Minority Presidents, Deadlock Situations, and the Survival of Presidential Democracies

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Abstract

What are the conditions that generate minority presidents and deadlock in presidential regimes? What is the impact of minority presidents and deadlock on the survival of these regimes? Based on data for all presidential and mixed democracies that existed between 1946 and 1996, I show (1) that characteristics of the electoral and party systems do affect the level of support for the president in congress and hence the probability of minority presidents; (2) that these characteristics, and the minority presidents they generate, do not make deadlock more likely; (3) that minority presidents do not necessarily induce deadlock; and (4) that minority presidents and deadlock do not affect the survival of presidential systems. Together these findings suggest that we must abandon the view that explains the instability of presidential democracies in terms of the type of executive-legislative relations these regimes are likely to induce. I then offer two reasons, institutional in nature, that may account for the instability of presidential regimes.

Introduction

Between 1946 and 1996 there have been 133 transitions to and from democracy in the world. Fifty-nine of these, or 45%, took place in the 23 countries of Latin America, while the remaining 74 were spread among the other 166 countries located in other areas of the world.[1]

This high level of political instability used to be explained in terms of structural variables -- the degree of dependency, the level of inequality, poverty, and so on -- which supposedly created conditions that were adverse to the survival of democratic regimes. More recent explanations have moved away from this focus on economic and social conditions, concentrating instead on institutional arrangements. Stimulated by the formulations first advanced by Juan Linz (1994),[2] the breakdown of democratic regimes and the alleged "crisis of governability" of new democracies, and not only in Latin America, have been attributed to presidentialism, which, in combination with permissive electoral systems and weakly institutionalized political parties is supposed to produce presidents whose parties do not control a majority of seats in congress, deadlocks, institutional paralysis and, ultimately, the breakdown of democratic institutions.

Indeed, we do know that parliamentary democracies tend to last considerably longer than presidential democracies: between 1950 and 1990, the probability that a parliamentary democracy would die in any given year was 0.0138, corresponding to an expected life of 73 years; the probability that a presidential democracy would die was 0.0477, corresponding to an expected life equal to 21 years. We also know that this difference between parliamentarism and presidentialism is not due to the wealth of countries in which these institutions were observed, to their economic performance, or to conditions under which they emerged, in particular the military legacy of the previous authoritarian regime.[3]

This pattern has commonly been interpreted as evidence that the instability of presidential democracies stems from the principle of separation between executive and legislative authorities, which distinguishes them from parliamentary democracies. A conventional wisdom has emerged which, first, sees the occurrence of minority presidents, and the deadlock between executives and legislatures that it supposedly causes, as the predominant condition of presidential regimes. Second, since these regimes lack a constitutional principle that can be invoked to resolve conflicts between executives and legislatures, such as the vote of no confidence of parliamentary regimes, minority presidents and deadlock would provide incentives for actors to search for extra-constitutional means of resolving their differences, thus making presidential regimes prone to instability and eventual death. It is thus the consequences of the separation of executive and legislative powers characteristic of presidential regimes that are usually invoked to account for their relatively inferior performance when compared to parliamentary regimes.[4]

In this article I examine the conditions that generate minority presidents and deadlock in presidential regimes, and evaluate the impact of minority presidents and deadlock on the survival of these regimes. Although only presidential regimes are analyzed, the findings reported below also shed light on the stability of presidential democracies relative to parliamentary democracies. More specifically, it allows us to answer the following question: Is it indeed the occurrence of minority presidents and deadlocks

that make presidential regimes less stable than parliamentary regimes? Let me explain why this is so.

Parliamentary and presidential regimes are indeed based on different constitutional principles when it comes to government formation. Although minority governments may also exist under parliamentarism, the fact that governments in these systems exist only as long as there is no alternative majority that can replace them distinguishes them from governments in presidential regimes: minority government in parliamentarism cannot produce deadlock between the executive and the legislative majority. In these situations, either the executive changes, or the legislature changes.[5] For this reason we cannot directly assess the effect of deadlock on the survival rates of parliamentary and presidential regimes. We can, however, adopt an indirect approach.

Let *Ma* be the situation in which governments have majority support in the legislature; *MiNd* be the situation in which governments do not have majority support in the legislature and there is no deadlock between the government and the legislature; *MiD* be the situation in which governments do not have majority support in the legislature and there is deadlock between the government and the legislature. Let p_i, $i = Ma$, *MiNd*, *MiD*, be the probability that a democracy, parliamentary or presidential, will breakdown; f_{Ma} be the frequency with which democracies with majority governments die; f_{Mi} the frequency with which democracies with minority governments die; and f_D be the frequency with which presidential democracies with minority governments and deadlocks die.

The probability that a presidential democracy dies is:

Pr {Presidential democracy dies} = p*Ma*f*Ma* + p*MiNd*(f_{Mi}-f_D) + p*MiD*(f_D).

And since we cannot observe deadlock in parliamentary democracies, the probability that they will die is:

Pr {Parliamentary democracy dies} = p*Ma*f*Ma* + p*MiNd*f_{Mi}.

If p*MiNd*=p*MiD*, that is, if the survival chances of presidential democracies are not affected by deadlock, then Pr {Presidential democracy dies} = Pr {Parliamentary democracy dies} = p*Ma*f*Ma* + p*MiNd*f_{Mi}. Thus, if deadlock does not matter for the survival of presidential regimes, we can conclude that it is not what makes the survival rates of presidential democracies inferior to the survival rates of parliamentary democracies. For this reason, although we only analyze presidential regimes, we can also say something about whether it is deadlock between the executive and the legislature that makes presidential democracies more brittle than parliamentary democracies.

The analysis is based on data for all presidential and mixed regimes that have existed between 1946 and 1996.[6] Due to variation in the availability of the data, many analyses are based on slightly different samples, covering a shorter period of time and/or a smaller set of countries. Whenever appropriate, these changes are noted. The primary focus is on pure presidential regimes, that is, systems in which the government serves at the authority of the elected president. Mixed systems, however, that is, systems in which governments are responsible to both legislative assemblies and elected presidents, have also been considered in order to assess whether their presence modifies what

is found for pure presidential regimes. The appendix contains a brief discussion of the criteria utilized to classify the regimes, a list of the countries included in the data set, and the definition of other variables used in the analysis.

The article is organized as follows. In the next section I explain how I define and observe minority presidents and deadlock situations. The following section discusses some of the issues related to multipartism and party discipline that have an impact on the way of measuring deadlock situations. I then present the main analysis. There are essentially six facts which, together, indicate that the occurrence of minority presidents and deadlock situations do not affect the survival of presidential regimes. I then suggest two hypotheses, institutional in nature, that could account for variations in the performance of presidential regimes. I offer them as examples of plausible hypotheses that illustrate the directions research can take once we accept that the operation of democratic regimes (presidential or parliamentary) cannot be entirely deduced from their first principles. In the conclusion I summarize the main findings and draw some of their implications for recent democracies.

Minority Governments and Deadlock Situations

Governments are considered to be minority when the party of the president does not control a majority of seats in the legislature or, in a bicameral system, when it does not control a majority of seats in at least one of the chambers. In what follows I do not distinguish the situations in which a minority president faces a unified opposition from the situations in which no party has a majority.[7] Although not politically irrelevant, the former situations are not empirically important:[8] they are essentially a function of the number of political parties, and the fact that they are not distinguished in the analysis does not affect any of the results that are presented below.

Deadlock situations are more complex to define and observe. Consider a situation in which there are only two parties, the party of the president and the opposition. P is the share of seats held by the party of the president and O is the share of seats held by the opposition. Legislation is passed by votes of at least M members of congress and, in the case of bicameral systems, bills have to be approved in both houses. Under these conditions we can distinguish the situation in which the party of the president controls a majority of seats in congress, and hence congress passes bills preferred by the president, from the situation in which the party of the president does not control a majority of seats in congress. When the latter is the case, congress approves bills that are not the ones preferred by the president. In these situations, if constitutionally allowed, the president vetoes the bill. Presidential vetoes can be overridden by at least V members of Congress. Thus, $0 < M \leq V < 100$.

*** Figure 1 here ***

This setup defines three possible situations in terms of executive-legislative relations. One situation is defined by $P < 100 - V$ and $O \geq V$. In these cases, congress passes bills preferred by the opposition and these bills are likely to become law: even if the president vetoes the bill, the opposition has the votes to override the presidential veto. We can say that the opposition dominates. Another situation is defined by $P > M$, when congress passes bills preferred by the president, the president signs the bills and they become law. In these cases we can say that the president dominates. It is only when 100-

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$V \leq P < M$ and $M \leq O < V$ that deadlock can occur: in these cases, congress passes bills preferred by the opposition, the president vetoes these bills and the opposition does not have enough votes to override the presidential veto. There is a stalemate between congress and the president, to which there is no automatic solution since executive and legislature have independent basis of authority. This is the situation that should make presidential regimes the most vulnerable since both the president and the opposition would have an incentive to seek extra-constitutional solutions to the stalemate.

Empirically, deadlock situations depend on the combination of institutional and political factors. On the one hand, they depend on the distribution of seats in congress or, more specifically, on the share of seats held by the party of the president. On the other hand, they depend on institutional provisions regarding the presidential veto. These provisions are:
•	whether the president has veto power;
•	the type of congressional majority necessary to override the presidential veto (the location of V with respect to M in the scheme above);
•	whether the system is unicameral or bicameral;
•	whether in bicameral systems veto override is by a vote in each chamber separately or in a joint session of both chambers.

Figure 2 presents the distribution of cases (country-years) of both presidential and mixed systems according to these institutional factors. Note, to begin with, that there is only a handful of cases in which the president has no veto powers: 4.7% and 5.5% in presidential and mixed systems, respectively. A significant portion of these cases come from Switzerland, but they also include the Congo (1992-96), Croatia (1991-96), Kyrgyzstan (1991-92), Peru (1956-61 and 1963-67), Romania (1990-96), Russia (1991-92), South Africa (1994-96), Sri Lanka (1989-96), Suriname (1988-89 and 1991-96), and Uganda (1980-84). At the same time, only Cyprus grants veto powers to the president without allowing congress to override it: all 38 cases in this category come from this country. The bulk of the cases in pure presidential regimes (81.7%) are those in which the president has veto powers and congress can override the presidential veto by a super-majority, either of two-thirds (the most common situation) or of three-fourths. In 8.4% of the cases presidents can veto legislation, but the veto can be overridden by the same majority that passed the legislation in the first place. These situations are also common in mixed systems (39.4%), although here the most frequent situation is the one in which disagreement between congress and the president regarding legislation is decided either by a constitutional court or by referendum (42.8%).

*** Figure 2 here ***

In some of the situations represented in Figure 2 deadlock between the president and congress will not occur, regardless of the share of seats the party of the president controls in congress. This is obviously true for the cases in which the president has no veto powers, the ones in which congress cannot override the presidential veto, or when disagreements between the president and congress are resolved by referendum: if presidents cannot veto legislation, whoever controls a majority of seats in congress dominates; if presidents can veto legislation but congress cannot override the presidential veto, the president has the final world and no impasse emerges; if disagreements are referred to a third party, deadlock between the executive and the legislative will necessarily be resolved. Similarly,

deadlock will not occur in unicameral systems in which presidential veto can be overridden by an absolute majority in congress. In these cases, to use the symbols defined above, *V=M*, thus defining a situation that is functionally similar to the cases in which presidents cannot veto legislative bills. In these cases, whoever controls the congress, either the president or the opposition, dominates. If the president's party does not hold a majority in congress, the same majority that approved a bill in the first place may override the presidential veto. Together these situations, that is, the situations in which the distribution of seats in congress does not affect the conditions for deadlock, represent a small share of the cases of pure presidential regimes observed since 1946: 14.58%. In mixed regimes, however, they are more frequent; they constitute 83.47% of the cases, largely due to the frequency with which impasses between the president and congress are resolved by a third party.

Note, however, that in the majority of the cases, at least in pure presidential regimes, it is the combination of the rules regarding presidential veto *and* the share of seats held by the party of the president that defines the conditions under which deadlock situations are likely to occur in presidential regimes. This is how these two sets of factors combine:

- When veto override is by a majority vote in each of the houses of a bicameral system, deadlock will emerge if the party of the president controls a majority of seats in only one of the houses. In these cases, the president will veto the legislation but the opposition, lacking control in one of the houses, will not be able to override the presidential veto.

- When veto override is by a majority vote in a joint session of both houses, deadlock will emerge only if, lacking control in one of the houses, the party of the president also holds more than 50% of the seats in the joint congress. In this case, the president will veto the legislation, and the opposition will lack enough votes to override the presidential veto. However, if the party of the president holds less than 50% of the seats in a joint meeting of both houses, deadlock will not emerge, even if the party of the president does not control a majority in one of the houses. In these cases, the opposition dominates.

- When veto override is by a two-third majority in a unicameral system, deadlock will occur only if the party of the president controls more than 33.3% but no more than 50% of the seats.

- When veto override requires a two-thirds majority and the system is bicameral, deadlock situations will depend both on the share of seats held by the party of the president and on whether the vote is to be taken in each chamber or in a joint session of both chambers. Table 1 illustrates the possible scenarios when the vote is to be taken in each chamber separately. Here, deadlock may be pervasive; it is unlikely to occur only if the opposition holds more than two-thirds of the seats in both houses, or the party of the president holds more than 50% of the seats in both houses. All the other cells in Table 1 represent situations in which deadlock is likely to occur.

*** Table 1 here ***

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- If the system is bicameral and veto override is at two-thirds in a joint session of both houses, deadlock conditions will exist if the party of the president does not control a majority in either house but controls more than 33.3% of the votes in the joint congress. In these cases, the president will veto legislation, but the opposition will not control enough votes in the joint congress to override the presidential veto.

- Finally, in the cases in which veto override requires a three-fourths majority, deadlock conditions are analogous to the cases in which the requirement is a two-thirds majority, except that the cut-off points change from 33.3% to 25%.

These are thus the situations which deadlock can emerge in presidential regimes. They depend on the provisions regarding presidential veto and its override, the number of legislative chambers and the distribution of seats in congress. The variable DEADLOCK was created to indicate these cases. It is coded 1 for all the cases in which deadlock or stalemate between the president and congress is likely to occur, as specified above, and 0 for the cases in which it is not likely to occur, either because the president "rules," or because the opposition "rules."

Multipartism and Party Discipline

There are two main questions that may be raised regarding the way deadlock situations are being identified in this work. The first has to do with multipartism. If we return to the four scenarios regarding executive-legislative relations that were defined above, we can see that multipartism does not affect situations (3) and (4): if the president's party controls a number of seats that is larger than M, congress will pass bills that the president will sign into law, regardless of the number of parties that are in the opposition. However, with multipartism, it becomes difficult to assess situations (1) and (2), that is, those cases in which $P<M$. Here, O is likely to contain a subgroup of parties (O_p) that may support the president. Whether a stalemate will occur depends, of course, on the size of O_p, which cannot be assessed with the available information.[9] Thus, in general, under multiparty regimes stalemate could also occur under situation (1), which above was defined as a situation in which the opposition "rules," characterized by the absence of deadlock.[10]

At this point it is sufficient to notice that this fact is of little relevance for the measuring of deadlock situations. If we define multipartism by the presence of at least two effective parties, *and take into consideration the rules about the presidential veto*, we find that the incidence of deadlock situations would increase only marginally and would have no impact whatsoever on the findings that will be reported below. The reason for this is again that, as defined here, deadlock does not depend only on the distribution of seats in congress. In order for it to emerge, we also have to take into consideration other institutional rules, particularly the ones concerning the presidential veto.

The second question has to do with party discipline. Clearly, if party labels do not predict anything about how members of congress will behave, it does not make sense to define deadlock in terms of the share of seats held by the party of the president. There is no doubt that party discipline is an important factor in analyzing executive-legislative relations, although its precise effect is ambiguous.[11] I would argue, however, that in the absence of appropriate comparative data, which are unlikely to

become available for a relatively large set of countries any time soon, the best strategy is to assume that presidents command the support of those members of congress that belong to their own party. This becomes clear if we consider the existing alternatives to this assumption.

The first alternative -- which has been adopted in most comparative work concerned with party discipline -- is to measure party discipline in terms of the permissiveness of a country's electoral and party legislation: party discipline is supposed to be low in systems where there are incentives for candidates to cultivate the "personal vote" and parties do not have full control over candidacies.[12] The problem with this approach is that party discipline is a behavioral concept and, as such, cannot be inferred from electoral and partisan legislation: what matters for executive-legislative relations is how members of congress will vote; and how they will vote depends on more than what is provided in the legislation. Party labels can be very good predictors of congressional behavior even where electoral and party legislation are very permissive.[13] Thus, classificatory schemes based on legislation may provide a misleading view of how parties affect what members of congress will do regarding legislative votes.

The second alternative to assuming that presidents can count on the votes of members of their own parties is to postulate that party discipline in presidential regimes is necessarily negligible since the mechanisms that supposedly produce highly disciplined parties in parliamentarism are, by definition, absent in presidential regimes.[14] The argument goes like this: In order to exist, governments in parliamentary regimes need to secure a majority in parliament and, in order to do so, they depend on their party's capacity to enforce discipline and pass legislation. There is, so to speak, a "majoritarian imperative" in parliamentary democracies that is absent in presidential regimes due to the fixed terms of presidents and assemblies. Moreover, individual members of parliament in parliamentary regimes have an incentive to comply with their parties in order to avoid bringing the government down and risk losing their own seats in early elections.

In my view, this argument oversimplifies the operation of parliamentary regimes, assuming that governments always have to hold a majority of seats in parliament and that the consequence of government dissolution is invariably an early election. Neither, however, is true. We know now that minority governments in parliamentary regimes are not pathologies of some political systems; rather, they are frequent occurrences that can be explained by reference to the rational action of political actors (Strom 1990). Indeed, according to Strom's and other counts, about one-third of governments in parliamentary regimes are formed even if they control less than 50% of the seats. My own counting (Cheibub 1998), based on data for 21 industrialized parliamentary regimes between 1946 and 1995 yields a similar picture. During this time, 31% of the elections in these countries produced minority governments (more frequently in proportional representation systems -- 38% -- than in majority-plurality systems -- 13%). At the same time, in 24% of the years governments held less than 50% of the seats (again much more frequently in proportional representation systems than in majority-plurality systems: 30% against 7% of the time)[15]. Thus, the "majoritarian imperative" which supposedly distinguishes parliamentary and presidential regimes is not really an imperative.

As for the argument about early elections, the calculus of the individual legislator under parliamentarism cannot be entirely connected with the risk of election for the simple fact that early

election is not the necessary consequence, or even the most frequent consequence, of a government dissolution. My data show that 56% of the prime ministers observed between 1946 and 1995 changed without an election taking place; that 38% of the changes in the party controlling the premiership also occurred without elections taking place; that 46% of the changes in the partisan composition of the government -- a "weak" notion of alternation in power -- took place without elections; and that 24% of the changes in the largest party in the government -- a "strong" notion of alternation -- occurred, again, with no elections (Cheibub 1998).

The frequency of government changes in the middle of the electoral term obviously varies with the type of electoral system, the number of parties and the type of government (coalition or single party) (Cheibub1998); but the bottom line is that elections are far from being the necessary outcome of government dissolution in parliamentary regimes. It is, thus, far from apparent that the threat of early elections is sufficient to induce party discipline. Between adopting an inappropriate measurement of party discipline, or an oversimplified distinction of parliamentary and presidential regimes, I find it is reasonable to consider that presidents command the support of those members of congress who belong to their own party.

Survival of Presidential Regimes

With the definitions of minority presidents and deadlock situations in mind, as well as the caveats discussed in the previous session, we are now in a position to investigate the conditions under which these outcomes are likely to occur, the way in which they relate to each other, and the impact they are likely to have on the survival of presidential regimes. There are six main points to be noted.

(I) The first point is that minority presidents are, indeed, frequent in presidential regimes: in about 61% of the years the party of the president did not control a majority of seats in Congress. This rate is lower if we only consider pure presidential regimes (58%), particularly in unicameral systems (48%). Still, almost half of the years in these systems were years of minority presidents.

*** Table 2 here ***

(II) Second, the occurrence of minority presidents is associated with the number of political parties, with the type of electoral system, and with the electoral cycle, as suggested by Mainwaring (1993), Jones (1995a), Shugart (1995) and others. As indicated in Table 2, the frequency with which the party of the president does not hold a majority in congress increases markedly with the number of effective parties: in pure presidential regimes it goes from 38.67% of the years when there are two parties, to 41.01% when there are two to three parties, 89.43% when there are three to four parties, 90.38% when there are four to five parties, to almost all the years when there are more than five parties.

The timing of presidential and congressional elections also seems to affect the likelihood of minority presidents. Table 2 shows that presidential parties are more likely to hold a majority in congress when presidential and congressional elections coincide (54.22%) than when they do not coincide (60.26%) or are alternately held concurrently and non-concurrently (65.57%). Note, however, that, contrary

to expectations (Shugart 1992, Shugart 1995, Jones, 1995) this is not due to the fact that the number of parties is larger when presidential and legislative elections do not coincide. As Table 3 indicates, the frequency with which we observe two-party systems is higher when presidential and congressional elections are not concurrent. At the same time, systems with two to four parties are more frequent when elections coincide than when they do not coincide. As a matter of fact, when presidential and legislative elections are not simultaneous, either because they are never held at the same time or because they alternate, the frequency of cases first decreases and then increases as the number of parties increases. Thus, even though the timing of presidential and legislative elections matters for the occurrence of minority presidents in presidential regimes, the reason why it does needs to be further investigated.[16]

*** Table 3 here ***

Finally, as Table 3 shows, minority presidents are more frequent when legislative elections are held under proportional representation systems. Under these systems parties are likely to multiply thus making it less likely that any one party, including the party of the president, will hold a majority of seats in congress.

(III) Third, we must note, however, that there is no necessary relationship between minority presidents and deadlock situations. As Table 4 indicates, deadlock situations occur in only about 25% of the cases if we consider both presidential and mixed regimes. In pure presidential regimes the frequency of deadlock situations is 32%. When the party of the president does not control a majority of seats in congress, there is a fifty-fifty chance that deadlock situations will occur if we consider both pure presidential and mixed regimes, and a 61% chance if we only consider pure presidential regimes. Thus we cannot assume that minority presidents will always induce deadlock.

*** Table 4 here ***

Note that multipartism, as noted before, does not make any difference for the incidence of deadlock. If we define multipartism by the presence of more than two effective political parties and consider nothing but the share of seats held by the party of the president, the years of deadlock situations would increase by 150 in unicameral systems and 84 in bicameral systems. However, we know that deadlock situations also depend on the provisions regarding the presidential veto. Taking this into consideration reduces the number of additional cases of deadlock to only 58, increasing the incidence of deadlock situations in pure presidential regimes from 24.55% to 30.55%. Substantively this means that, even if we were to abandon the assumption that parties other than the party of the president are in the opposition, deadlock situations in presidential regimes would occur less than one-third of the time and would be unrelated to the occurrence of minority presidents.

(IV) The conditions that are likely to produce minority presidents do not affect the occurrence of deadlock situations. As we can see in table 4, the number of effective parties, the electoral system, and the relative timing of presidential and congressional elections have no systematic impact on the probability that deadlock situations will occur. Thus, whereas the probability that the party of the president will control less than a majority of seats in congress increases with the number of effective

parties, with non-concurrent presidential and legislative elections, and with proportional representation systems, this does not mean that the probability of deadlock will also increase. Minority president is not synonymous with deadlock; hence, the factors that induce one do not necessarily induce the other.

(V) We cannot infer anything about the survival of presidential democracies from electoral and partisan variables. The evidence that is sometimes (e.g., Mainwaring 1993, Jones 1995a) offered in support of the proposition that minority presidents and deadlock situations are detrimental to presidentialism is usually indirect: it is about the *conditions* that are more likely to produce a minority president since minority presidents are assumed to produce deadlock, and deadlock is assumed to have a negative effect on the survival of the regime. Thus, the type of electoral system, the number of political parties, and the electoral cycle are all found to influence the likelihood that presidents will control legislative majorities. And from that, it is then inferred that these factors also affect the survival of presidential regimes. However, whereas it is indeed true, as we have just seen, that these conditions affect the likelihood that presidential parties will control a majority of seats in congress, it is not the case that they affect the chances of survival of presidential regimes.

Table 5 presents the transition probabilities of presidential regimes as a function of electoral and partisan variables.[17] We can see that neither the type of electoral system nor the relative timing of presidential and legislative elections has any impact on the survival of presidential regimes. The difference in transition probabilities between plurality and proportional representation systems is negligible. Concurrent elections seem to reduce the chances that a presidential regime will die, although this effect is not significant in statistical analysis.[18]

*** Table 5 here ***

The story with the number of political parties is somewhat more complex. It is not, contrary to Mainwaring (1993) and Jones (1995), multipartism per se that affects the survival of presidential regimes. In presidential democracies high risks are associated with situations of very low pluralism, or situations conducive to moderate pluralism, which, as Sartori (1976) suggested, are the ones in which there are between two and five relevant political parties. Presidential democracies with more than five effective parties, the cases that tend to be conducive to "polarized pluralism" in Sartori's typology, have an expected life considerably higher than the presidential democracies with less than five effective parties: 95 years against 21.[19]

Why should moderate pluralism affect the survival of presidential democracies so strongly? One possibility would be that, somehow, moderate pluralism reduces the share of seats controlled by the president thus making stalemate more frequent and making it more difficult for presidents to govern. This seems to be partly confirmed by the data. If we consider unicameral and bicameral systems separately and, in the latter, the share of seats held by the party of the president in the lower and the upper houses, we find that this share reaches one of the lowest points when the number of effective parties is around 3.5 and 4.5. Note, however, that the share of seats held by the party of the president falls sharply when there are more than 5 effective parties, even though the hazard rates in these cases are, as we have seen before, the lowest. Note also that 3.5 effective parties does not represent the

point at which presidents cease controlling a majority of seats in congress. According to Table 6, this happens when the number of effective parties is 2.5. Thus, the higher hazard rates of systems with a moderate number of political parties cannot be entirely accounted for by the fact that the party of the president does not control enough seats in congress.

*** Table 6 here ***

One alternative explanation would have to do not so much with the share of seats controlled by the party of the president, but rather with the distribution of strength of the three largest parties as indicated by the number of seats they hold. What may be difficult for presidential regimes -- and for that matter any democratic regime -- is the existence of three political forces of relatively equal strength, each of which attempting to implement its own program either alone or in alternating coalitions. Pluralism, in such cases, will be moderate, with the number of effective parties hovering between three and four. More importantly, compromises may be difficult as they would be inherently unstable: agreements among any two parties could be undermined by counter-offers from the third one.

Although not conclusively, the available data suggest that this hypothesis at least makes sense. Table 7 summarizes a couple of traits of party systems in presidential regimes. The goal is to present measures that could help characterize the distribution of party strength without, of course, being correlated with the number of effective parties. "Party Structure 1" is simply the sum of seats held by the three largest parties in Congress, while "Party Structure 2" is this sum weighted by the share of seats of the largest party. This last measure is an index of equiproportionality among the three largest parties, at least in the range of cases in which the largest party gets more than 30% of the votes: in this range, the closer this number is to one, the more concentrated the distribution of strength among the three largest parties is; the closer it is to three, the more evenly divided are the seats held by the three largest parties. As we can see in the table, the three largest parties are likely to hold an equal share of seats in moderate and strong pluralism (number of effective parties > 3.5) than in weak pluralism. The closest the distribution of seats among the three largest parties gets to being equal is when the number of effective parties is between four and five. Note that the figure for strong pluralism is contaminated by the large number of cases in which the largest party holds less than 30% of the seats. If we exclude these cases, we find that the index for "Party Structure II" drops from 2.46 to 1.81, almost identical to the average value for weak pluralism. In moderate pluralism, however, the average is 2.12, suggesting that, in comparison to the other situations, moderate pluralism is more likely to be characterized by three strong political parties.

*** Table 7 here ***

(VI) Finally, but certainly not any less importantly, contrary to all expectations, neither minority presidents nor deadlock has a negative effect on the survival of presidential regimes. If arguments about the perils of presidentialism are correct, presidential democracies should face higher risks of dying when the presidency and the congress are controlled by different parties and when the conditions for deadlock between the president and the congress are present. Yet, as Table 8 demonstrates, this is not true. Presidential regimes are as likely to die when presidential parties do not

hold a majority of seats in congress as when they do. The difference between deadlock and no deadlock situations, although in favor of the former, is rather small: whereas one in every twenty-three presidential democracies dies when there is no deadlock, one in every twenty-eight dies when there is deadlock. This difference does not seem to warrant the level of concern with deadlock that is often expressed in the comparative literature on presidentialism.

*** Table 8 here ***

Note that statistical analysis strongly confirms the findings suggested by the descriptive transition probabilities of Table 8. Minority presidents are found to have no statistically significant effect when a model of survival of presidential democracies is estimated. This remains true even after controlling for the type of electoral system, by the electoral cycle, by the number of effective parties, by the level of economic development (as indicated by real per capita income), by the presidential systems of Latin America and by the presence of the United States or Switzerland in the sample. The same is true with deadlock situations: survival models reveal no statistically significant effect on the probability that presidential regimes will remain in place.[20] Thus, the idea that the survival prospects of presidential democracies is compromised when presidential parties do not hold a majority of seats in congress, or when deadlock situations exist, is refuted by both descriptive and statistical evidence.

To summarize, we can say that some of the effects of institutional factors on presidentialism which are commonly postulated can be observed empirically: the electoral system, the timing of elections, and the number of parties do affect, as expected, the legislative strength of presidents and the likelihood that we will observe minority presidents. These cases are more frequent in proportional representation systems, when presidential and legislative elections do not coincide, and when the number of parties is large. This relationship, however, does not warrant any conclusion about the survival chances of presidential democracies: neither the type of electoral system nor the timing of presidential and legislative elections has any impact on the survival of presidential regimes; the number of parties, in turn, matters for the survival of presidentialism, but not in the way and probably not for the reasons commonly postulated: what matters is not multipartism per se but whether pluralism is moderate; moderate pluralism, in turn, affects survival of presidentialism not because of its effect on the president's legislative support, but most likely because of the distribution of strength among the three largest parties. Most importantly, none of these factors affects the likelihood of deadlock, which does not have a negative effect on the survival of presidential regimes. It seems, thus, that there must be other mechanisms operating in presidential regimes that allow them to survive under conditions that presumably would make them perish.

Term Limits and the Centralization of Decision-Making in Presidential Regimes: Two Hypotheses

One factor that could explain the breakdown of presidential democracies independently of the share of seats controlled by the party of the president in congress has been suggested above: the existence of three relatively equal political forces. Here I would like to offer two other hypotheses, institutional in nature, which suggest promising directions for future research.

The first hypothesis has to do with the fact that presidents rarely change because they are defeated in elections. Almost 80% the presidents observed between 1946 and 1996 could not be reelected.[21] Whenever incumbent presidents could run and did, a large proportion of them won reelection. Among 22 presidents who faced reelection without impending term limits between 1950 and 1990, only 14 were not reelected, and of those only six can be counted as real defeats by incumbents.[22] Hence, given that incumbents won in 8 and lost in 6 elections, their odds of being reelected were 1.3 to 1. For reference, the odds of reelection for prime-ministers during the same period were 0.66 to 1 (Cheibub and Przeworski 1999).

It appears, therefore, that presidentialism gives a pronounced advantage to the incumbents when they are legally permitted to run for reelection. At the same time, to prevent the incumbents from exploiting this advantage, it obligates them to leave office whether or not voters want them to stay. What may thus happen is that either incumbent presidents use their advantage to stay in office despite voters' dissatisfaction with their performance, or they are legally forced to leave office despite their high degree of support. In either case, there is a temptation to proceed in an extra-legal way: either some groups of civilians turn to the military to throw the president out of office, or the president, counting on this support in the population, illegally retains office. The latter was clearly the case of Ferdinand Marcos in 1971 and may have been the case of Alberto Fujimori in 1992. In addition, term limits may affect the survival of presidential regimes indirectly. By removing the possibility of electoral rewards for incumbents, term limits may also remove the president's incentive to perform well.

Unfortunately, analysis of this issue is hindered by the very dearth of cases of presidents who are not constitutionally barred from reelection.[23] For the moment what matters is that we can conceive of a plausible explanation for the variation in the survival of presidential regimes that is not based on a feature that is inherent to this form of government. It may be true that presidents, if left unencumbered, may use their office for their own electoral advantage. And it is also true that such behavior, at least its excesses, should be inhibited. Constitutional term limits, however, may be just too blunt an instrument to do so, and one that imposes too high a price. There may be other instruments that accomplish similar goals of limiting presidential electoral advantage and providing incentives for good performance without at the same time generating incentives for extralegal action or interfering with the operation of accountability mechanisms. Examples include strict regulation of campaign finance and procedures, public funding of campaigns, free access to media and the strengthening of agencies that oversee campaigns. These are devices that will limit the ability of presidents to use the office for undue electoral advantage and yet will not remove their incentives to perform well with an eye to being reelected.

The second possible explanation for variation in the performance of presidential regimes is based on a set of factors that have received little attention in comparative research. What the findings reported in the previous session suggest is that the share of seats obtained by the party of the president in elections is limited in terms of the information it conveys about the president's actual capacity to obtain support in congress. Presidents everywhere do form governing coalitions, parties do merge with one another, and legislators do change parties in the middle of the term. More importantly, presidents do have legislative and agenda powers, and legislatures do operate according to rules and

procedures, both of which affect these actors' ability to approve their preferred legislation. Thus, the share of seats obtained by the party of the president at elections, which, as we saw, is a function of electoral and partisan variables, is far from being sufficient for conveying the entire picture regarding the degree of legislative support the president can count on to govern. Thus, if presidential regimes fail, it is not because the president does not control enough seats to impose, so to speak, his or her own policy agenda.[24] What may matter for the functioning of presidential regimes (and, for that matter, of any democratic regime) is the presence or the absence of factors that allow presidents with very little legislative support to work with congress. It is to these factors -- particularly the ones that regulate the internal workings of congress and the president's legislative and agenda powers -- that we should shift our attention in order to understand the performance of presidential regimes.

Consider, for example, the results of a series of recent studies of the Brazilian Congress, which show that government performance cannot be accounted for by an exclusive focus on electoral and partisan variables: the post-1988 governments in Brazil have performed reasonably well, at least in terms of being able to implement the president's legislative agenda, in spite of the fact that the electoral and partisan legislation are among the most permissive in the world. The explanation offered by these studies for this unexpected performance focuses on the power the president has to control the legislative agenda and the power congressional party leaders have to control the way information flows to individual legislators. Because of these factors, congressional parties are highly disciplined and the president is able to pass much of what he wants, even though the electoral and partisan legislation are permissive and the congress is highly fragmented. Thus the government in Brazil can govern not because its electoral and partisan legislation tend to produce government majorities in congress, but because of what presidents and party leaders can do to bypass, so to speak, the individual legislator's preferences and incentives to act in isolation. A focus on this kind of variables would seem to be fruitful in generating a more sophisticated understanding of how presidential regimes actually work and hence in explaining variations in their performance. I would even venture the hypothesis that some of the differences in the performance of parliamentary and presidential regimes will vanish once these variables are taken into consideration.

If this is the case, then the issue of the trade-off between "representation" and "governability," so central in the debate about presidentialism and parliamentarism, is raised again, but now with the trade-off taking place at a different point in the political system. Let me explain why.

As we know, much of the discussion about presidentialism and parliamentarism has been couched in terms of a trade-off between "representation" and "governability." This is precisely what is implicit in several defenses of parliamentarism and their suggestion that presidential regimes perform better when representation is more restricted: the idea is that when voters are faced with fewer choices, presidential majorities are more likely to be produced, and the regime will have a better performance (see, for example, Mainwaring 1993, Stepan and Skach 1993, and Lamounier 1994).

A trade-off between "representation" and "governability" is also present if we focus on the executive's legislative and agenda powers, and on the organization of congress. As just mentioned, according to Figueiredo and Limongi (1999 and 2000), what allowed Brazilian presidents to approve their legislative agenda were institutions that made the preferences of individual legislators essentially

irrelevant. The only difference is that, in this case, the trade-off takes place inside congress, and not before it is formed.

So it seems that there are at least two ways in which representation and governability can be traded-off:

- one way that limits representation by limiting the variety of views that can enter the political process: restrictive electoral and party legislation reduces the number of parties, increases the likelihood that governments will obtain substantial legislative support, thus increasing "governability;"

- another way that is more permissive at the level of the variety of views that can enter the political process, but that limits the role that individual representatives have in deliberation and decision-making.

Both systems may work in the sense that their chances of survival are similar; and this is probably why we do not find, statistically, that the share of seats held by the party of the president affects the regime's performance. Nonetheless these systems may be very different in terms of the effectiveness with which interests are represented in the political process and hence in the type of public policies that they yield.

Conclusion

The superior survival record of parliamentary democracies over presidential democracies has been explained in terms of the fundamental difference between these two systems: the separation of executive and legislative authorities in presidentialism, and their fusion in parliamentarism. A number of consequences are supposed to follow from this difference, leading, in one way or another, to conflict between government and assembly in presidentialism and their cooperation in parliamentarism. The "majoritarian imperative" that supposedly characterizes parliamentary regimes is thought to provide adequate legislative support for the government. This same imperative provides ineluctable incentives for political parties to cooperate with the government and for individual members of parliament to comply with party directives. As a consequence, highly disciplined parties tend to cooperate with each other in forming legislative coalitions out of which governments will emerge and rely for their existence. Crises do exist, but they can be solved by the formation of a new government or the emergence of a new majority.

Since these are consequences of the fusion of powers characteristic of parliamentarism, they are absent in presidentialism. In fact, nothing in presidential regimes guarantees that the government will be able to count on an adequate basis of support in congress. Incentives to cooperate are supposed to be few: political parties, it is thought, have no reasons to bear the cost of incumbency at election and hence will try to distance themselves from the government; individual members of congress face no risk of losing their jobs regardless of how they vote. Unless elections return a majority for the president, presidential democracies are destined to experience deadlock, stalemate and ultimately, breakdown.

Although I do not deny that parliamentary regimes do live longer than presidential regimes, in this article I have taken issue with the idea that this difference is due to the separation or fusion of executive and legislative authorities. For one, I argued that many of the results that are considered to follow from this principle are not to be expected, either as a matter of logic or as a matter of empirics. More importantly, I showed that the conditions that should be conducive to the death of presidential democracies were the conventional view of presidentialism correct -- minority presidents and deadlock situations – have no impact on the survival of these regimes. Two alternative explanations have been offered, which focus on institutional features that are not inherent to presidential regimes. The testing of these hypotheses requires data that are not yet available, and hence at this point can only be evaluated in terms of their plausibility.

Thus, even though we do not really know why presidential regimes appear to be considerably more frail than parliamentary regimes, we do know with certainty that it is not due to reasons that follow from presidentialism's basic principle. The separation of power that defines presidentialism is not associated with conflict, with minority presidents, or with deadlock.

It follows from this conclusion that we have no reason to be concerned with the fact that many recent democracies have chosen presidential systems. This concern comes from the fear that these new democracies are facing daunting tasks of re-structuring their economies, which generates profound strains in the system. These difficulties are thought to be compounded, to the point of paralysis or worse, when executives have to negotiate the complications of a divided control of government and the explosive potential for deadlocks.

My analysis, however, shows that these fears are unfounded. With the possible exception of Peru under Fujimori and Ecuador more recently, none of the democratic regimes that emerged in the past ten or fifteen years have succumbed to the strains of what we could call a crisis of governability. At the same time most of them have made significant strides in re-structuring their economies. Perhaps the pace of change has not been to the satisfaction of some, thus generating frustration and a sense that not enough is being done. The fact remains, however, that recent presidential democracies have accomplished quite a bit under a range of political conditions. We can, therefore, stop seeing presidentialism as the main offender in democratic instability and start to look for other institutional factors that may help us come to a better understanding of how these regimes actually work, rather than deriving performance implications from the regime's constitutional principle. There must be other features found in presidential regimes, but not inherent to them, that may account for their relatively poor performance. If there are reasons why we may want to have a presidential system -- an issue that at this point I leave untouched -- then the question becomes one of finding the institutional mechanisms that can correct some of its excesses without keeping it from operating properly.

Appendix: Classification of pure presidential and mixed democracies and variable definition.

This paper uses a subset of a data set that classifies political regimes for 189 countries between 1946 and 1996. Countries were first classified as democracies and dictatorships for each year during this period according to rules spelled out in detail in Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000). The cases of democracy were further classified as parliamentary, mixed, or presidential. These types of democracy are defined as follows. Systems in which governments must enjoy the confidence of the legislature are "parliamentary"; systems in which they serve at the authority of the elected president are "presidential"; systems in which governments respond both to legislative assemblies and elected presidents are "mixed."[25]

In parliamentary systems the legislative assembly can dismiss the government, while under presidential systems it cannot.[26] Some institutional arrangements, however, do not fit either pure type: they are "premier-presidential," "semi-presidential," or "mixed," according to different terminologies. In such systems, the president is elected for a fixed term and has some executive powers but governments serve at the discretion of the parliament. These "mixed" systems are not homogeneous: most lean closer to parliamentarism insofar as the government is responsible to the legislature; others, notably Portugal between 1976 and 1981, and some of the post-Soviet Republics (including Russia) grant the president the power to appoint and/or dismiss governments (Shugart and Carey 1992).

The primary focus of the paper is on pure presidential regimes. Many analyses are also performed on a sample including the mixed systems in order to assess whether their presence modifies what is found for pure presidential regimes. In spite of significant institutional differences between the two systems regarding term limits and presidential veto, which significantly affects the occurrence of deadlock, the inclusion of mixed systems does not modify any of the findings reported for presidential regimes.

Pure presidential regimes:

Benin, 1991-1996	Bolivia,1979-1980	
Cameroon, 1960-1963	Bolivia,1982-1996	
Congo, 1960-1962	Brazil,1946-1964	
Djibouti, 1977-1982	Brazil,1979-1996	
Gabon, 1960-1967	Chile,1946-1973	
Ghana,1979-1981	Chile,1990-1996	
Malawi,1994-1996	Colombia,1946-1996	
Nigeria,1979-1983	Ecuador,1948-1963	
Rwanda, 1962-1965	Ecuador,1979-1996	
Sierra Leone 1996	Guyana, 1992-1996	
Uganda,1980-1985	Peru, 1946-1948	
Zambia,1991-1996	Peru,1956-1962	
Costa Rica,1949-1996	Peru,1963-1968	
Dominican Rep.,1966-1996	Peru,1980-1992	
El Salvador,1984-1996	Suriname, 1988-1990	
Guatemala,1946-1954	Suriname, 1991-1996	
Guatemala,1958-1963	Uruguay,1947-1973	
Guatemala,1966-1982	Uruguay,1985-1996	
Guatemala, 1986-1996	Venezuela, 1946-1948	
Honduras,1957-1963	Venezuela,1959-1996	
Honduras,1971-1972	Bangladesh,1986-1991	
Honduras,1982-1996	South Korea,1963-1972	
Nicaragua,1984-1996	South Korea,1988-1996	
Panama,1949-1951	Philippines,1946-1972	
Panama,1952-1968	Philippines,1986-1996	
Panama,1989-1996	Switzerland, 1946-1996	
United States,1946-1996	Armenia, 1992-1996	
Argentina,1946-1955	Kyrgyzstan, 1991-1996	
Argentina,1958-1962	Namibia, 1990-1996	
Argentina,1963-1966	Russia, 1991-1996	
Argentina,1973-1976	Ukraine,1991-1996	
Argentina,1983-1996	Cyprus, 1960-1996	

Mixed regimes:

Cent. Afr. Rep., 1993-1996
Comoro Islands, 1990-1995
Congo, 1992-1996
Madagascar, 1993-1996
Mali, 1992-1996
Niger, 1993-1995
Somalia, 1960-1969
South Africa, 1994-1996
Haiti, 1991-1992
Haiti, 1993-1996
Mongolia, 1992-1996
Pakistan, 1972-1977
Sri Lanka, 1989-1996
Finland, 1946-1996
France, 1958-1996
Iceland, 1946-1996
Poland, 1989-1996
Portugal, 1976-1996
Romania, 1990-1996
Albania, 1992-1996
Croatia, 1991-1996
Lithuania, 1991-1996
S.Tomé&Príncipe,1991-1996

The variables used in the analysis are the following:

MINORITY: Coded 1 when the party of the president does not control more than 50% of the seats in the legislature in a unicameral system; or when it does not control more than 50% of the seats in at least one of the chambers in a bicameral system; 0 otherwise.

DEADLOCK: Coded 1 when conditions for deadlock between the executive and the legislative exist; 0 otherwise. The coding of this variable takes into consideration the constitutional provisions regarding presidential veto and its override by the legislature, the number of chambers and the share of seats controlled by the party of the president in each chamber. The coding procedure is discussed in detail in the body of the paper.

EFFPARTY: Number of effective political parties, defined as $1/(1-F)$, where F=Party Fractionalization Index.

COINCIDE: Variable coded 0 when presidential and legislative elections do not coincide; 1 when they alternate (coincide and do not coincide); 2 when they always coincide.

PROP: Variable coded 0 when legislative elections are held under a plurality system; 1 when they are held under a proportional representation system; 2 when they are mixed, either because they adopt different formulas when there are multiple tiers or because they use different formulas in different parts of the country.

BICAMER: Dummy variable coded 1 when the system is bicameral, 0 otherwise.

PLOWER: Share of seats held by the party of the president in the lower house.

PUPPER: Share of seats held by the party of the president in the upper house.

PRESLGST: Dummy variable coded 1 when the party of the president is the largest in the lower house, 0 otherwise.

LGSTPS: Share of seats held by the largest party in the lower house.

LGSTPS2: Share of seats held by the second largest party in the lower house.

LGSTPS3: Share of seats held by the third largest party in the lower house.

VETO: Dummy variable coded 1 when the president is constitutionally allowed to partially or totally veto legislation; 0 otherwise.

OVERRIDE: Constitutional provision for legislative override of presidential veto, coded 0 if no override; 1 absolute majority; 2 if 3/5 majority; 3 if 2/3; 4 if 3/4 majority; 5 if decision is by constitutional court or referendum.

PTLTYPE: Presidential constitutional term limit, coded 0 if no constitutional restriction; 1 if president has to wait one term for reelection; 2 if president has to wait two terms for reelection; 3 if president can only serve a maximum of two terms; 4 if president can only serve a maximum of three terms; 5 if no reelection is ever allowed.

TERMLIM: Dummy variable coded 1 when the current president is constitutionally prevented from seeking reelection, 0 otherwise.

FLAGC: Dummy variable coded 1 for the first year of each country, 0 otherwise.

FLAGR: Dummy variable coded 1 for the first year of each regime (and each country), 0 otherwise.

FLAGPR: Dummy variable coded 1 for the first year of each presidential spell (and each country), 0 otherwise.

FLAGP: Dummy variable coded 1 for the first year of each spell of presidential party (and each year), 0 otherwise.

RSPELL: Regime spell, successive number.

PRSPELL: Presidential spell, successive number.

PSPELL: Presidential party spell, successive number.

PRESH: Dummy variable coded 1 when there is a change of president, 0 otherwise.

PARTYH: Dummy variable coded 1 when there is a change of presidential party, 0 otherwise.
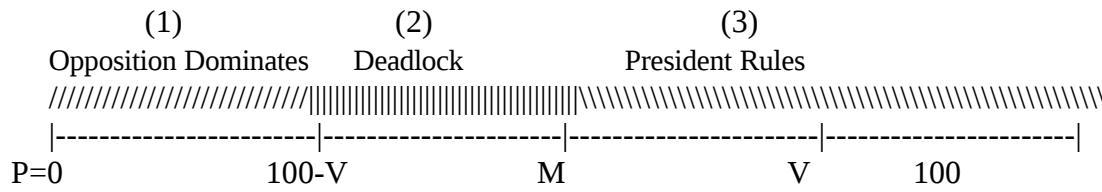
ENTRYPR: Mode of entry in power (president), coded 0 if non-constitutional entry; 1 if constitutional entry resulting from elections; 2 if constitutional entry not resulting from elections (nomination by parties, interim presidents, etc).

EXITPR: Mode of exit from power (president), coded 0 if president is still in power by December 1996;1 if by death; 2 if by assassination while in office; 3 if constitutional exit due to elections; 4 if constitutional exit not due to elections; 5 if non-constitutional due to coups; 6 if non-

constitutional due to consolidation of incumbent power.

ENTRYPR: Mode of entry in power, presidential parties.

EXITP: Mode of exit from power, presidential parties.

REGTRANS: Dummy variable coded 1 for the year before a regime transition (to dictatorship) took place, 0 otherwise. Note that it codes the year before the transition occurs. Hence, correlates of regime transition are lagged with respect to the transition.

AGEPR: Number of years the president has been in power.

AGEP: Number of years the party of the president has been in power.

AGER: Number of years the political regime (as coded by REG) has been in place.

The coding of presidential regimes was based on Alvarez, Cheibub, Limongi and Przeworski (1996) and updated by the author. Information on distribution of legislative seats, constitutions and electoral systems was taken from Banks (1993; 1997), Nohlen (1993), Morrison, Mitchell and Paden (1989), Bratton and Van de Walle (1996), Jones (1995b; 1997), Kurian (1998), Blaustein and Flanz (1971-), Carey, Amorin Neto and Shugart (1997) and Peaslee (1970). A number of more specific sources were also consulted: Choe (1997), Lande (1989), McGuire (1995), Choe (1997), Banlaoi and Carlos (1996), and Carlos and Banlaoi (1996). In addition, the following web sites were consulted: "Constitution Finder" (http://www.urich.edu/~jpjones/confinder/const.htm); "Elections Around the World" (http://www.agora.stm.it/elections/elections.htm); "Parline Database" (http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch/asp). Economic data was extracted from World Bank (1997).

Figure 1
Conditions for Deadlock Between the President and Congress When Presidents Have Veto Power and a Majority of V Votes Is Required for Legislative Override

```
          (1)                    (2)                         (3)
 Opposition Dominates       Deadlock              President Rules
////////////////////////////|||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||||\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
  |----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
 P=0               100-V                M                      V           100
```

P = Share of seats held by the party of the president

Figure 2: Distribution of Cases (Country-Years) by the Number of Chambers, Presidential Veto and Conditions for Veto Override

} Pure Presidential Democracies (727)
- ■ Unicameral (309)
    - **#** No Veto (23)
    - **#** Veto (286)
        - ▬ No Legislative Override (38)
        - ▬ Legislative Override (248)
            - **P** Absolute Majority (34)
            - **P** Two-Third Majority (214)
- ■ Bicameral (418)
    - **#** No Veto (11)
    - **#** Veto (407)
        - ▬ No Legislative Override (0)
        - ▬ Legislative Override (407)
            - **P** Absolute Majority (27)
                - • Separate Chambers (18)
                - • Joint Chambers (9)
            - **P** Two-Third Majority (335)
                - • Separate Chambers (251)
                - • Joint Chambers (84)
            - **P** Three-Fourth Majority (45)
                - • Separate Chambers (4)
                - • Joint Chambers (41)

} Mixed Democracies (236)
- ■ Unicameral (176)
    - **#** No Veto (8)
    - **#** Veto (168)
        - ▬ No Legislative Override (0)
        - ▬ Legislative Override (112)
            - **P** Absolute Majority (83)
            - **P** Two-Third Majority (29)
        - ▬ Third Party Decision: Court or Referendum (56)
- ■ Bicameral (60)
    - **#** No Veto (5)
    - **#** Veto (55)
        - ▬ No Legislative Override (0)
        - ▬ Legislative Override (10)
            - **P** Absolute Majority (10)
                - • Separate Chambers (5)
                - • Joint Chambers (5)
        - ▬ Third Party Decision: Court or Referendum (45)

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Table 1
Possible Scenarios Regarding Executive-Legislative Relations in a Bicameral Setting with a Two-third Veto Override Requirement to Be Voted Separately in Each Chamber

Share of Seats Held by the Party of the President in the:

Lower House: Upper House:	0-33.3%	33.3-50%	>50%
0-33%	Possible veto; Opposition overrides ("Opposition rules")	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in the lower house**	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in the lower house**
33.3-50%	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in the upper house**	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in either house**	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in either house**
>50%	**Possible veto; Opposition cannot override in the upper house**	**Possible Veto; Opposition cannot override in either house**	No veto ("President rules")

Table 2
Frequency of Minority Presidents in Presidential Regimes by Type of Legislature,
Number of Effective Political Parties, Electoral System and Timing of Elections

| | % Minority President | |
	All Regimes	Pure Presidential
All	61.01	57.68
Type of Legislature:		
Unicameral	55.89	47.91
Bicameral	66.01	65.16
Number of Effective Parties (EP):		
$EP \leq 2$	38.07	38.67
$2 < EP \leq 3$	42.72	41.01
$3 < EP \leq 4$	90.00	89.43
$4 < EP \leq 5$	94.12	90.38
$EP > 5$	98.92	98.11
Electoral System:		
Majority-Plurality	51.72	47.55
Pure Proportional	64.64	59.36
Mixed	64.10	80.00
Pure Proportional + Mixed	64.61	60.40
Timing of Legislative and Presidential Elections:		
Non-Concurrent	67.26	60.26
Alternate	65.57	65.57
Concurrent	55.31	54.22

Table 3
Timing of Presidential and Congressional Elections
by the Number of Effective Parties (EP)*

Presidential and Congressional Elections Are:

	Non-Concurrent		Alternate		Concurrent	
	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.
EP≤2	36.76	23.67	33.82	40.83	29.41	35.50
2<EP≤3	32.15	22.87	8.85	10.24	59.00	66.89
3<EP≤4	50.75	23.32	3.02	4.51	46.23	69.17
4<EP≤5	74.28	58.11	4.29	8.11	21.43	33.78
EP>5	70.63	63.16	9.79	14.74	29.47	22.11

* Entries are the proportion of year in each category.

Table 4

**Frequency of Deadlock Situations in Presidential Regimes by Minority President,
Number of Effective Parties, Electoral System and Timing of Elections**

| | % Deadlock Situations | |
	All Regimes	Pure Presidential
All	24.56	32.03
Minority Presidents	49.48	61.50
Number of Effective Parties (EP):		
EP$\leq$2	31.69	37.91
2<EP$\leq$3	28.44	32.85
3<EP$\leq$4	29.47	41.60
4<EP$\leq$5	20.29	32.88
EP>5	3.85	6.10
Electoral System:		
Majority-Plurality	27.78	37.16
Proportional	23.22	29.67
Proportional+Mixed	22.56	29.23
Timing of Legislative and		
Presidential Elections:		
Nonconcurrent	8.33	15.79
Alternate	54.10	54.10
Concurrent	32.51	33.85

Table 5
Transition Probabilities by Partisan and Electoral Conditions

	Pure Presidential	All Regimes
Number of Effective Parties (EP)		
EP≤2	0.0592	0.0637
2<EP≤3	0.0239	0.0206
3<EP≤4	0.0752	0.0502
4<EP≤5	0.0541	0.0357
EP>5	0.0105	0.0140
EP≤3.5	0.0383	0.0362
2<EP≤3.5	0.0283	0.0231
3.5<EP≤5	0.0748	0.0488
EP>5	0.0105	0.0140
Electoral System:		
Plurality	0.0427	0.0426
Proportional	0.0391	0.0316
Proportional+Mixed	0.0371	0.0297
Timing of Legislative and Presidential Elections:		
Nonconcurrent	0.0506	0.0337
Alternate	0.0504	0.0503
Concurrent	0.0376	0.0386

Table 6
Average Share of Seats Held by the Party of the President in Congress by the Number of Effective Parties (EP)

	Unicameral:		Bicameral (Lower):		Bicameral (Upper):	
	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.	Mixed and Pres.	Pure Pres.
1<EP≤1.5	63.15	84.25	76.83	79.42	75.13	76.59
1.5<EP≤2	68.78	67.15	53.30	52.99	55.51	56.52
2<EP≤2.5	55.23	56.83	52.76	51.95	56.37	56.02
2.5<EP≤3	46.11	47.99	44.04	43.69	49.01	49.01
3<EP≤3.5	37.64	38.57	40.85	41.50	49.83	46.85
3.5<EP≤4	30.75	30.75	34.00	33.54	40.28	42.20
4<EP≤4.5	32.56	34.66	34.59	26.81	25.39	25.14
4.5<EP≤5	27.64	45.44	54.12	59.66	48.60	49.97
EP>5	22.49	22.29	49.32	57.28	23.39	16.42

Table 7: Party System Characteristics by Number of Effective Parties (EP)

	Mixed and Presidential		Pure Presidential	
	Party Struct. I	Party Struct. II	Party Struct. I	Party Struct. II
1<EP≤1.5	92.06	1.17	91.98	1.16
1.5<EP≤2	95.12	1.47	97.09	1.50
2<EP≤2.5	92.97	1.69	93.99	1.73
2.5<EP≤3	90.92	1.92	91.31	1.93
3<EP≤3.5	87.58	2.12	87.84	2.10
3.5<EP≤4	79.40	2.16	79.09	2.22
4<EP≤4.5	78.79	2.09	75.58	2.11
4.5<EP≤5	73.49	2.43	74.30	2.48
EP>5	61.88	2.41	60.90	2.46
EP>5 (less LGSTP<30)	63.57	1.78	66.34	1.81

Table 8
Transition Probabilities for Presidential Democracies
by Minority Presidents and Deadlock Situations

	Mixed and Presidential	Pure Presidential
Majority Presidents	0.0427	0.0444
Minority Presidents	0.0470	0.0426
No Deadlock Conditions	0.0430	0.0342
Deadlock Conditions	0.0348	0.0336

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Endnotes

1. These numbers come from Alvarez et al. (1996) and the author's update.

2. An early argument was offered in Linz (1978:71-74). See also Linz (1990a and 1990b) for further developments.

3. This paragraph is based on Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (1996) and Alvarez (1997), which present a comprehensive comparison of performance, political and economic, under parliamentarism and presidentialism. Power and Gasiorowski (1997), however, using a sample of developing countries and measures of performance that are somewhat arbitrary, find that there is no difference between the two regimes.

4. The original formulation of this view was, of course, Linz (1978) and elaborated in Linz (1994); " Since [the president and the congress] derive their power from the vote of the people in a free competition among well-defined alternatives, a conflict is always latent and sometimes likely to erupt dramatically; there is no democratic principle to resolve it, and the mechanisms that might exist in the constitution are generally complex, highly technical, legalistic, and, therefore, of doubtful democratic legitimacy for the electorate. It is therefore no accident that in some of those situations the military intervenes as '*poder moderador*'" (p.7). This view, as argued in the text, has become widespread and can be found in Stepan and Skach (1993) ("The essence of pure presidentialism is mutual independence. From this defining (and confining) condition a series of incentives and decision rules for encouraging the emergence of minority governments, discouraging the formation of durable coalitions, maximizing legislative impasses, motivating executives to flout the constitution, and stimulating political society to call periodically for military coups predictably flows. Presidents and legislatures are directly elected and have their own fixed mandates. This mutual independence creates the possibility of a political impasse between the chief executive and the legislative body for which there is no constitutionally available impasse-breaking device" pp.17-18; Presidentialism, in sharp contrast [with parliamentarism], systematically contributes to impasses and democratic breakdown," p.19); Mainwaring and Scully (1995) ("Because of the fixed terms of office, if a president is unable to implement her/his program, there is no alternative but deadlock" p.33); Valenzuela (1994:136); Jones (1995a:34, 38); Ackerman (2000:645); Linz and Stepan (1996:181); Nino (1996:168-169), Hartlyn (1994:221), González and Gillespie (1994:172), Huang (1997:138-139); among others.

5. These changes, as Cheibub and Limongi (2000) note, may not be sufficient to resolve the conflicts that made them necessary. For the purposes of this paper, however, it is sufficient to consider that the fundamental difference between parliamentary and presidential democracies lies in the fact that the alternatives of forming a new government or calling new elections in case of disagreements between the executive and the legislative exist in the former but not in the latter.

6. There is no left-censoring in coding the age of the regimes; the time frame was extended as far back as 1870.

7. Shugart (1995) distinguishes the two situations. The paradigmatic example of the former situation is the United States, about which a large literature has developed (for reviews see Brady 1993, McKay 1994 and Fiorina 1996). Note that in this literature, contrary to the comparative literature, there is no consensus about the impact of minority presidents. See Sundquist (1988) for a statement of the negative consequences of divided government, and essays in Cox and Kernell (1991) for studies showing how divided government affects policy output. See Mayhew (1991) for an analysis concluding that divided government is of no consequence for the volume of congressional investigations and the enactment of major legislation in the US. Mayhew's analysis has originated its own literature, the latest examples of which may be found in Binder (1999) and Coleman (1999). No-majority situations are exemplified by a number of Latin American countries, including Argentina after 1983, Bolivia since 1982, Brazil both in the 1946-1964 and post-1990 periods, Chile prior to 1973 and after 1990, Ecuador after 1979, El Salvador since 1984, Uruguay since 1984 and Venezuela for most of the period since 1964.

8. In only 18% of the cases do minority presidents face a unified opposition. The bulk of these cases (42% and 18%, respectively) are represented by the U.S. and the Philippines between 1946 and 1968.

9. Comparative data on the partisan basis of presidential governments are scarce. Part of the reason has to do with the fact that the dominant view of presidentialism implies that coalition governments are unlikely in these regimes and that, when they exist, they are precarious if not absolutely meaningless. A few analysts, like Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) for example, have attempted to assess the partisan composition of presidential governments by measuring the legislative seats held by the parties that participated in the coalition that supported the president at the elections. They, however, recognize the limitation of this measure to indicate the size of the coalition of parties that support the president in congress, ultimately concluding that the share of seats held by the party of the president is a better measure of the president's legislative support (p.403). To my knowledge, only very recently have some analysts focused their attention on governing coalitions in presidential regimes. See Dehesa (1997), Amorin Neto (1998), Foweraker (1998) and Altman-Olin (1999) .

10. Note that the possibility that presidents will form coalitions in order to obtain majority control of congress does not imply either that these coalitions will be formed or that, if formed, they will be majoritarian. Just as in parliamentary regimes, minority governments, whether single or multiparty, may emerge.

11. Across the board disciplined parties can hinder a minority president's ability to form ad hoc majorities to approve specific legislation; across the board undisciplined parties, on the other hand, make it difficult for a majority president to rely on the seats he or she supposedly controls. From the point of view of the executive, the best situation would be the one in which only the party of the president is highly disciplined.

12. Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), for instance, base the party discipline component of their index of presidential partisan powers on three aspects of party and electoral legislation: selection of candidates, the order in which candidates are elected, and the way votes are counted for candidates and their parties. Carey and Shugart (1995) propose a ranking of electoral systems according to the incentives candidates have to cultivate a personal vote. See also Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina (1987) for an argument that relates single-member plurality districts with the personal vote.

13. Consider the case of post-1988 Brazil, arguably the presidential system with the most permissive party legislation. According to Figueiredo and Limongi (2000), in any roll-call vote taken in the lower house of the Brazilian National Congress since 1988, 9 out of 10 representatives voted according to the recommendation of their party leaders.

14. According to Linz (1994), "the idea of a more disciplined and 'responsible' party system is structurally in conflict, if not incompatible, with pure presidentialism," p.35). He also argues that "While the incentive structure in parliamentary systems encourages party discipline and therefore consolidation of party organizations, presidential systems have no such incentives for party loyalty (except where there are well-structured ideological parties)" (pp.41-42).

15. In this counting, governments change only when a new prime minister comes into office. Thus, contrary to Strom (1990) and most of the literature on government formation in parliamentary democracies (Warick 1994, King et al. 1990, Robertson 1984), prime ministers who survive an election, or who resign and are subsequently reappointed to office, are not counted as two governments. In this sense my counting underestimates the number of governments and, hence, the number of minority governments in these parliamentary democracies. See also Laver and Schofield (1998) for a discussion of minority governments in European parliamentary regimes and for an argument for the inappropriateness of the "majoritarian imperative" for the analysis of these systems.

16. This analysis employs a crude measure of electoral cycle. Cox (1997), for example, provides a more refined measure of proximity of presidential and legislative elections, which would allow us to gauge with more precision the impact of electoral cycle on presidential majorities and the number of parties. The measure employed here, however, is sufficient to establish that, as expected, the timing of electoral and presidential elections is related to the frequency with which presidential parties control a majority of seats in Congress.

17. Between 1946 and 1996 there were 91 presidential regimes (pure and mixed), of which 42 "died," that is, changed into a non-presidential type of political regime, and 49 were in place as of December 1996. The vast majority of the presidential regimes that "died" became dictatorships; only Bangladesh in 1991 changed from a mixed system to a pure parliamentary regime. In general, democratic regimes are very resilient in their form of government. The only other changes occurred in Brazil in 1961 (from pure presidential to mixed) and 1963 (back to pure presidential), which in the data set used in this analysis does not appear as a change, and in France with the inauguration of the Fifth Republic in 1958, when a mixed system replaced the parliamentary regime of the Fourth Republic.

18. When a duration model is estimated we find that the impact of the timing of elections on the survival of presidential regimes is not statistically different from zero.

19. The way the data are grouped does make some difference. For instance, if we use 3.5 as the cut-off point (the number that Mainwaring and Shugart 1997 believe matters for the functioning of presidential regimes], we find that, indeed, one in thirty-two presidential democracies dies when there are less than 3.5 effective parties and one in thirteen dies when there are more than 3.5 parties. There is, however, too much aggregation in this number as we find, for example, that the hazard rate of presidential democracies is even higher when the number of effective parties is between 3.5 and five, reducing drastically when the number of parties is higher than five.

20. These effects are robust to model specification: they do not change if hazard rates are modeled as being constant, monotonically increasing or decreasing, or changing directions; it is also robust to sample heterogeneity. Note, in addition, that these results, contrary to the figures presented in Table 8, do take into consideration the fact that a number of regimes were still in place when observations ended. These results are not reported due to space considerations, but they can be obtained from the author by request.

21. Of 148 presidents observed during this period, only nine were in systems where there were no restrictions on reelection. Twenty-eight were in systems in which a president can serve a maximum of two terms. If we count the first terms of these presidents, we obtain a total of 31 cases in which presidents could, if they wanted to, be reelected. About 40% of the presidents had to sit one term out before participating in a new election, whereas 28% were barred from reelection at any time.

22. In the Dominican Republic in 1978, when Joaquín Balaguer lost to Antonio Guzmán Fernández; in Nicaragua in 1990, when Daniel Ortega Saavedra lost to Violeta Chamorro; in the US in 1977, when Gerald Ford lost to Jimmy Carter and 1981, when Carter lost to Ronald Reagan; and in the Philippines in 1953, when Elpidio Quirino lost to Ramon Magsaysay, as well as in 1961, when Carlos Garcia lost to Diosdado Macapagal. In all the other cases the incumbent, for various reasons, did not run. These include, for example, Lyndon Johnson in 1969 in the US, Salvador Jorge Blanco in 1986 in the Dominican Republic, Nereu Ramos in Brazil in 1956, Hector Campora in Argentina in 1973.

23. It is also limited by the lack of comparable economic data for the 1946-96 period.

24. A strong president and a weak congress seems to be one of the conditions generally found to be necessary for presidential regimes to function, even among those who, like Shugart and Carey (1992), have called our attention to the fact that presidential regimes may come in several guises. An alternative would be a weak president and a strong congress. Instability would be likely wherever a strong president faces a strong congress. In these cases, the logic of separation that characterizes presidentialism dominates, and conflict is likely to emerge. I do not see why this needs to be so.

25. This criterion coincides almost perfectly with the mode of selection of the government: by legislatures in parliamentary systems, by voters (directly or indirectly) in presidential systems. For a review of the differences, see Lijphart (1992).

26. The Chilean 1891-1925 democracy does not fit this classification. While it was popularly called "parliamentary," this is a misnomer. The Chilean lower house frequently censured individual ministers but could not and did not remove the government or the chief executive, the president. In parliamentary systems, except for some early rare cases, the responsibility of the government is collective.