play with their parties´ rank-and-file, more concerned with ideology and less in line for the other spoils of office.

In presidential settings, Amorim Neto (2006, p. 422; 1998, p. 7) refutes party discipline as a contributing factor for majority building in legislatures: in minority situations, weaker discipline helps presidents to co-opt legislators in non-presidential parties (while a disciplined oppositional majority can lead to deadlock). Indeed, if undisciplined parties make coalition support less predictable, they can make cross-party support-buying more likely. Besides, legislators are subjected to cross-pressures from other powerful influences beyond the Executive (his particular constituency interests, wealthy donors, party activists, other party elite members in charge of the candidate selection process); that is, the president is a powerful competing principal to legislators, but not the only one, and he may even face severe uncertainty in ascertaining precisely what the policy preferences of legislators are (Saiegh, 2014., p. 486; Carey, 2007, p. 106)[245].

In sum, "[..] the extent to which political parties are unitary actors should be determined empirically rather than by assumption." (Sieberer, 2011, p.733). That´s not saying parties will neglect the pursuit of cohesion or unity as a means to "for crafting a clear party image, cultivating support for party programs, and bolstering the party's political power." (Barnes & Jang, 2016, p. 302): the point here is that their success in reaching it is not a requisite for the reconcilability of party goals in the presidential bargaining environment, nor for decisiveness at large[246].

On a multilevel polity, this distribution of goals and priorities across dimensions for each party is compounded by different configuration along each dimension (i.e., a party can be moderately or partially policy-seeking in the national level and strongly office-seeking in the subnational arena[247]). However, we find no reason to posit that the

[245] Indeed, Carey (2007) finds that presidential parties show less voting unity than other major parties.

[246] Barnes and Jang (2016, p. 303), while focusing their research precisely on the issues of party unity, reminds us that parties in a coalition (that is, those who joined the presidential administration) are exactly those who face less pressure to push their own party´s reputation and agenda, since the president himself has resources and incentives to pursue both reputational and policy objectives under an unified front (making it easy on the coalesced parties individually and on their legislators´ individual action); that´s the opposition, instead, who will face stricter pressures by their leaders to present a cohesive party unity, given that an opposition party´s leadership is the only agent with the means to promote its reputation.

[247] That´s the case, Field (2016) argues, for her main object of study (Spanish regional parties and their role in supporting minority governments by nationwide parties at the national level).

reconcilability of party goals is any less important in unitary states: the logical foundations for them to be a decisiveness conditions are absolutely the same. In this sense, the multilevel features may cause that condition to be empirically more frequent, but by no means logically distinct than in any other state structure. So, in conceptualizing this condition, we make no difference whatsoever between unitary or federal states.

So, we´re left with the identification of an opportunity structure for presidents to initiate a game with parties in exchange for support to their policy agenda, which depends crucially on the potential party demands for each potential payoff. This will not be a party system variable, that is, it can´t depend on the individuality of party preference structures on any given circumstances. As the theoretical overview above shows, parties´ goals are assumed to deploy along all four dimensions in different proportions at each moment in time (and those proportions may be change in different moments) – that´s assumption is even stronger under the perspective of the whole party system, which significantly raises the likelihood of different parties being available to trade in different dimensions, hence the number of possible bargains for the president, at any given time.

What´s at stake here is the existence, at each moment in time, of environmental conditions who can make bargaining along each dimension more attractive to any party: when will the "votes" arena be more pronounced as a reason for accepting bargains, or when "policy" becomes more relevant ? Given that the direct payoffs from being in cabinet are expected to be the same across any system, the differential factor will be whatever may affect parties´ stance on the other dimensions. That´s very similar to the main theoretical question posited by Strøm (1990) when asking why outside parties might persistently support a minority government in investiture and policymaking if they´re not enjoying the direct benefits of cabinet membership. His answer involves the votes and policy dimensions. On one hand, the perceived electoral losses suffered by minor coalition partners in the following elections[248] and the expectation of gaining office in those same elections makes cabinet sharing less attractive to many potential partners. How widely strongly this position holds among non-formateur parties depends

[248] An empirical reality in the post-war Western European parliamentarism he studies, reiterated by Helms (2020), Salom (2003), and Thürk (2022). In presidential systems, Altman (2000, p. 261) points that, given the influence that the president's reputation has on voters' evaluations of government performance, "the president's coalition partners are less able to claim credible credit for good government performance." Alemán and Tsebelis (2011) see this perceived losses in incentives to join and remain in coalition to be aggravated by the closeness to the next elections..

basically on the perceived competitiveness of elections in a given country at a given time: if parties have little hope of surpassing the main coalition members for any reason[249], they may be less discouraged from taking office; otherwise, their electoral bids in a competitive election induce their keeping away from joining cabinet even if they occasionally support the government.

Of course, non-government parties have also very strong motives to refuse cooperation on grounds of electoral immediate gains ("to eschew compromise and try to lay the blame for consequent policy failures on the other" – Goodin, 1996, p. 33[250]). Indeed, an "accommodating" position towards governmental agendas by oppositional parties shows strong empirical variance, and will require a balance of several factors to offset this first impulse of compromise refusal (Ganghof & Bräuninger, 2006; Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006). So, we must get back to Strøm (1990): cooperating outside the cabinet will be attractive only if the bargaining party can reach some influence on policy decisions, in order to reap either direct policy gains or changes in government decisions deemed more suitable to its electoral stances[251], or both. This reasoning can also be applied to the support of "niche parties", who are less interested in public office and more keen on influencing policies in their specific area of interest (Meguid, 2005, 2008), and within them for "ethno-regional parties" whose main interest is in transfers of policymaking resources to their regional spheres (Anghel & Thurk, 2021[252]). In a minority situation, the odds of that factor being meaningful are even greater, since in most issues the government will need some outside support and, thus, is more likely to be willing to negotiate policy concessions (Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008). On the

[249] Strom exemplifies this situation by Italy´s minor center-right parties, who felt little expectation of surpassing the Christian Democrats (for several idiosyncratic reasons) and, for that reason, were more than willing to join them as minor coalition partners even when the DC was just a plurality in parliament.

[250] Goodin´s example is the ferociously competitive bipartisan US politics, which reminds us that this non-cooperative motives are perfectly compatible with electoral competitiveness discussed just above.

[251] Helms (2020, p. 651-652) suggests that prospective leading parties (expecting to be the formateurs in parliamentary coalitions or to elect a president) will favor investments (education, health, infrastructure) with dispersed growth effects to appeal broadly to a large, heterogeneous pool of voters, while other minor parties might cater to more specific regional or sectoral clienteles in public spending. Mújica and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006, p. 89) recall another possibility in that, "by cooperating with government the opposition has a chance to influence government policies, thereby demonstrating to its voters that, despite its electoral defeat, voting for the party is not completely useless".

[252] The classical examples of such parties are, of course, European: Spanish regionalist parties (Field, 2016) or Romanian parties sponsoring the interests of ethnic *Roma* or Hungarian populations (Anghel & Thurk, 2021). However, one can´t rule out this perspective at least for the numerous indigenous parties, intra-party factions and movements all across Latin America.

other side of the aisle, some findings by Barnes and Jang (2016, p. 305-306) suggest that under a minority condition, "given that the reputation of the executive is already compromised, the opposition party members have less incentive to focus on party-oriented behavior aimed at damaging the incumbent's popularity", thus being more amenable to negotiate shared initiatives or policy compromises. All that is, evidently. a matter of degree, when non-cabinet parties will stand between the two extremes of a typical Westminster bipartisan winner-takes-all exclusion from any influence and the full power sharing stemming from being in the cabinet[253]; that´s also a potential influence afforded by the environment parties face, since in any given circumstances they may choose not to exert it[254].

In sum, a given system will offer presidents a more favorable space for bargaining with parties along the votes and policy dimensions if it simultaneously shows electoral competitiveness and oppositional (or, more precisely, non-coalitional) policy influence, so as to give presidents the opportunity to make attractive policy offers to non-cabinet parties in exchange for support to his governance agenda, and to see them accepted by those same parties. In a way, that´s the mirror-image of Strøm´s rationale for minority governments forming in parliamentarism: if those bargains can be struck, prime ministers can arrange some support for his tenure without having to rally parties into the cabinet coalition. In presidential settings, and specially if one considers minority governments trying to reach policy decisiveness, tenure in presidential office is not at stake, but rallying support for presidential agendas definitely is.

Still on the conceptual point of view, our Latin American universe requires consideration of another bargain dimension: direct benefits in terms of pork and other advantages to offer legislators. Those issues have already been extensively described in the "toolbox" approach in section 3.2.1, under the perspective of presidential capacity to offer them. However, presidential budgetary and informal exchange powers show basically the supply of such goods: without demand they would be irrelevant in any

[253] *The higher the policy influence differential, the greater the power of the government vis-à-vis the opposition. The smaller the differential, the less of an advantage it is to be in office. The notion of a single system-specific measure of policy influence differential is of course a simplification of reality. [..] But we should think of the systemic policy influential differential as a summary measure of the expected marginal increase in policy influence potential of the typical party facing a decision whether or not to participate in government.* (Strøm, 1990, p. 42)

[254] *Note that the policy influence differential thus refers to a potential and not to the actual power exercised by parties in government or opposition. Even in systems where the opposition enjoys relatively generous opportunities for policy influence, some parties may deliberately or through incompetence fail to exploit them* (Strøm, 1990, p. 42)

deal[255]. And demand, here, means a particularistic motivation in the party system, an important distinctive feature in any polity (Cox & McCubbins, 2001[256]; Chaisty & Power, 2018). Kellam (2015, pp. 523-524) describes very clearly the logic of such party system feature:

> These parties put their blocs of votes up for hire on presidents' initiatives in exchange for the pork, patronage and/or approval of local-oriented policies requested by heir constituents. This makes them relatively cheap coalition partners in policy terms when presidents face programmatic disagreements with other parties. The result of particularistic party representation in the legislature is greater flexibility in presidents' choices of coalition partners and their governing strategies. The parties-for-hire argument identifies conditions that increase the likelihood that minority presidents will govern without forming majority cabinets and that shorten the lifespan of presidential cabinets.

That is, when the party system presents strong party-voter linkages based on patronage at large, as opposed to programmatic or universalistic-policy links, presidents can operate in a whole new dimension for bargains: exchanging policy support (in legislative votes) for such clientelistic goods such as pork, patronage or favors, regardless of sharing cabinet power or making major policy concessions[257]. In our goal reconciliation perspective, the party system doesn´t need to be entirely composed of pork-seeking parties: it suffices that some relevant parties (or factions thereof) can be assessed through this channel, while others are strictly program-oriented in their political action. Programmatic, nationwide parties are much less inclined to lend support to a presidential national policy agenda than particularistic ones, and the latter increase the potential bargains available to the presidents. That´s an explicit addition to the possibility of partial policy deals present in Strøm´s original features of minority governance that began this section. In a way, that involves for the parties involved a

[255] Santos (2003a) describes the last months of the Goulart government in Brazil (1963-64) as an example of party system who, despite having followed a highly particularistic behavior for decades, showed very little appetite for exchanging support for cabinet, patronage and pork, due to the extreme political polarization at that particular moment.

[256] Those authors (2001, pp. 36-38) associate such inclinations to electoral incentives for a personal vote (making it a rational strategy for reelection) and weak parties, and "weak parties mean that important collective goods go un- or undersupplied" (since individually legislators can´t credibly claim credits for national public policies, they´ll favor particularistic policies and services). The movement from non-particularistic to particularistic pattern was identified in Taiwan by Chen and Haggard (2001), while arguments regarding the pervasiveness of such transactions were made for Malawi (Patel, 2016) and Brazil (Mello & Spektor, 2018).

[257] There´s some degree of concessions in handling such particularistic goods, since they cost money after all, but appear to the president not as costly as to threaten their main policy goals. That´s Shugart and Carey´s (1992) "inefficient secret".

subset of the classical "office" motive, that is, getting hold of some of the perks expected as a reward for holding high office (patronage at the lower administrative levels, awarding contracts and discretionary regulatory favors, handing out public money as grants and other outlays), without the need for occupying cabinet positions.

Mitchell (2001) suggests another possibility for this possibility of particularistic benefits: in Ireland, the electoral system favors the election of independent (non-party-endorsed) candidates, who face strong electoral costs and get elected precisely for pledging differently from the mainstream parties´ electoral platforms (whatever those might be). Those independent MP´s were found much more likely to cooperate with the minority governments in exchange for mainly pork-based packages (and the deferral of any kind of election that might threaten their hard-won seats). Although that example might be directly unobservable in Latin America, it represents a clear case for the logic of support rationales not based on policy but on individual particularistic payoffs. And, above all, it shows the analytical blueprint for the several possibilities of individual negotiation attempted by the president with legislators, circumventing parties altogether. That is, regardless of who sits at the table (either party leadership or individual legislators) to negotiate, the demand for pork and favors is to be considered a relevant factor.

We will not focus here on the previous attempts made to find the probable causes of such demand for pork, usually involving centrifugal, constituency-centered electoral systems that promote incentives for legislators to cultivate a "personal vote" (Haggard & McCubbins, 2001; Cox & McCubbins, 2001; as a summary to that assessment in the literature, see Wehner, 2014) – whatever the underlying motives, what´s relevant to our purposes is that such demand exists. Nor such analytical endeavor should be seen as the consequence of expanding the model from parliamentary to presidential minority governance: we find no reason for particularistic parties or legislators not being present under parliamentarism; instead, that may reflect Strøm´s empirical universe of Western European democracies whose party competition is essentially policy-driven, where even the "office" motive means basically the focus on the top cabinet decision-making powers to capture all of a government power share from above (Strøm & Müller, 1999). In a Latin American background, however, where such general particularistic patterns have been already found as pervasive (Kellam, 2015; Carey & Shugart, 1995) with extreme cases of clientelistic motives for major parties´ behavior (Ames, 2000; Levitsky, 2003) and claims about the relative weakening

of programmatic party-voter linkages even in the most institutionalized party systems (Chile and Uruguay - Luna, 2008), we can´t leave aside the existence of significant particularistic motivation in the party system as a whole[258] as an independent factor in our assessment of a given country´s reconcilability of party goals.

Operationalization

Moving on to those concepts´ operationalization, the first element is the joint existence of electoral competitiveness and oppositional policy influence. The canonical implementation by Strøm (1990) is, for electoral competition (the author calls it "decisiveness of elections"), strongly empirical: a composite of several direct observations regarding each country´s elections during the assessed period[259]. On oppositional influence, it´s also empirical, although indirect: by correlating oppositional capacity with strong parliaments, and proxying parliamentary strength through the organizational development of a full-fledged committee system, such influence is measured by a five-point index based on stable institutional properties of parliamentary committees in the country at hand[260]. Strøm´s choices are, evidently, sensible in a theoretical sense, and coherent to his empirical universe.

However, we can´t go along that path, for both kinds of reason. In competitiveness, we don´t have repositories or other data sources to one of its subcomponents (the "identifiability of government alternatives"), and the other two have little meaning in presidential systems (the time between elections and government formation, and the cabinet share of electorally successful parties). So, we must proxy such condition with the crudest measurement of electoral competition, the volatility among elections. That should not be a measure of simple alternation in executive power, but a dynamic measure of how much competition there is, not only between two

[258] Again, not excluding the possibility of relevant policy- or ideology-centered parties existing within any such system.

[259] Namely, an impressionistic categorical assessment to the "identifiability of viable government alternatives"; the percent of governments who were formed immediately following a general election; a measure of electoral volatility proper (in legislative seats) between successive elections; and the share of cabinet portfolios occupied by parties that have gained rather than lost seats in the previous elections.

[260] The number of standing committees (considered a precondition to specialization); their having fixed jurisdictions corresponding to ministerial departments (taken as a requisite for more effective oversight); the existence of restrictions to the number of committee assignments to individual MPs (which might restrict government manipulation of committee assignments and raise MPs´ specialization); and the proportional distribution of committee chairmanships among parliamentary parties.

opposing poles, but among parties as a whole, since all of them are potentially affected by this systemic feature[261].

That´s the index of electoral volatility presented in Mainwaring and Scullly (1995, p. 6), that is, "the net change in the seat (or vote) shares of all parties from one election to the next", which measures how parties´ electoral fates alternate from one election to another (thus, how ferocious are the effects of party competition). Data for Latin America are available in PNUD (2004, p. 67-68), for every country-year from 1990-2002[262]. That´s a sub-optimal solution, since party systems evidently change along time and values will probably be different before 1990 and after 2002. Unfortunately, we couldn´t find a time-disaggregated series to fill in such gaps, which will endow us only with extrapolations from this series to assess the remaining periods.

As for calibration, that´s clearly a continuous variable who allows for a fuzzy condition. The theoretical anchoring points for volatility will be the extreme empirical points to the index (0 and 100) as complete non-membership and full membership; for intermediate positions, the Latin American mean (22,35)[263], will amount to 0,66, and the average level of aggregate volatility found empirically for Western European countries in the period from 1945 to 1989 (8.7), as a paragon of theoretically expected political stability (Marshall, 1997, p. 80-81), which will then become our 0,33 threshold[264].

Turning our attention now to operationalizing the oppositional influence on policy variable, we must also depart from Strøm´s implementation, which is based on measures regarding legislative committees (seen as proxies for strongly deliberative legislatures). First of all, because the literature on congressional powers in multiparty presidentialism is clear on the variety of legislatures in terms of their roles and relative powers vis-à-vis the government (Cox & Morgenstern, 2001; Morgenstern & Nacif, 2002; Montero, 2009) and their multifactor causalities, far beyond one single determinant such as committee structures[265]. Secondly, because presidential systems

[261] Nor it involves more general assessments of "political competition" as opposed to authoritarian restrictions on political activities, a variable that is offered in the V-Dem repository (Coppedge et. al, 2018, p. 325) or in the Quality of Government one (Teorell et. al., 2018, p. 168), since the case selection for fully democratic instances (discussed in section 4.3.1) uniformizes such condition.

[262] The precise starting year varies according to the country.

[263] Payne et. al. (2007, Table 6.1, p. 153) uses the same data from PNUD (2004) but extends the period from 2002 to 2004 and offers a mean value to the whole period between redemocratization in the 80´s or 90´s up to 2004 for the single or lower houses of parliament.

[264] Those same data (quoted from Bartolini and Mair, 1990) are also used by Mainwaring and Scully (1995, p. 7) to qualitatively gauge their own volatility findings.

[265] Something that might probably affect Strom´s Western European sample or parliamentary governments much less.

have at least one independent factor in policymaking (presidential legislative powers) who are mostly alien to the internal structuring of congresses. So, we must search for other assessments of oppositional influence, albeit less clear-cut or objective. To that end, the closest precedent we find is the assessment registered by expert surveys for European parliamentary democracies, then coded as a categorical variable from 0 to 10 (O´Malley, 2007, 2010). That is, an qualitative appreciation (unavoidably, to a certain extent, impressionistic) of this elusive and highly abstract condition of a political system. Along those lines, there are actually some surveys who deal with the issue on a very broad level: the perception of expert respondents on the openness and depth of elite consultation (which includes, obviously, opposition parties) regarding policy changes, something which more likely than not is correlated to those parties´ influence in policymaking. In V-Dem survey database (Coppedge et. al, 2018, p. 143-145), Question 3.6.5 asks respondents " When important policy changes are being considered, how wide is the range of consultation at elite levels (based on the most typical style of policymaking) ?", ranging the answers from 1 (no consultation, leaders make decisions on their own) to 5 (consultation across the political spectrum and all relevant sectors of society and business); Question 3.6.5 consults them "to what extent political elites tipically acknowledge and respect counterarguments on considering important policy changes ?", answers set from 1 (counterarguments not allowed and/or repressed) to 5 (counterarguments almost always acknowledged and valued, and frequently accepted to influence intended changes). In BTI Governance project indexes (Beltersmann Stiftung, 2022, p. 44), Question 16.4 assesses "to what extent does the political leadership enable the participation of civil society in the political process?", which can go from 1 (civil society participation obstructed, their organizations suppressed and their representatives excluded from the policy process) to 10 (political leadership actively enables civil society participation, giving it an important role in deliberating and determining policies). So, each of those indicators provide a glimpse at a political behavioral pattern by policymaking bodies who is probably correlated to the oppositional influence on policy. Being ordinal variables, an average of the three is conceptually acceptable and even more likely to be close to a more general view of oppositional influence[266]. The ordinal scale is also a natural candidate for anchoring points in calibrating the fuzzy condition, since 1 means the least characteristic of oppositional influence and 5 the

[266] The BTI variable being divided by two. The averaging solution has the advantage of allowing the composite indicator to be produced from less than three of its individual components, in case data is missing from any of the sources (still representing the best approximation available to us).

maximum valuation for such situation; the distances between the points of the scale were already construed as an assessment by the experts surveyed of the qualitative degree of membership to the condition involved in the question. So, we can extract our fuzzy condition values straight from the average value: an average of 1 means a fuzzy value of 0; an average of 5 reaches a full 1 in the condition; the intermediate points distribute proportionally along the distance between 0 and 1.

As already pointed out, those two dimensions (competitiveness and oppositional influence) are to be present simultaneously for the environment to be considered promising to bargains. So, our logical component to the reconcilability condition will be their multiplication or intersection ("logical AND"), making out a composite variable which we´ll call "electoral policy bargaining potential" for the sake of quick understanding.

The last condition component to operationalize is the particularistic motivation of the party system. Our main theoretical reference (Kellam, 2015, p. 520) measures it by a residual category in the classification of parties in the left-wing dimension (considered as the primary policy dimension relevant to the policy agenda) according to expert surveys - that is, particularistic parties those who can´t be assigned any position in such dimension (although they may take positions along other orthogonal dimensions). This method results in "particularistic" mean vote shares in Congress: some of them are probably expected (27,49% for Ecuador, 19% for Brazil, 0,00 % for Uruguay, 1,97% for Chile), but some seem highly problematic vis-à-vis the extant knowledge[267]. Theoretically, it´s a coherent view when seen from the point of view of presidents (facing parties interested in dimensions other than the one which is their focus), but we can´t follow this path. First, because such orientation resembles much more an informal institution (Helmke & Levitsky, 2006) than a formal variable that can be captured by party manifestos or even by surveys centered on parties: there´s absolutely no theoretical reason to discard the possibility of any party having particularistic motivations and practices while showing a public profile pointed to pursuing a given left- or right-wing orientation. Second, because we have already made clear that parties can (and often are) divided, non-unitary, and can thus survive

[267] Finding 5,7% of particularistic vote in contemporary Argentine Congress conflicts with the strong warnings by Levitsky (2003) regarding the fundamentally clientelistic dynamics of peronism; the 5,80% share of clientelism in the Brazilian legislature between 1946 and 1964 contrasts sharply with the strong emphasis on clientelistic linkages of all major parties by the literature (as surveyed in Bittencourt, 2009)

balancing their policy *personae* with a particularistic practice to an extent that this practice affects its bargaining preferences at large.

In other words, although we are dealing with parties´ motives, parties themselves do not offer very precise benchmarks for measuring them[268]. We´ll have to use a more widespread (albeit looser) perspective on the general particularistic view of the political system. Again, there´s strong availability for that in expert surveys: following Chaisty and Power (2018), we find that V-Dem, in particular, offers several different perspectives on that (Coppedge et. al, 2018, pp. 56, 96, 146, 226). Question 3.6.7 asks about the "particularistic" or "public goods" character of social and infrastructural government spending; Question 3.1.21 surveys the perception of vote and/or turnout buying in the last national election[269]; those two first questions have categorical ordinal responses, all ranging from 0 (the closest to widespread particularism) to 4 (an universalist perspective by parties). The explicit nature of party linkage to constituents (the main contents of their electoral offer to voters and partisans) is the object of Question 3.2.8, whose 0 to 4 scale evolves from purely clientelistic (individual rewards in goods, cash and/or jobs) to local collective ("pork") goods such as wells, roads or bridges, culminating in a relationship based on a party's positions on national policies, general party programs, and visions for society[270]. All those indicators are relevant to our measurement, since they jointly touch in parties´ demand for both "pork" provided through the public budget and for informal exchanges that may leak out of formal public finances (all of which can be of interest to presidents, as already discussed in the "toolbox" section 3.2.1).

Here, too, ordinal scaling in the survey´s responses is conducive to a straight fuzzy interpretation (with the caveat that the extreme membership in our model means the most particularistic case, and that requires the response values be taken inversely[271]). In the first two questions, the 0-4 range means an expert evaluation of the degree of

[268] Nor can we endeavor direct measurement of things like outright bribery in vote-buying, notoriously very hard to gauge empirically (Saiegh, 2014, pp. 495-496, has to fall back to Georgian England in the 18th century as a working example).

[269] It means the distribution of money or gifts to individuals, families, or small groups in order to influence their decision to vote/not vote or whom to vote for; does not include legislation targeted at specific constituencies, i.e., "porkbarrel" legislation. That´s a meaningful variable to our purposes, since it reflects a pattern of relationship between parties and voters (which cannot but affect accordingly the relationship between parties and the governmental apparatus).

[270] There´s also Question - 4.0.8, in which a continuous Clientelism Index ("to what extent are politics based on clientelistic relationships?") is constructed by a Bayesian factor analysis of the three indicators mentioned here.

[271] That is, a 4 in the response means the least particularistic inclination (so, in a fuzzy condition, a 0 value), and so on.

membership to the "particularistic motivation" set, allowing us to set the 0 and 1 extreme values in those 2 points at the interval, while assigning the other three points to 0.25, 0,5 and 0,75 respectively. The third question requires a different approach: the first three values (originally 0, 1 and 2) involve distinct particularistic inclinations who are, to our purposes of multiplying demand for bargaining outside cabinet and policy, equivalent: for presidents, legislators willing to trade floor support equally raise his exchange possibilities either when they demand individual clientelistic goods (cash, jobs) provided by informal disbursement practices or when they expect traditional budgetary pork in return. So, we have only three positions of interest: fully clientelistic parties (values 0, 1 and 2), mixed clientelistic and programmatic interests (value 3) and fully programmatic linkages (value 4). So, converting such values in a fuzzy scale requires assigning a fuzzy value 1 to responses coded as 0, 1 and 2; 0,5 to a response in value 3; and 0 to an answer in 4.

As the questions mean different perspectives to the same phenomenon, the end variable to "particularistic orientation" should be the sum or union (logical "OR") of the three converted fuzzy variables, since all of them signals high potential for particularistic bargains.

Lastly, we must design the final composition of our "reconcilability of party goals" condition. We have already defined two components as fuzzy conditions, one the "electoral policy bargaining potential" and the other called "particularistic orientation". Each of them represents one potential dimension of bargain to be offered by the system to the president for him to rally legislative support. In this sense, one given country may have two positive membership cases (fuzzy value higher than 0,5), when their coexistence multiplies presidential bargaining space by allowing a combination of offers along both dimensions; it may have just one of them, cutting bargaining space by half; or it may have none (both fuzzy values equal or lower than 0,5), precluding expectations around legislators´ demand for such presidential resources. Given this distribution, we might propose the following rules for compounding the ultimate logical condition: if both intermediate conditions have values higher than 0,5, the final fuzzy value will be their sum/union (logical "OR"), with a 0,75 floor to that value (to account for the joint effect of the active possibility of two bargaining dimensions); if only one of the intermediaries exceeds 0,5, the final value will be its own value, capped at 0,75 (to reflect the existence of only one variable); finally, if no condition exceeds 0,5, the final value will be the multiplication/intersection (logical "AND") of both.

3.2.3 Congruence between cabinet and congress

Theoretical foundations

Positional considerations (that is, taking governmental and parliamentary party´s policy preferences as a causal factor) have had a considerable influence in the study of minority governance, specially because of the flexibility attributes it posits for minority governments´ negotiations. The general argument is that a minority government can choose between more options of bargains due to more alternative legislative coalitions, increasing the odds of finding a deal which is closer to their desired preferences than the *statu quo*. If those governments are formed by pivotal (relatively large, centrally-located parties) in the main left-right policy space, they can split the opposition into two opposing factions at the extremes; to both of them, cooperating with the government would be likely preferable to support the other extreme opposition[272]. That, and the flexibility of shifting those alliances according to the issue at hand, makes for a good command of policymaking. (Laver & Shepsle, 1996; Green-Pedersen & Thomsen, 2005 p. 156; Thürk, 2022, p. 5; Negretto, 2004, p. 4[273]). It´s true that such general pattern may be enfeebled by political polarization, that makes policy preferences more distance among potential partners, and thus may restrict the compromise space (Thürk, 2022, p. 17; Chaisty et al, 2020, p. 425) or disincentivize presidents to engage with a far too distant congress and pursue unilateral strategies (Amorim Neto, 2006, p. 435). Nevertheless, the possibility of variable-geometry bargains exists even in such restricted conditions, and when the government´s position is sufficiently median, it combines (instead of conflicting) with governmental agenda powers to form dynamic and issue-specific legislative coalitions (Matthieß, 2018)[274].

[272] The median position of the government party or coalition is not a necessary assumption, though. König and Lin (2020) even suggest that if the median party is part of a minority coalition, the government´s agenda will be more resisted in parliament since the intra-coalition infighting will involve more actors in each case; they clearly refute the empirical necessity of the median party as a necessary member of government coalitions, pointing out that in Denmark, only 37% of minority cabinets between 1985 and 2015 included the median party.

[273] As almost everywhere in this study, we´re taking "government" or "executive" as an actor, regardless of the regime, since those negotiating strategies in the legislature are common to both (among the mentioned authors, Negretto deals exclusively with presidential regimes, while the others refer to parliamentary cases).

[274] All that is not an iron law, but a tendency: even non-extremist opposition parties may on occasions have low tolerance for concessions (specially when expecting close forthcoming electoral success), putting forth maximalist policy demands even if the government proposals change the *statu quo* to a closer position to their own preferences.

That general argument is the background to one specific negotiating strategy regarded as an outstanding feature in minority governance, the so-called "bloc parliamentarism" (Green-Pedersen & Thomsen, 2005; Fitzmaurice, 2001; Narud & Strom, 2011, pp. 71[275]). That situation happens when a minority government has on its side of the left-right spectrum[276] enough opposition (that is, non-cabinet) parties to form a majority in favor of his proposals (or at least a good many of them) due to the fact of such proposals are, anyway, closer those other "bloc" members than any *statu quo* that might be on the other side of the spectrum. This *ad hoc* majority is sufficiently coherent and stable to provide strong incentives to both government and opposition parties to negotiate on a systematic basis: for the government, he´ll be able to advance considerably his agenda (and denying the opposed "bloc" the possibility of vetoing it); to the "bloc" opposition parties, they´ll have systematic policy influence to foster their preferences without incurring in the electoral costs of supporting the government[277]; even the opposition parties not included in the "bloc" is more amenable to negotiating in some relevant issues, for the fear of being bypassed by the "bloc" with its numerical majority[278]. Without this possibility of falling back on a "bloc" for at least part of its policy goals, government stability and success was found decreased.

This particular strategy has its limitations, and its successful implementation requires some contingent parliamentary and party landscape features: a relatively strong minority coalition[279], not too much polarization (Thürk, 2022, p. 17) and not too much fragmentation – the absence of any one of those conditions may turn the transaction

[275] Empirically, those strategies are recorded as being put in place in Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden and Norway). The theoretical reasoning, however, doesn´t require any feature specific to those polities.

[276] Not necessarily with more extreme preferences: there may be (as referred to in Denmark) that a Social Democratic government finds in its "bloc" moderate centrist parties who are closer to it than to the right-wing opposition

[277] While systematic obstructionism (and, in parliamentary Scandinavia, voting the government out) would be pointless, since it would favor other parties outside of the "bloc", even more distant from their preference.

[278] "Broad coalitions" across the spectrum, putting in agreement government and the parties from the other side not included in the "bloc", are not impossible but uncommon and usually ineffective: too-far-apart partners could agree on *ad hoc* measures (and, even, on occasional investiture or censure voting support), but their policy differences would be too big to agree on substantive and coherent policies (Green-Pedersen; Thomsen, 2005). Besides, the Swedish experience is that of a heavy electoral cost to those parties who attempt cross-bloc alliances (Aylott & Bergman, 2011), due to voter rejection.

[279] For instance, since the 1973 Danish elections the effective number of parties grew permanently and significantly (Elgie, 2001a, pp. 214-215), and the mainstream right became sharply divided into two main parties. That accounted for a virtual disappearance of "bloc parliamentarism" between 1973 and 1981, during governments led by some of those rightist parties, and a considerable reduction since 1981, even during social democratic minority governments (Green-Pedersen; Thomsen, 2005)

costs for the orderly bargaining within the "bloc" too high (which loosens the special leverage that the "bloc" provides for sustained government initiatives in parliament). Indeed, Christiansen and Damgaard (2008, p. 56-62) acknowledge the importance of "bloc parliamentarism" in all of Scandinavia, but in alternation with several other minority governance strategies[280]. Whatever the limitations, though, there´s still a large possibility space for attempting it[281]. In this scenario, individual governments´ "flexibility" is somehow diminished (in that they must tend to cultivating their "bloc", without shifting gears too often in their agreements), in exchange for a more predictable and profitable course of action in terms of legislative success[282].

Pereira, Melo and Bertholini (2018) offer a reconceptualization to those positional models in multiparty presidentialism, one based on the congruence between the median ideological preference of the presidential coalition and the median ideological preference of the whole congress[283], that might bring a more helpful perspective on our governance analysis. An "unified" government, according to those authors, would be one where the coalition reflects adequately the policy preferences of parliament. Such congruence is, for governance, as important as the presidential coalition size in seat shares[284], and several cases of oversized coalitions with poor legislative performance may be explained by it. The authors claim that the ideological

[280] Which include "undisciplined" bloc politics, shifting "ad hoc" legislative coalitions, major inter-bloc compromises facing economic crises, and "contract parliamentarism" (formal support agreements with non-cabinet parties, involving either overall legislative support or issue-specific commitments). Similar heterogeneity of strategies is found for more recent periods in Denmark by Fitzmaurice (2001).

[281] Ganghof, Eppner, Stecker, Heeß and Schukraft (2019), attempting to measure precisely the opposite (shifting, flexible alliances with different opposition sides) in the German regional minority government of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2010-2012, end up discovering that such flexibility coexist (in the small proportion of around 15%) with prevailing "bloc-style" one-sided coalitions.

[282] That refers to individual governments´ flexibility, not the flexibility of the political system: centrist parties can (and, in the Danish case, actually do) take part in different "blocs" partnered with social democratic or conservative-led governments.

[283] It´s clearly distinguished from the highly regarded concept of "coalescence" (Amorim Neto, 1998, 2006), which compares the share of portfolios held by parties in a coalition (weighed or not by the importance of each portfolio, usually measured by the share of the budget it controls) with their respective share of legislative seats. Those concepts are made for different purposes: coalescence is essentially an intra-coalitional tool, associated with the tightness or the coordination between those parties in the coalition (which, for a majority coalition, might be the main object of interest). Congruence, on the contrary, explicitly incorporates all parties in congress (including opposition ones, whose support is necessary in one way or another for policy enactment by minority governments), and is not limited to seat numbers (since they must be compounded by each party´s position in the preference scales).

[284] Except, possibly, in the case of a single-party (assumed disciplined) majority for the president, when this congruence would be automatic.

difference between presidential coalition and congress[285] significantly explains (in a regression with several relevant controls) both the legislative success (number of bills approved) and the costs (in terms of the volume of pork disbursed and the number of cabinet posts assigned to coalition parties) of presidential governments in Brazil, as well as the probability of initiation of high-end parliamentary enquiry procedures[286]. Pereira (2022) develops the core of the argument: in a multiparty system, presidents are elected by the median voter in the whole electorate, but legislators are chosen by clusters of voters (regardless of the party- or candidate-centered orientation of the electoral system), which in turn have each their own median preference. So, legislative support will be heavily influenced by the congruence that the president manages to reach between his own preferences and that of congress as a whole. It´s clear that such congruence is not the only instrument in presidential hands, and he may try to implement policies as close to his preferences as possible (otherwise, he would not have policy as his main objective, something that goes contrary to the whole theoretical foundations of coalition theory), making use of any means available. However, whatever *rapprochement* he may find acceptable raises the probabilities of enacting his actually proposed policies, and in that sense may be considered a decisiveness factor, as well as measured as such. To a very large extent, that´s an indirect way to incorporate one component of the "executive toolbox" included into one previous version of the concept (Araújo, Pereira & Raile, 2010): the possibility of negotiating the policy content (or at least part of it) in their initiatives. Such possibility unlocks many bargaining possibilities and prevents a high-risk "take it or leave it" strategy (while preserving the president´s interests in that whatever concession made must be acceptable to him). Well, designing a coalition to raise congruence with congressional preferences is another way to institutionalize policy concessions (given that the expected outcome will be closer to the median preference affected by the newly added coalition members, who will hold decisional power in their own portfolios and in intra-coalitional negotiation).

And this kind of presidential flexibility is seen in the literature as positive for implementing decisions. As we already pointed out in section 2.1.1, Negretto (2004, 2006) centers his study of divided government dynamics in the relative policy preferences between the executive and two congressional benchmarks (the median and

[285] In their empirical assessment, such congruence was measured only in regard to the lower house (Brazilian Chamber of Deputies)

[286] The "*Comissões Parlamentares de Inquérito*" (CPI´s), an oversight instrument endowed with very strong formal powers to probe into any issue, including government malfeasance or policy choices.

the veto legislators): that difference would set the tone to interbranch cooperation. Negretto considers only the position of the presidential party, but if coalitions mean effective power sharing – an underlying postulate of any such model - presidents can shape a coalition to reflect a different aggregate position in the spectrum. When that is considered, presidents can more often approach a median position where their proposals might get the approval of the median legislator (Negretto´s "unified government") or, at least, one where the status quo is not in between their preferences (that is, when any change would not simultaneously benefit one and damage the other). Those are, in his model, ways to break gridlocks and get policy done. Chasquetti (2013, p. 69) sees the Uruguayan minority cabinets more successful in their policy initiatives when they are willing to shape them closer to the median legislator. Amorim Neto (2006, p. 422; 1998, p. 7) also sees presidents whose policy positions diverge widely from those of the legislature as having lower probabilities of enacting their policies through legislation (that, and the very fact that they´ve got the mandate by pledging so differently from congressional candidates, may even be seen as a rationale for challenging the *status quo* unilaterally). Pérez-Liñán and Rodríguez-Raga (2009, p. 717) warn that many institutional variables usually considered relevant to policy change have different impacts according to the distances held by the president and the congressional majorities vis-à-vis the *status quo*[287].

The strict issue of policy ownership, though, is not under scrutiny here: it´s clear that a new coalition (majority or minority) who changes the estimated median preference of the government means a partial presidential abdication in favor of congressional preferences, but the degree to which this abdication happens is contingent upon the president´s capacity to press or seduce[288] his coalition partners into positions closer to his own and deploy that same shift into parliamentary votes, as well as upon the amount and importance of what he concedes in the policy bargain. No less important meaning has the fact that, when such a coalition is agreed upon, a meaningful share of legislative parties are willing to enter into policy negotiations (instead of betting on gridlocks and immobilism) In this sense, any coalition congruence would be only the

[287] Their focus is on policy stability, so the distance to the *status quo* is at the center of their model; however, both sides are individually considered in measuring that distance (that is, their relative distance in the policy space is still a part of the model).

[288] By means either of hierarchical pressure on cabinet ministers and the bureaucracy, or by the more liberal use of the toolbox (pork, perks, patronage) on behalf of coalition members, all of which must be conveyed afterwards by party ministers, leaders and whips into a change also to their fellow party legislators´ votes. Such an outcome is possible, but far from given; in fact, party splitting along these lines is itself a field of study (Laver, 1999).

starting point to this process of influencing policy decisions, that is, generating the potential for the sharing of power in exchange for more favorable legislative votes to the whole governmental policy package[289]. What we´ll be exploring here, then, is the actual existence of such "concession infrastructure" (a congruent coalition), which is a suitable platform for policy negotiations. It´s debatable that a complete surrender of policy decisions to the congressional median preference (the theoretical "upper limit" of a congruent coalition´s outcome) would be in itself a good governance recipe (in the same way as complete presidential unilateralism); however, an in-between position may indicate presidential - and congressional - flexibility and mutual negotiations. A possibility like that may legitimately be posited as a potential causal factor for good governance (at least, as we propose, as an INUS condition to be migled with others along specific configurations).

On a final note, an emphasis on congruence seems to enter into profitable dialogue with the previously described "positional paradigms" of minority governance. A congruent coalition is, by definition, an instance of a "centrally-located" cabinet[290] which can explore its pivotal position (although not necessarily having to hold a sizeable seat share for itself[291]). On the other hand, building a congruent coalition[292] means letting go of a significant part of the flexibility to make "variable-geometry" negotiation with outside parties[293]; at the same time, it moves the government strategy considerably closer to a "bloc" path, because a coalition around the median congress preferences will clearly set a positional benchmark for delimiting possible blocs, prevent systematic dealmaking between the extremes, and structure a clearer negotiation space for approaching the president´s preferred side of the spectrum.

Operationalization

[289] Much in the same way as having strong presidential control on pork disbursements doesn´t mean that pork will be materially distributed (for parties might not demand it, or the president himself might consider that costs in pork outweigh the benefits in support).

[290] Here, the central location is referred to the actual legislature at hand, not to any exogenous ideological scale,

[291] If such condition is at all necessary, it´ll be captured by the support threshold condition described in the next section.

[292] In this case, a coalition not in a merely formal sense, which means one that actually acts as a power-sharing arrangement that restrains some of the presidential discretion in shaping policy, in favor of the coalition´s median preferences.

[293] So, a negative finding in the congruence condition will reinforce the plausibility of the flexibility argument.

For operational purposes, Pereira et al (2018) offer as a measure of congruence the difference (both in nominal and in absolute values) between the average congress ideology and the average coalition ideology[294]. For our purposes, the absolute value is more helpful, since it´ll capture policy distances regardless of who is on the left and who is on the right – and all the arguments made above didn´t require a specific ideological configuration neither of presidents nor of parliaments to be valid. Ideological preferences are measured along a left-right [1,10] *continuum*, which means their absolute differences will result in a [0, 9] ordinal interval. Their (assumed arbitrary) threshold for "divided" government (that is, the value above the coalition could not be congruent) as 10% of the ideological scale or an absolute value of 1. That means any coalition who might differ ideologically from congress by more than 1 point on the scale should not be construed as congruent in their assessment.

In trying to convert such indicators into a logical condition, we must first decide whether it´s reasonably a fuzzy one to choose, that is, if there are shading degrees of membership to the condition. For our purposes, the answer is negative: congruence seems theoretically a very specific strategy, purposefully followed by presidents with objectives other than merely securing a majority. Therefore, nothing in its logic suggests incremental change from the president´s starting point (his own party´s preferences) to the resulting coalition balance – it´s either a carefully aimed congruent coalition or not at all. So, we´re facing a clearly crisp condition. Their threshold to that condition seems, however, a little too narrow for building our variable: in the sense we´re building it here, a congruent coalition is the springboard from which to attempt negotiations involving chunks of the president´s preferred agenda, and such starting point might embrace some more variance (due to the fact that it´s only the space for negotiations, not the end result of them). In sum, we propose the understanding of congruence as a crisp condition of 1 if the presidential/congress ideological distance is equal or less than 2, and 0 otherwise for any one assembly.

[294] Although not explicit in their paper, we infer that this average is built by weighing party ideology scores by their relative seat shares in parliaments and portfolio shares in coalition cabinets, so as to reflect their compositions. That´s a very intuitive computation for parliaments; as for cabinets, although not substantively straightforward (presidential cabinets don´t usually decide by votes as very traditional parliamentary ones did), it seems the closest thing as a proxy of parties´ political influence on the government (and thus of parties´ power to influence policy-making inside the coalition). Meireles (2016) has a difference operational measure of polarization in Congress and presidential distances to Congress, but we stick to Pereira, Melo and Bertholini both for their simplicity and for referring to more resourceful primary sources.

This calculation must be adjusted for the case of a bicameral congress: the president will hardly ever find a precise "median congressional preference" in such cases, for both chambers, potentially and practically, have different compositions[295]. So, under bicameralism the president´s only choice is to try a coalition composition that, in average, is situated between one chamber and the other, trying to minimize the sum of both distances. In our construct, that will require "enlarging the confidence interval", since whatever coalition that gets a very close congruence with one chamber risks a larger difference to the other. That´s to say, congruence must be assessed individually in both chambers, with looser thresholds. So, we propose that, in bicameral countries, the congruence condition be assigned 1 if the ideological difference between the coalition and both chambers is not greater than 3, or 0 otherwise[296].

Values of party policy preferences are available at the sources mentioned by Pereira et al (2018): the Database of Political Institutions compiled by the Interamerican Development Bank (Cruz, Keefer & Scartascini, 2021), Baker and Greene (2011), Saiegh (2015), and, for the Brazilian case, Power and Zucco (2012). Other primary surveys who may add to the information on party ideology are Wiesehomeier, Singer and Ruth-Lovell (2021), Sáez (2022a), while Negretto (2006a) brings secondary data with their sources; Deheza (1997, p. 251) offers information for past periods in South America, and Barner and Jang (2016, p. 307) give detailed information on the Argentine parties[297]. For legislative seat shares, data are available at Nohlen (1993, 2005a, 2005b), Carr (2022), Mackie & Rose (1991), Sáez, 2022 and Negretto (2006a). Finally, data on cabinet composition are discussed in section 4.1.2 below.

3.2.4 Legislative support threshold

Theoretical foundations

[295] Conceptually, since each chamber votes independently, there will always be two median points; any mathematical combination of their seat shares will be meaningless.

[296] The more immediate solution of averaging both distances would risk a misleading low average if one chamber were too far apart from the other (as it might happen if they have different electoral timetables, or midterm elections change abruptly the composition of one chamber). Such seismic sudden changes in the electorate are not usual, but not impossible (as shown by the differences between Chile´s preexistent parliamentary chambers and the Constituent Convention elected in May 2021).

[297] Due to those more resourceful and updated sources, we don´t follow several other important studies who take their party position data from Coppedge (1997).

Our literature survey in section 2.1.3.2 shows a remarkable finding by many scholars regarding minority presidentialism: the holding of a share of legislative seats beyond a certain threshold (although minoritarian) strongly affects presidential coalitional behavior. Chaisty & Power (2018) posit that presidents close to the majority share for their own party may opt to not incur in the agency loss involved in sharing cabinet posts and go on a single-party minority government, anticipating acceptable odds of surpassing the hurdles of gathering legislative support. Deheza (1998) shows that most post-electoral coalitions came from a presidential share of votes lower than 45%, a "critical minority threshold" beyond which governments might perceive the costs of getting outside support in such limited proportions as less onerous than the costs of sharing power with coalition partners. Figueiredo et al (2012) argue that most minority presidential governments hold beyond between 40% and 50% of lower house seats, and propose the same logic: the small amount of outside support to be conquered is found more interesting through other means than by adding partners to a cabinet coalition. Those numbers converge, by the way, with Strom´s (1990, p. 62) finding that in his Western European post-war parliamentary democracies, "[t]he parliamentary basis of substantive minority governments[298] is on average only slightly above 40%". Lastly, Negretto (2006a) suggests that a minority president having more than 40% of seats behind him and occupying a central location in the policy space enjoys the advantage of being indispensable to almost every successful vote in congress and, as such, being able to form shifting alliances to win legislative votes without a formal cabinet majority. Alemán & Tsebelis (2011, p. 17) classify the presidential support in congress, when equal or greater than 45 percent of seats in the lower chamber, as "strong", meaning presidents with near majorities and to act as majority parties due to the supposed easiness with which they can find support among small parties and independents.

All those authors were dealing with coalition formation, that is, the presidential choices between forming a coalition or not, and on how large to make it. For our governance focus, however, these findings shed a relevant light on the underlying issue: coalitional decisions are shaped by presidential seat shares because the perceived possibilities of building support in parliament are seen as also shaped by them. In other words, a smaller presidential formal share of votes is seen as an obstacle to his decision-

[298] "Substantive" minority governments are, in Strom´s definition, those who haven´t formal and binding support agreement with external parties.

making, which entitles it to consideration as a (negative) decisiveness condition. By doing that, we´ll not be acquiescing to the simplistic view to equate decisiveness with majority coalition-building, as we discussed in section 2.2.3; it´s only about to acknowledging the potential effect that a very low share of seats may individually have in determining decisiveness (interacting with all the others). That´s why the holding of a legislative share of seats above this "critical threshold" might be in itself a condition to be assessed (together with its negation) in our QCA model.

Operationalization

Operationalizing this new condition requires choosing its nature (crisp or fuzzy) and the numerical value of the threshold. As for the first issue, we should pick the conservative approach of a crisp variable, valued 1 if the government has more than the threshold in the relevant chambers[299], or 0 otherwise. We don´t have theoretical support for any scalar or gradual weighing of seat shares on decisiveness conditions: all the reviewed evaluations point to a sharp distinction between the possibilities above and below such limit, amounting to a clearly Boolean argument. Moving on to the value, two benchmarks (40% or 45%) are discussed in the literature, and we find no relevant criteria to distinguish them on their intrinsic merit. However, the same conservatism points to the lower bound: if the cleavage effectively lies in 45%, the cases located between them will lead to discarding this condition in the logical minimization, preventing us from drawing an invalid conclusion[300]; if the opposite occurs (real cleavage around 40%, while condition set at 45%), the discarded cases may cause too high consistency and coverage values to the condition only because of that numerical choice, thus distorting the interpretation of such condition as more important than it actually is.

Therefore, one causal condition to the governance outcomes, related to decisiveness, will be a crisp variable related to "critical minority threshold", assigned 1 when the government coalition holds more than 40% of the seats in each of the relevant chambers, and 0 otherwise.

[299] In a bicameral congress, such a threshold must be surpassed in both chambers, otherwise any negative impact on decisiveness will be inflicted on the president anyway.

[300] That would mean the loss of one potential explanatory condition, reducing the power of our analysis.

3.3 Accountability condition – legislative oversight

Theoretical foundations

In section 2.2.4 and 2.2.5, we presented the grounds for considering accountability through parliamentary actions an essential part among the drivers for good governance: without disregard for the idea of accountability as the result of a set of institutions, including elected and unelected ones (such as courts and audit offices), legislative oversight will be the most potentially affected (specially in the short-run) by our scope conditions of minority governments; besides, in a longer time span, the powers and resources of any other non-elected institutions will most probably be created and kept by legislative mandate; so, parliament´s position towards accountability will potentially shape the whole design of a country´s accountability framework.

We must now lay down precisely what can be taken as parliamentary accountability for the purposes of our analysis, based on Sieberer´s (2011) specification of a three-legged standing of the nature of parliamentary influence on policy. One very disseminated understanding for that concept is the "making and breaking" of governments (Laver & Shepsle, 1996) considered the core power of otherwise relatively weak Westminster parliaments (Mitchell, 2001). Under this view, parliaments would have one, and one only, ultimate role in controlling governments, that of pushing them out of power to be replaced by another sanctioned cabinet. This would not, evidently, be a reasonable assumption in presidentialism: here, executive removal is subject to very specific (and costly) legal requirements regarding previous presidential misconducts and procedural rites, and, even under a strictly political point of view, impeachments cannot but signal the occurrence of deep political instability who means precisely the opposite of good governance (Pérez-Liñan, 2009; Shugart & Haggard, 2001, p. 64)[301].

Another possible understanding of parliamentary accountability might be the scrutiny devoted by legislators to lawmaking, screening and debating government initiatives. That´s entirely compatible with the accountability framework advanced above: indeed, parliamentary input on policy decisions fosters debate, opens channels

[301] In a broader context of oversight, removal from office via impeachment can reach other authorities such as judges and supreme court justices, something empirically found at least in the Argentine case (Palanza, 2005; Hidalgo, 1997). Since our focus is on direct executive-legislative interaction, we won´t go further in considering such potential oversight phenomena.

for participation and information-gathering, and reduces opportunities for abuse[302]. However, as conceptually strong as it may be, using parliamentary influence in lawmaking as a benchmark for accountability has huge implementation problems. Measurement is not the only one: most studies on executive-legislative balances still rely on old-style legislative success and dominance rates (Badillo, 2002; Strøm, 1990; Cheibub et al, 2004; Field 2016; Pereira, 2017; Montero, 2009), where legislative input can´t be measured not even indirectly; others, trying to gauge specifically the level or parliamentary scrutiny in decision-making, must resort to indirect measures such as the length of congressional decision-making process as proxies for the intensity of legislator´s involvement on the decision (König & Lin, 2020; Martin & Vanberg, 2011; Sieberer, 2011; Hiroi & Rennó, 2014). There´s conceptual risks in such operationalization: too much scrutiny might end as frictional interference or excessive veto pressure: after all, the legislature is precisely an institutional veto point. If taken to extremes, such role might be precisely mean the gridlocked decision-making process that early presidentialism theories abhor – and there´s no clear theoretical guidance as to exactly how much policy veto is excessive. Moreover, Mayhew (1991) warns that lawmaking is, to a certain extent, a reaction to (partially random) external circumstances[303] and to the different presidential policy agendas, which might induce researchers to assign a higher degree of activism to a legislature based on its reaction to more bills introduced to cope with particularly conflictive conjunctural settings or to convey a particularly ambitious presidential legislation programme.

So, we must look at the third[304] main thrust of strong parliamentary activity: oversight[305]. As Kriner and Schikler (2016)[306] point out from the experience of the all

[302] Legislative control or veto over executive nominations (but for cabinet positions) are taken as included among those lawmaking aspects of congressional oversight, since they represent a direct parliamentary intervention over governmental decisions, and their consequences resemble precisely those described here (for a treatment of those powers as one specific feature of parliamentary influence on policy, see Sieberer, 2011).

[303] "External" to the government, that is, they may be public opinion trends in favor of more governmental activism or more general factors such as wars and economic crises.

[304] In presidential systems, the second, since overthrowing governments is but an exceptional circumstance for them.

[305] Rockman (1984) points to some severe hurdles on the study of oversight: much less attention to it as an independent variable than as the resulting outcome of other conditions; uncertainty on what might be the supposed goals of oversight; increased difficulties in conceptualizing and measuring its impacts. By inserting oversight as one single component to an entire causal mechanism for governance, we hope to circumvent some of those problems, since we don´t try to isolate (let alone to measure quantitatively) its specific effects.

[306] Kriner and Schikler (2016) will be the source for this whole section. Although their empirical research involves only oversight activities regarding wrongdoing, mismanagement and abuse

powerful US Congress[307], oversight and investigations are the most relevant countervailing power that congressmen have to face the presidency. Oversight is both feasible and effective. On the feasibility side, legislators face an uphill battle when confronting presidents through legislation[308]: strong collective action problems, heavy information asymetries, harsh majority thresholds for lawmaking and veto overriding, and even the inability to overcome on the ground the occasional maneuver by the president to circumvent formal congressional powers such as budgetary authorizations. But congress can investigate even when it can´t legislate: several investigations and other surveillance measures can be decided and enforced by committees (which are not necessarily subject to the same preferences and arithmetics than on the floor)[309], or even sometimes by their chairmen[310]; supermajorities are hardly required to deliberate on them, and bicameral assent is also very rare as a requirement (Mayhew, 1991[311]); as for incentives, investigations can be very salient for individual or party credit-claiming, much more than failed legislation attempts[312].

[307] That means also that their argument is applicable as an extreme case (such as our usage of minority governments as a scope condition), since they deal with the legislature probably most endowed with formal constitutional powers among all presidential countries. The same relevance of parliamentary oversight as highly effective to influence government policy agendas for a broader range of parliamentary democracies is mentioned by König and Lin (2020), and for Latin American presidentialism by Morgenstern et al (2013, p. 62). Sieberer (2011) even notes that, in his survey of 15 parliamentary democracies along a three-dimensional model of institutional parliamentary power (lawmaking, electing cabinet and non-cabinet posts, and control), those dimensions where mutually substitutable up to a certain point (with the only exception of Denmark, which scored high on all 3 when the model expected it to be weak in control prerogatives).

[308] Taking into account that, besides his or her formal unilateral powers, any president (specially in a bipartisan system as in the USA) will probably hold a strong grip on a party, coalition or parliamentary group which holds a relevant share of the votes in committees and on the floor. Ogul and Rockman (1990, p. 18-19) strongly emphasize those barriers to lawmaking achievements by opposition legislators in the United States when their party is the minoritarian one.

[309] Lemos (2005, p. 42) argues that committees are even more likely to engage in oversight activities than the floor, since they have a lighter load of matters for urgent consideration, and face smaller transaction costs due to their limited number of members.

[310] Mayhew (1991) recalls that Joseph McCarthy led his high-octane far-right investigative purges under Democratic-controlled Congresses

[311] That means the possibility of full effects of minority condition on oversight when the president is not majoritarian in only one of the chambers. As the effect of minority conditions at large on oversight effectiveness, Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008, p. 54) recall that "[..]*control activities – involving monitoring of ministers and possibly invoking sanctions – are most effective when they are least needed, and vice versa. In other words, ministers of strong majority governments can resist attacks from the parliamentary minority opposition, whereas ministers of weak minority governments cannot do so by means of their own votes*".

[312] A very illustrative example in this regard is the impact of Harry Truman´s initiative in probing on problems in war procurement contracts during World War II, initially on an individual basis, then resulting in a Senate investigative commission whose results and visibility are claimed to have catapulted Truman as vice-presidential candidate for Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 (Kriner and Schikler, 2016, presenting it as a successful case study of Congressional oversight; Caro, 2003, p.

But oversight can be very impactful also. Legislative scrutiny can raise the salience of some issues (mainly by short-circuiting their access to broader public awareness through media coverage), and erode presidential public support by sustained criticism or simply by making known to the public facts or conducts that may themselves be conducive to unpopularity[313]. Thus, investigative and oversight efforts can push presidential initiatives back, and even induce strategic behavior in dumping initiatives thought to be a target for congressional investigative thrust[314]. Even more important, those effects can be felt by presidents during the very consideration of bills, forcing them to make policy concessions or refrain from using unilateral devices such as vetoes – which allows legislators to intervene in the substantive core of policy-making.

It´s true that such conclusions were strongly based upon the observation of misconduct investigations; Kriner and Schikler found much less impact when oversight efforts were centered on policy considerations or policy criticism[315]. However, that´s hardly a reason for dumping oversight as a means of accountability. For one, effectively combating malfeasance and corruption has a very strong impact on good policy results (Power & Taylor, 2011[316]). But the effect goes also into policy at large: an active

320). Another example of individual reputation building through championing oversight is the decades-long career of Democratic Representative Henry Waxman from California (Waxman & Green, 2010).

[313] It´s clear that this causal mechanism depends on strong media influence on public opinion, which can be partly offset by contemporary impacts of social media in disseminating information. However, like Kriner and Schikler´s, the empirical reality covered by our study is mainly previous to this phenomenon. Besides, studies focusing on more contemporary empirical bases (Christiansen & Seeberg, 2016, p. 17; Helms, 2020, p. 653) also claim the same phenomenon (oppositional criticism inducing government policy concessions due to their expected effects on future voters´support). For those reasons, we stick to this basic framework for considering legislative oversight as a very powerful accountability mechanism.

[314] "*Since measures based solely on formal presidential authority do not account for the institutional strength of congress, they can fail to properly gauge relative power. Congressional oversight mechanisms, for instance, influence the balance of power between branches, giving legislators tools to affect political outcomes that matter to the president (Alcántara et al. 2005). Some of these mechanisms include the ability to form investigative committees, veto presidential nominations, impeach presidential appointees, compel information from state agencies, screen budgetary maneuvers, or force the interpellation of government officials".* (Alemán & Tsebelis, 2011, p. 12)

[315] Similarly, Mayhew (1991) chose, in his benchmark study of the impact of divided government on Congressional oversight, high-profile investigations for misconduct attributed to executive branch authorities.

[316] *Impunity has appropriately been labeled corruption's "brother" and, perhaps even more appropriately, "evil twin" (Morris 2009, 9). For if corruption is destructive of the trust that is needed for both markets and democracies to function smoothly, the pernicious inertia of revealed but unaddressed corruption may be doubly so. An absence of accountability means that corruption may be fleetingly exposed but its practitioners will remain in the game. As a result, exposed but unpunished political corruption will erode confidence in all politicians - whether corrupt or not - and perhaps even in the political system itself*

congress may cross-check policy initiatives by log-rolling concessions in lawmaking initiatives against lighter investigative assaults on malfeasance issues; besides, a congress who is very active in investigating wrongdoing will probably hold more policy oversight activities than otherwise. Another point is that any kind of oversight collects information and generates policy expertise, at least to an extent: such by-products will be available to lawmaking activities even if they´re not specifically destined to policy scrutiny[317] - Sanders, Lisi & Schonhardt-Bailey (2017, pp. 3-4) assess *ex post* oversight hearings under a "deliberative" approach to democracy, equating the activities there to the *ex ante* floor debates in approving bills as to the amount of justification and exchange of views they provide to a given policy. Oversight might also be non-oppositional, aimed at protecting the programs reviewed (although possibly critical of the individual administrators in charge), anticipating and signalling to the Executive possible changes to preserve and perfect them (Lemos, 2005a, p. 19). Finally, many relevant oversight instruments (most notably committee hearings) are also the vehicle for lawmaking information gathering and debate, widely used in scrutinizing a bill´s passage; so, measuring them will allow to ponder both kinds of legislative influence on policy.

Accountability processes by which political corruption is uncovered, investigated, and punished are therefore crucial for at least three reasons. First, they may have a salutary effect in extracting corrupt practices and corrupt practitioners from public office, leading to the restoration of the "link between collective decision making and people's powers to influence collective decisions" (Warren 2004, 328). Removing these dirty players and practices may also, by the same process, lead to improvements in the efficiency, efficacy, and impartiality of public goods provision (Della Porta and Vannucci 1997).

Second, through effective punishment, accountability signals the potential costs of corrupt behavior and the efficacy of the state to "contingent consenters" who might otherwise be tempted to engage in corrupt activities themselves (Levi 1999). Effective punishment not only discourages future transgressions but may boost voluntary compliance with other formal and informal rules, since there will be less perceived gain from flaunting these rules. Third, and as a result of the foregoing, accountability may help to restore public trust in political institutions and the policy process after malfeasance has been uncovered. Accountability allows citizens in a democracy to "discern representative from unrepresentative governments" and sanction them appropriately (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes 1999, 10). More broadly, the full accountability process may set in motion corrective measures by helping to identify institutional flaws, as well as by building political consensus around reforms designed to prevent a recurrence of specific forms of corruption. (Power & Taylor, 2011, pp. 8-9).

[317] An additional reason to bet on oversight activity is Kriner and Schickler´s (2016) and Kriner and Schwartz´s (2008) finding that "divided government" (in their settings, a majority against the president in the chamber) does increase congressional oversight efforts in US House of Representatives (although not in the Senate). Even if considering the difference between that "divided" chamber (with an oppositional majority) and multiparty minority governments (where the minority cabinet may face a divided chamber who doesn´t necessarily is on the other side of the aisle), that raises the expectations for a more intense influence of such conditions on the dynamics of government in our sample of minority governments.

Further conceptual specification is due: by oversight, we mean here "police patrols", that is, when "at its own initiative, Congress examines a sample of executive agency activities, with the aim of detecting and remedying any violations of legislative goals and, by its surveillance, discouraging such violations" (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984, p. 166). For several reasons, we´re not including in our assessment the "rules, procedures, and informal practices" triggering "fire alarms [..] that enable individual citizens and organized interest groups to examine administrative decisions [..], to charge executive agencies with violating congressional goals, and to seek remedies from agencies, courts, and Congress itself (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984, p. 166). We´re not disputing McCubbins´ and Schwartz´s claims that fire alarms can be more effective tools in modern governmental circumstances and for that reason they´re substituting for much of the formerly endeavoured police patrols in US Congress´ oversight portfolio[318]. Our point here is twofold. Operationally, measuring "fire alarms" is by any means an unsurmountable challenge for a comparative study with our intended scope, for it would require conceptualizing what would be a "fire alarm footprint" across the whole spectrum of governmental activities[319], and then measure them across all governmental activities[320]. Conceptually, it would be misleading: we´re looking at legislative oversight activity, that is, that performed directly by congresses, as discussed in sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5 above. To that end, typical fire alarm devices such as the creation of an administrative court for complainants or the enactment of tort legislation for citizens to seek redress directly at courts would be meaningless. What´s more, that subset of fire alarms directed at allowing interested parties to directly warn congress will probably result in direct congressional activities (such as hearings or investigations) which are, by their turn, police patrol ones (following West´s, 2020, expression, fire alarms would be irrelevant if not followed by "firefighting" activities by Congress)[321]. Similarly, we´re not considering the "informal" or "latent" kind of oversight that emerges from the indirect pressure that oversight activities (or the expectations thereof) exert on the bureaucracy (Ogul & Rockman, 1990; Lemos, 2005a), not out of denying their

[318] Although Lupia and McCubbins (1994) qualify some aspects in the first statement, and Balla and Deering (2013, p. 29) find difficulties in empirically confirming the second.

[319] "Fire alarms" might be created by legislation (which would require substantive analysis of literally each enacted bill in every parliamentary session in every country), but also in the setting of a parliamentary ombudsman office or administrative courts and grievance boards.

[320] "*Fire-alarm review is also likely to be informal (McCubbins 1985), which makes it difficult to measure whether more or less of it is occurring*." (Ogul & Rockman, 1990, p. 14)

[321] Indeed, to measure fire alarms activities in the US Congress, Balla and Deering (2013, p. 31-33) counted the committee hearings (a typical police patrol device) which were triggered by some kinds of external position-taking took into account by legislators.

existence or relevance, but due to the conceptual unfeasibility of setting its boundaries[322].

A final qualification is the clear option for considering not merely the formal availability of whatever oversight instrument, but its effective usage by parliament – a choice West (2020, p. 2) sees a less common approach in the literature. The former is, obviously, a logical requirement to the latter: however, their being deployed depends on a specific parliamentary decision to do so - and, as an intermediate step, to endow the legislative chambers with the organizational means necessary to it. That is, between the set of formal powers and instruments available for oversight and the actual oversight output, there´s usually a wide gap (Bonvecchi, 2010; Pellizzo, 2008[323]; Figueiredo, 2003; Winzen, 2012; Alemán & Tsebelis, 2011; Melo, 2009). That gap is strongly influenced by the incentives parliamentarians face for promoting oversight in face of usually powerful presidents and party machines (West, 2020; Pellizzo, 2008; Bonvecchi, 2010) - incentives which may be sometimes very conducive to pursuing such initiatives, as in the American cases discussed by Kriner and Schikler (2016) or the Brazilian low-cost preferred initiatives highlighted by Lemos and Power (2013), or may be overridden by other interests, as suggested by Figueiredo (2003) in the Brazilian case or by Buzogány and Häsing (2018) regarding German regional parliaments. For our enquiry into the consequences of oversight on governance, whatever reasons for the oversight potential not to be put into effect are irrelevant: if the legislature didn´t control, any effect would stem from this very absence, regardless of what has caused it.

Operationalization

A reasonable working measure of oversight activity is the volume of the several initiatives performed, since the observation of actual tasks developed is a more stringent and objective assessment for the intensity devoted to oversight by parliamentarians. Pellizzo (2008) points to a strong correlation between the number of legislative

[322] "*O problema dessa definição é, porém, a amplitude: como identificar as ações legislativas que promovem a limitação do poder executivo, para além das técnicas específicas de controle? Poderiam entrar discursos, projetos, ofícios, encontros, reuniões, telefonemas, enfim, uma gama tão ampla que dificilmente alguma atividade não seria interpretada como controle legislativo. Isso tornaria difícil – senão impossível – mensurá-lo*." (Lemos, 2005, p. 28)

[323] Pellizzo mitigates somehow this statement, suggesting that sometimes strong oversight potential may preempt government action and allow parliaments to better focus their resources (arguments he attributes to Sartori), and sometimes too much exercise of low-intensity tools may dissimulate lack of actual impact under too much noise.

oversight tools available in a given country´s institutional framework and the country´s level of democracy. Indeed, that´s how the literature has most frequently evaluated control intensity: how many parliamentary hearings are performed, sometimes proxied by the number of days devoted to that activity in committees and in the floors (Kriner & Schikler, 2016; Mayhew, 1991; Lemos, 2007; Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Figueiredo, 2003; Balla & Deering, 2013; Pinto, 2021); the discharge (specially when a clear opinion is not granted, and significant objections or censure are expressed) of whole-of-government accounts presented by the head of the Executive (Bonvecchi, 2010); the issuing of information requests to the government, either written, formal ones (Lemos, 2005b; Lemos, 2007; Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Figueiredo, 2003; Pinto, 2021; Palanza, 2005; Fuchs & Nolte, 2005) or through verbal questioning in hearings (König & Lin, 2020, p. 9; Sieberer, 2011; Palanza, 2005; Fuchs & Nolte, 2005); the summoning of executive authorities to testify before congressional meetings (Lemos, 2005a; Lemos, 2007; Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Figueiredo, 2003; Pinto, 2021; Palanza, 2005); or the performance of *ad hoc* investigative procedures on specific issues, endowed with institutional and organizational resources to allow effective enquiries (Lemos, 2005b; Lemos, 2007; Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Figueiredo, 2003; Pinto, 2021)[324].

To perform systematic data collection regarding those activities, we must first organize them into broadly uniform categories. The most comprehensive typology of oversight tools seems to be the one listed in Pellizzo & Stapenhurst (2008), reflected on the Table below:

Table 8 - Parliamentary oversight tools - Pellizzo & Stapenhurst ´s typology

INSTRUMENT	Comment
committee hearings	

[324] Other studies assess oversight by the footprint of institutional and organizational resources that might be considered prerequisites for effective control activities, such as the existence of a permanent committee system, whose jurisdiction is arranged around specialized governmental areas, in order to raise members´ expertise so as to reduce information asymmetry (Meneguin & Inácio, 2014; Montero, 2009, p. 271; Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Martin & Vanberg, 2014, p. 444)), or the availability of professional and permanent research and investigative staff proficient in relevant issues, either as part of parliament´s organic structure (Meneguin and Inácio, 2014; Nolte, 2003, pp. 58-59; Melo, 2009, p. 42-43), or through independent bodies legally tasked with providing such advisory and informational services to parliament, such as audit offices and courts of accounts (Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008; Lemos, 2007; Figueiredo, 2003). Others, such as Winzen (2012) and Sieberer (2011), involve several institutional power features, albeit explicitly recognizing that such exclusive focus comes from the unfeasibility of getting data on the behavioral aspects of oversight. Those kinds of operationalization will not be considered here, for the reasons already developed in the previous paragraphs (although specific activities involving interaction with the auxiliary bodies can be taken into account, if available).

hearings in plenary sittings	
commissions of inquiry	
questions	written questions (including information requests)
question time	specific parliamentary sessions where the executive officials (including the prime minister) have to answer and debate personally on the questions presented by MP´s
interpellations	a more formal questioning that may end on a vote
ombudsman	existence of an independent ombudsman office that must convey its findings to parliament
auditors general	existence of an independent audit office that must convey its findings to parliament
committees	existence of a specialized committee system within parliament for its standing committees
public accounts committees	existence of a committee specialized in scrutinizing budget execution and analyzing audit findings

Source: Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008, with comments from the author

Some adjustments are necessary to tune the categories to better fit our theoretical design. First, the mere existence of internal or external institutions (such as ombudsmen or committees) is not being taken into account (instead, we focus on the results of their actions). So, those categories are not relevant to our purposes, except for one very specific interaction with the audit office: when congress demands audits and other investigations from those bodies, that´s clearly the materialization of an oversight activity initiated directly by legislators (even if its execution is delegated to the audit office), and probably an impactful one. So, this will be one category included in our framework. "Questions" are understood as any formal request for information (if they´re verbally presented but appear registered as such, they must be so considered). On the other hand, the instruments of "question time" and "interpellation", as politically salient as they must be in parliamentary systems, have little or no effect in presidential systems: the president itself is not subject to personally present and defend his positions in parliament the way a prime minister typically is, and a "vote" after such questioning is no different than any other floor vote (it won´t affect the survival of the cabinet, for instance). Instead, the summoning of executive authorities (including ministers) for debates and questioning in the legislative chambers or committees is frequent, and stands for a tool in itself (that would be the – somehow washed-up – presidential equivalent to the question time[325]). So, both categories will be replaced by one involving

[325] The same goes, as far as we know, for the kind of "question time" formally defined for senior ministers like the *Jefe del Gabinete de Ministros* in Argentinian and Peruvian constitutions (Palanza, 2005). For a comprehensive list of the several kinds of in-person questioning available in parliamentary Germany, and their subtle differences, that we group here into only one category, see Fuchs and Nolte (2005).

the summoning of executive authorities for questioning[326]. "Commissions of enquiry" are the embodiment of specific investigative procedures performed by congress, so their number must include also those enquiries which, although performed by standing committees, have been recorded by parliament as specific, individual proceedings[327]. In another adjustment, there´s no analytical reason to distinguish committee and plenary hearings, for they both represent the same kind of task. Indeed, every tool can be tallied across all committees, plenaries and other collegiate organs within parliament, even if they are recorded separately. Finally, it´s necessary to highlight that Pellizzo and Stapenhurst´s slate does not include a very important resource recalled by Bonvecchi (2010), the passing of judgment of the whole-of-government yearly accounts rendered by the president. That´s an important tool, still to be explored by the literature, but its inclusion would be methodologically tricky: such procedures are typically fixed in number (one account per year), and the oversight intensity is captured in their content (how much, and how grave, are the qualifications and censure points brought to the accounts by congressional judgement). Since our measurement is based on the amount of activities performed, simply tallying the accounts considered would bring practically no variance to this particular indicator.

So, our own categorization of oversight tools will be as presented in the next Table.

Table 9 - Parliamentary oversight tools - proposed typology

INSTRUMENT	Comment	Cluster
parliamentary hearings	Either in committees or in plenary sittings, as well as in any collegiate body within parliament	High impact
commissions of inquiry	Including specific, individualized investigative proceedings performed by standing committees and recorded as such	High impact
Questions	all formal information requests and questioning of the executive	Low impact
summons of executive authorities	all mandatory demands for personal attendance of executive authorities for rendering information and debating issues under their jurisdiction	Low impact
audit requests	formal requests to the audit office or equivalent body to independently perform audit or investigative assignments	Low impact

Source: Pellizzo & Stapenhurst, 2008, adapted by the author. The meaning of "Cluster" classification will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

[326] Sometimes those events are formally converted into "invitations" (Lemos, 2005a) and won´t count as such; in those cases, the activity will still be counted as one more hearing.

[327] That includes Brazilian Congress´ "*Propostas de Fiscalização e Co*ntrole", for instance (Lemos, 2005a) .

To use those categories in building an indicator of congressional oversight, we must then recognize that there are obvious differences between the actual impact of each kind of initiative, and between individual actions within each category. While the latter heterogeneity is entirely contingent, and is hardly feasible to measure in a large comparative survey, the former cleavage is systematic and has already been pointed by the literature (West, 2020, p. 11). Lemos and Power (2013) weighed the oversight tools they captured in the Brazilian Congress according to an ordinal scale trying to reflect "the severity of their consequences"[328]. Investigative commissions have been pointed as strong instruments in terms of their repercussions (Pereira et al, 2018, Calcagnotto, 2005, and Figueiredo, 2003, for the Brazilian case; Kriner & Schickler, 2016, for the US Congress[329]); congressional hearings are the main indicator of legislative oversight for the main studies used in shaping our conceptual view in this section (Kriner & Schickler, 2016; Mayhew, 1991), and Santos (2005) sees their usage concentrated in "macroissues" regarding matters of State[330]. Although devising a *continuum* of effects might not be methodologically feasible (besides the obvious measurement difficulties, those effects will probably vary from country to country), we must at least attempt to differentiate "high impact" tools from those who have less expected influence on government policy: besides reducing the possibility of measurement errors, the differentiation revolves around the relative position of those two clusters, being less likely to vary across countries. To that end, and based on the precedents above, we must consider consolidating in one composite result the "high-end" tools of parliamentary hearings and commissions of inquiry, and in another the other three (questions, summons of executive authorities and audit requests).

Computationally, the characterization of "high intensity" oversight cannot be found but in within-country comparison, since the bare amount of activities (even with the obvious control for the number of legislators in each chamber) is no grounds for comparison between two different countries. Indeed, if we are discussing the causal factors for differing effects on the governance among specific cabinets, it follows

[328] Namely, weights were attributed to information requests (1), investigative procedures known as "*Proposta de fiscalização e controle*" (2), summoning of executive authorities (3) and public hearings (4).

[329] The authors point historical examples such as the already mentioned "Truman investigative commission" on war procurement (Caro, 2003).

[330] While information requests were downgraded as the conduit for "smaller, even minute questions, sometimes of individual scope" (Santos, 2005, p. 117). In the same direction of thought, the low political and transaction costs of information request and their possible usage as substitutes for "stronger" (and more politically expensive) initiatives, specially by those legislators who support the government, is highlighted by Lemos (2005a).

logically that the parameters for assessing how "intense" or "lax" oversight has been in a given country-year are to be found in the historical profile of the same parliament´s oversight along time. For that, we propose to measure the normalized value of each subcomponent (the number of each oversight tool exercised in the chamber per legislator[331] at each country/year, subtracted by the average in the whole time series considered for the country in question, and divided by the standard deviation in the same series[332]). Given the potential substitution within each group (the "high" and the "low" impact clusters), the value of oversight intensity in each group can be found by averaging the value of the tools it encompasses.

To convert each group into a fuzzy condition, we must then consider how each numerical value might be expected to reflect the actual exercise of control. When the number in the high-impact group is very high (a normalized value greater than 1, that is, at least one standard deviation above average), that means the parliament in question was extremely active in strong instruments of control, which assigns it the value 1. If the high-impact group numerical value is still positive (between 0 and 1) and the legislature combines it with extremely high (higher than 1) marks in the low-impact category, oversight activism is slightly smaller, and the condition receives 0,75. If both groups have positive but not top marks (between 0 and 1) in both groups, the activity is less stringent and the condition equals 0,66. Negative high-impact values and positive (0 to 1) value still show some activity, but much less so, deserving 0,25 as fuzzy value. The negative values in subcomponents don´t need to mirror-image this scaling of membership: for analytical purposes, an above average finding does not characterize strong oversight at all, and whatever combination of negative values accrues a fuzzy 0.

A caveat must be introduced here: regardless of their strengths, within-country comparisons pose a serious risks, for they´ll always yield some above average results,

[331] This control is necessary to preempt changes in the measures due exclusively to an increase or decrease in the number of legislators from one year to another, which supposedly is correlated to the possible amount of work developed by their chamber (Fuchs & Nolte, 2005 pointed to that possibility).

[332] One can possibly speculate on the suitability of an average involving decades-long time series, on the basis of possible evolving trends: did technological advances, or societal modernization, or another long-term trend, enhance the overall control activity of parliaments ? We don´t follow this path for two reasons. One is that literature has not converged on whether legislative oversight is decreasing in volume and impact (Mayhew, 1991; Brockman, 1984) or growing in importance (Lupia & McCubbins, 1994; Kriner & Schickler, 2016; Pellizzo, 2008; Lemos, 2005b), so there´s no ground for assuming any quantitative trend to the numbers. The other is the simple idea that any upward (or downward) trend in oversight would mean precisely an increased (or decreased) supply of oversight and its corresponding impact on governance, and as such should be measured and considered in our analysis.

while not necessarily they mean strong oversight. That´s because a weak parliament in oversight matters[333] (one who has very little incentive to legislate itself strong oversight powers, or very little incentive to use those available to it) will anyway show above average numbers in some years, even if that mathematical finding is substantively meaningless. That flaw can´t be corrected by cross-country comparison, as we already discussed; that requires another kind of within-country triangulation to minimize it. The best cross-check available seems some measure of the overall strength for the parliament in question as related to his own country, and there are very suggestive perception measures for the oversight roles of parliaments in the V-Dem survey (Coppedge et al, 2018, pp. 131-132). There, interviewees present several opinions on how they perceive the effectiveness of their parliaments in oversight: "Are opposition parties (those not in the ruling party or coalition) able to exercise oversight and investigatory functions against the wishes of the governing party or coalition?" (question 3.5.12) [334]; "In practice, does the legislature routinely question executive branch officials?" (question 3.5.8) [335]; and "If the executive were engaged in unconstitutional, illegal, or unethical activity, how likely is it that a legislative body (perhaps a whole chamber, perhaps a committee, whether aligned with government or opposition) would conduct an investigation that would result in a decision or report that is unfavorable to the executive?" (question 3.5.9) [336]. An extremely low reputation in parliament seems the best proxy we can have for a weak capacity for oversight on a given parliament, which would jeopardize any numerical finding based on its own activity output. So, if we find more than two negative positions[337] for the parliament in question on a given year, the fuzzy oversight to the legislature in question will be given 0 even if numerically they receive a greater value after analyzing output data.

Another point to be made involves bicameral legislatures: for oversight purposes, they may be considered independent and additive, that is, one chamber reinforces the other´s control or substitutes for it (most notably when majorities belong to different parties or coalitions vis-à-vis the executive in each of them). So, they must be assessed separately, and the final fuzzy value for the country-year in question must

[333] As Huneeus et al (2006, p. 420-421) claim to be the Chilean case.
[334] Answers offered in an ordinal scale of "0: No, not at all; 1: Occasionally; 2: Yes, for the most part".
[335] Answers offered in an dichotomous scale of "0: No — never or very rarely; 1: Yes — routinely."
[336] Answers offered in an ordinal scale of "0: Extremely unlikely; 1: Unlikely; 2: As likely as not; 3: Likely; 4: Certain or nearly certain".
[337] That is, results among the lower half of the categories available for answering each question (including the median category, if existed).

be the union (logical "OR") between the value of both (meaning, basically, that the oversight one chamber abstains from doing can be done by the other).

To conclude this section, data collection is posited as the gathering of primary data, through direct observation of chambers´ yearly reports on their official websites, when available, and direct contact with parliamentary libraries or secretarial offices, via e-mail or post, to request such information whether as a compilation or through copies of the corresponding reports. By the way, that´s the only primary data collection proposed to this entire research project, and this limited scope suggests it´s a feasible goal to achieve.

Such data can be complemented or cross-checked by some other available sources on legislative oversight. Compilations of formal institutional powers of oversight including Latin American parliaments[338] appear in Pelizzo & Stapenhurst (2008), Freudenreich, 2016; Sáez, Montero and López (2005), and Sáez (2022). Information on actual oversight activities are more scarce: Lemos (2007), Lemos and Power (2013), Calcagnoto (2005), and Figueiredo (2003) for some instruments in Brazil; Pinto (2021) for some tools in Brazil and Paraguay; Huneeus et al (2006) for Chile; Palanza (2005) and Fuchs and Nolte (2005) for several tools in Argentina; Bonvecchi (2010), and Alemán and Tsebelis (2011)[339] for specific instruments and assessments across in Latin America. All those sources, however, are strictly complementary, and might at best fill in some gaps or raise some quality issues regarding the primary data collected.

3.4 What can´t be considered yet

Some political and institutional features are the object of scholarly attention and can be considered, in one way or another, potentially related to our main theme of minority governance (at least in the sense that they affect coalition theories as a whole). Nowithstanding, we don´t see how to connect those issues directly with our causal assessment. For full disclosure, we must briefly discuss in this sections the reasons behind each such decision.

[338] Others present data on Western European and other parliamentary democracies: Garritzmann (2017); Wizen, 2012; West (2020)

[339] Besides presenting data on formal oversight powers, Alemán and Tsebelis show an overall "effectiveness indicator" for parliaments, as a proxy for the results of their activities.

Pre-electoral coalitions are seen in the literature as influencing cabinet composition and enhancing the proportionality of portfolio allocations in government formations (Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008; Freudenreich, 2016; Peron, 2018; Borges, Thurgeon & Albala, 2018), the duration of coalitions (Albala, 2014), the likelihood of parties joining the government (Albala & Borges, 2017; Borges et al 2018). All those very relevant consequences, however, belong in the specifically political domain, and there is no explicit association of those consequences with any policy result. Therefore, the issue did not seem relevant to our purposes.

"Contract parliamentarism" is another feature considered extremely relevant in recent minority governance in parliamentary regimes: minority governments enter into formal agreements with external support parties that make their joint action "so institutionalized that they come close to being majority governments" in legislative success and cabinet duration and stability (Bale & Bergman, 2006; Christiansen & Pedersen, 2014; Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008; Matthieß, 2018). However important that might be, support agreements have been recorded only in parliamentary systems, and even not all of them[340], with absolutely no empirical record of presidential experiences. Besides, any written agreement is only enforceable (so, credible) by the involved external supporters by voting down the delinquent government, something which is meaningless in presidential systems – indeed, Bale and Bergman (2006) point to some specific prerequisites which are required to a successful deployment of such tools[341], and all of them involve in one way or another the cabinet´s investiture or demotion. For all those reasons, we don´t find any empirical possibility of actually finding them in our Latin American context.

Finally, two other institutional features are currently in a formative moment to their research agenda regarding presidential governments: bicameralism and multilevel (federal) features of a polity (Couto et al, 2021), with very few sedimented causal hypotheses in that pioneering work (at least when compared to the other factors here included). The former has another caveat in its possible low variance: in a list of 58

[340] Most studies refer to Denmark, Sweden or New Zealand, but even landmark parliamentary systems with significant minority government experience have not shown that experience, as Norway (Bale & Bergman, 2006; Narud & Strom, 2011) and Spain (Field, 2016).

[341] Long traditions of single-party government who generate strong public expectations for fast post-electoral government formation, whose probability is enhanced by support agreements; credible medium-term budgetary frameworks who constrain any formateur´s ability to capture coalition partners through pork or spending; large formateur parties who are willing to incur in formalized concessions to stay in government; centrist support party candidates who face electoral cost in adhering to a formateur more to their right.

countries where the upper house powers index ranged from 4 to 32, 9 Latin American countries ranged to 22 to 32 (all of them were in the top 13 of that ranking). That means very little probability of finding relevant differences among countries that can affect our causal reasoning in the scale of the other factors inserted in the truth table[342]. The bicameral nature of some Latin American policies, though, has not been overlooked: all definitions where the existence of a second chamber might affect a condition´s operationalization, it has been taken into account as precisely as possible (that is, absolutely no variable has had the lower chamber imputed as the whole footprint of parliament in a bicameral country). As for the latter, it´s indisputable its huge influence on the possibilities for negotiation that are the core of minority governance (as we already pointed out in describing the frameworks in section 2.2.2.1). Federalist-minded analysis are even described as the recently introduced "fourth generation of coalition theories" (Albala & Reniu, 2018, p. 13), having to cope with huge heterogeneity in party system structures, electoral rules and intergovernmental relations, among other crucial cleavages. Possibly because of that, even in the most outstanding examples of research in the relationship between coalition governance and federalism (see for instance Albala & Reniu, 2018 an Field, 2016) we haven´t found attempts at generalization, but only in-depth countrywide studies. So, as much as it certainly has strong impact on possibly every national case, we haven´t been able to select from the extant theories some general features to include in our comparative model[343].

3.5 Reviewing the research strategy and refining the hypotheses

After having presented the theoretical background, a more complete vision of the overall research strategy is within our reach now. Our research focus can be summarized by the "funnel" metaphor shown in the Figure below.

[342] Contrasting with studies in other contexts where second chambers vary largely in their relative powers, such as advanced democracies (Lijphart, 1999), or present outlier cases of the Senate having extremely singular decision-making procedures, as in the German Bundesrat (Sturm, 2001).

[343] Although differences in the multilevel dimension stand as prime candidates for further explaining discrepancies that we may find at the country level.

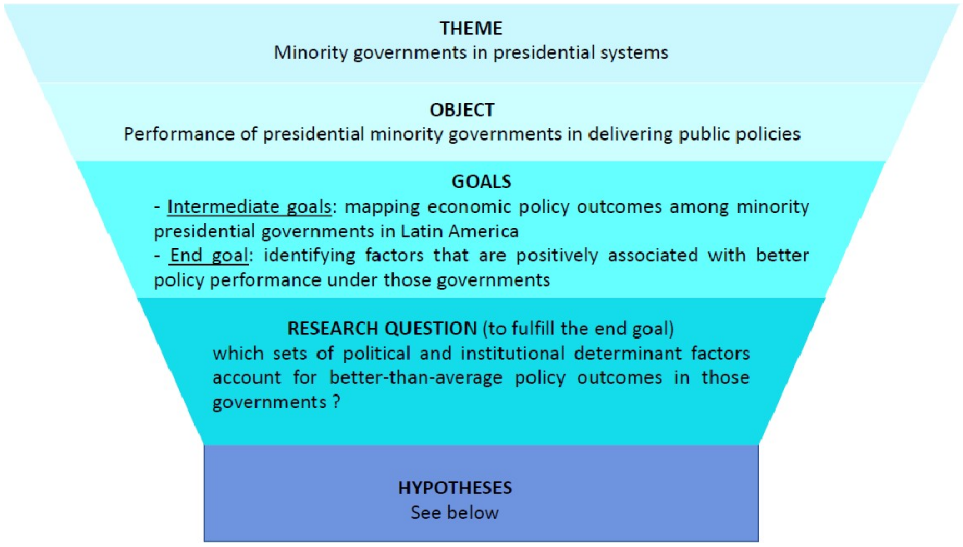

Figure 2 - Research funnel

Source: the author

We can now present a more structured view, in QCA terms, of the causal relationships described along this chapter, deriving from that the hypotheses. We gathered from theory that, first, decisiveness is widely regarded as correlated good governance results under any governments (so, also to the minority governments who make up our scope condition). This correlation is not explicitly pointed as a sufficiency claim, but our understanding of that association as presented in this chapter 3 is that the authors are trying to highlight the existence of decisive conditions[344] and the resulting corollary of "political good health" in that country. In other words, when an author points to the correlation between, say, presidential powers[345] as an independent variable and the maintenance of a stable coalition as the dependent one, he or she is putting those powers as an antecedent to a stable coalition and positing that, if they exist, the latter will follow the corresponding result. This is not explicitly structured in most studies, as they develop correlational analysis, but we couldn´t find arguments shaped in another propositional line[346] (specially arguments pointing to clearly associate the lack of decisiveness conditions with democratic or governance failures, so as to suggest that decisiveness might be formally regarded as a necessary condition for good governance[347]).

[344] Mainly conveyed through the "intermediate variable" of a majority coalition, as pointed in section 2.2.3.

[345] Taken as an example, as any of the decisiveness conditions discussed.

[346] Even studies who focus on specifically negative events, such as democratic breakdowns, associate the existence of some factors (such as coalitions) to the survival of democracies.

[347] Which means that no claim has been made that, decisiveness lacking, no other independent cause might occur and ensure good results.

When it comes to accountability, the reviewed scholarship (specially O´Donnell) points to a different logic: its absence engenders bad governance. So, it´s put as a necessity condition, without the claim that accountability by itself might ensure a good turn to the country´s condition.

If we take both together, the joint theoretical claim ends up being that: 1) decisiveness implies good governance; and 2) no accountability implies bad governance. That generates two propositions with those variables: first, that decisiveness and accountability, jointly, are sufficient conditions for good results[348]; second, that decisiveness and no accountability are sufficient conditions for bad results[349].

So, our first step in hypothesizing the model (at this point, only as an intermediate step for deploying the actual solution) will be:

H0-1: Decisiveness and accountability, together, are sufficient conditions for a minority government to reach good policy results.

DECISIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY ➔ GOVERNANCE

H0-2: Decisiveness and no accountability, together, are sufficient conditions for a minority government not to reach good policy results.

DECISIVENESS AND ~ACCOUNTABILITY ➔ ~GOVERNANCE

H0-2 was posited to reflect findings in the literature: "delegative democracies" did have decisiveness, but the lack of accountability derailed their governance. From a logical standpoint, it could be rewritten more simply as the statement of accountability being a necessary condition to good results, since whatever the value of decisiveness, the absence of accountability would lead to bad governance. That relaxation of assumptions, however, would not advance theory, in that, by disregarding decisiveness in the empirical verification, we must face the case where there´s simultaneously no decisiveness and no accountability. Here, governance might falter while we wouldn´t be able to distinguish between the causal conditions´ effects. So, although a more general specification might seem attractive, we must stick to this more modest claim to test, that

[348] When there´s accountability and no decisiveness, the first term of the equation will be negative, and the expected result will be indeterminate, not infirming the proposition.

[349] When there´s no decisiveness, no claims about good results flow from this last equation.

is: even under decisive governments, the lack of accountability would miscarry government results.

Note that "Decisiveness", here, is not an empirical measurable condition, but an abstract construct used to represent an end result of several different causal components, who substitute for one another to a great extent, in a still unknown way; so, decisiveness may be achieved by several different (and still unknown) configurations of those components, not necessarily requiring the presence of every one of them to yield a logically true value for decisiveness (and neither allowing us to assume that any one of them individually will be enough for achieving decisiveness). Since those configurations are still unknown, every one of those component (presidential powers, reconcilability of party goals, cabinet congruence and legislative support threshold) is a INUS condition, that is, "an insufficient but necessary part of a condition, which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the result"; they´re precisely in a situation where "multiple conditions can plausibly be conceived of as elements in combinations that are jointly sufficient for the outcome, but where it is not possible to derive more specific expectations from theory, prior to the empirical analysis" (Mello, 2011, p. 68)[350]. The "outcome" at this point is DECISIVENESS itself, not the result of its combination with accountability. The results of the truth table minimization will point exactly at the configurations the data suggest that are those who engender decisiveness to a minority government in such a degree that it can reap its benefits and produce good policies[351].

So, the previous temporary hypotheses must be rewritten to indicate that one of the variables is this configuration resulting from a series of INUS conditions, still to be generated. That way, a final format to the previous two hypotheses might be:

H1: Decisiveness and accountability, together, are sufficient conditions for a minority government to reach good policy results.

f {PRESPOWER; PARTYGOALS; CONGRUENCE; LEGTHRESHOLD} AND ACCOUNTABILITY ➔ GOVERNANCE

where f {...} means several possible combinations

[350] *"INUS conditions are the nuts and bolts of QCA solutions, as we typically find combinations of two or more conditions that are individually insufficient but jointly sufficient for the outcome."* (Mello, 2011, p. 68)

[351] For a similar procedure applied to the analysis of Executive-Legislative relations in Latin America, see Santos et al (2014).

H2: Decisiveness and no accountability, together, are sufficient conditions for a minority government not to reach good policy results.

f {PRESPOWER; PARTYGOALS; CONGRUENCE; LEGTHRESHOLD} AND ~ACCOUNTABILITY ➔ ~GOVERNANCE

where f {...} means several possible combinations

And a third hypothesis is to be added

H3: Presidential powers (PRESPOWER), reconcilability of party goals (PARTYGOALS), cabinet/congress congruence (CONGRUENCE) and the holding of at least 40% of the chamber seats (LEGTHRESHOLD), all are INUS conditions to the outcome of decisiveness.

The testing of such hypothesis will thus be performed according to the conceptual and operational framework described in sections 3.1 to 3.3, and summarized in the table below.

Table 10 - Outcome and conditions overview

		DESCRIPTION	CALIBRATION	MAIN DATA SOURCES
Outcome	GOVERNANCE	Economic policy results, as compared with the Latin American average for the same year (% GNP growth, inflation rate, % change in employment rate% of change in income inequality.	1 = all four indicators score 1; 0,75 = three 0,5 = two; 0,25 if just one, and 0 - no indicators. Each indicator scores 1 if better than Latin American average (higher, for % GNP growth and % change in employment rate, smaller, for inflation rate and % change in income inequality), or 0 otherwise (section 3.1)	IMF, 2022 WIL, 2022
Decisiveness conditions (H1, H2, H3)	PRESPOWER	Institutional instruments and opportunity structures available to presidents to negotiate legislative support for their policies	8 fuzzy values spread from 0 to 1, according to the mix of legislative, budgetary and informal exchange powers available to the president, clustered as "unilateral" powers, that allow presidents to unilaterally implement decision and change the status quo (with or without the need of ex post ratification by parliament), and "bargaining" powers, leverages to the relative bargaining position of presidents within the legislative process (section 3.2.1.4)	Legislative powers: Montero (2009) , Budgetary powers: OECD, 2005; Alesina et al (1999,PNUD (2004) and Filc & Scartascini (2007); Fish and Kroenig (2009), Informal exchange powers: (Coppedge et. al, 2018
	PARTYGOALS	potential party demands for each kind of potential payoffs (other than holding cabinet office), which creates the opportunity structure for presidents to initiate a game with parties in exchange for support to their policy agenda	composite of two indexes: “electoral policy bargaining potential” (a measure of electoral volatility combined with a survey perception of oppositional influence on policy) and “particularistic orientation” (an expert survey perception of political system demands for particularistic policies) (section 3.2.2)	PNUD (2004) Coppedge et. al, 2018,
	CONGRUENCE	The closeness between the presidential cabinet coalition´s and the legislature´s median policy preference	1 = congruence equal or less than 2 (measured as absolute values in a left-right 1 to 10 scale); 0 = otherwise (crisp condition) (section 3.2.3)	Pereira et al (2018); (Cruz, Keefer & Scartascini, 2021), Baker and Greene (2011), Saiegh (2015); Power and Zucco (2012)

	LEGTHRESHOLD	Presidential coalition holding of a share of legislative seats beyond a certain threshold close to the majority (although still minoritarian)	1 = the government coalition holds more than 40% of the seats in each of the relevant chambers; 0 = otherwise (crisp condition) (section 3.2.4)	Amorim Neto (2006); Meireles (2016); Cheibub et al (2004, appendix); Borges et al (2020); Freudenreich (2016); Albala (2017; 2017a), Payne et al (2007), Figueiredo, et al (2012); Chaisty and Power 2018); Montero (2009, pp. 50-52).
Accountability condition (H1, H2)	(ACCOUNTABILITY)	Measured volume of several of oversight initiatives actually performed by parliaments, as an objective assessment for the intensity devoted to oversight by parliamentarians	5 fuzzy values (1, 0,75, 0,66, 0,25 and 0), according to the mix of oversight activities clustered in 2 "high impact" types (parliamentary hearings and commissions of inquiry) and 3 "low impact" ones (as detailed in section 3.3); "high" and "low" oversight activities measured by an year´s standard deviation above the average of the same chamber´s whole time span considered; bicameral countries assigned the sum (logical OR) of both chambers (section 3.3)	Primary data collection among parliaments

Source: the author

After the extracting the findings of QCA drills on the data, the next step will be to organize the precise specification of the suggested logical equations (most notably the exact shape of the several configurations of decisiveness). Based on them, the findings can then be contrasted with theoretical expectations. That will be our main contribution: a critical assessment of the extant theory on governance in minority governments, generating more comprehensive causal propositions that put together several lines of scholarship that today are working in parallel. The logical results will also open the opportunity (and the need) to delve deeper into the most deviant cases vis-à-vis the theoretical expectations. The development of a methodologically proper follow-up case study is beyond the material possibilities of this dissertation, but the attempt of a closer look into the literature and other empirical research available that deals with those specific cases is within our purview, in search of at least some new grounded hypotheses on the occasional discrepancies from the general overview.

This research design is proposed with the foreknowledge that the end results will probably be modest in term of establishing precise causal relationships. It´s clearly

posited as a preliminary step in moving towards a more comprehensive, integrated, view of minority governance in presidentialism; as such, the most important result will probably be the disclosure of some promising causal configurations for further development through focused studies that might refine their theoretical specification (by disaggregating some of the highly clustered conditions we´ve built), reduce the property spaces by choosing cases with similar values in some conditions (to potentialize the variation in the remaining ones) or explore more of their causal mechanisms by choosing some of the cases already signaled here. That´s our vision for contributing to the scholarship: possibly not a very flashy or marketable one, but nevertheless able to give several "infrastructural" inputs for researchers on the field.

4 Data and methods

4.1 Case selection

4.1.1 Selection criteria

The cases (or, more precisely, units of analysis[352]) are minority cabinets in Latin American presidential systems (with a few country exceptions explained below) under democratic conditions in the last "third wave" of democratization (Huntington, 1994; Mainwaring & Hagopian, 2005)[353]. That´s one among other possible case selection strategies: the imposition of scope conditions to bring the range of cases in line with theory, which will be assumed valid to these boundaries - not assuming its validity elsewhere (Mello, 2021, pp. 20-21; Gertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 193). As in any case selection, it must be justified.

Minority government settings have already been discussed as a scope condition in the last part of section 2.2.6. Following that line of reasoning, and the conceptual discussion of section 2.1.1, a minority government will be considered that where the parties who have ministers represented in the presidential cabinet hold less than 50% of the seats in any chamber of parliament.

Presidential systems are automatically the universe of analysis, since there´s no historical record of parliamentary regimes in the region during the time span concerned. Latin America, by its turn, is not the only possible domain for the study of presidential governance: Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power (2018) emphasize that, although most of the literature on presidentialism is heavily reliant on the subcontinent, there´s an emerging reservoir of contemporary experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa and post-Soviet republics[354].

Choosing Latin America, more than just trying to leverage on more experiences available, means trying to align cases that – without ignoring internal diversity - hold

[352] Following King et al(1994) in considering "observation" as the conveyor of one measure on one unit for one dependent variable, with information on the values of the explanatory variables; "unit of analysis" as the grouping of observations according to their nature, and "case" as a domain of study that contains multiple potential observations and defines the boundaries within which a large number of observations are made.

[353] As the left boundary to the overall time series, the selection may take the year registered as the beginning of an uninterrupted regular election cycle in each country (variable "*Comienzo del proceso electoral sin interrupciones*", PNUD, 2004, p. 33).

[354] Besides other previous cases in Asia, such as South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines.

strong similarities in significant institutional traits in presidentialism (Foweraker, 1998), as well as in most cultural and socioeconomic variables that might affect governance results (Whitehead, 2006; Bethel, 1998; for an overview of the strong association between shared historical trajectories and presidentialism´s features in all Latin America, see Cheibub, 2007, pp. 148-160[355]). In a way, this choice is an attempt to minimize third variables´ variance, by selecting countries with a more similar background (Peters, 1998[356]); bringing all units of analysis within their Latin American context (that is, as similar as possible among them) is expected to raise unit homogeneity in causally relevant ways (Faletti & Lynch, 2010)[357]. Of course, the ever-standing problem of how to deploy a context-specific understanding of the causal relationships assessed will have to be considered in interpreting the results, although some degree of context dependence is somehow inevitable in studying human affairs (Flyjberg, 2006)

Within the Latin American framework, two countries must be individually assessed for their suitability for our purposes. The first one is Venezuela, to be checked against the common sense perception that oil revenues impact the country´s economy to such extent that government decisions may be irrelevant, in practice, to affect economic outcomes, or at least much less relevant than in any other Latin American country (which would render this case as irrelevant in the logical sense). Whatever the common sense may be, though, we can see no empirical grounds for that assumption. In his thorough review of the economic and fiscal effects of natural resource exports in the region, Rossignolo (2015, p. 16) shows that Venezuelan dependence on oil (66,7 % of exports) is the higher among Latin American commodity exporters, but not too much far away from Ecuador (54,8%), or Colombia (48,9%), or from the Bolivian dependency on

[355] "*Roy C. Macridis and Richard Cox also argue that if areas are characterized by political as well as non-political uniformities, "the area concept will be of great value, since certain political processes will be compared between units within the area against a common background of similar trait configuration"; they cite Latin America as an example of an area offering the prospect of "fruitful intra-area comparison*." (Lijphart, 1971, p. 688)

[356] I.e., taking advantage of the fact that Latin American cases are "similar in a large number of important characteristics (variables) which one wants to treat as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables are concerned which one wants to relate to each other." (Lijphart, 1971, p. 687). In fact, all selected conditions (and the outcome) are, in principle, country-specific.

[357] Considering that virtually all of the explanatory conditions, besides the outcome, are nationwide variables, and as such would be completely pointless in any attempt at the preferred strategy to get homogeneity, that is, to compare subnational units (Lijphart, 1971; Barnes & Jang, 2016; Snyder, 2001). Our strategy, however, still profits from another preferred "alternative way of maximizing comparability [which is] to analyze a single country diachronically" (Lijphart, 1971, p. 688), since several instances of a country´s government along time will be compared to each other.

natural gas (52,4 %) or Chilean on copper (47,4 %)[358], all of them subject to extreme price volatility[359]. The macroeconomic impact of commodity prices is obviously huge, but can´t be singled out in Venezuela as having an outlier effect on the economy regarding the other commodity export countries[360] - in fact, other countries such as Chile, Colombia and Peru, suffer very strong effects from commodity price shocks (Roch, 2017); even the institutional profile of a state-owned company running most of the commodity output is similar to most countries in the region[361]. As a share of GDP, Venezuela´s commodity exports were 25 % in 2014, less than Bolivia´s (around 27 %) and slightly more than in Chile, Ecuador or Paraguay (around 22%, 21% and 18%) – (Balakrishnan et al, 2021, p. 52). It´s true that fiscal revenues from natural resources oscillated between 9,4% and 21,1 % of GDP from 2001 to 2012 (with a windfall of up to 25,9 % in the 2006-2007 oil boom), against a Latin American average ranging from 2,2 % to 6,4% in the same period, and Venezuelan budgetary reliance on oil revenues as a share of total public revenues is the greatest in the continent (Hanni. Jiménez & Ruelas, 2018, p. 23) However, Bolivia also got such revenues not lower than 9,1 % of GDP from 2006 onwards, while Chile reached peaks of 8,3 % and 8,1 % in 2006 and 2007 (Rossignolo, 2015, pp. 54-55)[362]. So, commodity impacts in Venezuela are certainly higher than elsewhere, but this does not mean that they circumvent or render meaningless the overall economic management by the government[363]. Following Campello and Zucco (2020), the relations between economic volatility and other effects from commodity exports, on one side, and political effects on the other, are a clear

[358] All data for 2013, except Venezuela (figures for 2011).

[359] See Rossignolo, 2015, Figure 6 and Table 2, p. 19-20

[360] Remarkably, Venezuela is (together with Argentina) singled out as an example of deliberate macroeconomic intervention by the government to sustain an alleged currency overvaluation in the period 2001-2013 (Rossignolo, 2015, pp. 25-26). Moreover, internal governance affects the performance of the oil extraction sector itself, thus having a direct effect on the financial and economic impact of oil production and exports (Smith, 2020)

[361] *A la inversa de lo que acontece con el sector minero, en el sector de hidrocarburos las empresas estatales (como PEMEX, PDVSA, PetroEcuador, YPF o YPFB) y mixtas con participación estatal mayoritaria (como Petrobras y Ecopetrol) siguen desempeñando un papel preponderante, en consonancia con la tendencia internacional observada en la mayoría de los países exportadores de hidrocarburos en los que la participación directa del Estado a través de empresas petroleras públicas y mixtas, así como el mayor desarrollo relativo de los regímenes fiscales petroleros en el diseño de instrumentos fiscales y contractuales que aseguran la progresividad de la participación estatal de la rentas del sector, es creciente.* (Rossignolo, 2015, p. 46)

[362] In another compilation, Venezuelan fiscal revenues from commodities, as a share of GDP, were closer to Mexico´s and smaller than those enjoyed by Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ecuador from 2000 to 2016 (Hanni, Jiménez & Ruelas, 2018, p. 22).

[363] That may be the reason for policy appraisals and prescriptions as to the fiscal policy of Latin American countries regarding natural resources are usually designed with the whole cluster of such countries in mind (Balakrishnan, Lizarazo, Santoro, Toscani, & Vargas, 2021; Hanni et al, 2018, Vieyra & Masson, 2014; Gelos & Werner, 2014)

object of study regardless of the individual country. So, we keep Venezuela in our sample.

On the other hand, there´s a specific political feature that excludes Ecuador from the assessed universe: the literature points to the so-called "ghost coalitions" made of cabinet posts formally held by non-partisan officials but, in practice, informally controlled by parties[364] (Mejía-Acosta, 2006), a pervasive situation at least until the constitutional changes in 2008 (Chaisty et al, 2018, cap. 6). That would heavily distort, during a long period of interest, both the identification of governments as majority and minority (the scope condition itself) and the measurement of some causal conditions such as cabinet/congress congruence and the forty-percent threshold, all of them depending on the assumption, discussed in Section 2.2.3, that sharing cabinet membership is the best proxy of a stable political alliance between parties (Amorim Neto, 1994, 1998; Chasquetti, 2008)[365].

But we´re not selecting Latin American countries at large, but specifically Latin American democracies during the period in question: that´s not to say legislatures under authoritarian regimes don´t matter (Williamson & Magaloni, 2020; Schuler & Malesky, 2014; Gandhi, 2008), but the whole logic of both decisiveness and accountability factors is borne out of democratic theory, and possibly would be logically irrelevant within non-democratic polities. To evaluate democratic conditions, we propose as a selection

[364] *Although presidential coalition building has helped solve problems of multiparty presidentialism in several Latin American countries, including Chile, Bolivia, and Brazil, Ecuadorian coalitions differ in one important respect: they tend to be hidden from public view. Publicly visible cross-party coalitions are unpopular among Ecuadorian voters, who have become suspicious of the nature of political deals. Thus party leaders view public coalitions as nonviable politically, and negotiations between opposition parties and the government must be clandestine. Here, the absence of roll-call voting mecha nisms in the legislature is crucial, for it allows vote-trading while protecting the electoral reputation of coalition partners who vote for unpopular economic reforms. At the same time, threats of ''going public'' with such arrangements provide an especially powerful enforcement mechanism to deter noncompliance.* (Mejía-Acosta, 2006, p. 70).

[365] In Ecuador, on the contrary, formal coalition membership was used to hide such agreements from the public:

When net popularity ratings are negative, the political liabilities of voting with the president exceed the expected benefits of government cooperation. At that point, party coalitions often adopt the form of clandestine alliances or ghost coalitions, where ad hoc agreements or "policy coincidences" take place between the government and parties from diverse affiliations, but any programmatic or long-term commitment is systematically denied (Mejía Acosta, 2004). The absence of voting records in the Ecuadorian Congress facilitated this informal mechanism of coalition formation. The resilience of ghost coalitions as a conventional legislative practice is the more remarkable since presidents and legislators from distinct political parties and tendencies acknowledged their existence from the early 1980s (Burbano de Lara and Rowland García, 1998; Grindle and Thoumi, 1993; Mills, 1984). Often, legislative agreements were disguised under a cloud of heavy criticism against the president with the purpose of projecting an image of political chastity or independence vis-à-vis other parties and potential voters. (Mejía-Acosta, Araujo, Pérez-Liñán & Saiegh, 2006, p. 36)

criteria the widely regarded "POLITY score" produced by the Polity V Project[366] (Marshall, 2020), choosing those countries whose value is no less than 6 for each given year (considered "democracies" according to the dataset categorization)[367].

As becomes clear, those selection criteria don´t imply, in any case, selecting on any given value of both conditions and outcome, which by design circumvents any lack-of-variance arguments (King et al, 1994). As for the outcome, the explicit examination of its presence (good governance) and absence, a standard QCA procedure, allows for its full range of possibilities.

It must be established, also, the time in office for a given government to be considered into the analysis. Krauss and Thurk (2022) remind us that low levels of cabinet duration worsen the representation of citizens´ preferences, since they must be honoured by being translated into authoritative and sustained action, while the enactment of legislative proposals is critically dependent on the time a government is in office; besides, the literature shows a strong association between political instability (as reflected in cabinet changes) and less economic growth. Martínez-Gallardo (2012) also links coalition instability with less successful policy achievements and a shorter policy time horizon, due both to ever-changing concessions in policy and in costly pork funds, and to the discontinuity arriving from excessive rotation of key policy managers in the cabinet. Milio (2008) also finds empirically that cabinet instability brings strongly negative administrative impacts, generated by multiple factors: politician´s incentives to extract short-term benefits from their tenure; conflicts between those politicians seeking only immediate-effect money allocation with bureaucrats focusing on longer-term planning; and the loss of administrative experience in higher cabinet turnover[368].

So, as tempting it may be to try profiting from as much country-year instances as possible, some of those instances can be misleading: if a minority government is in

[366] The same choice of repository as made by Chaisty and Power (2018).

[367] For an overview and short discussion of democracy indexes, see UNDP (2012).

[368] Huber & Martínez-Gallardo (2004) suggest some qualifications to that opinion: what might be relevant to policy performance is not cabinet stability per se, but the accumulation of experience by individual cabinet ministers (both in the specific portfolios that they hold and the political experience at large, in any significant portfolio). So, if cabinet changes involve only moving qualified ministers in and out, the negative effects wouldn´t be so strong (empirically, they see no conclusive results of government duration on cabinet turnover in 19 parliamentary democracies). Besides, cabinet reshufflings can be desirable mechanisms for improving ministerial performance (that is, the outcome of any given cabinet allocation is not necessarily optimal from the policy point of view). However, this counter-argument only addresses the policy expertise domain, and doesn´t touch neither in the short-term incentives for ministers nor in the short-termism coming from changes in policy priorities emerging from different partisan compositions of successive cabinets. So, we maintain the point of cabinet duration as theoretically relevant.

office for a whole year, there´s no doubt that it must be held responsible for the governance results thereof; on the other hand, if a government takes office, say, a few weeks before the end of that term, there would be few possibilities for such government to affect the yearly policy outcome.

But how much time is too little time in office ? We could not find in the literature any such threshold to separate expected relevant influence and its absence due to insufficient time in office – and whatever arbitrary assumption would be misleading (specially in so relevant a parameter for case selection). So, we must rely on the actual observed duration of minority cabinets, summarized in the Table below, in order to extract from it some grounded expectations regarding the issue.

Table 11 – Duration of minority governments – estimates in the literature

Source	Scope	Average time in office for minority governments (in months)
Deheza (1997)	9 Latin American presidential systems 1958-1994	1958-1994: single-party minority government, 26,95 months (n = 25); minority coalition, 14,08 months (n = 23)[369] 1976-1994: single-party minority government, 30,28 months (n = 11); minority coalition, 11,67 months (n = 12)
Strøm (1990)	15 Western European parliamentary systems, 1945-1987	Formal minorities: 13,2 months (std. dev. 9,3; n = 14) Substantive minority: 14,1 months (std. dev. 12,9; n = 107)[370]
Field, 2016[371]	Western European parliamentary systems in the post-war period[372]	Single-party minority: 17,76 months (533 days); minority coalitions: 11,7 months (351 days)

Source: The author, compiled from the references in the left column

[369] The somehow contradictory results are attributed to the added difficulty of managing a coalition within already harsh minority conditions (under single-party minority, any reshuffles or policy changes won´t risk bringing down the coalition, which would be then counted as the end of a cabinet and the beginning of another). Those numbers, however, are averages with a very large variance across countries (Deheza, 1997, pp. 139-140). The same reasoning can be found in Martínez-Gallardo, 2012, pp. 69-70.

[370] Formal minority governments are those minority governments who are backed by a formal written agreement with external (non-cabinet) support parties that ensure them consistent legislative support; other cabinets are called substantive minorities. At first sight, those seem very unstable conditions for both kinds of minority government, but the average tenure of all governments in Strøm´s sample (n = 342) is 17,5 months (st. dev. 15,00), not very far from minority ones.

[371] Quoting results in Saalfeld, 2008.

[372] The French governments included in the sample are from the Fifth Republic, where the classification of "pure parliamentary regime" is disputable.

So, even in the harshest conditions, the available data point to precedents of an average tenure close to one year (although with a very high variance), as compared to some overall assessments of around two and a half years for all cabinets in Latin American presidentialism[373]. Applying that to our problem, if that time frame coincides with each country-year, there would be no problem; however, if those average yearly tenures are divided among years, the fragmented periods might be overlooked (if discarded at all), or overstated (if considered as a full minority government period that year). To try to tackle that, we must use a two-step selection: first, picking all cabinets whose tenure extends along one year or more; then, for those cabinets, selecting those years where they´ve been at least 6 months in office.

Only one exception must be made: fixed terms of office in presidential systems have given way to a recurrent movement of defections close to the next presidential elections[374], as non-presidential coalition partners try to better position themselves for the national race (Chasquetti, 2006; Altman, 2000). That means an electoral *volte-face* that not necessarily correlates with an actual disembarkation from government, which means that those parties may inertially support the sitting president during his residual term even if they´re not in the cabinet any more[375]. So, under those circumstances, an apparently minority government will be in fact a majority coalition in disguise. So, those cases of formally minority cabinets inaugurated less than six months before a national general election will be excluded from consideration[376].

4.1.2 Data sources

[373] For contemporary Latin America (from the beginning of each country´s third wave democratic period to 2002, 2003 or 2006, according to each country), Martínez-Gallardo (2012, p. 65) estimates an average duration for all types of cabinet of 29,73 months (std. dev. 5,2, n = 121)

[374] More precisely, Chasquetti and Altman independently point to a gradual erosion of coalitions along time, which collapses into larger defections in the few months before the elections.

[375] Besides, some electoral regulations require that candidates resign from public office sometime before the polls ("desincompatibilização", in Brazilian vocabulary). So, political heavyweights may be forced to exit their cabinet posts to run for office, leaving caretakers in place who, although not formally party representatives, act like that in practice.

[376] With this criterion, we also expect to address the case of purely caretaker governments installed after the impeachment or unplanned resignation of presidents (Freudenreich, 2016, p. 8), when they represent a truly stopgap measure. The case of successor governments (such as vice-presidents standing in for the rest of an impeached or deceased president´s mandate, as in the Brazilian cases of Itamar Franco and Michel Temer, or the Bolivian cases of Jorge Quiroga and Carlos Mesa) will not be captured by this treatment, as they shouldn´t be, for those governments have – at least potentially – the same policy horizons as any cabinet under the original head of State.

Since our universe regards minority cabinets in Latin American democracies, we must seek data sources. Contrary to the other variables, we could find no primary source repository for automated data collecting of cabinet composition and duration across Latin America, which requires us to search for secondary data in the literature. Among those, the most remarkable are Amorim Neto (2006, p. 425), which also refers a wide list of primary and secondary sources used for his compilation; Meireles (2016), who provides also tabulated data in a data repository; Cheibub et al (2004, appendix), and Borges et al (2020). Other sources for cross-country time series on cabinets and presidencies are Freudenreich (2016); Albala (2017; 2017a), Payne et al (2007), Figueiredo, et al (2012); Chaisty and Power 2018) and Montero (2009, pp. 50-52).

Those cross-country sources may be fine-tuned or complemented by other works containing isolated tables for one or more countries concerning cabinets (Deheza, 1997; Amorim Neto, 2019; Dowding & Dumont, 2014; Camerlo & Martínez-Gallardo, 2017; Altman & Castiglioni, 2008; Chasquetti, 2006; Altman, 2000; Figueiredo, 2007; IPEA, 2022); or cross-referencing to other sources of data or cabinet formation (Kellam, 2015; Saiegh, 2014, pp. 501-504).

Anyway, data can be collected not only directly at the published sources but also directly in touch with the authors of those several referred pieces of research (which has already been kindly provided by the authors for the data contained in Borges et al (2020) and in Albala (2017; 2017a).

Using those sources will require some theoretical benchmark regarding what precisely is a cabinet – a question which extolls many different answers (Salom, 2003; Lijphart, 1999; Schleiter, 2020). The main reference for us will be the Amorim Neto (2006, p. 425) criteria for Latin American presidential cabinets (also employed in Martínez-Gallardo, 2012; Figueiredo et al, 2012; Meireles, 2016): a new cabinet comes only with the inauguration of a new president or a change in the party composition of the cabinet[377]. Consequently, there´s no requirement for the presidential inauguration to be the result of a new election (otherwise a great number of cases of resignation and impeachment, very common in the 90´s, would be unheeded); moreover, the cabinet composition (for the sake of identifying periods) will be unaffected by changes in the

[377] Including the adjustments (in the 2006 study) of counting only one branch of the armed forces, if they are formally represented in the cabinet and are headed by a military officer (as in Brazil and Peru during some time frames), naturally computing them as nonpartisan ministers; and not including the additional criteria of a change of more than 50% in the identity of individual ministers, previously mentioned in Amorim Neto (1998, p. 17) but dropped in the latter 2006 study.

proportion of seats among parties, provided those parties remain the same. Party membership by ministers is assumed as meaning their representation for the party, regardless of any occasional circumstances of nominations decided by presidents on an individual basis outside party channels (Schleiter, 2020, p. 306); although some repositories might correct those data points on an *ad hoc* basis, we won´t make any attempt at that [378].

4.1.3 Potential number of cases

As for the number of cases to be assessed[379], we can´t provide a precise result as of now, without actually getting hands on each data repository (since the actual number of minority cabinets is not known in advance, as well as any occasional restriction regarding data availability). We can, however, make an estimate based on some preliminary data and on patterns shown in the literature. As already sketched in section 2.1.3.1, several studies tried to quantify the occurrence of minority governments[380]. The table below summarizes those attempts:

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[378] *The composition of the cabinet is defined by the set of legislative parties that formally hold cabinet posts. The term formally is included because presidents occasionally invite members of other parties to join the cabinet on the basis of "their technical ability, political skill, or public image" (Zelaznik 2001, 132) but without any commitment by their parties (Cheibub 2007, 74–75). The problem with this approach is that agreements between parties in presidential systems are generally not written down or made public. Hence, this study follows Cheibub (2007, 75) and assumes that ministers are representatives of their parties, and departs from this norm only when there is clear evidence against a party's membership in government.* (Freudenreich, 2016, p. 8)
Before classifying the coalitions by size, we need to define what a coalition government is. Following the specialized literature (AMORIM NETO, 2006; FIGUEIREDO et al., 2012; MARTINEZ-GALLARDO, 2012), the criteria utilized in the present study to identify them is the party affiliation of the ministers of the principal ministerial portfolios in each country, taking into account that ministers are not always recruited due to their connections or their congressional influence, and that in some cases they are not recognized by their parties as legitimate representatives of the same[4]. This aim in mind, I consulted several specialists in some of the countries included in the sample and another three databases on coalition governments to check each observation[5]. Whenever the original data diverged from the information obtained from other databases, the final classification of the specialists was adopted. Next, the number of parties and seats of each coalition were compiled based on the corrected party composition of each cabinet [6]. (Meireles, 2016, pp. 12-13)

[379] Although "cases" in QCA parlance clearly mean each empirical instance to be reflected (and tallied) in one row of the truth table, we might refer more precisely to this dimension as the number of units of analysis, or data points.

[380] Cheibub (2002) has been discarded as a source to this comparison, although presenting abundant data on the subject. The boundaries of sample are not clear from the paper´s text: first, he claims to be based on data for all pure presidential regimes that have existed between 1946 and 1996, totaling 790 years (across 38 countries in every stage of development) – pp. 287 and 309. Then, he presents results for "21 industrialized parliamentary regimes between 1946 and 1996" yielding 31 % of elections producing minority governments (p. 293). Lastly, he finds 40,22 % of minority governments in 726 "Presidential regimes" (Table 2, p. 295). Since the scope is not clear,

Table 12 - Prevalence of minority governments – estimates in the literature

Source	Scope	Unit of counting	Share of minority governments
Cheibub et al (2004)	almost all democracies that existed between 1946 and 1999	"situation" (a combination between a given government and a given distribution of legislative seats (n = 380)	41,8% (under parliamentarism, n= 136); 71,1 % (under presidentialism, n = 97)
Deheza (1997)	9 Latin American presidential systems 1958-1994	Presidential cabinets (in absolute numbers) (n = 123)	40,65 %
Figueiredo et al (2012).	14 Latin American presidential systems 1979-2011	Presidential cabinets (in absolute numbers and in country-years) (n = 130; in country-years, n = 287)	47,7 % (In absolute numbers); 45,99 % (In country-years, n = 132)
Negretto (2006a)	18 Latin American presidential systens, 1978-2003	Presidential cabinets (in absolute numbers) (n = 75)	48 %
Strøm (1990)	15 Western European parliamentary systems, 1945-1987	Parliamentary cabinets (n = 356)	35,1 %
König & Lin, 2020, Online Appendix	16 Western European parliamentary systems, 1945-2017	Parliamentary cabinets (n = 522)	32,19 %
Field, 2016	29 Western European parliamentary systems[381], 1945-2010	Parliamentary cabinets (n = 640)	33 %
Christiansen & Damgaard (2008)	18 Western European parliamentary systems[382], 1945-2003	Parliamentary cabinets (n = 459)	28 %

Source: The author, compiled from the references in the left column

It´s clear that the several empirical surveys range from 40 to 48 % of minority governments in presidentialism, and 28 to 35 % in parliamentarism[383], which suggests

and it also includes (at least probably) the extreme case of US bipartisan divided government multiplied by the mid-term elections (he himself points out at p. 287 that United States and Phillipines are an atypical situation).

[381] The French governments included in the sample are from the Fifth Republic, where the classification of "pure parliamentary regime" is disputable.

[382] The French governments included in the sample are from the Fifth Republic, where the classification of "pure parliamentary regime" is disputable.

[383] For our purposes here, we must discard Cheibub, Przeworski and Saiegh´s numbers, because they include the United States, where the number of potential divided governments is overrated since they must be counted also after each midterm election, multiplying by two the probabilities of finding minority government (an effect compounded by the uninterrupted presence of the country from the beginning to the end of the series). Besides, as thoroughly discussed, the overall logic of divided government in the American bipartisan system is different from the multiparty settings we´re studying.

taking a middle value (44%, very close to 45,99% as the only measurement in terms of country-years by Figueiredo, Canello and Vieira) to our presidential cases.

On the other hand, the absolute number of possible cases (country-year) will depend on how many country-years will be found to assess each one´s government performance. As for the countries, those mentioned in Negretto (2006a), as well as the more recent por Borges et al (2018), include 17 countries. If we set the time frame ending in 2012 (the publication year to the most updated general survey of presidential systems among those presented at the previous table)[384], and begin counting each country´s democratic period at the point Negretto (2006a, p. 72) does, we end up with 477 country-years, as demonstrated in the Table below.

Table 13 - Potential number of cases - country-by-country time span until 2012

Country	First year considered	Country-years
Argentina	1983	30
Bolivia	1980	33
Brazil	1985	28
Chile	1989	24
Colombia	1978	35
*Costa Rica	1978	35
Dominican Republic	1986	27
El Salvador	1985	28
Guatemala	1986	27
Honduras	1982	31
Mexico	1997	16
Nicaragua	1990	23
Panama	1994	19
Paraguay	1989	24
Peru	1980	33
Uruguay	1984	29
Venezuela	1978	35
	Total	**477**

Source: The author, compiled from Negretto (2006a, p. 72)

So, if the share of minority governments is similar along the periods data can be collected, we may get as much as 477 * 44 % = 209,88 cases. That seems appropriate, since in absolute terms an amount of 150 is considered a large-N QCA (Albala & Leal, 2022, p.100); Melo (2011), in his survey of 120 contemporary QCA-based studies, finds

[384] Taking into account that even more recent surveys (such as Borges et al, 2018) do not present data for later exercises.

that the median number of cases reaches the range of 20 to 30. Moreover, as important as the absolute number of cases is the ratio between cases and conditions, an essential factor to raise the possibility of the empirical distribution of cases across truth table rows not to generate too many empty rows (logical remainders). Indeed, as seen in section 3.2, efforts have been made to reduce the absolute number of conditions to minimize such risks. Mello (2011) finds that the ratio between cases and conditions in the literature oscillates from 4.1 to 5.3. Since we´ll work on no more than 5 conditions (see chapter 3), this estimate projects that our study will keep well below the recommended limit.

4.2 Risk assessment

As thorough as might have been our effort, this qualification project is still the scaffolding for the actual research, specially given the emphasis that our methodology of choice (QCA) puts on the need for a permanent dialogue between theoretical models and the data. The results of the analysis of the truth table will probably pose the need for further refinements of the proposed logical equations that allow re-runs of the models to reach more adequate parameters of fit and more coherence between theory and results.

Even before such dive in the data, we must try to foresee the upcoming risks and the ways to mitigate them. The first one is of an empirical nature: would the research design be including too many variables or too many cases to handle ? From the quantitative point of view, data collection (but for one variable) is concentrated on existing databases and repositories. Even that primary data collection involve only website exploration and direct email contact with no more than 18 parliaments (or at most 36 contacts, if all of them were bicameral). The amount of data eventually to be gathered is amenable to automated treatment in R, since they are no more than a few hundreds of cases (section 4.2.3), each one having a not more than 20 or 30 attributes. From this point of view, we see no foreseeable bottleneck to threaten the feasibility of the proposed research.

Risks can also emerge from theoretical problems: are the chosen variables (causal conditions) too many or too few ? Here, we seem to be on the conservative side: five causal conditions, as shown in section 4.2.3, seems compatible with the precautionary recommendations of QCA practice for our potential number of cases,

large enough to generate meaningful results. The downside risk is that too many other conditions – and potentially counfounding factors - were left aside. To some degree, that´s an unavoidable occupational hazard: Radaelly and Wagemann (2018) remind us that only the perfect theory would solve the problem of omitted variables, and even if the explanation seems perfectly fitting we can never know if variables or conditions that were not included would have provided yet another explanation for the same phenomenon. Our attempt at mitigating this risk is to mention briefly other potential causal factors pointed in the literature as important in coalition theory, and the reasons for not taking them in, as extended in section 3.4.

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