



# Legislative Politics in Latin America

Edited By  
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## *Legislative Politics in Latin America*

This theoretically inspired study explores legislative politics in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Instead of beginning with an assumption that these legislatures are either rubber stamps or obstructionist bodies, the chapters provide new data and a fresh analytical approach to describe and explain the role of these representative bodies in these consolidating democracies. For each country the book provides three chapters dedicated, in turn, to executive–legislative relations, the legislatures’ organizational structure, and the policy process. The analytical focus of each section, however, remains the same: the role of institutional factors (including the allocation of policy-making authority between the executive and legislative branches of government; the number of relevant parties in the legislature; and the structure of electoral incentives) in shaping the patterns of legislative behavior.

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Latin America*

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## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

Before 1997 few were studying the Mexican Congress, let alone other legislatures in Latin America. In 1996, however, the opposition parties in Mexico were poised to wrestle the PRI for control of the Congress for the first time, which they succeeded in doing the following year. Understandably, this generated tremendous interest in legislative politics not only among academics, but also in the business world, the press, and the general public.

At that time the two of us were working in the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in Mexico City. Blanca Heredia and Carlos Elizondo, the academic secretary and general director of CIDE respectively, charged the two of us with organizing an international conference of our own design. We both had recently finished dissertations related to legislative politics and realized that bringing in other experts could provide the field much fuller descriptions and richer analyses than our own individual work. Further, Mainwaring and Shugart had been working on their volume on presidentialism in Latin America, and we saw an opportunity to complement their valuable study.

Our first challenge was in defining the scope of our study. In this we relied on the División de Estudios Políticos (Political Studies Division) of CIDE, where we first presented our ideas. The first drafts of the proposal covered many countries and themes. We were forced, therefore, into a tradeoff between depth and breadth. We opted for the former, as it allowed us to add theoretical rigor to studies of Latin American politics. Having made this decision, we settled on addressing two main theoretical issues, executive–legislative relations and legislative organization, with a third section showing how these issues shape the policy process.

## Preface and Acknowledgments

Our theoretical bent stems from our training in American politics, based on David Mayhew's general model of the U.S. legislature and Joseph Schlesinger's theory of political ambition. These works have been important cornerstones of studies of the U.S. Congress, since they have shown how simple assumptions about legislators' reelection drives shape politics. However, since they focus on just one case, they hide several assumptions about the nature of the party system, the constitution, the electoral system, and the reelection interests of legislators.

These "hidden" assumptions become variables in a comparative model. We therefore chose our four cases, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, to test their impact. The most prominent variable gleaned from the U.S. models is the reelection-seeking goal of legislators. In Latin America no country has reelection rates as high as those found in the United States, but Chile has the region's highest rates. At the other end of the spectrum is Mexico, where immediate reelection is prohibited. Argentina and Brazil lie at other nodes on the continuum, and thus these cases presented themselves as prime suspects for our study. These countries also provide important variance on our other variables, most importantly the shape of the party and electoral systems.

Our contributors, of course, share this methodological focus. This has allowed us to provide comparable chapters on each of the four countries for each of the three themes. As such, the volume combines depth of knowledge about the four cases as well as tests of our primary variables across four major Latin American countries.

In producing this volume we have incurred many debts. Foremost we must thank CIDE for its financial and moral support. The Center for International Studies at Duke University also provided key financial support for the project. The Fredrich Eber Foundation deserves a special mention for the important financial support from the early stages of the project. Also supportive were the Legislative Studies Committee (Comisión de Estudios Legislativos) and the Institute for Legislative Studies (Instituto de Estudios Legislativos) of the 57th Legislature of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies.

On the intellectual side, our primary thanks must go to an anonymous reviewer who provided almost 40 single-spaced pages of comments. Alex Holzman and Cambridge University Press were very encouraging and helped us focus our revisions. Finally, Lewis Bateman at Cambridge gave us the last necessary push to revise and improve some key sections.

## *Party Names and Other Acronyms and Abbreviations*

### *Party Names*

#### *Argentina*

Alianza	Alianza para el Trabajo, la Justicia y la Educación (Alliance for Work, Justice and Education)
FG	Frente Grande (Large Front)
FR	Fuerza Republicana (Republican Force)
Frepaso	Frente País Solidario (Front for a Country in Solidarity)
MODIN	Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Independencia (Movement for Dignity and Independence)
PA	Partido Autonomista (Autonomist Party)
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party)
PDP	Partido Demócrata Progresista (Progressive Democrat Party)
PI	Partido Intransigente (Intransigent Party)
PJ	Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party [Peronists])
PSD	Partido Socialista Democrático (Democratic Socialist Party)
PSP	Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party)
UCeDé	Unión del Centro Democrático (Union of the Democratic Center)
UCR	Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civic Union)

#### *Brazil*

PDS	Partido Democrático Social (Democratic Social Party)
PDT	Partido Democrático Trabalhista (Democratic Labor Party)
PFL	Partido da Frente Liberal (Party of the Liberal Front)
PL	Partido Liberal (Liberal Party)
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement)
PP	Partido Progressista (Progressive Party)
PPB	Partido Progressista Brasileiro (Brazilian Progressive Party)

### Party Names and Other Acronyms and Abbreviations

PPS	Partido Popular Socialista (Popular Socialist Party)
PRN	Partido da Reconstrução Nacional (Party of National Reconstruction)
PSB	Partido Socialista Brasileiro (Brazilian Socialist Party)
PSDB	Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy)
PST	Partido Social Trabalhista (Social Labor Party)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Worker's Party)
PTB	Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (Brazilian Labor Party)

#### *Chile*

PPD	Partido por la Democracia (Party for Democracy)
PS	Partido Socialista (Socialist Party)
RN	Renovacion Nacional (National Renovation)
UDI	Union Democratica Independiente (Democratic Independent Union)

#### *Mexico*

PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PT	Partido de Trabajo (Labor Party)
PVEM	Partido Verde Ecologista de México (Green Party)

#### *Other Acronyms and Abbreviations*

CEDI	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Institucional (Center for Studies for Institutional Development)
CEN	Comite Ejecutivo Nacional (National Executive Committee)
CLP	Comisión de Labor Parlamentaria (Committee of Parliamentary Work)
CMO	Comissão Mista de Planos, Orçamentos Públicos e Fiscalização (Joint Committee for Planning, Public Budgets and Oversight; Brazilian budget committee)
CONASUPO	Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares (National Company for Public Subsistence)
CRICP	Comisión de Régimen Interno y Concertación Política (Committee for Internal Regulations and Political Concertation)
DGI	Dirección General Impositiva (Director Tax General)
DNU	Decree of Necessity and Urgency
DSV	double simultaneous vote

### Party Names and Other Acronyms and Abbreviations

FOBAPROA	Fondo Bancario de Protección al Ahorro (Banking Fund for the Protection of Savings)
GC	Gran Comisión (Great Committee)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INJ	Instituto Nacional Juvenil (National Youth Institute)
ISI	Import-substituting industrialization
M	District Magnitude
GAO	General Accounting Office (Contaduría Mayor de Hacienda)
MC	Member of Congress
MCDs	Mexican Chamber of Deputies
NUDs	Necessary and Urgent Decrees
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican Petroleum)
PR	Proportional Representation
SEGPRES	Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia (Ministry of the Secretary General of the President)
SMD	single-member district
VAT	Value Added Tax

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## *Presidential Cabinets, Electoral Cycles, and Coalition Discipline in Brazil*

OCTAVIO AMORIM NETO\*

### *Introduction*

Recent works on Latin American presidentialism (Amorim Neto 1998; Deheza 1998; Thibaut 1998) indicate that the frequency of coalition governments in this area is higher than expected by comparative theorists of this system of government (Jones 1995; Lijphart 1992; Linz 1994). While such a finding reveals that Third World presidential democracies are able to devise extraconstitutional means by which the crisis proclivity of minority presidents can be overcome, it remains to be seen whether multiparty presidential cabinets can work as parliamentary-style coalitions that in general display a high degree of unity on the floor of parliament and operate in conjunction with the executive to promote legislation.

Brazil is a good starting point to tackle this question. There is an ongoing debate in the comparative presidentialism literature about Brazil's prevalent pattern of government formation. On the one hand, Abranches (1988), Deheza (1997, pp. 192–230), and Meneguello (1998) contend that all Brazilian presidents appoint coalition governments. On the other, Amorim Neto (1994, 1995) and Thibaut (1996, pp. 282–321) caution against a loose application of the concept of coalition government to presidential systems and argue that other types of cabinets also have been formed in this country. While Abranches, Deheza, and Meneguello simply

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### Cabinets, Electoral Cycles, Coalition Discipline in Brazil

count the number of parties drafted into the cabinet to assert their coalitional status, Amorim Neto and Thibaut also look at cooptation strategies (as opposed to coalition ones) employed by presidents in their dealings with political parties and social actors, and the recruitment criteria of individual ministers. However, all of these five authors provide only illustrative evidence as to whether legislative policy making is actually associated with the type of cabinet chosen by the chief executive. The type of presidential cabinet does not hinge only on whether it is single-party or multiparty and whether it commands a majority of legislative seats. Presidential cabinets also vary according to how well parties are represented in the cabinet. Students of coalition politics in Europe provide a wealth of evidence showing that parties joining coalition governments as a rule receive ministerial payoffs proportional to their legislative weight (Browne and Franklin 1973; Budge and Keman 1990, pp. 88–131; Laver and Schofield 1990, pp. 164–194; Schofield and Laver 1985, 1990). Yet, in presidential regimes, given that presidents are constitutionally free to design the cabinet as they see fit, they may appoint a multiparty cabinet but not reward the parties based on a proportionality rule. What is the consequence of such a coalition-building strategy? Will it generate lower rates of legislative support to the president by the cabinet partners? Does a fair distribution of cabinet posts to parties help boost the support to the president?

As long as those questions about the role of the cabinet in influencing legislative voting patterns remain improperly answered, any effort to establish whether multiparty cabinets in Brazil or in any other presidential systems actually work as parliamentary-style coalitional arrangements will arouse justified skepticism. After all, as Sartori (1997, p. 161) correctly puts it, “The problems of presidentialism are not in the executive but in the legislative arena.” In this chapter I seek to analyze the impact of how cabinet posts are distributed to parties on the latter’s legislative behavior in Brazil in 1989–1998 using roll-call data. The effects of other relevant variables on legislative behavior, such as the elapsing of the president’s term and the ideological diversity of the cabinet, will also be checked.

The period 1989–1998 provides a suitable setting to test the impact of cabinets on legislative behavior in a single country, as there has been important variance on both the legislative behavior and cabinet membership across and within presidential terms. As presidents frequently appoint different cabinets over their terms, I can investigate how cabinet changes

affect legislative behavior by holding constant many intangible factors that affect presidents and legislators. Further, as discipline rates in Brazil vary across parties and over time, we can test for the impact of cabinet composition on these rates.

A key to executive–legislative relations in Latin America rests on the ability of presidents to cobble together majorities to support policy initiatives. Coalition behavior in presidential regimes, however, is an understudied aspect of Latin American politics. This chapter is thus an attempt to improve our knowledge of coalition behavior in Latin American presidential systems by means of a case study. It will also provide an extension of the literature that has focused on the Brazilian parties' loose discipline (Amorim Neto and Santos 2001; Limongi and Figueiredo 1995<sup>1</sup>; Mainwaring and Liñán 1998) and the president's use of budgetary resources and agenda-setting powers to obtain legislative support (Amorim Neto and Santos 2001; Limongi and Figueiredo 1998; Santos 1997).

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the next section I propose a quantitative measure to tap the degree of coalescence of presidential cabinets based on the distribution of ministerial portfolios to political parties. A coalition cabinet is defined as featuring at least two parties and a high degree of proportionality between the parties' cabinet shares and legislative weights. The application of that indicator to Brazil shows that there is a substantial variation in the degree of coalescence of cabinets in this country. In the third section I briefly describe Brazil's institutional structure in 1985–1999 and show how it relates to the politics of cabinet formation. Using time-series analysis, the fourth section checks the impact of the degree of proportionality between cabinet shares and legislative weights plus two variables relating to the ideological makeup of cabinets and the elapsing of the president's term on coalition discipline using roll calls taken in 1989–1998. The tests show that coalition discipline is mainly a function of the degree of cabinet coalescence and the elapsing of the president's term. In the fifth section I provide party-specific tests of support to the executive, demonstrating that the support given to presidents by Brazil's largest parties depends on their ministerial payoff ratio, the elapsing of the president's term, and, to some parties, on their ideological distance from the chief executive. The sixth and last section concludes.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Figueiredo and Limongi assert that Brazilian parties are actually fairly disciplined and behave in a predictable manner.

## Cabinets, Electoral Cycles, Coalition Discipline in Brazil

### *The Degree of Coalescence of Presidential Cabinets*

In this section my goal is to propose an indicator based on the partisan distribution of ministerial portfolios that will allow us to measure the coalescence of presidential cabinets and to provide the criteria to pin down when a new cabinet is formed.<sup>2</sup> Coalescence will be understood here as a continuous variable: The higher the proportionality between the parties' cabinet shares and legislative weights, the more coalescent the cabinet. Based on this notion of coalescence, in the next section I will check empirically whether more coalescent cabinets are associated with higher legislative discipline of cabinet parties.

Can presidential cabinets work as coalitional arrangements as in parliamentary systems? In principle, yes. But, it is not enough for politicians from at least two parties to simply join the cabinet. As Laver and Schofield (1990, p. 130) contend, a coalition means that there must be a *binding agreement* between those parties. However, the authors are considering parliamentary systems in this definition, and coalition agreements do not work in the same way in presidential systems. Politicians from different parties may be appointed ministers by a president, but this does not mean that the parties endorsed those appointments. That is to say, their appointment does not necessarily bind their parties to support the president in the legislature (Mainwaring 1993). Moreover, one could argue that a president may strike one binding agreement with party X and a second binding agreement with party Y; yet those agreements may very well not bind parties X and Y to each other. But one thing is the formation of a coalition cabinet, another thing is coalition governance. Even in a parliamentary regime a well-cemented coalition cabinet may unravel in a short period of time due to inter- or intraparty conflicts, and this does not signify that the cabinet was not a coalition when it was formed. So, to avoid the conceptual confusion between coalition formation and coalition governance, I posit that a coalition cabinet in a presidential system simply requires an agreement over cabinet appointments between the president and more than one party. The question then becomes, does the design of a coalition agreement affect coalition governance as evinced by the legislative behavior of cabinet parties? In this chapter I argue that the answer is positive, and that if coalition agreements provide for a proportional

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the application of this measure to cabinets in 10 Latin American countries, see Amorim Neto (1998, ch. 3).

distribution of cabinet shares relative to legislative weights, coalition parties should display a disciplined behavior toward the president on roll-call votes.

How do we observe empirically that an agreement was actually struck? We would have to obtain historical and/or newspaper accounts of the negotiations over all appointments made to appoint a cabinet. This procedure would be too time-consuming. Moreover, even if a researcher were able to collect accounts of the appointments of all ministers, many deals actually cut by presidents and party leaders would go unnoticed because of the secrecy that often surrounds political negotiations. She would thus have to make judgment calls to classify some cabinets. Such procedures would often result in *ad hoc*-ery, which would certainly hurt the analysis' reliability.

It is nonetheless possible to avoid such pitfalls by making some plausible assumptions about what constitutes an agreement over cabinet formation and relying solely on the basic information available on cabinet ministers, namely, their party affiliation (if any), appointment and dismissal dates, and the legislative weight of their parties. Thus, I assume that if a president and more than one party reach a coalition agreement over the composition of the cabinet, the parties receive ministerial portfolios in a measure that is roughly proportional to their legislative weight. By this logic, proportionality in cabinet shares is the equilibrium solution for the bargaining problems faced by presidents and parties regarding the division of the executive pie.<sup>3</sup> Actually, students of parliamentary regimes have demonstrated empirically that coalition payoffs in Europe are distributed according to the legislative size and bargaining power of the parties (Browne and Franklin 1973; Budge and Keman 1990, pp. 88–131; Laver and Schofield 1990, pp. 164–194; Schofield and Laver 1985, 1990). Additionally, I posit that the degree of coalescence of presidential cabinets is a continuous variable. Hence, the proportionality norm will be employed here as a yardstick to identify the degree of coalescence of cabinets. Ministerial allocations deviating from proportionality should therefore be seen as a characteristic of cabinets displaying lower levels of coalescence. The assumption here is that the more cabinet shares deviate from proportionality, the less coalitional is the cabinet.

<sup>3</sup> I am using the concept of equilibrium in the technical game-theoretic sense of a Nash equilibrium, that is, a situation in which no actor has an incentive to move unilaterally.

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To account for the relationship between cabinet shares and legislative weight, I propose a mathematical indicator called Cabinet Coalescence Rate (call it CABINET). It is based on the index of proportionality devised by Rose (1984) to measure the amount of deviation from proportionality between seats and votes that a given election produces. Here ministries and seats take the place of seats and votes. The index's formula is

$$\text{CABINET} = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n (S_i - M_i)$$

where  $M_i$  is the percentage of ministries that party  $i$  receives *when the cabinet is appointed* and  $S_i$  is the percentage of legislative seats that party  $i$  holds in the total of seats commanded by the parties joining the cabinet *when the cabinet is appointed*.

In order to arrive at the coalescence rate for a given cabinet, we add the absolute value of the difference between the percent of ministries and the percent of legislative seats for all parties joining the cabinet, whether or not these parties hold legislative seats, and for all ministers, whether party members or not, and then divide the total by 2. Subtracting the result from 1 yields the coalescence rate. The index varies between 0 (no correspondence between ministerial payoffs and legislative seats) and 1, which defines an upper limit of perfect correspondence between cabinet shares and legislative weights. Any departure from this upper limit is detected. To work properly, the index requires that at least one minister be a partisan. If all ministers were nonpartisans, the index would yield the value of 0.5, a result that does not match the meaning of a partly coalitional cabinet. So in the case of a ministerial distribution with no partisans, 0 should be assigned simply as its coalescence rate.

The values obtained with this index express a relation between the information available to the analyst – the percent of ministers belonging to a given party and that party's share in the total number of legislative seats nominally commanded by the party labels included in the cabinet. That is to say, CABINET measures how the distribution of cabinet posts is roughly weighed vis-à-vis the dispersion of legislative seats *across the legislative contingent of the parties joining the executive*. Consider, for example, the following hypothetical case.

Table 3.1 reports a 100-seat legislature divided among three parties, A, B, and C, and a cabinet comprising 10 portfolios. The president allocates two portfolios to A, six to C, and appoints two independent ministers. A

Table 3.1. *Hypothetical example of how to calculate the cabinet coalescence rate.*

Legislative Parties	Cabinet Shares	$S_i(\%)$	$M_i(\%)$	$ M_i - S_i $
A = 20 seats	2	0.31	0.2	0.11
B = 35 seats				
C = 45 seats	6	0.69	0.6	0.09
	Independent	0	0.1	0.1
	Independent	0	0.1	0.1
Total = 100 seats	10 portfolios			0.4

Cabinet Coalescence Rate =  $1 - 1/2 * 0.4 = 1 - 0.2 = 0.8$ .

and C together command 65 seats; therefore  $S_A$  is 0.31 ( $= 20/65$ ),  $S_C$  is 0.69 ( $= 45/65$ ), and the independent ministers each score 0 on  $S_i$ . As for the percentage of portfolios ( $M_i$ ), A has 0.2, C has 0.6, and each independent minister has 0.1. The sum of all  $|M_i - S_i|$  values is 0.4; this result divided by 2 gives us 0.2, which subtracted from 1 leaves 0.8. This result tells us that the allocation of portfolios in this cabinet deviates from perfect proportionality, but the correspondence between cabinet shares and legislative seats is still high.

Although CABINET does capture much information, there are two concerns. First, note that it assumes that all cabinet posts are of equal value. In the real world of politics they are not. Some cabinet posts are often more important than others. The finance ministry is always a good example. However, any procedure to quantify the different political value of cabinet posts would hardly be reliable and would always be open to criticism. For instance, if we were to use the budgetary appropriations allocated to ministries to measure their relative political value, a highly prized post such as the foreign office would score very low in Brazil, in particular, and in Latin America, in general. So while recognizing that assuming equal political value for all ministries is an imperfect solution, I contend that it is more reliable than any effort to quantify such a value.

Second, CABINET assumes that a party's bargaining power is directly proportional to the size of its legislative delegation. There may be some circumstances under which a small party can successfully demand that it be overrepresented in the cabinet so as to join it. This is likely to happen in pure parliamentary regimes because the survival of the government in office depends on the tolerance of legislative parties. However, in pure

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presidential systems such as Brazil, small parties' ability to extract disproportional concessions is severely reduced, owing to the president's fixed term of office.

### *Cabinet Change*

Presidents in a pure presidential system are constitutionally entitled to freely dismiss their ministers. Hence, new cabinets may be formed over a president's term. How do we identify them? Three criteria are applied to distinguish a new presidential cabinet:

1. the inauguration of a new president;
2. a change in the party membership of the cabinet; and
3. a change of more than 50% in the identity of individual ministers.

The first criterion is obvious. In presidential systems the inauguration of a new presidency represents a wholesale change in the executive branch because the executive power is vested solely in the head of the state. The second criterion is required because CABINET is centered on the party makeup of the executive, and any change in it constitutes of necessity a new cabinet. The third is included because, in a presidential system, as individual ministers must ultimately run their portfolios according to presidential goals, a major change in the identity of ministers may also represent a major change in the way in which the president wants to run the executive branch and the way in which he deals with the parties and the legislature.

*Military Officers in the Cabinet* Finally, I consider high-ranking military officers, who, as a rule, are appointed to head the Army, Navy, and Air Force Ministries in Brazil as independents. However, only the Army Ministry will be included in the calculations. The reason for this simplification is to avoid an overestimation of nonpartisan ministers.

*Presidential Cabinets in Brazil* Table 3.2 provides the coalescence rate and other indicators of the cabinets appointed by the four presidents in 1985–1999. As the data show, there is a substantial variation in the coalescence rates in Brazil, ranging from a minimum of 0.22 (Franco's fifth cabinet) to a maximum of 0.62 (Franco's first cabinet). Based on their values on CABINET, one can hardly say that the last cabinets of Sarney

Table 3.2. *Presidential cabinets in Brazil (1985–1998).*

President and Cabinet	Period in Office	Parties Represented in the Cabinet	Cabinet Coalescence Rate	President's Party and its (%) of Seats	Cabinet's Nominal Size (% of Seats)	Ideological Range of the Cabinet	% of Nonpartisan Ministers
SARNEY I <sup>a</sup>	(03/85–02/86)	PMDB-PFL-PTB-PDS	0.66	PMDB (41.8)	93.5	1.0	18.0
SARNEY II	(02/86–01/89)	PMDB-PFL	0.64	PMDB (44.7)	69.3	1.0	14.0
SARNEY III	(01/89–03/90)	PMDB-PFL	0.41	PMDB (35.4)	53.3	1.0	35.0
COLLOR I <sup>b</sup>	(03/90–10/90)	PMDB-PFL-PRN	0.40	PRN (5.1)	50.3	1.0	60.0
COLLOR II	(10/90–01/92)	PFL-PDS-PRN	0.40	PRN (5.1)	29.6	0	60.0
COLLOR III	(01/92–04/92)	PFL-PDS	0.30	PRN (6.0)	26.2	0	60.0
COLLOR IV	(04/92–10/92)	PFL-PDS-PSDB-PTB-PL	0.46	PRN (6.0)	43.7	1.5	45.0
FRANCO I	(10/92–01/93)	PMDB-PFL-PSDB-PTB-PDT-PSB	0.62	No party	61.6	1.5	20.0
FRANCO II	(01/93–05/93)	PMDB-PFL-PSDB-PTB-PDT-PSB-PT	0.59	No party	67.4	2.0	38.0
FRANCO III	(05/93–09/93)	PMDB-PFL-PSDB-PTB-PSB	0.51	No party	53.3	2.0	38.0
FRANCO IV	(09/93–01/94)	PMDB-PFL-PSDB-PTB-PP	0.48	No party	58.6	1.5	52.0
FRANCO V	(01/94–01/95)	PMDB-PFL-PSDB-PP	0.22	No party	55.3	1.5	76.0
CARDOSO I <sup>c</sup>	(01/95–04/96)	PSDB-PMDB-PFL-PTB	0.57	PSDB (12.1)	56.3	1.5	32.0
CARDOSO II	(04/96–12/98)	PSDB-PMDB-PFL-PTB-PPB-PPS	0.60	PSDB (15.8)	76.6	1.5	32.0

<sup>a</sup> This cabinet was appointed by president-elect Tancredo Neves (PMDB), who fell ill on the eve of his inauguration. He came to die 38 days later without ever being sworn in.

<sup>b</sup> I disregarded the first minister of Agriculture appointed by Collor, Joaquim Roriz (PST), because he stayed in office for only 14 days.

<sup>c</sup> Cardoso's minister of Culture, Francisco Weffort, was affiliated with the PT when he took office in January 1995. However, he bolted this party soon after his appointment. Hence I decided not to include the PT as one of the parties represented in Cardoso's cabinet.

Source: CPDOC (N.d.), *Ministros de Estado da República*, Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, and data provided by Antônio Octávio Cintra and José L. M. Dias. Additional sources: for Sarney: *Keating's Contemporary Archives*, vol. 31, n. 6, 1985, pp. 33642–33650; *Veja*, February 12, 1986, pp. 16–21; *Veja*, January 11, 1989, pp. 34–36; for Collor: *Veja*, March 14, 1990, pp. 26–31; *Veja*, April 15, 1992, pp. 18–26; for Franco: *Veja*, October 7, 1992, pp. 34–49; *Jornal do Brasil*, August 20, 1993, p. 2; *Jornal do Brasil*, August 21, 1993, p. 4; *Jornal do Brasil*, August 29, 1993, p. 12; for Cardoso: *Istoé*, January 4, 1995, pp. 21–2.



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and Franco and those appointed by Collor are coalition cabinets, whereas the first cabinet appointed by Sarney and the two cabinets appointed by Cardoso are certainly so. In the next section I briefly review the institutional structure of Brazil's presidentialism so as to relate it to the politics of cabinet formation.

#### *The Institutional Structure of Presidentialism in Brazil*

In March 1985 a civilian president, selected by an electoral college composed of congressmembers and six representatives from each state legislature, was sworn in after 21 years of military dictatorship, and a protracted transition started in 1974. One of the first acts of the new regime was to confer constitution-making powers to the Congress to be elected in November 1986. This Congress was inaugurated in February 1987, and it was only able to promulgate a new constitutional text in October 1988. So between March 1985 and October 1988 the political system operated under the provisions of the 1967 Constitution enacted by the military. These provisions provided for a pure, strong presidential regime under which the president had total control over the executive branch and could govern by decree almost unhampered by legislative checks (Pessanha 1997, ch. 3). If Congress failed to deliberate on the decrees issued by the executive in 30 days, they were considered approved.

After the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, Brazil's presidentialism displayed the following features.<sup>4</sup> The president is elected by majority rule, with a runoff between the two top tickets if no candidate obtains more than 50% of the valid votes in the first round. From 1985 to 1994, the presidential term was five years. In 1994, the term was reduced to four years. In June 1997, the Congress approved, for the first time in its history, a constitutional amendment allowing presidents to run for one consecutive term. The 1988 Constitution grants the chief executive the power to issue a partial and total veto over bills; the ability to initiate legislation with monopoly of initiative over many policy areas; the power to freely appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers; and the prerogative to adopt *medidas provisórias* (provisional measures) with the immediate force of law. Provisional

<sup>4</sup> In this chapter I will delve only into the problems of legislative fragmentation and presidential powers, leaving the question of federalism aside. Readers interested in the latter topic should consult the works of Abrucio (1998), Dias (1997), Mainwaring (1997), and Samuels and Abrucio (1997).

measures must be submitted immediately to Congress, and if not converted into law within 30 days, they lose effectiveness. Although Article 62 states that provisional measures may be issued only to deal with urgent and relevant matters, they have actually become the presidents' most preferred policy-making instrument, particularly for the implementation of economic policy. Figueiredo and Limongi (1997a, p. 144) show that, in 1988–1995, 1,249 provisional measures were issued. Yet it should be noted that, out of this total, 862 were basically reiterated versions of measures that Congress failed to consider within 30 days of their issuance. Such a high rate of re-issued provisional measures is a clear sign that this constitutional weapon tempts presidents to act unilaterally and to overstep their legislative powers (Power 1998).<sup>5</sup>

### *Multipartism*

A key factor affecting executive–legislative relations in any democratic polity is the partisan distribution of power in the legislative branch. According to a survey of 54 democracies (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997, pp. 169–170), in the 1980s Brazil had one of the most fragmented legislatures in the world. For many analysts, such a high level of fragmentation cripples the decisiveness of the political system (Lamounier 1994; Mainwaring 1995), thus seriously hurting the country's prospects for democratic consolidation. As a measure of legislative fragmentation I use the conventional Laakso and Taagepera index of effective number of parties (1979), the formula of which is

$$N = 1 / \sum x_i^2$$

where  $x_i$  is the percentage of seats held by the  $i$ -th party with representation in the lower chamber. Table 3.3 reports the effective number of legislative parties in Brazil in 1985–1999.

In the period from 1985 to 1992, the fragmentation of Brazil's lower chamber almost tripled (from 3.2 to 9.4). It is true that it declined from 1986 to 1987 and stabilized from 1996 to 1999, but the central trend for the whole period is one of dramatically increasing fragmentation. In the 1985–1999 period the mean size of the president's party was 12.3% of the

<sup>5</sup> Other summaries of the 1988 Constitutions can be found in Carey, Amorim Neto, and Shugart (1997) and Mainwaring (1997).

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Table 3.3. *Effective number of legislative parties (1985–1999).*

1985	1986	1987*	1988	1989	1990	1991 <sup>a</sup>	1992	1993	1994	1995*	1996	1997	1998	1999*
3.2	3.3	2.8	4.1	5.5	7.1	8.7	9.4	8.5	8.2	8.1	7.1	6.9	6.8	7.1

\* First year of a new legislature elected the previous year.

Sources: Nicolau (1996, p. 72), *Folha de São* (a São Paulo-based daily newspaper), “O Novo Congresso,” (October 10, 1998), p. 1; *Folha de São*, “A Nova Câmara dos Deputados,” In *Eleições 1998–Caderno Especial* (October 10, 1998), p. 2; and data provided by Bolívar Lamounier.

lower chamber seats. High fragmentation in Brazil resulted from the combined effects of two factors: the electoral decline of the two largest parties of the military period (the PDS and PMDB), and unrestrained party switching on the part of federal deputies (Lima Júnior 1993; Nicolau 1996).<sup>6</sup>

How does legislative fragmentation affect presidentialism? Many authors have already delved into this question (Mainwaring 1993; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Jones 1995), and the tenor of their conclusions is one: The higher the legislative fragmentation, the weaker the president’s party support. The data in Table 3.3 show that Brazil provides compelling evidence to this effect.

How does the institutional structure of presidentialism relate to coalition formation in Brazil? Using data on 75 cabinets appointed by 57 presidents in 10 Latin American countries in the 1946–1995 period, Amorim Neto (1998, ch. 3) has demonstrated that cabinet coalescence is a positive function of the size of the president’s party and a negative function of whether the constitution grants the president the power to issue decree laws. The larger the size of the president’s party, the higher CABINET. The power to issue decrees, in turn, leads to a lower CABINET. The link between the size of the president’s party and CABINET is that presidents

<sup>6</sup> Additional comments on Brazil’s impressive rates of party switching are in order. Table 3.3 shows that legislative fragmentation varies within a single legislature. Party switching is the main cause of this fact, because it alters the partisan distribution of seats during a single legislature. When changing parties, deputies either go to older labels or create new ones. According to Nicolau (1996, p. 65), 64.6% of the members of the legislature elected in 1994 have switched parties at least once since 1980. Some deputies change their party affiliations even twice in the same legislature. Party switching reached its peak in the late 1980s. The effective number of legislative parties that emerged in the 1986 election was 2.8. However, due to party switching, it jumped to 4.1 in 1988, to 5.5 in 1989, and to 7.1 in 1990, the last year of this legislature.

with strong party support tend to make policy mostly through statutes. They thus build more coalitional cabinets to solidify support in the legislature. Presidents with weak party support prefer policy-making strategies other than statutes, so they use cabinet appointments for other purposes, such as to reward cronies or to bring policy expertise into the executive branch. Likewise, presidents with decree authority are prone to make policy with this unilateral instrument, which does not necessitate high rates of CABINET. Unlike in 1946–1964, all Brazilian presidents had decree authority in 1985–1999. So, much of the variation in CABINET in this period is explained by the size of the president’s party. For example, Collor’s cabinets scored so low on CABINET in part because his party commanded a very small share of lower chamber seats.

### *The Impact of Presidential Cabinets on Legislative Voting*

In order to analyze the impact of CABINET on coalitional behavior in the legislative arena, we need to find a valid measure of the latter. Legislators behave in a coalitional fashion when the members of the same coalition act as unity. There are two key legislative arenas in which coalitional behavior can be readily observed, namely, committees and the assembly’s floor. The second is certainly the most relevant, because the decisions there often convey the assembly’s last word on policy. Also, a greater number of representatives are required for floor decisions to be made than for committees. That is to say, the floor offers a more representative sample of the whole legislature than do committees.

Further, the assembly’s floor is the best arena to observe the degree to which coalition agreements over cabinet composition are actually binding on legislative parties. Consider a comparison between presidential and parliamentary regimes. To begin with, in presidential systems interbranch cooperation is harder to achieve than in parliamentary regimes. This is ultimately due to the fixed term of office of both the president and the assembly. Such a provision ensures that the chief executive does not have to resign in case a government-sponsored bill is defeated, nor can the assembly be dissolved in case of an executive–legislative deadlock. Members of governing parties in presidential systems therefore feel much freer to vote against the executive on the assembly’s floor than their counterparts in parliamentary systems. If the latter wish to do so, the prime minister can always threaten to resign, probably triggering a snap election, whose consequence may be the defeat of the governing parties. Anticipat-

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ing this outcome, backbenchers, as a rule, prefer to transfer their eventual conflicts with the cabinet to arenas other than the house of parliament. In this sense, prime ministers have a strong weapon to induce compliance from their rank-and-file *as far as floor behavior is concerned*. That is why roll-call decisions in parliamentary systems are usually a foregone conclusion, with the cabinet line almost always having the final say. Only on a few and extraordinary occasions can one observe backbenchers voting against the cabinet on the parliament's floor.

By this logic, roll calls are not the best evidence for the analysis of legislative discipline in parliamentary systems. Legislative discipline (or conflict) in parliamentary regimes is best observed in party caucuses and conventions and in cabinet meetings, where the party line is formed, and where divergent preferences can be safely given free rein. In these arenas a compromise between the cabinet position and those of individual legislators is often reached so that bills taken to the floor stand a very low risk of defeat. In most presidential regimes, particularly those in which party discipline is not tight, as in Brazil and the United States, however, roll-call votes are characterized by a great deal of uncertainty for the reason stated above. Separation of powers poses a serious commitment problem to presidents in their dealings with legislators, and this problem is clearly reflected in floor behavior. In view of this fact and the loose discipline of Brazilian political parties, roll-call votes will be used to test the legislative impact of presidential cabinets.

Some observations about the rules governing roll calls in Brazil are in order. According to the standing orders of the Chamber of Deputies, motions can be decided by three kinds of voting procedures: secret vote, voice vote, and roll-call vote. A secret vote requires a two-thirds quorum and is designed to decide on the establishment of investigation committees and the impeachment of presidents, legislators, and judges. The voice vote is the most frequently employed decision rule. For a voice vote to be valid, a minimum of 50% + 1 of deputies should be present on the floor. But voice votes can be taken without the lower chamber's steering body checking whether a majority is present. However, if after a voice vote some deputies consider that the minimum quorum required for the vote to be valid had not been met, they can request a quorum counting. Any quorum counting request supported by at least 6% of the lower chamber membership triggers a roll-call vote.

Hence, in Brazil, roll calls provide opposition legislators with an opportunity to make decisions by majorities more costly – because preferences

have to be publicly disclosed, which is not the case with voice votes – and slower – because the majority has to vote twice on the same bill. So roll calls constitute an important obstructionist tool in the hands of the opposition. This means that roll calls are a good site to observe party conflict and coalition discipline in Brazil in particular.<sup>8</sup>

### *Data*

I have considered all roll calls taken in the Chamber of Deputies in 1989–1998 for which there was information on the preferences of the president. The reason for looking at only these roll calls is straightforward: Since this section’s goal is to check the extent to which legislators affiliated with the parties represented in the presidential cabinet take unified action, roll calls that convey some information on the president’s agenda are the most valid ones for this purpose.

Ascertaining the president’s position is straightforward in Brazil due to a provision entitling presidents to appoint a so-called government leader in the Chamber of Deputy. The role of this leader is to communicate the president’s preferences over legislative bills to party leaders and legislators and negotiate with them. Before a roll call is taken, the government leader is asked by the chair of the lower house to announce the executive’s position on the matter to be voted on.

Four hundred and twenty roll calls for which there was information on the government leader’s position were found in 1989–1998. This period covers the last two years of the 1987–1990 legislature; all years of the 1991–1994 and 1995–1998 legislatures; the last year of the Sarney administration; the entire presidencies of Collor and Franco; and the first term of Cardoso.

### *The Dependent Variable: Coalition Discipline of the Cabinet Parties*

Coalition discipline is here defined as the degree of coalition unity on voting decisions (call it COAL). Because my focus is on the behavior of parties with politicians appointed to the cabinet, I measure coalition discipline as follows:

<sup>8</sup> In countries where party discipline is tight, as in Venezuela in the 1959–1993 period, the analysis of roll-call votes is meaningless (Coppedge 1994b).

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COAL = % of *the total legislative membership of the cabinet parties* voting in accordance with the orientation of the government leader on each roll call.

Note that this measure assumes that abstention and absence are also forms of noncooperative behavior vis-à-vis the government. If we were to assume that the only form of noncooperative behavior on the part of individual deputies vis-à-vis the government leader is when the former vote explicitly against the recommendation of the latter (e.g., the government leader recommends that deputies vote aye, and a deputy affiliated with one of the cabinet parties votes nay, or vice versa), then we would be overestimating coalition discipline.

For example, suppose that a presidential cabinet is composed of parties A, B, and C. Party A holds 60 legislative seats; party B, 30; and party C, 10. In a given roll, 54 legislators of party A were present; 37 voted aye, and 17 voted nay. Twenty-four legislators of party B turned out to vote; 20 voted aye, and 4 voted nay. As for party C, 8 responded to the roll call, with 4 voting aye, and 4 voting nay. Now suppose that we know the position of the government leader, and that she oriented the cabinet parties to vote aye. If abstention and absence are discounted, the coalition discipline of the cabinet parties on this roll call is  $(37 + 20 + 4)/(54 + 24 + 8) = 61/86 = 0.71$ . However, if we include abstention and absence in the denominator, the coalition discipline rate is  $(37 + 20 + 4)/(60 + 30 + 10) = 61/100 = 0.61$ .

Finally, as many authors have emphasized (Bond and Fleisher 1991; Carey 1999; Limongi and Figueiredo 1995; Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán 1998; Riker 1959) not all roll calls are meaningful for coalition behavior and party conflict. Roll calls on which there is consensus or near consensus are less relevant than those on which the sizes of the majority and the minority are close. Likewise, roll calls with a low attendance can also be said to be less relevant than those with high attendance. Therefore, a clear criteria of roll call relevance must be set up, taking into account both vote closeness and attendance. The solution adopted here is to establish a cutoff point based on the indicator of roll-call “critical-ness” proposed by Carey (2000). The formula of a roll call’s critical-ness is

$$\text{CRITICAL-NESS} = \text{ATTEND} * \text{CLOSE},$$

where

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Table 3.4. *Summary statistics of coalition discipline, support to the president, per cabinet in Brazil (1985–1998).*

President and Cabinet	Number of Roll Calls	Discipline Coalition		PMDB's Support to the President		PFL's Support to the President		PSDB's Support to the President	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Dev. Std.	Mean	Std. Dev.
SARNEY I	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
SARNEY II	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
SARNEY III	4	.52	.26	.46	.25	.65	.30	.19	.27
COLLOR I	18	.63	.17	.53	.21	.73	.21	.35	.31
COLLOR II	41	.51	.19	.45	.25	.55	.21	.35	.30
COLLOR III	1	.55	–	.02	–	.60	–	.00	–
COLLOR IV	8	.63	.13	.34	.29	.65	.29	.25	.30
FRANCO I	10	.70	.10	.76	.10	.65	.14	.83	.11
FRANCO II	11	.54	.20	.60	.21	.42	.27	.70	.22
FRANCO III	13	.55	.19	.60	.24	.49	.23	.66	.25
FRANCO IV	1	.44	–	.50	–	.33	–	.58	–
FRANCO V	2	.48	.08	.50	.01	.35	.19	.81	.06
CARDOSO I	82	.71	.16	.64	.17	.75	.19	.77	.18
CARDOSO II	133	.70	.12	.63	.15	.77	.12	.77	.13

– does not denote that the party was not in the Cabinet.

Source: Roll-call data provided by Argelina C. Figueiredo, Fernando Limongi, and Jairo Nicolau.

ATTEND = % of legislators voting,

CLOSE =  $1 - (2 * 0.5 - \%aye)$ ,

%aye = #aye/entire lower chamber membership.

Only roll calls on which there is at least 0.6 of legislators voting and on which at least 0.2 of legislators dissent from the majority will be included. Plugging those numbers into the above formula will yield the following value of CRITICAL-NESS:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{CRITICAL-NESS} &= 0.6 * [1 - (2 * 0.5 - 0.8)] = 0.6 * [1 - 0.6] \\ &= 0.6 * 0.4 = 0.24. \end{aligned}$$

This means that for a roll call to be selected it has to score at least 0.24 on Carey's indicator of critical-ness.<sup>9</sup> By applying the 0.24 cutoff point, the final sample was reduced to 324 meaningful roll calls. Table 3.4 displays

<sup>9</sup> According to Carey, because some votes require extraordinary majorities to pass, the index of roll-call critical-ness should be adjusted accordingly. For example, if an extraordinary threshold is set at 0.67 of the entire membership of the legislature, this value should be used in the place of 0.5. In Brazil there are three types of majorities: simple majority (for



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the mean values and the standard deviations of COAL per cabinet along with individual parties' support to the president (defined in the next section).

### *The Key Independent Variable: Cabinet Coalescence*

The key hypothesis to be tested is the following:

- H1.** *The more coalescent the cabinet, the more disciplined the behavior of the legislators belonging to the cabinet parties on roll calls.*

This is expected to be so because a cabinet with a high coalescence rate reflects a judicious allocation of ministerial posts to the parties by the president. Such an allocation is very likely to bring the parties drafted into the cabinet to a more consistent support of the executive. So I expect that the cabinet coalescence rate will have a positive sign in the regression equations.

### *Other Relevant Independent Variables: The Elapsing of the President's Term and the Ideological Range of the Cabinet*

Underlying the cabinet coalescence rate is the assumption that parties are office-seeking actors. However, as is forcefully argued by Strom (1990a), parties have another two fundamental concerns, namely, vote maximization and the pursuit of policy goals. How do vote and policy seeking affect coalition discipline in the context of Brazilian politics?

Given that in pure presidential regimes the president's term is fixed, as the term elapses the value of holding ministerial posts for parties declines over time as concerns with office seeking give way to vote maximization (Altman 1998; Amorim Neto and Santos 2001). By this logic, larger opposition factions should emerge inside the legislative contingent of cabinet parties as the president's term comes to an end. Therefore, coalition unity should also ebb over time. So the second hypothesis to be tested is

- H2.** *As the president's term elapses, coalition discipline on roll calls declines.*

To operationalize the elapsing of the president's term, I simply count the temporal distance in days between the day that a roll call is taken and

standard bill proposals), absolute majority of the entire membership of the legislature (for votes on bills regulating constitutional articles), and a 0.6 majority of the entire membership (for constitutional amendments). As I do not have reliable information on the type of majority required for each roll call, I opted for a compromise solution, 0.5, which means that an absolute majority is being required.

the constitutional end of a given administration (call this variable ELAPSE):

$$\text{ELAPSE} = T_e - T_r,$$

where  $T_e$  is the day that the president's term constitutionally ends and  $T_r$  is the day that a roll call is taken.

For example, if a roll call on a bill is taken on the ninetieth day of a five-year presidential term (total of 1,825 days), this roll call's score on ELAPSE is  $1,825 - 90 = 1,735$ . I expect this variable to have a positive sign. That is to say, early in the president's term, when the distance between the days that roll calls are taken and the presidency's expected end are larger, coalition unity should take on higher values.

What about policy concerns? Although Brazil's largest parties (those often drafted into the cabinet) are usually seen as mostly clientelistic organizations, they also have an identifiable ideological profile (Figueiredo and Limongi 1995; Kinzo 1993; Mainwaring 1999, pp. 88–135) that affects their electoral coalition strategies (Schmitt 1999) and legislative behavior (Figueiredo and Limongi 1995). If this much is true, then the ideological diversity of the cabinet should impact on coalition discipline. Cabinets joined by highly ideologically diverse parties should display lower levels of coalition discipline than cabinets composed of ideologically homogeneous partners. For example, a cabinet joined by two centrist parties (a highly homogeneous coalition) is very likely to generate higher rates of coalition discipline than a cabinet composed of three parties, one centrist, the other center-right, and the third center-left.<sup>10</sup> This is so because the coordination of cabinet parties' preferences is much more difficult to achieve under the latter cabinet than under the former. Thus, I surmise that

**H3.** *The more ideologically diverse the cabinet, the lower coalition discipline on roll calls.*

To operationalize the cabinet ideological diversity I measure the ideological distance between the furthest-left and the furthest-right cabinet

<sup>10</sup> Note that ideological diversity is a key government attribute to explain cabinet survival in parliamentary democracies (Warwick 1994, pp. 49–74). Tsebelis (1995) argues that the same variables that explain the breakdown of presidential democracies also account for cabinet termination in parliamentary democracies, namely, the number of partisan veto points and the heterogeneity of preferences. However, if we assume democratic stability, coalition discipline as a function of the ideological diversity of the cabinet is presidentialism's functional equivalent of cabinet survival in parliamentarism.

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parties (call this variable IDRANGE). How is it measured? Following Coppedge (1997) and Mainwaring (1999), I measure this by assuming that the most salient cleavage that divides Brazilian parties is the classic left–right one. Additionally, these two authors place Brazilian parties on the five standard positions along the left–right dimension, namely, left, center-left, center, center-right, and right.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on a similar procedure adopted by Coppedge, I further posit that the distance between each contiguous position is 0.5. Thus, if a cabinet is joined by a center, a center-left, and center-right party, its score on IDRANGE is the distance between the latter two parties, that is, 1.0. IDRANGE varies between 0 and 2; 0 is the IDRANGE value for all cabinets whose parties are all placed on the same ideological position, and 2 is the value for all cabinets being joined by both a left and a right party:

$$\text{IDRANGE} = |P_{\ell} - P_{r}|,$$

where  $P_{\ell}$  is the ideological position on the left–right dimension of the furthest-left party represented in the cabinet and  $P_{r}$  is the ideological position on the left–right dimension of the furthest-right party represented in the cabinet.

Note that IDRANGE is an imperfect indicator of ideological diversity because it does not take into account the ministerial share held by each ideological block represented in the cabinet. An ideal measure would have to include both the ideological positions and the ministerial shares of all ideological blocks represented in the cabinet in the same way as Coppedge (1998) does to calculate the effective number of ideological blocs in Latin American party systems. However, it is impossible to apply such a measure owing to the high percent of nonpartisan ministers in Brazilian cabinets. The only reliable method to identify the ideological position of nonpartisan ministers is experts' surveys. Unfortunately, there are no experts' surveys on the ideological position of Brazilian ministers.

Table 3.2 shows that no cabinet formed in 1985–1999 was all occupied by partisan ministers, and that the percent of nonpartisan is high in many cabinets. For example, Franco's last cabinet had 76.0% nonpartisan ministers; Collor's first three cabinets, 60.0%; and Cardoso's two cabinets,

<sup>11</sup> According to Coppedge (1997) and Mainwaring (1999), the ideological position of all 12 of the parties that joined the cabinet at least once since 1985 is the following. On the left: PT, PSB, and PPS; on the center-left: PSDB, and PDT; on the center: PMDB; on the center-right: PTB; and on the right: PFL, PDS, PP, PL, and PRN.

32.0%. One way to reduce the error of not considering the ministerial share of each ideological position represented in the cabinet is to apply IDRANGE only for parties holding more than one cabinet post or at least 5.0% of the lower chamber seats. It is better to use these arbitrary but plausible relevance criteria than to overestimate the weight of tiny parties in the cabinet ideological diversity. Let us thus restate the definition of IDRANGE: It measures the ideological distance between the furthest-left and furthest-right cabinet parties that meet one of the two relevance criteria. Table 3.2 displays the IDRANGE for all cabinets in 1985–1999.

All in all, the resulting regression equation takes the following form:

$$\text{COAL} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{CABINET} + \beta_2\text{ELAPSE} + \beta_3\text{IDRANGE} + \varepsilon. \quad (1)$$

*Results*

The regression results are displayed in Table 3.5. In Model 1, the full model, both CABINET and ELAPSE were found significant at the 0.01 level in a one-tailed test. IDRANGE was not statistically discernible from zero, and it came with the wrong sign. A second model was run without IDRANGE on the right-hand side of the equation. CABINET and ELAPSE remained significant at the same level as in the first model. In a

Table 3.5. *The determinants of the coalition discipline rate (in accordance with the president's preferences) of cabinet parties (1989–1998)<sup>a</sup>.*

Dependent Variable: Coalition Discipline of the Cabinet Parties				
Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	.107 (.803)	.094 (.079)	.258*** (.066)	.503*** (.039)
CABINET	.874*** (.164)	.930*** (.122)	.727*** (.158)	
ELAPSE	.00007*** (.00002)	.00008*** (.00002)		.00003 (.00002)
IDRANGE	.012 (.024)		.003 (.024)	.098*** (.019)
Adjusted R-squared	.151	.153	.130	.078
Number of observations	324	324	324	324

<sup>a</sup> Standard errors are indicated in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $\rho > 0.01$ ; \*\*  $\rho > 0.05$ ; \*  $\rho > 0.1$ .

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third model, ELAPSE was dropped. In this model CABINET continued to be significant at the 0.01 level, and IDRANGE was again not found significant and came with the wrong sign. I checked whether IDRANGE had a multicollinearity problem by correlating it with CABINET and ELAPSE. IDRANGE and CABINET were found to be highly correlated (a 0.75 correlation). So a fourth model was run without CABINET on the right-hand side of the equation. ELAPSE was not found significant. However, IDRANGE had for the first time a significant effect on coalition discipline but, again, came with the wrong sign.

Given the employment of time-series data, I checked for autocorrelation by regressing the unstandardized residuals on its lags and all other explanatory variables for the four models. No autocorrelation problem was detected in either case.

Why did IDRANGE fail to be significant? With all probability, because it is too crude a measure. So only when a more refined indicator is available will the impact of the ideological diversity of Brazilian cabinets be properly checked.

At any rate, which model do we choose? Model 2 is clearly the best because the coefficients on the independent variables are the highest, their significances are also the highest, and it has the highest adjusted *R*-squared (albeit just a bit higher than that of Model 1). Holding ELAPSE constant in this model, a unit increase in CABINET is approximately associated with a unit increase in cabinet coalescence. So, for example, if a president changes a government scoring 0.4 on CABINET to one scoring 0.6, an increase of 0.19 in cabinet coalescence should be observed. Holding CABINET constant, the coefficient on ELAPSE indicates that if a roll call is taken when there are still 1,000 days (approximately three years) for the president's term to elapse, coalition discipline should increase by .08 relative to a roll call taken by the end of the term.

The meaning of the results are clear-cut: Cabinets with a higher coalescence rate maximize the coalition discipline of governing parties, and coalition discipline decreases later in the president's term.

### *Party-Specific Tests of Support to the President*

In this section I provide party-specific tests of support to the president. Let us first glance at the most relevant governing parties.

On the center of the left-right dimension the key player is the *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB – Party of the Brazilian

Democratic Movement). In spite of its marked electoral decline since 1988, it was Brazil's largest legislative party from 1985 to 1996. It held the presidency under José Sarney in 1985–1990. Table 3.2 indicates that the PMDB was represented in all but 3 of the 14 cabinets appointed in 1985–1998.

On the right, the *Partido da Frente Liberal* (PFL – Party of the Liberal Front) stands out as the most relevant party. It became the second largest party in 1986, and since 1997 it has been the largest one, having participated in all presidential cabinets appointed since 1985.

Finally, the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (PSDB – Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy) was created in 1988 during the National Constituent Assembly as a breakaway from the PMDB. It is a center-left organization and has been an increasingly important party since the election to the presidency of one of its leaders, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in 1994, and his reelection in 1998. It became the third largest legislative party in 1995, and after the 1998 races it is the second largest one. The PSDB was first drafted into the cabinet by president Collor in 1992. Since then this party has always occupied key ministerial posts.

I hypothesize that individual parties will cooperate with the president if they see positive benefits for doing so. These benefits can imply serving career ambitions, winning pork, or passing favored policy initiatives. One way to assure a share of the benefits is for party politicians to take cabinet positions. In order to keep their posts, I assume that cabinet ministers must work to assure the support of their party for the president. Further, individual legislators should share in the pork barrel if their leader maintains the cabinet post. Thus, I expect that

**H4.** *The better the cabinet representation of a party, the stronger its support to the president on roll calls.*

I test this hypothesis by looking at individual parties' support to the president as a function of the degree to which they are awarded with an at least fair ministerial payoff. The dependent variable will be operationalized as the percent of the whole lower chamber delegation of a given party voting in accordance with the orientation of the government leader on legislative roll calls (call it SUPPORT):

$SUPPORT_i = \% \text{ of the whole lower chamber delegation of party } i \text{ voting with the government leader on a given roll call.}$

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Note that SUPPORT, like COAL, accounts for all forms of non-cooperative behavior vis-à-vis the president (as represented by his leader on the floor). That is, abstentions and absences are also included in the denominator.

Ministerial payoff, the key independent variable, will be measured as the ratio of a party's percent of ministerial posts to its percent of seats in the legislative contingent of the cabinet parties (call it PAYOFF). Its formula is

$$\text{PAYOFF}_i = M_i/S_i.$$

( $M_i$  and  $S_i$  are defined in the previous section.)

So if a party is allocated 0.35 of ministerial posts, and this party holds 0.60 of the seats in the cabinet parties' legislative contingent, its score on PAYOFF is  $0.35/0.60 = 0.58$ . If a party does not receive any cabinet post, its score on PAYOFF is obviously zero. I expect that PAYOFF will have a positive sign. Table 3.6 displays the PAYOFF values for the PMDB, PFL, and PSDB for all cabinets appointed in 1985–1998.

Table 3.6. *Ministerial payoff ratio of the PMDB, PFL, and PSDB (1985–1998).*

President and Cabinet	PARTIES		
	PMDB	PFL	PSDB
SARNEY I	1.17	0.54	0.00
SARNEY II	0.71	0.51	0.00
SARNEY III	0.44	0.35	0.00
COLLOR I	0.19	0.53	0.00
COLLOR II	0.00	0.32	0.00
COLLOR III	0.00	0.30	0.00
COLLOR IV	0.00	0.45	0.50
FRANCO I	0.57	0.64	1.41
FRANCO II	0.58	0.51	1.31
FRANCO III	0.46	0.40	0.78
FRANCO IV	0.38	0.44	0.86
FRANCO V	0.13	0.27	0.25
CARDOSO I	0.27	0.49	1.40
CARDOSO II	0.13	0.56	1.10

*Source:* The same as for Table 3.2.

Additionally, the variable ELAPSE, tapping the impact of the electoral cycle on coalition discipline, will also be included in the party-specific tests, as in the tests with aggregate measures of coalition discipline and cabinet coalescence. Again, I expect that ELAPSE will have a positive sign. That is to say,

**H5.** *As the president's term elapses, a party's support to the president on roll calls declines.*

Finally, the ideological distance between individual parties and the president is clearly a factor that should affect the former's willingness to support the latter. The hypothesis in this case is similar to H3:

**H6.** *The larger the ideological distance between a party and the president, the weaker the former's support to the latter on roll calls.*

To operationalize the ideological distance between party and president, it is first assumed that the ideological position of the president is that of his party. How plausible is this assumption? Obviously, in the real world of politics presidents differ ideologically from their parties. In general, the reality of power makes presidents more conservative than their party when the latter leans to the left. This is the case of President Cardoso and his Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy. The opposite is also true: When the president's party is right-leaning, the chief executive tends to look more progressive. A good example is President Juscelino Kubitschek, who ruled Brazil in 1956–1961, and whose policy stances seemed to be to the left of those of his conservative PSD. At any rate, a president's party label can be said to provide a reliable clue as to the central trend relating to presidential preferences over a myriad of policy goals. I posit that the distance on the left–right scale between the president's ideological position and that of the party can be depicted by the following formula:

$$\text{DIST} = |P_{\text{pres}} - P_i|,$$

where  $P_{\text{pres}}$  is the ideological position on the left–right dimension of the president's party and  $P_i$  is the ideological position on the left–right dimension of party  $i$ .

For example, the ideological distance between a center-right president and a center-left party is 1.0. The only Brazilian president who poses an operational difficulty to DIST is Franco. When he took office in October 1992 he was not affiliated with any party. However, during most of his



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career he was affiliated with the PMDB, having bolted this party just before his name was placed on Fernando Collor's presidential slate in 1989. During his presidency, Franco took mostly centrist, moderate positions, just like his former party. Thus, equating Franco's ideological position to that of the PMDB would not be an egregious violation of reality.

All told, the equation representing the additive effects of the independent variables relating to a party's office, vote, and policy concerns on its support to the president on rolls calls is as follows:

$$\text{SUPPORT}_i = \beta_4 + \beta_5\text{PAYOFF} + \beta_6\text{ELAPSE} + \beta_7\text{DIST} + \varepsilon. \quad (2)$$

#### Results

Table 3.7 reports the party-specific regression results. For the PMDB, all three independent variables were found to be significant and came with the right sign. Holding all else constant, if the PMDB's payoff ratio jumps from 0.5 (meaning that only half of the party is properly represented in the cabinet) to 1.0 (a perfectly proportional representation in the cabinet), the party's support to the president should increase by 0.22; if a roll call

Table 3.7. *The determinants of individual parties' support to the president's preferences (1989–1998)<sup>a</sup>.*

Dependent Variable: Support to the President of Individual Parties			
Independent Variables	PARTIES		
	PMDB	PFL	PSDB
Constant	.355*** (.074)	.224*** (.079)	.583*** (.065)
PAYOFF	.447*** (.049)	.664*** (.160)	.174*** (.055)
ELAPSE	.0001*** (.00003)	.00007** (.00002)	-.00003 (.00003)
DIST	-.097* (.051)	.076*** (.024)	-.148*** (.051)
Adjusted R squared	.139	.158	.434
Number of observations	324	324	324

<sup>a</sup> Standard errors are indicated in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $\rho > 0.01$ ; \*\*  $\rho > 0.05$ ; \*  $\rho > 0.1$ .

is taken when there are three years before the end of the president's term, the PMDB's support to the president should increase by 0.1 relative to a roll call at the end of the term; and if a centrist president is replaced by a rightist one, the PMDB's support should decline by 0.1.

As for the PFL, PAYOFF, ELAPSE, and DIST, they all had a significant effect on SUPPORT, although at different levels of significance (0.01, 0.05, and 0.1, respectively). However, DIST came with the wrong sign, thus confirming the null hypothesis. With all else constant, if the PFL's payoff ratio goes from 0.5 to 1.0, the party's support to the president should increase by 0.33; a roll call taken three years before the elapse of the president's term should see the PFL's support to the president increase by 0.07 relative to a roll call at the end of the term.

Finally, in regard to the PSDB, only PAYOFF and DIST were found to be significant (both at the 0.01 level) and came with the right sign. With all else constant, if the PSDB's payoff ratio jumps from 0.5 to 1.0, the party's support to the president should increase by 0.09; and if a centrist president is replaced by a rightist one, the PSDB's support should decline by 0.15.<sup>12</sup>

Why did DIST come with the wrong sign for the PFL? Students of conservative politics in Brazil (Hagopian 1996; Power 2000) assert that this party is an essentially clientelistic organization. Parties of this kind are chiefly concerned with the benefits of office. Thus it is no wonder that it joined all of the cabinets appointed since 1985. Therefore, the positive sign on DIST in the PFL's regression equation and its statistical significance can be said to be spurious.

Finally, why did ELAPSE have no significant impact on the PSDB's support to the president? Among Brazil's largest parties, the PSDB is certainly the one with the strongest ideological commitments. It is much less clientelistic than the PFL and less heterogeneous than the PMDB. Therefore, it can be argued that once the PSDB decides to support or not a government (it did not join either the Sarney or Collor's first three cabinets), its pattern of relationship with the chief executive will be stable over the president's term. Therefore, a variable tapping the elapsing of the latter is bound to have no significant impact on this party's support to the president.

In short, the legislative support given to presidents by Brazil's two largest parties, the PMDB and PFL, is mainly determined by their min-

<sup>12</sup> No autocorrelation problem was found in any of the regressions.

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isterial payoff ratio and the elapsing of the president's term. In the case of a more ideological party such as the PSDB, the ideological distance between president and party also plays a key role, and the elapsing of the president's term has no significant effect on the party's support to the chief executive.

### *Conclusion*

Let us now return to the question posed in the introduction: Can multiparty presidential cabinets work as coalition arrangements in parliamentary regimes? The analysis of the Brazilian case provided in this chapter allows the following conclusions. First, a presidential cabinet joined by politicians from two or more parties should not be assumed to constitute a coalition executive. Only cabinets displaying a high correspondence between cabinet shares and the parties' legislative weights (relative to the legislative contingent of the cabinet parties) can be regarded as such in a strict interpretation of the term coalition. Second, a judicious allocation of cabinet posts to parties based on the proportionality norm, particularly if it is early in the president's term, approximates the legislative behavior of the parties joining a multiparty presidential cabinet to that of coalition partners in a parliamentary regime. That is, higher coalition unity on legislative votes should be observed under presidential cabinets featuring those attributes. Third, more ideological parties display a more consistent coalition behavior over time.

How generalizable are those findings? With all probability, they should hold up for any presidential system in which parties are either not perfectly disciplined or factionalized, and where executive patronage in the form of cabinet positions is an important political currency. So, data availability permitting, Equations (1) and (2) can well be applied to countries like Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, pre-Fujimori Peru, and Uruguay. They should not be valid for countries like pre-Chávez Venezuela, because of the perfect discipline of its parties, and the United States, owing to the little importance of cabinet posts for political parties.

How does coalition discipline help presidents? First of all, it is important to note that the fact that a Brazilian president happens to count on a more disciplined legislative coalition due to his judicious allocation of cabinet posts to parties does not mean that he has a stable majority in Congress. Table 3.2 shows that almost all cabinets in Brazil nominally command a majority in the lower chamber. Yet Brazilian presidents are

always striving to achieve legislative majorities. However, if the president's legislative contingent behaves in a disciplined fashion, this certainly helps the president negotiate a majority with opposition parties because he may bargain with them from a firmer launching base. That is why presidents who appoint more coalescent cabinets tend to be the most stable in Brazil.

The example provided by President Fernando Collor de Mello (1990–1992) is illustrative in that respect. When he took office in March 1990, his party in the Chamber of Deputies, the PRN, commanded only 5.1% of the seats. His legislative situation was thus quite difficult in terms of party support and was further complicated by the generalized perception that he was too far to the right of the political spectrum. Had he wanted to form a stable legislative majority, he would have had to make an enormous number of concessions to the largest parties. However, Article 62 of the Constitution empowered him to issue decrees with the force of law (the so-called provisional measures). On his inauguration day, he made his policy-making strategy clear: He decided to face the hyperinflation crisis in which Brazil was enmeshed since 1987 exclusively by means of decrees. He signed no less than 36 decrees in his first 15 days in office (and 163 during 1990)<sup>13</sup> and appointed a cabinet composed mostly of cronies and technocrats.

Collor kept governing by decree during the first year and the beginning of the second year of his term, despite growing dissatisfaction with the way in which he was handling his relationship with Congress and with the overall performance of his government. Dissatisfaction was so great that in April 1991 Congress nearly approved a bill (the so-called Nelson Jobim Bill) that regulated and constrained the issuance of decrees by the executive. According to Power (1998, p. 211):

Although Jobim and his allies did not succeed in redefining Article 62 of the Constitution, their effort seems to have resonated among Collor and his advisers. While the Jobim Bill was being considered by Congress in February, March, and April, Collor did not decree a single MP [provisional measure]. . . . Based on the experience of his first year in office, his restraint was astonishing. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the president imagined his good behavior might save him from having his decree power reduced by an act of Congress.

In a certain sense, the vote on the Jobim Bill was a turning point in the Collor presidency. In 1991 he only signed 8 decrees as compared to 163 in 1990, indicating a steady decline in his legislative support. Yet

<sup>13</sup> Data provided by Jorge Vianna Monteiro.

### Cabinets, Electoral Cycles, Coalition Discipline in Brazil

throughout 1991 Collor resisted negotiating an agreement with opposition parties so as to improve executive–legislative relations, and insisted on dealing with Congress at arms’ length. This impasse had the effect that 1991 was a year during which little was done to address Brazil’s main problem, hyperinflation. In December 1990, the monthly inflation rate was 16.0%; in December 1991, it was 23.3%.<sup>14</sup> In January of 1992, Collor reshuffled his cabinet to bring more solid support from some conservative parties to his government.<sup>15</sup> We can easily understand why he flagrantly failed to do so: The cabinet scored only 0.30 on the coalescence rate. By the first quarter of 1992, there were disquieting signs that Collor’s government was completely failing. Monthly inflation rates were still above 20.0%. His popularity was eroding: In March 1992, a nationwide poll showed that only 15.4% of the respondents considered his government good or very good, as compared to 35.3% in August 1990, 23.3% in March 1991, and 20.4% in August 1991.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, charges of corruption against cabinet ministers and presidential advisers were increasingly making the headlines. It was clear that Collor needed above all to boost his support in Congress to be able to initiate a new, more successful phase of his presidency. By late March 1992, Collor dismissed the whole cabinet and, for the first time in his presidency, publicly avowed that he was opening negotiations with political parties to form a governmental majority in Congress.<sup>17</sup> He ended up forming the most coalescent cabinet of his whole presidency (CABINET = 0.46), thus finally trying to effectively obtain more legislative support by a more sensible allocation of cabinet posts to political parties. Had Collor not been impeached, it can be said that his new cabinet would probably have performed better in terms of

<sup>14</sup> Data provided by the Department of Economics of the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>15</sup> See *Veja* (a Brazilian weekly magazine), “Faxina em Casa: Collor demite Alceni e Chiarelli, cria um ministério para Bornhausen e convoca o PFL para dar um novo desenho político ao governo” [Cleaning the House: Collors dismisses Alceni and Chiarelli, creates a portfolio for Bornhausen, and calls the PFL to give a new political shape to the government], (January 29, 1992, pp. 18–24).

<sup>16</sup> These poll data were provided by the Centro de Estudos de Opinião Pública (CESOP) of the University of Campinas.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *O Globo* (a Rio de Janeiro–based daily newspaper), “Collor dissolve o Governo: irritado com denúncias diárias de corrupção, presidente inicia reforma ampla do ministério” [Collor dissolves the Government: irate with daily corruption charges, the president begins a major cabinet change], (March 31, 1992, p. 3), and *Folha de São Paulo* (a São Paulo–based daily newspaper), “Governo tenta compor base partidária” [Government tries to form a party base], (March 31, 1992, p. 11).

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coalition support than the previous ones. Obviously this kind of ex post speculation should always be read with a grain of salt. One wonders why he took so long to change his cabinet so as to obtain more legislative support. A plausible reason is that he was aware that under an actual coalition cabinet the policy-making autonomy that he had enjoyed in his first year in office would be seriously curtailed. At any rate, the case of Collor shows a clear, if loose, connection between the interaction of cabinet coalescence and coalition support. This sort of example could be multiplied to other Brazilian and Latin American presidents, which is what the quantitative analysis in the chapter shows.