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## **Minority Governments, Deadlock Situations, and the Survival of Presidential Democracies**

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What are the conditions that generate minority presidents, minority governments, and deadlock in presidential regimes? What is the impact of minority presidents, minority governments, and deadlock on the survival of these regimes? Based on data for all presidential democracies that existed between 1946 and 1996, the author shows (a) 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 and minority governments; (b) that these characteristics, and the minority governments they generate, do not make deadlock more likely; and (c) that minority presidents, minority governments, and deadlock do not affect the survival of presidential democracies. Together, these findings suggest that the view that explains the instability of presidential democracies in terms of the type of executive-legislative relations these regimes are likely to induce must be abandoned. The author offers two reasons, institutional in nature, that may account for the instability of presidential regimes.

## MINORITY GOVERNMENTS, DEADLOCK SITUATIONS, AND THE SURVIVAL OF PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACIES

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**B**etween 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.<sup>1</sup>

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—that supposedly created conditions that were adverse to the

1. These numbers come from Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi (2000) and the author's update.

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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 Linz (1994),<sup>2</sup> 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, existing evidence shows that parliamentary democracies tend to last longer than presidential democracies and that the difference in survival rates of these two regimes is not due to the wealth of countries in which they are observed; to their economic performance; or to conditions under which they emerged, in particular the military legacy of the previous authoritarian regime.<sup>3</sup>

The instability of presidential democracies has been commonly accounted for by the principle of separation between executive and legislative authorities. A conventional wisdom has emerged that, first, sees the occurrence of minority governments, and the deadlock between executives and legislatures that it supposedly causes, as the predominant condition of presidential regimes. Second, because 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 extraconstitutional means of resolving their differences, thus making presidential regimes prone to instability and eventual death. It is thus the separation of executive and legislative powers inherent to presidential regimes that is usually invoked to account for the fact that they die more frequently than parliamentary regimes.<sup>4</sup>

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

3. See Alvarez (1997) and Przeworski et al. (2000) for a comprehensive comparison of performance, political and economic, under parliamentarism and presidentialism.

4. The original formulation of this view was, of course, Linz (1978), elaborated in Linz (1994, p. 7):

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 there-

In this article, I examine the conditions that generate minority presidents, minority governments, and deadlock conditions in presidential regimes; and I evaluate their impact 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, this analysis allows us to answer the following question: Is it indeed the occurrence of minority governments and deadlock conditions that make presidential regimes less stable than parliamentary regimes? Let me explain why this is so.

Ideally, to assess the impact of minority status and deadlock on the survival of presidential and parliamentary regimes, we should compare their survival rates under each condition. Although minority governments may exist under each of these regimes, deadlock between the executive and the legislative cannot emerge in parliamentarism, at least not in the same way that it emerges in presidentialism. The fact that governments under parliamentarism can exist only as long as there is no alternative majority that can replace them implies that in cases of serious disagreement between the executive and the legislative majority, either the executive changes or the legislative majority changes.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, it is not possible to directly assess the effect of deadlock on the survival rates of parliamentary and presidential regimes. But we can adopt an indirect approach.

Let *Ma* be the situation in which governments have majority support in the legislature; *MiND* the situation in which governments do not have majority support in the legislature and there is no deadlock between the government and the legislature; and *MiD* 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 break down;  $f_{Ma}$  the frequency with which democracies with majority governments die;  $f_{Mi}$  the frequency

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fore no accident that in some of those situations the military intervenes as "*poder moderador*."

This view has become widespread and can be found in Ackerman (2000, p. 645), González and Gillespie (1994, p. 172), Hartlyn (1994, p. 221), Huang (1997, pp. 138-139), Jones (1995a, pp. 34, 38), Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 181), Mainwaring and Scully (1995), Niño (1996, pp. 168-169), Stepan and Skach (1993), and Valenzuela (1994, p. 136), among others.

5. It may be the case, as Cheibub and Limongi (2000) note, that these changes will not be sufficient to resolve the conflicts that made them necessary. For the purposes of this article, 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.

with which democracies with minority governments die; and  $f_D$  the frequency with which presidential democracies with minority governments and deadlocks die.

The probability that a presidential democracy dies is  $\Pr \{\text{presidential democracy dies}\} = p_{Ma}f_{Ma} + p_{MiND}(f_{Mi} - f_D) + p_{MiD}(f_D)$ . And because deadlock in parliamentary democracies cannot be observed, the probability that they will die is  $\Pr \{\text{parliamentary democracy dies}\} = p_{Ma}f_{Ma} + p_{MiND}f_{Mi}$ . If  $p_{MiND} = p_{MiD}$ , that is, if the survival chances of presidential democracies are not affected by deadlock, then  $\Pr \{\text{presidential democracy dies}\} = \Pr \{\text{parliamentary democracy dies}\} = p_{Ma}f_{Ma} + p_{MiND}f_{Mi}$ . Thus, if deadlock does not matter for the survival of presidential regimes, it can be concluded that it is not what makes the survival rates of presidential democracies inferior to the survival rates of parliamentary democracies. This is why we can also say something about whether it is deadlock between the executive and the legislative that makes presidential democracies more brittle than parliamentary democracies, even though the article analyzes only presidential regimes.

This article is based on data for all pure presidential regimes that have existed between 1946 and 1996.<sup>6</sup> During this time, there were 790 years of presidentialism distributed across 38 countries. The appendix contains a brief discussion of the criteria utilized to classify presidentialism and the resulting list of cases.

### MINORITY GOVERNMENTS AND DEADLOCK SITUATIONS

Minority governments are those in which the governing coalition does not control a majority of seats in the legislature or, in a bicameral system, those in which it does not control a majority of seats in at least one of the chambers. Here I am primarily interested in minority governments and not, as in much of the existing literature, in minority presidents. The latter are frequent under presidential regimes, but they are not what really matters for the operation of these regimes.<sup>7</sup> In much the same way as prime ministers in parliamentary systems, presidents who find themselves in a minority situation may enter

6. There is no left censoring in coding the age of the regimes; the time frame was extended as far back as 1870. Thus, the age of the regime in the United States in 1946 was 77 years. Due to space limitations, mixed democracies, that is, democracies in which the government is responsible to both an independently elected president and a legislative majority, are not included here.

7. See Cheibub (in press) for an analysis that looks specifically at minority presidents and considers the impact of deadlock on government accountability with respect to economic outcomes.

into coalition to obtain the support of a majority in congress. They do so by distributing cabinet positions to parties that pledge their support to the government in congress.<sup>8</sup> Government, thus, is here defined by all the parties that hold cabinet positions, and the government legislative support by the sum of seats held by all the parties that are in the government.

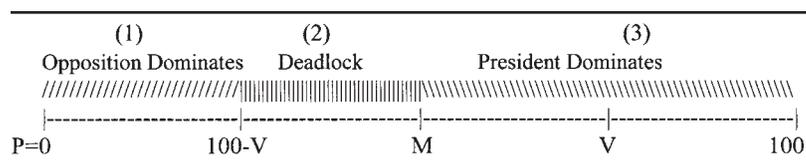
I do not distinguish the situations in which a minority president faces a unified opposition—the cases of divided government, as discussed in the literature about the United States—from the situations in which no party has a majority.<sup>9</sup> Although not politically irrelevant, the former situations are not empirically important:<sup>10</sup> 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 the following situation.  $P$  is the share of seats held by the government 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

8. The probability that at any given point in time a minority president (i.e., a president whose party controls less than 50% of the seats in at least one legislative house) will head a majority government is .24. However, little is known about coalition formation in presidential regimes. 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, when they exist, that they are precarious if not absolutely meaningless. In my opinion (Cheibub & Limongi, 2000) this view is not correct. A few analysts (e.g., Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997) have attempted to assess the partisan composition of presidential governments by measuring the legislative seats held by the parties that participated in the president's electoral coalition. 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 (Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997, p. 403). To my knowledge, only very recently have some analysts focused their attention on governing coalitions in presidential regimes. See, for example, Dehesa (1997), Amorin Neto (1998), and Altman-Olin (1999).

9. 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; Fiorina, 1996; McKay, 1994). 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 United States. Mayhew's analysis has originated its own literature, the latest examples of which may be found in Binder (1999) and Coleman (1999).

10. 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 United States and the Philippines between 1946 and 1968.



**Figure 1. Conditions for deadlock between the president and congress when presidents have veto power and a majority of votes is required for legislative override.**

*Note:*  $P$  = share of seats held by the government coalition;  $M$  = share of members of congress necessary to approve legislation;  $V$  = share of members of congress necessary to override presidential veto.

approved in both houses. Under these conditions, it is possible to distinguish the situation in which the government controls a majority of seats in congress, and hence in which congress passes bills preferred by the president, from the situation in which the government 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,  $V \geq M$ . Thus,  $0 < M \leq V < 100$  (see Figure 1).

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. In these cases, 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, the president dominates. It is only when  $100 - V \leq P < M$  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 legislative have independent basis of authority. This is the situation that should make presidential regimes the most vulnerable, because both the president and the opposition would have an incentive to seek extraconstitutional solutions to the stalemate.

Empirically, thus, deadlock situations depend on the combination of institutional and political factors. On one hand, they depend on the distribution of seats in congress or, more specifically, on the share of seats held by the government. 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 presiden-

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Total number of presidential democracies (727)	
Unicameral (295)	Bicameral (475)
No veto (8)	No veto (66)
Veto (287)	Veto (409)
No legislative override (37)	No legislative override (0)
Legislative override (250)	Legislative override (409)
Absolute majority (23)	Absolute majority (28)
Two-third majority (227)	Separate chambers (19)
	Joint chambers (9)
	Two-third majority (337)
	Separate chambers (255)
	Joint chambers (82)
	Three-fourth majority (44)
	Separate chambers (4)
	Joint chambers (40)

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*Figure 2.* Distribution of cases (country-years) by number of chambers, presidential veto, and conditions for veto override.

tial veto, whether the system is unicameral or bicameral, and 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) according to these institutional factors. Note, to begin with, that there are only a handful of cases in which the president has no veto power: in unicameral systems, Uganda from 1980 to 1985 and Kyrgyzstan prior to the 1993 constitution; in bicameral systems, Peru in the 1950s and 1960s, Russia prior to the 1993 constitution, and Switzerland. Cyprus is the only country in which the president has veto power but congress cannot override the presidential veto. The majority of cases thus allow for presidential veto and congressional override, most frequently by a two-thirds majority (81% of the cases in which the president can veto legislation).

There are circumstances under which deadlock will not occur, regardless of the share of seats controlled by the party of the president or the government.<sup>11</sup> But in the majority of the cases, it is the combination of the rules regarding presidential veto *and* the share of seats held by the government coalition that define the conditions under which deadlock situations are likely to occur. To give just one example, consider the case in which the system is bicameral, the president has veto powers, and veto override is by a two-thirds majority in a vote taken in each chamber separately (such as in the

11. For instance, when the president has no veto powers or when congress cannot override the presidential veto. Together, these situations represent about 20% of the cases of presidentialism.

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*

Seats Held by President's Party in Upper House	Seats Held by President's Party in Lower House		
	0% to 33.3%	33.3% to 50%	>50%
0% to 33%	Possible veto; opposition overrides ("opposition rules")	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in the lower house</b>	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in the lower house</b>
33.3% to 50%	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in the upper house</b>	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in either house</b>	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in either house</b>
>50%	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in the upper house</b>	<b>Possible veto; opposition cannot override in either house</b>	No veto ("president rules")

Note: Cells in boldface are deadlock situations.

United States, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia until 1990). In these cases, deadlock may be pervasive. As Table 1 illustrates, deadlock is unlikely to occur only if the opposition holds more than two thirds of the seats in both houses or the government holds more than 50% of the seats in both houses. All the other situations, set in boldface in Table 1, are deadlock situations. Thus, for the purposes of this article, deadlock situations were identified and coded by working through the possible combinations of institutional factors and the distribution of seats held by the government.

## PARTY DISCIPLINE

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 government. There is no doubt that party discipline is an important factor in analyzing executive-legislative relations, although its precise effect is ambiguous.<sup>12</sup> Here I shall argue that in the absence of appropri-

12. Across the board, disciplined parties can hinder a minority president's ability to form ad hoc majorities to approve specific legislation; 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

ate 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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 because the mechanisms that supposedly produce highly disciplined parties in parliamentarism are, by definition, absent in presidential regimes.<sup>15</sup> The argument goes like this: to exist, governments in parliamentary regimes need to secure a majority in parliament, and 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 parlia-

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of view of the executive, the best situation would be the one in which only the parties that are in the government are highly disciplined.

13. 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 (1994) propose a ranking of electoral systems according to the incentives candidates have to cultivate a personal vote.

14. 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.

15. 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).

ment in parliamentary regimes have an incentive to comply with their parties 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 as it does 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. It is now known 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 1996, 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). Thus, the majoritarian imperative that 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 1996 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 took place without elections; and that 24% of the changes in the largest party in the government 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; Cheibub, 1998); 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 governments and deadlock situations in mind, it is now possible to investigate the conditions under which these situations are likely to occur in presidential regimes, 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 five main points to be noted.

The first point is that minority presidents are indeed frequent in presidential regimes: in about 53% of the cases, the party of the president does not control a majority of seats in the legislature. This rate is higher in bicameral systems (close to 60%) than in unicameral systems (about 46%). Still, almost half of the years in unicameral systems were years of minority presidents.

Presidents, however, enter into coalition, which makes minority governments much less frequent than minority presidents: overall, about 40% of the years of presidentialism were experienced with minority governments, higher again in bicameral (42.54%) than in unicameral (36.46%) systems. These numbers are higher than what has been observed in (European) parliamentary systems, but not dramatically higher. As reported by Strom (1990, p. 8), studies of parliamentary governments in Europe, including his own, have found that the frequency of minority governments ranges from 30% to 37%.

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 the descriptive patterns in Table 2 indicate, minority presidents are more frequent when congressional elections are held under proportional representation systems, in multiparty systems (although it does not increase monotonically as the effective number of parties increases), and when presidential and legislative elections do not coincide. The occurrence of minority governments is also associated with these factors, although some of the effect is diluted by the fact that minority presidents sometimes build a majority through coalitions.

Statistical analysis modifies these findings only slightly. As Table 3 indicates, the effective number of political parties increases, and the coincidence of presidential and legislative elections reduces, the likelihood of minority governments in presidential regimes. The electoral system, in turn, affects the incidence of minority governments only through its effect on the effective number of parties: It is multipartism, as argued by Mainwaring (1993), and

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

	Minority Presidents		Minority Governments		Deadlock Situations	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
All	53.35	731	40.22	726	33.52	710
Type of legislature						
Unicameral	45.85	277	36.46	277	29.67	273
Bicameral	59.93	454	42.54	449	35.96	437
Electoral system						
Majority-plurality	43.84	146	39.04	146	36.99	146
Pure proportional	54.15	554	39.42	553	32.96	540
Pure proportional + mixed	55.73	585	40.52	580	32.62	564
Effective number of parties (ENP)						
ENP ≤ 2	38.67	150	35.33	150	27.33	150
2 < ENP ≤ 3	38.08	281	33.45	281	31.49	280
3 < ENP ≤ 4	88.46	130	59.69	129	49.22	128
4 < ENP ≤ 5	63.38	71	28.17	71	28.17	71
ENP > 5	62.65	83	50.60	83	32.10	81
ENP excluding the United States and Switzerland						
ENP ≤ 2	31.13	106	26.42	106	15.09	106
2 < ENP ≤ 3	37.96	274	33.21	274	31.13	273
3 < ENP ≤ 4	88.46	130	59.69	129	49.22	128
4 < ENP ≤ 5	90.00	50	40.00	50	40.00	50
ENP > 5	98.11	53	79.24	53	50.98	51
Timing of legislative and presidential elections						
Nonconcurrent	59.68	124	45.16	124	40.32	124
Alternate	73.91	138	66.92	133	47.11	121
Nonconcurrent + alternate	67.18	262	56.42	257	43.67	245
Concurrent	45.63	469	31.34	469	28.17	465

*Note:* Minority presidents are the cases in which the party of the president does not control more than 50% of the seats in the legislature in a unicameral system or in at least one of the chambers in a bicameral system. Minority governments are defined similarly for the party of the president plus the parties that hold cabinet positions.

not proportionality, that matters for the occurrence of minority governments in presidentialism. These conclusions remain the same even after controlling for the age of the democracy, the legislative structure (bicameralism), and whether the party of the president is the largest legislative party; it also remains unchanged if United States and Switzerland are excluded from the analysis (Model 6 in Table 3).

As Tables 2 and 3 indicate, the timing of presidential and congressional elections (the electoral cycle) affects the likelihood of minority governments

Table 3  
*Logit Estimates of Minority Governments*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
PROP	.0128 (.046)			.0049 (.051)		
EFFPARTY		.0486 (.012)		.0455 (.013)	.0286 (.0146)	.0704 (.018)
COINCIDE			-.2435 (.039)	-.2378 (.040)	-.2162 (.043)	-.1927 (.049)
AGE					-.0024 (.001)	.0071 (.002)
PRESLGST					-.4705 (.051)	-.3077 (.055)
BICAMER					.0912 (.045)	.0818 (.045)
CONSTANT	-.1070 (.040)	-.2530 (.041)	.0582 (.031)	-.0951 (.054)	.3020 (.077)	-.0649 (.094)
% CORRECT	59.94	61.20	64.15	64.57	72.98	70.74
<i>n</i>	714	714	714	714	707	605

*Note:* Dependent variable is minority governments, defined as in Table 2. Entries are partial effects, evaluated at the mean of the independent variables; standard errors are in parentheses. PROP = dummy variable coded 1 when legislative elections are held under proportional representation systems, 0 otherwise; ENP = effective number of parties; COINCIDE = dummy variable coded 1 when presidential and legislative elections always coincide, 0 otherwise; AGE = number of years the regime has been in place; PRESLGST = dummy variable coded 1 when the party of the president is the largest party in the legislature, 0 otherwise; BICAMER = dummy variable coded 1 when the legislature is bicameral, 0 otherwise; % CORRECT = percentage of cases correctly predicted by the model. Model 6 excludes the United States and Switzerland.

in presidential regimes. Presidential governments are more likely to hold a majority in congress when presidential and congressional elections coincide than when they do not coincide, either because they alternate or are never held at the same dates: 31.3% are minority governments in the former situation and 56.4% in the latter. The reason for this is thought to be that the number of parties, and hence the likelihood of minority governments, will be higher when presidential and congressional elections do not coincide (Jones, 1995a; Shugart, 1995; Shugart & Carey, 1992). This, however, cannot be the entire story, because the frequency of systems with fewer than three parties (as indicated by the effective number of parties) is about 59% both when elections coincide and when they do not coincide.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, as Table 3 shows, the effect of coincident presidential and legislative elections does not disap-

16. The complete distribution of cases by the electoral cycle and the effective number of parties can be obtained directly from the author on request.

Table 4  
*Logit Estimates of Deadlock Situations*

	1	2
PROP	-.0458 (.050)	-.0008 (.059)
EFFPARTY	.0176 (.013)	.0583 (.015)
COINCIDE	-.1189 (.039)	-.0586 (.044)
AGE	-.0013 (.001)	.0047 (.002)
PRESLGST	-.2491 (.042)	-.0719 (.048)
BICAMER	.0842 (.041)	.0787 (.041)
CONSTANT	.0654 (.069)	-.3353 (.090)
% CORRECT	71.02	64.78
<i>n</i>	704	602

*Note:* Dependent variable is deadlock situations, defined in the text as a function of the number of seats held by the government by whether presidents can veto legislation; by the requirements for legislative override of the presidential veto; by the legislative structure; and by whether, in bicameral systems, veto override is by a vote in each house or by a joint session of both houses. Entries are partial effects, evaluated at the mean of the independent variables; standard errors in parentheses. See Table 3 for the definition of independent variables. Model 2 excludes the United States and Switzerland.

pear even after controlling for the effective number of parties. Thus, although the electoral cycle matters for the occurrence of minority presidential governments, the reason why it does needs to be further investigated.

Third, deadlock situations are far from being the predominant condition of presidentialism. Overall, deadlock occurs in about one third of the cases (33.52%), and it is only weakly related to the conditions that are considered to be at the root of the instability of presidential regimes: the effective number of parties, whether congressional elections are proportional or not, or whether legislative and presidential elections are concurrent. As Table 4 demonstrates, once the age of the regime, the legislative structure, and whether the party of the president is the largest party in the legislature are controlled for, only the electoral cycle matters for the occurrence of deadlock. This effect, however, disappears if the United States and Switzerland are excluded from the sample. Thus, partisan and electoral factors have no real independent effect on the probability that deadlock situations will occur in presidential regimes.

Fourth, 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, because minority presidents are

Table 5  
*Breakdown Probabilities of Presidential Regimes by Partisan, Electoral, and Political Conditions*

	Number of Transitions	Number of Cases	Breakdown Probability
Effective number of parties (ENP)			
ENP $\leq$ 2	7	153	.0458
2 < ENP $\leq$ 3	6	287	.0209
3 < ENP $\leq$ 4	10	140	.0714
4 < ENP $\leq$ 5	3	72	.0417
ENP > 5	1	90	.0111
Electoral system			
Majority-plurality	8	166	.0482
Proportional	22	582	.0378
Proportional + mixed	23	618	.0372
Timing of legislative and presidential elections			
Nonconcurrent	5	157	.0318
Alternate	8	146	.0548
Nonconcurrent + alternate	13	303	.0429
Concurrent	18	481	.0374
Political conditions			
Minority presidents	18	390	.0462
Majority presidents	10	341	.0293
Minority governments	17	434	.0392
Majority governments	11	292	.0377
Deadlock situations	9	238	.0378
No deadlock situations	15	472	.0318

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. From that, it is then inferred that these factors also affect the survival of presidential regimes. However, whereas it is indeed true, as has been seen, that these conditions affect the likelihood that presidents and their governments 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 probabilities that presidential regimes will break down as a function of electoral and partisan variables. It can be seen 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 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.<sup>17</sup>

The story with the number of political parties is somewhat more complex. It is not, contrary to Mainwaring (1993) and Jones (1995a), multipartism per se that affects the survival of presidential regimes. In presidential democracies, higher 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 an effective number of parties larger than five, the cases that tend to be conducive to “polarized pluralism” in Sartori’s typology, have an expected life considerably higher than the presidential democracies in which the effective number of parties is fewer than five: 91 years against 25.

Why should moderate pluralism affect the survival of presidential democracies so strongly? One possibility would be that moderate pluralism somehow 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 unicameral and bicameral systems are considered 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 effective number of parties is around 3.5 and 4.5, respectively. Note, however, that the share of seats held by the party of the president falls sharply when there are more than five effective parties, even though the hazard rates in these cases are, as 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.<sup>18</sup> According to Table 6, this happens when the number of effective parties is between 2 and 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. Moreover, as the last three columns of Table 6 indicate, this relationship disappears if the fact that minority presidents enter into coalition to secure a majority in congress is allowed for.

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,

17. 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.

18. According to Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), this is the point that matters for the functioning of presidential regimes.

Table 6  
*Average Share of Seats Held by the President's Party and President's Coalition in Congress by the Effective Number of Parties (ENP)*

	President's Party			President's Coalition		
	Unicameral	Bicameral (Lower)	Bicameral (Upper)	Unicameral	Bicameral (Lower)	Bicameral (Upper)
1 < ENP ≤ 1.5	84.70	82.40	85.20	84.70	82.40	85.20
1.5 < ENP ≤ 2	64.82	60.56	71.41	65.75	70.35	84.13
2 < ENP ≤ 2.5	54.40	51.42	55.23	56.62	57.14	62.09
2.5 < ENP ≤ 3	47.48	45.53	48.47	50.73	51.32	51.89
3 < ENP ≤ 3.5	38.57	40.14	45.78	38.57	49.71	54.54
3.5 < ENP ≤ 4	31.07	32.66	41.36	54.80	45.82	48.05
4 < ENP ≤ 4.5	31.34	26.90	23.98	35.95	65.34	60.95
4.5 < ENP ≤ 5	45.44	59.01	41.72	46.66	67.69	54.41
ENP > 5	18.77	55.93	19.15	37.40	63.58	47.12

any democratic regime—is the existence of three political forces of relatively equal strength, each of which is attempting to implement its own program either alone or in alternating coalitions. Pluralism, in such cases, will be moderate, with the effective number of parties hovering between three and four. More important, compromises may be difficult as they would be inherently unstable: Agreements between any two parties could be undermined by counteroffers 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 effective number of parties. Party Structure 1 is simply the sum of seats held by the three largest parties in congress, whereas 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 1, the more concentrated is the distribution of strength among the three largest parties; the closer it is to 3, the more evenly divided are the seats held by the three largest parties. As shown in Table 7, the three largest parties are more likely to hold an equal share of seats in moderate and strong pluralism than in weak pluralism. The closest the distribution of seats among the three largest parties gets to being equal is when the effective number of 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 these cases are

Table 7  
*Party System Characteristics by Effective Number of Parties (ENP)*

	Party Structure 1	Party Structure 2
1 < ENP ≤ 1.5	92.13	1.10
1.5 < ENP ≤ 2	97.12	1.53
2 < ENP ≤ 2.5	94.34	1.74
2.5 < ENP ≤ 3	91.50	1.93
3 < ENP ≤ 3.5	87.88	2.05
3.5 < ENP ≤ 4	78.72	2.19
4 < ENP ≤ 4.5	74.88	2.10
4.5 < ENP ≤ 5	74.21	2.47
ENP > 5	61.03	2.44
ENP > 5 (less LGSTP < 30)	69.49	1.80

*Note:* LGSTP = the share of seats of the largest party in the lower house.

excluded, it is found that the index for Party Structure 2 drops from 2.44 to 1.80, almost identical to the average value for weak pluralism. In moderate pluralism, however, the average is 2.30, suggesting that, in comparison with the other situations, moderate pluralism is more likely to be characterized by three strong political parties.

Finally, but certainly not any less important, contrary to all expectations, minority presidents, minority governments, and deadlocks have no 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 the bottom rows in Table 5 demonstrate, this is not true. Presidential regimes are slightly more likely to die when presidential parties do not hold a majority of seats in congress. However, whatever difference there is, it disappears entirely when we allow for the fact that minority presidents sometimes form coalition governments and, hence, increase the share of seats they can count on to govern. The difference between deadlock and no-deadlock situations, although in favor of the former, is rather small: Whereas 1 in every 31 presidential democracies dies when there is no deadlock, 1 in every 26 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.

Note that statistical analysis strongly confirms the findings suggested by the descriptive transition probabilities in Table 5. Minority presidents and minority governments 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, the effective number of parties, the legislative structure, whether the party of the president is the largest in the legislature, the presidential systems of Latin America, and 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.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the idea that the survival prospects of presidential democracies are 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, some of the commonly postulated effects of electoral and partisan factors on presidentialism 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 of 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. These factors also affect the occurrence of minority governments, although not as strongly. 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 important, none of these factors affect 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.

19. 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; they are also robust to sample heterogeneity. Note, in addition, that these results, contrary to the figures presented in Table 5, 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 on request.

### 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 congressional seats controlled by the party of the president or by the government has been suggested above: the existence of three relatively equal political forces. Here I would like to offer two other hypotheses, institutional in nature, that 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% of the presidents observed between 1946 and 1996 could not be reelected. Whenever incumbent presidents could run and did, a large proportion of them won reelection. Of 22 presidents who faced reelection without impending term limits between 1950 and 1990, only 14 were not reelected; and of those, only 6 can be counted as real defeats by incumbents. Hence, given that incumbents won in 8 and lost in 6 elections, the 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 & 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 extralegal 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, which then generates dissatisfaction with the regime.

Unfortunately, analysis of this issue is hindered by the very dearth of cases of presidents who are not constitutionally barred from reelection.<sup>20</sup> For the moment, what matters is that a plausible explanation can be conceived for the

20. It is also limited by the lack of comparable economic data for the period from 1946 to 1996.

variation in the survival of presidential regimes that is not based on an inherent feature of this form of government. It may be true that presidents, if left unencumbered, may use their office for their own electoral advantage. It is also true that such behavior, at least its excesses, should be inhibited. Constitutional term limits, however, may be 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 electoral 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 has received little attention in comparative research. What the findings reported in the previous section 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, as seen, often form governing coalitions, parties merge with one another, and legislators change parties in the middle of the term. More important, 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.<sup>21</sup> What may matter for the functioning of presidential regimes (and, for that matter, of any democratic regime) is the presence or absence of factors that allow presidents with very little legislative support to work with congress. It is to these factors—

21. 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 whenever a strong president faced 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.

particularly the ones that regulate the internal workings of congress and the president's legislative and agenda powers—that attention should be shifted 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 (Figueiredo & Limongi, 1999, 2000). 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 the 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 these kinds 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 this time with the trade-off taking place at a different point in the political system. Let me explain why.

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, Lamounier 1994; Mainwaring, 1993; Stepan & Skach, 1993).

A trade-off between representation and governability is also present when the focus is on the executive's legislative and agenda powers and the organization of congress. As mentioned above, 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, 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 limits representation by limiting the variety of views that can enter the political process: restrictive electoral and party legislation reduces the number of parties and increases the likelihood that governments will obtain substantial legislative support, thus increasing governability. Another way is more permissive in terms of the variety of views that can enter the political process but 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; this is probably why we did not find, statistically, that the share of seats held by the government 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 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 upon which they will 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.

Because 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 reason 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 important, I showed that the conditions that should be conducive to the death of presidential democracies if the conventional view of presidentialism were correct—minority governments and deadlock situations—have no impact on the survival of these regimes. Two alternative explanations have been offered that focus on institutional features not inherent to presidential regimes. The testing of these hypotheses requires data that are not yet available and hence, at this point, they can be evaluated only in terms of their plausibility.

Thus, even though no one really knows why presidential regimes appear to be considerably more frail than parliamentary regimes, we know with a fairly high degree of 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 governments, or with deadlock.

It follows from this conclusion that there is 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 the daunting task of restructuring 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 10 or 15 years have succumbed to the strains of what could be called a crisis of governability. At the same time, most of them have made significant strides in restructuring 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 accom-

plished quite a bit under a range of political conditions. It is possible, therefore, to stop seeing presidentialism as the main offender in democratic instability and to start looking for other institutional factors that may lead 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 to desire 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**

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This article uses a subset of a data set that classifies political regimes for 199 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; and the latter were the ones used in the analysis.

Systems in which governments must enjoy the confidence of the legislature were classified as parliamentary; systems in which they serve at the authority of the elected president were classified as presidential; systems in which governments respond to both legislative assemblies and elected presidents were classified as mixed. Answers to the following three conditions unambiguously identify each of these regimes: (a) Whether there is a president who is independently elected (either directly or indirectly). This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a presidential regime. Hence, all democracies with no independently elected presidents are classified as parliamentary. (b) Whether the government is responsible to the assembly. Given the existence of an independently elected president, assembly responsibility is a necessary condition for a mixed regime. Hence, all democracies with independently elected presidents and no assembly responsibility were classified as presidential. Assemblies may affect either the formation or the survival of governments. The crucial aspect for assembly responsibility is survival; only when assemblies can withdraw support from the government at any point in its existence are governments really accountable to the assembly. Note that the nature of the executive—collective or not—is immaterial for the classification of the regime. Thus, Switzerland is classified as a presidential regime: The assembly does not affect the survival of the executive. (c) Whether the government is responsible to the president. The government can be responsible to the president either directly, as when the president can directly dismiss it, or indirectly, as

when the president can dismiss the government by dissolving the assembly. Either form of responsibility is sufficient to characterize the regime as mixed (given, of course, the existence of an independently elected president and assembly responsibility). Cases in which the president cannot dismiss the government and dissolve the assembly are classified as parliamentary democracies.

Democratic regimes that were further classified as presidential are as follows: Argentina (1946-1955), Argentina (1958-1962), Argentina (1963-1966), Argentina (1973-1976), Argentina (1983-1996), Armenia (1991-1995), Benin (1991-1996), Bolivia (1979-1980), Bolivia (1982-1996), Brazil (1946-1961), Brazil (1963-1964), Brazil (1985-1996), Chile (1946-1973), Chile (1990-1996), Colombia (1946-1949), Colombia (1958-1996), Congo (1960-1963), Costa Rica (1949-1996), Cuba (1946-1952), Cyprus (1960-1974), Cyprus (1975-1982), Dominican Republic (1966-1996), Ecuador (1948-1963), Ecuador (1968-1969), Ecuador (1979-1996), El Salvador (1984-1996), Ghana (1979-1981), Greek Cyprus (1983-1996), Guatemala (1946-1954), Guatemala (1958-1963), Guatemala (1966-1982), Guatemala (1986-1996), Guyana (1992-1996), Honduras (1957-1963), Honduras (1971-1972), Honduras (1982-1996), Kyrgyzstan (1991-1996), Malawi (1994-1996), Namibia (1990-1996), Nicaragua (1984-1996), Nigeria (1979-1983), South Korea (Rep.) (1963-1971), South Korea (Rep.), (1988-1996), Panama (1949-1951), Panama (1952-1968), Panama (1989-1996), Peru (1946-1948), Peru (1956-1962), Peru (1963-1968), Peru (1980-1992), Philippines (1946-1971), Philippines (1986-1996), Russia (1991-1996), Sierra Leone (1996-1996), Switzerland (1946-1996), Uganda (1980-1985), Ukraine (1991-1996), United States (1946-1996), Uruguay (1946-1973), Uruguay (1985-1996), Venezuela (1946-1948), Venezuela (1959-1996), and Zambia (1991-1996).

Information on distribution of legislative seats, constitutions, and electoral systems was taken from Banks (1993); Banks, Day, and Muller (1997); Blaustein and Flanz (various years); Bratton and Van de Walle (1996); Carey, Amorin Neto, and Shugart (1997); Dehesa (1997); Jones (1995b, 1997); *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (various years); Kurian (1998); Morrison, Mitchell, and Paden (1989); Nohlen (1993); and Peaslee (1970).

A number of more specific sources were also consulted: Banlaoi and Carlos (1996), Carlos and Banlaoi (1996), Choe (1997), and McGuire (1995). In addition, the following Web sites were consulted: Constitution Finder (<http://www.urich.edu/~jppjones/confinder/const.htm>), Elections Around the World (<http://www.agora.stm.it/elections/elections.htm>), and Parline Database (<http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch/asp>).

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