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THE POLITICS OF COALITION FORMATION AND SURVIVAL IN MULTI-PARTY PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACIES

The Case of Uruguay, 1989–1999

David Altman

ABSTRACT

The study of coalition formation has primarily focused on the analysis of parliamentary regimes. This article examines the dynamics of coalition formation and breakdown under presidential regimes using evidence from Uruguay (1989–99). Using logistic regression I show that while coalitions are more likely to form immediately after a presidential election, the probability of a political group remaining in an executive coalition decreases as the presidential term elapses. As a result, cycles of cooperation and stalemate among political actors are likely to occur. I also conclude that not only the prospects for political cooperation but also the likelihood of a given fraction leaving a governing coalition are explained by the following variables: ideological affinity between the president's fraction and another political group; presidential approval ratings; affiliation of a fraction with the president's party; proximity of the coming election; and the fairness of the coalition agreement.

KEY WORDS ▪ coalition ▪ electoral cycles ▪ ideological affinity ▪ presidentialism ▪ Uruguay

Introduction

This paper tries to fill a lacuna in our understanding of executive coalition formation under multi-party presidential regimes.[1] Because the study of executive coalitions under this type of regime is in an incipient state,[2] this work borrows relevant insights from the study of coalition-building under parliamentary regimes. This does not mean, however, that it simply applies theories of coalition behavior under parliamentary regimes to presidential ones. On the contrary, this paper begins to build a specific theory of coalition

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formation and termination under presidential regimes using evidence from Uruguay.

Building a majority coalition in presidential democracies is significant for many of the same reasons it matters in parliamentary ones. It increases the ability of the executive to get its program through the legislature and the ability of the parties to legislate solutions to pressing national problems. It is also important for some reasons unique to presidential systems. Because presidents without a legislative majority do not fall, several outcomes become more likely: (a) divided government or stalemate; (b) constitutional crisis; (c) attempts at circumvention of the legislature; (d) impeachment, which can be a traumatic experience, and (e) regime instability.[3]

Given that in presidential systems governments do not fall by confidence votes, the study of coalition-building under this type of regime requires the scholar to be nuanced and cautious in defining what kind of support executive coalitions have in legislatures. Moreover, there are substantial differences between building coalitions in a multi-party parliamentary system and building them in a multi-party presidential system. In parliamentary regimes, unless a political party is considered 'anti-systemic' (e.g. the Volksunie in Belgium, the Communists in Italy, or the Arab Lists in Israel), the chances that it would be invited to participate in the executive coalition are high. In this type of regime, no party and no individual can pretend to lead a government without regard to the balance of forces in the legislature; if the government loses the confidence of the legislature, the prime minister and his/her government must resign. Under presidential regimes some rules of the game change:

1 except in circumstances like a regime breakdown or an impeachment, the president will be in office (for 4–6 years) because the terms of the executive and assembly are fixed and not contingent on mutual confidence (Shugart and Carey, 1992);
2 the president almost always plays the role of formateur of the coalition.

This is because presidents have the legitimacy of direct election, their election gives them executive power regardless of the outcome of coalition negotiations, and the constitution grants powers to delay, and in some countries, veto, legislation. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any coalition to govern in any meaningful sense without the support of the president. Therefore most actors almost all the time assume the president to be a necessary coalition partner, a pivotal role tending to give the initiative in coalition negotiations and the option to choose the players who will enter or leave the coalition. In general, but not always, the president is attached to a political party that will be part of the coalition.

Incentives to form and to sustain coalitions are quite different in a presidential system. First, fewer coalition configurations are likely because one party – the president's – is normally expected to be a coalition member. The rare exceptions to this rule so far have not undermined this normal expectation. Second, given the influence that the president's reputation has on the citizens' evaluations of governmental performance (either positive or negative), the president's coalition partners are less able to claim credible credit for good government performance. Thus, under presidentialism players have fewer incentives than under parliamentarism to join or to remain in a coalition. Third, I assume that each party attempts to maximize its votes in the next election, and that the vote outcomes are determined by voter evaluations of government performance. Consequently, the president's approval rating has a powerful effect on parties' decisions to associate themselves with, or to distance themselves from, the government. And fourth, based on the previous assumption, most of the incentives change over time in synchronization with the fixed electoral calendar. Because parties know when the next elections will take place, they have incentives to distinguish themselves from the president in order to increase their chances to get elected as the next election approaches. [4]

This paper proceeds as follows. After offering the theoretical framework on which this paper is based in the next section, I then present my hypotheses and methods. Following a graphical display of my theory, a statistical analysis of the theory using logistic regression is set out. Finally, I draw some conclusions.

Theoretical Framework and Problem

It is not hard to understand why there is an immense literature on coalitions in West European parliamentary democracies. The process of forming coalitions involves a relatively reduced number of actors (parties) 'contending in a closed and rule-bound environment (national assemblies) for clearly defined goals (membership in the cabinet primarily, but also the quantity and quality of portfolios)' (Warwick, 1996: 471).

A vast number of alternative hypotheses of why and how coalitions are built have been put forward by a large number of scholars.[5] However, they all share at least one characteristic: none have studied coalition-building under presidential regimes. The reasons for this are twofold. The first has already been pointed out: under presidential systems governments do not require parliamentary confidence, which means that coalitions are not institutionally necessary. The second reason appears to be the widespread belief that presidentialism is not conducive to political cooperation. The criticisms summarized in Linz's (1990) essay 'The Perils of Presidentialism' have led to a large literature comparing the benefits of parliamentarism over presidential deficiencies. Linz's main arguments are that given the winner-take-all nature of the presidential system, it is not supportive of political collaboration.[6] As Arturo Valenzuela asserts: 'the very rules of the presidential system often generated pressures that undermined the logic of coalition formation' (Valenzuela, 1994: 93).

By the same token, Stepan and Skach argue that

> . . . there are far fewer incentives for coalitional cooperation in presidentialism. The office of the presidency is non-divisible. The president may select members of political parties other than his own to serve in the cabinet, but they are selected as individuals, not as members of an enduring and disciplined coalition.
>
> (Stepan and Skach, 1993: 130)

In a similar vein, Scott Mainwaring considers that in presidential systems

> . . . presidents put together their own cabinet, and the parties are less firmly committed to supporting the government. Second, in contrast to the situation in parliamentary systems, in many presidential systems legislators of parties with cabinet portfolios do not support the government. Third, incentives for parties to break coalitions are generally stronger than in parliamentary systems.
>
> (Mainwaring, 1993: 200)

Yet Linz, Stepan, Skach and Mainwaring overstate the difficulties of building coalitions in presidential regimes. There are cases, such as Uruguay, where real coalitions do form and last. I believe that this variation in coalition formation can be understood and explained if we take into account the ideological distances between political agents, the timing of the fixed electoral calendar, the balance in the coalition agreement between the president and other political agents, and the president's approval rating. In order to do so, I analyze the Uruguayan case.

Executive Coalitions in Uruguay: Hypotheses and Method

Despite its traditional bipartism, Uruguay currently features a moderately fragmented and highly fractionalized party system.[7] (A brief description of the currently most significant political fractions and their leaders in Uruguay is included in the Appendix.) After re-democratization began in 1985, different types of coalition governments ruled. What makes the Uruguayan case an interesting one to analyze is the simultaneous occurrence of pre-electoral and post-electoral coalitions, on the one hand, and the presence of a constant oscillation from periods of agreement to periods of mutual obstruction and delay, on the other.

The Uruguayan electoral system is characterized by four major features:

1 concurrent elections for all elective offices every 5 years;
2 closed lists;
3 double simultaneous vote (DSV) and simple majority for the presidency;
4 proportional representation (PR) in both legislative chambers and triple simultaneous vote (TSV) for the House.[8]

PR and DSV were one way in which fractions within each party could compete among themselves without hurting their party's chances of winning elections (Buquet and Castellano, 1995: 18). In other words, this combination of PR and DSV is intended to allow competition among fractions without harming the two-party system. DSV creates a strong incentive for cooperation among fractions, while nationwide PR, assuring fractions a 'fair' representation, acts as a strong incentive for competition among them. Moreover, because of the dynamics of the Uruguayan electoral system, political parties' fractions control the nomination process and thus are the most prominent political agents (Morgenstern, 1996).[9] These fractions also present a high level of legislative cohesion (Moraes and Morgenstern, 1995). As we will see below, the characteristics of the electoral system play a central role in shaping how coalitions are built.

However, one of the peculiarities of the Uruguayan case is that ministers must have the tacit approval of the Senate to take office and are subject to parliamentary confidence during their mandates.[10] This constitutes an important institutional constraint on the president's behavior when choosing the cabinet. Furthermore, in Uruguay the fraction of the president typically lacks a majority in Congress. Consequently, in order to obtain legislative approval for their cabinets and other executive posts, they are forced to bargain with other political actors in Congress.[11] This situation explains presidential motivation to form broad coalitions in order to overcome this constraint, but it does not explain why coalitions do not endure the entire length of the presidential cycle.

Many scholars working within the rational-choice framework make assumptions about the type of gain or payoff that political agents attempt to maximize. One body of theory takes as its core assumption the notion that parties and their leaders are office and vote maximizers (Downs, 1957). However, other scholars do not believe that it is always rational to pursue a vote-maximization strategy (Shepsle and Cohen, 1990). Thus, while parties may be motivated by the desire to gain office, this does not necessarily imply that they will attempt to maximize votes (Katz, 1980; McCubbins and Rosenbluth, 1995). A third type of rational choice theory underlines the policy dimension as key. As Wittman 1973: 490) remarks, 'political parties are solely interested in policy and [. . .] winning the election is just a means to that end'. Making different assumptions about what the preferences of political parties are, rational-choice theorists variously stress vote-seeking, office-seeking, policies-seeking, or a combination of these (as in Strøm, 1990b).

In developing my theory of presidential coalition-building I assume that all players are self-interested rational maximizers of three different types of gain.[12] Parties and party leaders do not necessarily define one consistent objective. More often they are engaged in several games and pursue different strategies, which means their gains cannot be reduced to a single type of payoff. All three models of party preference (vote, office and policy) are relevant to all parties all the time, although more so at some times than at others. I assume all parties want to win office, achieve their policy goals, and gain votes in the next election. But there are tensions between these preferences that often make it impossible to pursue all these at the same time.[13]

In order to reconcile these tensions party leaders shift their immediate goals over the course of each presidential term.[14] At the outset they are preoccupied with spoils and policy rewards. Near the end of the term, the closer the election, then vote-maximization becomes more important. This theory agrees with Strøm's claim that '[a] more complete theory of party behavior must attempt to integrate these theories dynamically. Such theory must also incorporate institutional and organizational factors, which have been inadequately addressed' (Strøm, 1990b: 594).

Thus, what determines the membership of a given political fraction in the executive coalition in Uruguay? The model I propose below has five independent variables, four based on the theoretical framework outlined above and one for control: ideological affinity, fairness of the coalition agreement between the president and the other fractions, proximity of coming elections, and presidential approval. Because the units of analysis are political fractions and not political parties, I include a fifth (dummy) variable for whether the observed fraction belongs to the same party as the president.[15]

My *dependent variable* directly addresses the outcome of coalition existence and endurance at a more precise level of analysis. It indicates whether or not a political fraction belongs to the executive coalition; in other words, whether a fraction has a minister in the cabinet, in a given year. It is operationalized as follows: each fraction is observed once a year and if it is part of the executive coalition in that year it receives a score of 1, otherwise 0. During Lacalle's government (1989–94) there were 12 fractions and with Sanguinetti (1994–9) there were 17. The total number of observations for the period 1989–99 is 116.

Ideological Affinity. The relevant dimensionality of policy spaces in Uruguay, as in much of the world, is open to debate. There is rarely a perfect consensus on the positions of political agents in any ideological continuum. Because I believe that what matters most is how they perceive their own positions and those of others, it is important to employ a measure of subjective ideological affinity. Political leaders are the ones who bargain, build and dissolve coalitions. If citizens or political scientists consider two fractions to be ideologically close, but political leaders do not, the chances that the two will be willing to work together are reduced.[16]

On the assumption that a left–right ideological dimension can adequately characterize policy spaces, I develop an ideological affinity index (IA).[17] The IA index between two fractions is the product of each fraction's perception of its ideological proximity to the other.[18] In the formula below, the left side of the equation gives the IA index between fraction *a* and fraction *b*. On the right side of the equation, the upper-case letters stand for a fraction's perception of its own position on a 1–10 left–right scale (with 1 designating the leftmost position and 10 the rightmost), and the lower-case letters stand for their perceptions of the other fraction's position on the scale. The absolute value of the difference between these positions is therefore the perceived distance between the two fractions, which is subtracted from 10, to become a measure of ideological affinity.[19]

$$\mathrm{IA}_{ab} = (10 - |A - b|) \times (10 - |B - a|) \tag{1}$$

The index of ideological affinity ranges from 1 to 100, with 100 representing the highest level of mutually perceived affinity between two fractions and 1 the lowest possible level. The concept of ideological affinity assumes that there is no objective distance between fractions. This index, therefore, respects both fractions' subjective perceptions of distance. For the purposes of this research on executive coalitions, I only consider the IA between the president's fraction and each of the other fractions in the system. The median and average values of IA involving the president's fraction are 57.91 and 51.83 respectively. The minimum value is 10.44 and the maximum 93.48.[20] Table 1 shows the IA matrix among all political fractions.

Fairness of the Coalition Agreement Between the President and the Fractions. There are two theories that explain how payoffs will be distributed among different members of a coalition. One theory claims that they are distributed proportionally to each party based on the number of seats it has in Congress (Gamson, 1961). For instance, if a fraction provides 40 percent of the members of the coalition in Congress, it should receive approximately 40 percent of cabinet posts. In general terms, Gamson's expectation can be expressed as:

$$Y = a + bX \tag{2}$$

where Y = the share of ministerial portfolios that a member of the coalition holds in the cabinet;
X = the share of seats that this member contributes to the government's legislative coalition.

This relationship, however, is implausible in presidential systems, where the president's fraction can be expected to receive a more-than-proportional share of the cabinet portfolios. I begin with a perfect Gamsonian situation, in which $a = 0$ and $b = 1$, and therefore $Y = X$. To clarify the derivation both Y and X must be renamed, to differentiate between the expectations for the president's fraction and those for the coalition partners. Using this theory of distributing payoffs, the expected payoff (EP) of the president's fraction (α) is, rather than $Y = X$:

$$EP = \frac{\alpha}{\alpha + \beta_i} \tag{3}$$

Table 1. Ideological affinity between political fractions

	FB	*UCB*	*PGP*	*C94*	*BR*	*MO*	***Herr***	*MNR*	*Renovi*	*Prop.*	*AU*	*MPP*	*PC*	*PS*	*ER*	*VA*	*NE*
FB	**100.00**	**54.61**	**93.48**	**61.04**	**71.22**	**80.53**	**68.14**	**57.91**	**73.53**	**82.38**	**48.92**	**22.22**	**22.83**	**34.46**	**41.74**	**35.65**	**58.20**
UCB	**54.61**	100.00	72.00	56.00	63.00	67.85	**56.78**	40.00	54.00	50.67	21.00	12.50	7.50	18.00	18.00	24.50	28.80
PGP	**93.48**	72.00	100.00	63.00	72.00	90.38	**81.00**	80.00	72.00	84.00	56.70	33.00	18.00	36.17	45.00	52.00	56.00
C94	**61.04**	56.00	63.00	100.00	65.33	70.64	**70.00**	54.00	60.00	63.33	21.53	13.00	8.67	15.83	16.00	16.33	30.00
BR	**71.22**	63.00	72.00	65.33	100.00	74.77	**76.44**	81.00	72.00	72.00	38.40	17.50	18.00	21.00	28.00	31.50	54.40
MO	**80.53**	67.85	90.38	70.64	74.77	100.00	**84.44**	83.08	94.60	89.74	38.50	19.69	18.85	31.40	33.46	28.85	47.72
Herr	**68.14**	**56.78**	**81.00**	**70.00**	**76.44**	**84.44**	**100.00**	**59.31**	**89.01**	**70.89**	**26.43**	**11.67**	**10.44**	**19.83**	**19.00**	**20.61**	**41.40**
MNR	**57.91**	40.00	80.00	54.00	81.00	83.08	**59.31**	100.00	72.00	90.00	47.20	35.00	28.00	39.67	40.00	38.50	61.20
Renovi	**73.53**	54.00	72.00	60.00	72.00	94.60	**89.01**	72.00	100.00	93.30	35.00	15.00	15.00	30.38	35.00	35.00	49.60
Prop.	**82.38**	50.67	84.00	63.33	72.00	89.74	**70.89**	90.00	93.30	100.00	54.13	24.00	17.50	29.28	35.00	33.00	57.60
AU	**48.92**	21.00	56.70	21.53	38.40	38.50	**26.43**	47.20	35.00	54.13	100.00	64.80	64.50	80.83	94.00	90.00	78.02
MPP	**22.22**	12.50	33.00	13.00	17.50	19.69	**11.67**	35.00	15.00	24.00	64.80	100.00	95.00	72.25	68.00	68.00	51.80
PC	**22.83**	7.50	18.00	8.67	18.00	18.85	**10.44**	28.00	15.00	17.50	64.50	95.00	100.00	57.42	31.50	58.50	41.80
PS	**34.46**	18.00	36.17	15.83	21.00	31.40	**19.83**	39.67	30.38	29.28	80.83	72.25	57.42	100.00	96.67	96.67	52.13
ER	**41.74**	18.00	45.00	16.00	28.00	33.46	**19.00**	40.00	35.00	35.00	94.00	68.00	31.50	96.67	100.00	90.00	70.40
VA	**35.65**	24.50	52.00	16.33	31.50	28.85	**20.61**	38.50	35.00	33.00	90.00	68.00	58.50	96.67	90.00	100.00	72.00
NE	**58.20**	28.80	56.00	30.00	54.40	47.72	**41.40**	61.20	49.60	57.60	78.02	51.80	41.80	52.13	70.40	72.00	100.00

Notes: The entries for each cell represent the ideological affinity between two fractions based on the average responses for respondents within each fraction.
The average score of the matrix is 50.51, the median is 52.06, the maximum is 96.67, the minimum 7.5, and the standard deviation 26.89.
Numbers in bold type refer to the presidential fractions elected at the 1989 elections (Herrerismo) and the 1994 elections (Foro Batllista).

The expected payoffs of a given fraction β will be:

$$EP_{\beta} = \frac{\beta}{\alpha + \beta_i} \tag{4}$$

Where α = percentage of the coalition members in Congress belonging to the president's fraction;
β = percentage of the coalition members in Congress belonging to the given fraction;
β_i represents all fractions in the coalition (except α).

On the other hand, I consider that what prevails in the division of payoffs among coalition partners in presidential regimes, contrary to the practice under parliamentarism, is a balance between the payoffs received by the fraction holding the executive and by the rest of the coalition fractions. The idea behind the balance of payoffs between coalition partners is that by definition the president is not a *primus inter pares* (first among equals), as a prime minister is conceived to be in a parliamentary regime.[21] Thus, the president will reserve for the elected executive's fraction a fairly large share of the payoffs. Here, as a first approximation, this share is theorized to be 50 percent because it is a focal point.[22] Future research might usefully attempt to adjust this proportion, perhaps depending on the size of the president's party. While reserving a substantial share for his/her own fraction, the president will recognize the need to distribute the rest of the payoffs proportionally to the other coalition members, based on their relative size in the coalition. To illustrate, in a coalition composed of two members, both providing 50 percent of legislative support for the coalition, the president's fraction will retain 50 percent of the cabinet posts by virtue of holding the presidency and then receive half of the remaining cabinet posts, for a total of 75 percent of the cabinet posts; the other fraction will thus receive 25 percent. In general terms, using this method of distributing payoffs, the *EP* of a given fraction (β) will be:

$$EP_{\beta} = \frac{\left[\dfrac{\beta}{\alpha + \beta_i}\right]}{2} \tag{5}$$

The expected payoff of the president's fraction (α) is:

$$EP_{\alpha} = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{\left[\dfrac{\alpha}{\alpha + \beta_i}\right]}{2} \tag{6}$$

Based on these two different theoretical measures of payoffs, I then define the 'fairness of the coalition agreement' as the difference between the share of legislative support provided by a fraction β on the one hand, and the share of cabinet posts distributed to fraction β by the president in cabinet posts.[23] Both theories suggest different focal points for sharing of payoffs. My empirical testing of these competing theories shows that although both are statistically significant, the balance of powers performs statistically better than Gamson's proportionality.[24] Thus, I opted to use the 'balance of payoffs' focal point theory in my analysis.

Distance to the Forthcoming Elections. The presence of this variable in the model is justified by the theoretical claim that parties are immersed in a double-edged game.

> There are two overlapping games going on all the time in parliamentary bargaining. There is coalition-building on the basis of the (known) result of the last election; and bargaining in anticipation of the (unknown) result of the next one. Immediately after an election, the first swamps the second, which gradually increases in relative importance until just before the next election.
>
> (McLean in Lupia and Strøm, 1995: 659)

At the end of the presidency, fractions are mainly concerned with electoral gains, causing them to behave mainly as vote-seeking actors. This variable is key because it will provide the information needed in order to confirm (or reject) the presence of governing cycles in multi-party presidential regimes. Because the electoral cycle in Uruguay is 5 years, proximity of the forthcoming elections is operationalized as 1 for the first year of a cycle, 0.75 for the second, 0.5 for mid-term, 0.25 for the fourth year, and 0 for the last year.

Presidential Approval. As previously underlined, the popularity of the chief executive has a powerful effect on fractions' decisions whether or not to build or defect from a coalition. I rely on the *FACTUM Index of Image* to measure the popularity of presidents.[25]

Dummy for the President's Party. In spite of the fact that the units of analysis in this research are fractions, political parties are still significant. I expect fractions belonging to the president's party to be more likely to remain in the coalition than fractions not belonging to it. Because of the presence of DVS in Uruguay's electoral system, presidents win elections partly due to the votes obtained by fractions within their own parties. Thus, presidents will be likely to reward these fractions with spoils.

Hypotheses

I put forward the following hypotheses.

1 The higher the perceived ideological affinity (IA) between the president's fraction and another fraction β, the higher the probability fraction β will be a partner in the executive coalition.

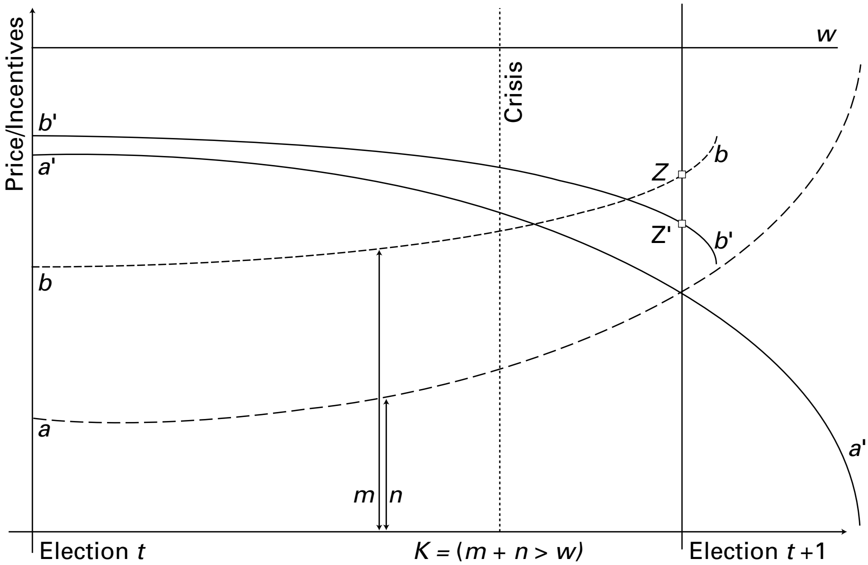

Figure 1. Model of coalition formation and survival

2 The higher the 'fairness of the agreement' for a fraction β at time *t*, the higher the probabilities of fraction β remaining in the executive coalition at time $t + 1$.
3 As the presidential term elapses, the lower the probability that fraction β will be in the coalition.
4 The higher the presidential approval ratings, the higher the probability that fraction β will remain in the coalition.
5 A fraction β that belongs to the same party as the president (β_{pp}) has a higher probability of being in the coalition than a fraction that does not belong to the president's party (β_{op}).

Graphical Display of the Theory

In the following paragraphs I discuss the graphical display of my theory. Although in the real world a given coalition typically has several members, in order to simplify the portrayal of my theory I only represent three members – the president and two fractions (*A* and *B*).

In Figure 1, line *a'* represents the incentives for fraction *A* to stay in the coalition. The dotted line *a* denotes the price the president must pay in order to maintain fraction *A* in his/her coalition. As we see, as the next election approaches ($t + 1$), the incentives to remain in the executive coalition decrease (*a'*) and the price the president has to pay increases (*a*). This is mainly because at the end of the presidency fractions are mainly concerned with electoral gains, causing them to behave as vote-seeking actors. Before that happens fractions are primarily preoccupied with spoils and policy (that enable them to use state resources for partisan purposes.) Since electoral gains are strong incentive for fractions to disengage themselves from the coalition, the price the president has to pay to keep his coalition partners increases. In other words, the higher the incentives fraction A or B have to remain in the coalition, the lower the price the president has to pay A or B to keep them in the coalition. Conversely, the lower the incentives A or B have to continue in the coalition, the higher the price the president has to pay A or B to remain in the coalition.

The segments m and n are the price paid by the president to each partner fraction at any given time (m to B and n to A). At the top of the graph, line w represents the maximum available payoffs that the president can share, given that payoffs are limited. I expect a crisis when the price required to keep the fractions in the coalition ($m + n$) is greater than the maximum amount of payoffs available (w); the point in time at which this occurs is represented by the line K. After this point the president cannot simultaneously satisfy all players. In other words, problems arise for the president when the incentives for some fractions to remain in the coalition decrease below a certain point, given that the only way the president can keep them in the coalition is by increasing their payoffs, which he/she is no longer able to do. Once the demands of fractions exceed the available payoffs, the president knows that the coalition must be restructured, which generally means losing members.

Point Z is the price the president has to pay in order to maintain fraction B in the coalition until the next election ($t + 1$). Z' are the incentives that B has to remain in the coalition at election ($t + 1$). I assume that always $Z' > 0$. (It is theoretically possible, but practically impossible, that the president will fulfill all B's aspirations and then that B would stay in the coalition.)

This theory has the virtue of being a non-static model of party behavior. It involves the three major models of competitive political party behavior in the rational-choice tradition: vote-seeking, office-seeking and policy-seeking (Strøm, 1990: 565). In the real world all these models of party behavior are correct to some extent at any one time. However, I believe that the strategies of parties or fractions change smoothly over time. In any case, the smoothness of the change of political parties' strategy over time does not eclipse my claim that cycles of political cooperation and stalemate exist under multi-party presidential regimes.

Statistical Analysis

Given the dichotomous character of my dependent variable (whether or not a political fraction belongs to the executive coalition in a given year), logistic regression is the most suitable statistical method of analysis. Table 2

Table 2. Determinants of coalition membership in Uruguay, 1989–99

Independent variables	*Logistic regression coefficients*	*Standard error*
Constant	–25.716 ***	6.992
Ideological affinity	0.213 **	0.065
Distance from forthcoming elections	4.999 *	1.955
Same party as president	0.997 *	0.490
Lagged presidential approval	0.268 **	0.080
Lagged fairness of the agreement	–0.242 ***	0.069
Log-likelihood	36.032	
n	116	
Overall predicted	93.97%	
Marginal distribution of Y	0.462	(Standard deviation = 0.5003)
Cox & Snell R^2	0.654	
Nagelkerke R^2	0.876	

*** p < .0001; ** p < .005; * p < .05

summarizes the results of this. The empirical findings displayed above fit my theoretical expectations. The overall model performs satisfactorily, predicting 93.97 percent of the cases, having a marginal distribution of Y of 0.5. All variables (ideological affinity, proximity of coming elections, presidential approval, lagged fairness of the agreement, and the dummy for belonging to the president's party) are significant and have the anticipated sign.

Because interpreting logistic regressions is more complicated than interpreting multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions, the results can be expressed more accurately through a series of graphic displays. Thus, in Figure 2, the probability that a fraction belonging to the president's party will be a partner in the coalition in a given year, depending on the level of ideological affinity, is represented with solid lines. For example, a fraction that has an IA of 55 with the president's fraction, which is close to the median level of IA, has a probability of belonging to the coalition of approximately .88 in the first year, .37 by mid-term, and only about .05 in the last year of the presidency.

This is impressive by itself, but examining the same graph for fractions that do not belong to the president's party (dotted lines), the results are even more persuasive: Figure 2 shows a shift to the right in all the curves. Using the above example of a fraction with an ideological affinity of 55 with the president's fraction, but not belonging to the president's party, the probability of belonging to the executive coalition is approximately .72 in the first year, .18 by mid-term, and almost nil in the last year. Table 3 summarizes the probabilities of belonging to the executive coalition for fractions that do and do not belong to the presidential party at different stages of the mandate

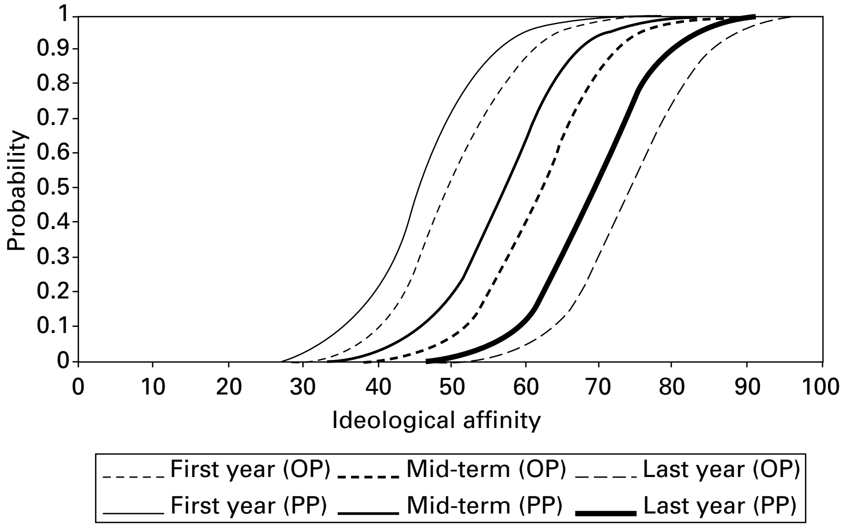

Figure 2. Probability of belonging to the executive coalition for fractions of the president's party (PP) and others (OP)

for the above example. In other words, at this level of IA, the probability of belonging to the executive coalition is 20 percent greater during the first year for a fraction that belongs to the president's party. As we see in Table 3, differences in the probability of belonging to the executive coalition increase in an exponential manner.

Figures 3 and 4 are as suggestive as the previous figures, as well as matching my theoretical expectations. These are based on the fairness of the coalition agreement between the president and a fraction from the president's party and a fraction that does not belong to it. For graphical readability I do not include curves for all five years of the presidential cycle. In this pair of figures the differences are obvious. Taking a neutral level of fairness of the agreement (neither positive nor negative) for a fraction β that is part of

Table 3. Probabilities of belonging to the executive coalition for fractions that belong to the president's party (β_{pp}) and those fractions that do not belong to it (β_{op})

Year	β_{pp}	β_{op}
First year	0.88	0.72
Second year	0.67	0.43
Mid-term	0.37	0.18
Fourth	0.14	0.06
Last year	0.05	≈0.00

Note: IA = 55

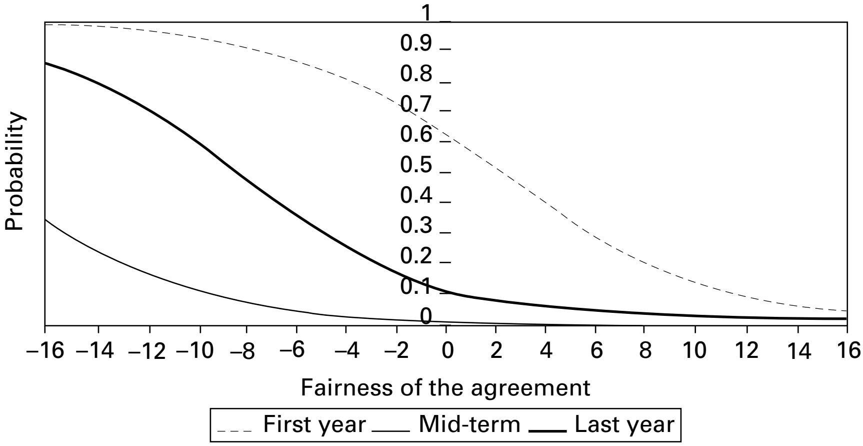

Figure 3. Probability of being part of the executive coalition based on the fairness of the agreement for a fraction that belongs to the president's party

the president's party, its probability of belonging to the executive coalition is approximately .94 in the first year, .52 at mid-term, and .09 at the last year of a presidency. For a fraction β from another political party, its probability is approximately .60 in the first year, .10 at mid-term, and .01 at the last year of a presidency. Clearly, the probability of belonging to the executive coalition is dramatically higher in any given year for a fraction that belongs to the president's party that for one that does not belong to it.

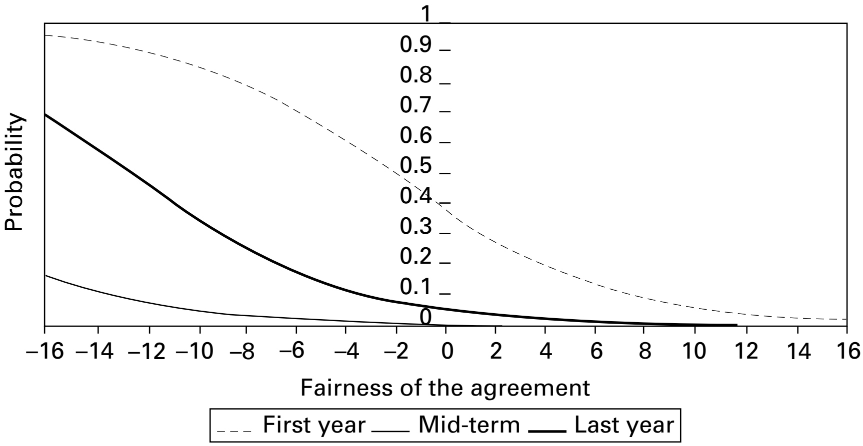

Figure 4. Probability of being part of the executive coalition based on the fairness of the agreement for a fraction that does *not* belong to the president's party

It is interesting to note that for a fraction that does not belong to the president's party, the probability of belonging to the coalition in the last year is almost independent of the fairness of the coalition agreement, as seen in the nearly horizontal slope of the curve (see Figure 4). However, by mid-term the scenario changes drastically, with the fairness of the coalition agreement significantly affecting coalition membership.

Nonetheless, if fractions are highly autonomous from party levels, then why is there such difference in the probability of coalition membership between fractions that belong to the president's party and those that do not? In Uruguay the electoral system promotes both cooperation and competition among fractions of the same party. Presidents know that their successes are in part due to votes won by the other presidential candidates of other fractions in the same party. Consequently, the elected president is under pressure to compensate the other fractions in the party. This can be illustrated by the example of Lacalle, of the Blanco Party, who was elected president of the Republic in November 1989, at which point he began to bargain with other political fractions and parties. According to him, his strategy consisted of three concentric circles of negotiation.

> The first round of conversations will be held with the members of the Blanco party. Then, we will bargain with the Colorado party, with the Frente Amplio party, and with Senator Batalla (head of the PGP party). I have to follow the hierarchy of the suffrage.
>
> (Quoted by Mancebo, 1991: 33)

Thus, Lacalle clearly prioritized his potential coalition partners along party lines. He was clearly focused on parties, rather than fractions, as actors as he thought about the end of his term.

In a personal interview I conducted with ex-President Lacalle[26] I asked him if it is possible to think in terms of government cycles in Uruguay, given the fact that at the beginning of a presidential term the government has majorities in Congress which, as the next election approaches, progressively tend to dissolve. He responded:

> Ah! Of course, this is normal. Because when the next elections approach it is impossible to maintain the same level of proximity between us. Two different parties cannot appear to be intermixed and tied together in front of the citizenry.

Asked whether he foresees the current coalition enduring much longer, his answer was even more unequivocal than the last: 'That we will not arrive at the next election with a coalition is written on the cover of the book! . . . We are two different parties!!'

As Table 4 shows, Lacalle's coalition started with a broad legislative majority and then narrowed to fewer and fewer fractions. And although a Colorado fraction remained in the coalition until the national elections of 1994, by the last months of 1994 the executive had the support of only 31 deputies and 8 senators, less than half the support it had at the beginning of the mandate in 1990.

Table 4. Cabinet composition and legislative support in the Lacalle government, 1990–95

	Party	*Ministers*	*Deputies*	*Senators*
Total		13	99	31
Majority		–	50	16
First government (Feb. 1990 to Dec. 1991)				
Herrerismo	Blanco	6	24	6
RenoVi	Blanco	1	3	3
MNR	Blanco	1	11	3
PLP–Zumarán	Blanco	–	–	1
PLP–Ferreira	Blanco	1	1	–
UCB	Colorado	2	8	2
BR L15	Colorado	1	10	2
Foro Batllista	Colorado	1	7	3
Total		13	64	20
Second government (Feb. to Dec. 1992)				
Herrerismo	Blanco	8	24	6
RenoVi	Blanco	1	3	3
MNR	Blanco	1	11	3
PLP–Ferreira	Blanco	1	1	–
UCB	Colorado	2	8	2
Total		13	47	14
Third government (Feb. 1993 to Nov. 1994)				
Herrerismo	Blanco	8	23	6
Independents	Blanco	3	–	–
UCB	Colorado	2	8	2
Total		13	31	8

Source: Mancebo (1993: 49)

Conclusions

The theoretic model presented here and the empirical findings supporting it provide a basis for restructuring research on political coalitions in multi-party presidential regimes. Mainwaring's tenet that in presidential systems 'parties are less committed to supporting the government [and that] incentives for parties to break coalitions are generally stronger than in parliamentary systems' (Mainwaring, 1993: 200) could be embraced in as much as we recognize that supporting the government and incentives to break coalitions depend on a complex interaction between ideological affinity between the president's fraction and other fractions, the proximity of the forthcoming election, the fairness of the coalition agreement, presidential approval ratings, and whether other fractions belong to the same party as the president. This study therefore provides a firmer theoretical and empirical foundation for the conventional wisdom that presidents are less likely to form and sustain executive coalitions when the next elections are close, that they do not distribute enough portfolios to coalition allies, that they do not have positive approval ratings, or that they are ideologically far from the rest of the political groups.

Although not the first study of coalitions in Uruguay, this paper constitutes the first attempt to test empirically many of the arguments made by Uruguayan political analysts. Scholars like Mancebo (1991, 1993, 1994) made an important contribution describing and explaining how political actors (leaders and fractions) bargain with each other in Uruguay. Studying executive vetoes, Moraes and Morgenstern (1995) were the first to examine presidential cycles in Uruguay. The work of Chasquetti (1997) was perhaps the first attempt to build a theory of coalition formation for the Uruguayan case. Although all these works theorized that the ideological affinity between political actors plays a crucial role in determining alliances and coalitions, no direct research on the players' perceptions had been carried out to test this hypothesis. This paper not only empirically tests the effect the ideological affinity between the president's fraction and other fractions has on coalition behavior, it also proposes a new theory of how payoffs are distributed among coalition partners in presidential regimes.

Finally, Schofield and Laver's claim, that 'past analyses have demonstrated that differences between countries are at least as significant as those between theories' (1985: 143), may be applicable to presidential regimes. It could be argued that differences between multi-party presidential regimes are at least as deep as differences between western parliamentary regimes. Theories of coalition formation under presidential regimes must be tested on both a general and a country-by-country basis. Therefore, this piece only partially illuminates coalition formation; additional research is needed before more definite conclusions can be drawn.

Appendix: Party Names and Fractions

Label	*Fraction*	*Lema*	*Description*
FB	Foro Batllista	Colorado Party	Social democratic ideological orientation.
UCB	Unión Colorada y Batllista	Colorado Party	Founded in 1962; Conservative/right.
C94	Cruzada 94	Colorado Party	Founded in 1989 by dissidents of the UCB. Conservative/right.
BR	Batllismo Radical	Colorado Party	This fraction could be defined as the libertarian in the current Uruguayan political system.

PGP	Partido por el Gobierno del Pueblo	Colorado Party	Founded in 1962. Social democratic ideological orientation.
MO	Manos a la Obra	Blanco Party	Created in 1994 by independent Blancos and Herreristas dissidents. Conservative in social terms, moderate in economic ones.
H	Herrerismo	Blanco Party	Founded in 1928. They have traditionally strong support on the rural-catholic-conservative strata of society. Conservative in social terms, liberal in economic ones.
MNR	Movimiento Nacional de Rocha	Blanco Party	Founded in 1964. Traditionally center left, although currently moderate in any terms.
RenoVi	Renovación y Victoria	Blanco Party	Created in 1987 by dissidents of the MNR and other Blanco members. Moderately conservative.
Prop.	Propuesta Nacional	Blanco Party	Created in 1993 by independent Blancos and Herreristas dissidents. Conservative in social terms, moderate in economic ones.
AU	Asamblea Uruguay	Frente Amplio	Created by independent Frentistas and some dissidents of the Communist Party for the elections of 1994. Moderate left.
MPP	Movimiento de Participación Popular	Frente Amplio	Created by the radical former members of the Independent Democratic Left (IDI). During the late 1980s, they absorbed the former Tupamaros's guerrilla (MLN-T). Radical Left.
Fidel	Frente Izquierda de Liberación	Frente Amplio	Created around Communist Party in 1962. Radical left. Marginal in electoral terms.
PC	Partido Comunista	Frente Amplio	Founded by socialists who adhered to the principles of the Third International in the early 1910s.
PS	Partido Socialista	Frente Amplio	Created in 1904 but participated in elections since 1910. In 1962 formed the Union Popular and after 1971 was part of the Frente Amplio. Until late 1980s declared itself of Marxist-Leninist orientation.
VA	Vertiente Artiguista	Frente Amplio	Founded for the elections of 1989. Created by moderate former members of the IDI and some dissident Blancos.
NE	Nuevo Espacio	Nuevo Espacio	Founded for the elections of 1989. Created by dissidents of UC, PDC and PGP. Socialist-democratic. Moderate.

Notes

A previous version of this paper was presented at the 94th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 3–6 September 1998. I would like to thank Andy Baker, Rossana Castiglioni, Michael Coppedge, Mark Jones, Brian Krueger, Scott Mainwaring, Ben Radcliff, Andrés Rius, Jacinda Swanson and two anonymous referees for their helpful comments on an early version of this article.

1 I understand presidentialism as the regime that has the following features: (a) popular election of the chief executive; (b) the terms of the chief executive and assembly are fixed and not contingent on mutual confidence; (c) the elected executive names and directs the composition of the government; and (d) the president has some constitutionally granted law-making authority (see Shugart and Carey, 1992: 19).
2 Except for Deheza's (1997) and Octavio Amorim Neto's (1998) doctoral dissertations on coalitions under presidentialism, these literatures have not been combined in a systematic comparative approach.
3 For Linz and Valenzuela (1994), a crisis of government easily becomes a crisis of regime; see also Linz (1990), Mainwaring (1993), Przeworski et al. (1996), Stepan and Skach (1993).
4 In parliamentary regimes the election date is generally fixed not long before the election itself. Consequently, it does not leave enough maneuvering room for those ally parties to distance themselves from the prime minister. In presidential regimes, the election date is known from the first date of the mandate.
5 This immense literature has developed since Riker's seminal work in 1962. He predicted the formation of winning coalitions of minimum size. Since then, other authors have added variables that they argue would affect coalitions' sizes and dynamics: Axelrod (1970) argues that coalition parties are likely to be adjacent in a one-dimensional policy space. De Swaan (1973) claims coalitions tend to be formed within the smallest ideological range. Dodd (1976) posits that party system fractionalization may impede the creation of winning coalitions. Lijphart (1977) and Crombez (1996) found grand coalitions to be common in consociational societies. Luebbert (1986) and Strøm (1990a), on the other hand, both focused on the variables leading to the creation of minority governments: focusing on consensus-building mechanisms and the opposition's ability to influence politics, respectively. Finally, others such as Schofield (1993) and Crombez (1996) centered their arguments on the importance of large parties and their position in the policy space.
6 It is important to note that Linz (1990) made this argument in the context of a broader discussion. For him, presidentialism is less likely to sustain stable democratic regimes than parliamentarism.
7 There is disagreement on whether to use the concept 'fraction' or 'faction' in the context of the Uruguayan party system. Some authors have called these political units factions (see Coppedge, 1994: 199; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997: 425). Following Sartori (1976), I will not use the term faction because it has derogatory connotations: it is deemed 'a political group bent on a disruptive and harmful *facere*'. Also, I consider this definition misleading since fractions are more permanent than factions (such as the circumstantial 'ins' and 'outs' groups formed in Venezuelan parties; Coppedge, 1994). Moreover, an important part of

political identities is directed toward *sub-lemas* rather than political parties. For a further discussion on this topic see Buquet (1997). In this context, *fragmented* refers to the number of parties in the system, while *fractionalized* refers to the number of fractions within parties.

8 In Uruguay, citizens elect simultaneously both at the intra-party and inter-party levels. For the presidential election, the double simultaneous vote permits party tickets (*lemas*) to divide into competitive fractions (*sub-lemas*). The votes for these fractions are then accumulated according to a party ticket without any possibility of making alliances among them. Thus, the winner of the presidency is the candidate of the fraction that receives the most votes within the party that receives the most votes. For the Congress election, the triple simultaneous vote enables the citizens to choose at three levels: first for a *lema*, then for a fraction, and lastly for a list of candidates.

9 This is because 'though parties can take collective action when the interest of all of the factions coincides, the electoral system does not generally create the necessary common interest to generate collective action among co-partisan factions. But, by granting faction heads nomination control, the system sustains hierarchically organized factions that are able to act together on a consistent basis' (Morgenstern, 1996).

10 I agree with Chasquetti (1998) in the sense that 'the constitutional texts assume that if a minister lacks parliamentary support, sooner or later he will be censured. In other words, if the minister remains in office it is due to the fact of the existence of a parliamentary majority inclined not to censure the minister.'

11 The last election in which a party obtained a majority in the parliament was in 1966. At that time the Colorado Party received 50.5% of the vote. In this research I am only taking into consideration the distribution of cabinet posts among coalition partners. However, there are around 300 additional posts that are at the core of the bargaining process involved in forming a government. These are (a) 12 ministries and 12 sub-secretaries; (b) 85 posts in the directories of public companies and decentralized services; (c) 17 offices in comptroller agencies; (d) 115 posts in the central administration; and (e) 25 positions in the foreign service (Chasquetti, 1997). Incorporating these is a project for my future research.

12 For Downs (1957) rationality means that: (1) an actor can always make a decision when confronted with a range of alternatives; (2) he/she ranks the alternatives in a way that each is either preferred to, indifferent to, or inferior to every other; (3) his/her preference ranking is transitive; (4) he/she always chooses that which ranks highest in her preference ordering; (5) he/she always make the same decision when confronted with the same alternatives.

13 As Coppedge (1998, personal communication) remarks:

> Sometimes sharing in the spoils requires policy concessions that are unacceptable; sometimes being in a position to earn policy rewards ties a party to a president whose unpopularity will be electorally fatal; and sometimes the electoral advantages of an uncompromising and principled opposition are outweighed by the lack of experience and material resources for party-building and campaigning that tend to come with the spoils.

14 Whether the ultimate preference ever varies from a pure vote-maximizing one is immaterial to this argument. The essential point is that their actions are, in the

short term, motivated by different strategic concerns at different points in the electoral cycle.

15 There are other variables that might impact on coalition formation and sustainability under presidential regimes as well. For instance, these may include presidential powers, type of presidential election, effective number of parties, party discipline, ideological polarization, institutionalization of the party system, or the presence of an external threat. However, for the period in consideration (1989–99), these variables were constant in Uruguay.

16 However, this does not mean that citizens' opinions are irrelevant. For instance, two fractions could share many common ideas regarding an issue, but if the citizenry consider them as radically different, public opinion will have the effect of decreasing the likelihood of cooperation among political leaders. The optimal measure of ideological affinity should combine both sides of the coin: citizens' and leaders' perceptions. For this reason, I am skeptical of those approaches that locate political parties in a continuum by using some criterion that does not take into account, at least partially, leaders' perceptions. Unfortunately, my analysis uses only legislators' perceptions due to the unavailability of data on citizens' perceptions by fractions.

17 During the months of June and July 1997, I interviewed 91 deputies in Montevideo. The Department of Government and International Studies of the University of Notre Dame financed the design and implementation of my research. The objective was to survey all 99 deputies of the Republic and was almost achieved, as 91 deputies each agreed to nearly an hour of questions and answers. I also wish to thank the deputies for their participation.

18 I thank Michael Coppedge for suggesting this formula.

19 Although we are working with a nine-point scale (1–10), the absolute value of the difference between positions is subtracted from 10 in order to avoid a situation in which one of the terms of the equation becomes 0. For example, if we subtracted from 9 instead of 10, and one fraction A perceives itself at 1 and the other fraction b at 10, one of the terms of the equation $(10 - |A - b|)$ and thus the index would become 0, regardless of the perceptions of the other fraction.

20 I tried to select the most appropriate moment to perform such investigation, thus opting for the mid-term (June–July of 1997). By opting for the mid-term I minimize the impact that either honeymoon or the incoming electoral campaign might have on ideological affinity. Nonetheless, whether affinity changes over time remains an open question that could only be answered empirically.

21 Theoretically prime ministers are the first among equals. However, Huber (1996) shows that this claim is indeed doubtful even for pure parliamentarian systems.

22 The idea behind the 50% threshold is the same as that of the focal point used in game theory (Schelling, 1978). Let me explain with an example:

> Consider the game where two players can divide one hundred dollars if they can agree on how to divide it. Each player must simultaneously write down how they will divide the sum. If the two entires match, the players get the money, divided in the way they have agreed. Any division of the money is a Nash equilibrium of this game. But we might expect that the players would choose to divide the money equally. Equal division is a natural focal point in the set of equilibria.
>
> (Morrow, 1994: 96)

This situation resembles the 'Matthew effect' in bargaining in which the president can more credibly make a proposal favorable to himself and say 'Take it or leave it' (Elster, 1989).

23

24 The percentage of correct predictions in the model using Gamson's proportionality is 87.07%, while that of the model using the balance of payoffs is 93.97%. Also, both pseudo-R^2 (Cox-Snell and Nagelkerke) are higher with the balance-of-power model (0.654 and 0.876) than with Gamson's proportionality (0.579 and 0.776). By itself, this finding suggest the interest and value of studying presidential democracies, since research on portfolio allocation in parliamentary democracies has shown that the Gamson hypothesis performs spectacularly well (see Browne and Franklin, 1973; Browne and Frendreis, 1980; Schofield and Laver, 1985).

25 This index consists of geometrically dividing equally the positive opinions and the non-negative ones in relative terms (percentage over the total of opinions) and weighting them by the opinion level (percentage of people that have an opinion). It is calculated by obtaining the square root of the product of the relative approvals, the relative non-rejections, and the proportion of opinions (see Factum at: http://www.espectador.com /factum/).

26 In Montevideo on 21 July 1997.

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