Government Formation in Presidentialism: disentangling the combined effects of pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation*

Word Count: 10,282

Abstract

Recent research has shed light on the impact of pre-electoral coalitions on government formation in presidential democracies. However, the fact that pre-electoral coalitions are not automatically transformed into coalition cabinets has often gone under the radar. In this article, I argue that the importance of pre-electoral pacts for government formation depends on the degree of legislative polarisation. When parties are distant from one another in the ideological spectrum, presidents face more difficulties in breaking away from the pre-electoral pact and rearranging their multiparty alliances. Conversely, when polarisation is not pervasive, presidents have more leeway to build a coalition cabinet different from the ones prescribed by the pre-electoral coalition. Drawing on a dataset of 13 Latin American countries, the results support my claim and suggest that the relationship between government formation and the concession of office benefits for pre-electoral coalition members is more nuanced than previously assumed.

Keywords: Coalitional Presidentialism, Latin America, Government Formation, Pre-Electoral Coalitions, Presidentialism

*Competing interests: The author declares none

1 Introduction

In the present day, scholars concur that forming coalition governments are a common tool to engender legislative majorities (or quasi-majorities) in presidential polities (Chaisty et al. 2018; Raile et al. 2011). However, this understanding did not have an ex-nihilo creation; rather, it comes from a lengthy and fruitful debate about the viability of coalition governments under presidential regimes (Albala 2018). Over the course of time, this debate has ultimately driven scholarly literature to back the empirical regularity and feasibility of multiparty governments in presidentialism (Cheibub et al. 2004; Garrido 2003). As a result, academic research on coalitional presidentialism has flourished tremendously in the last few years.

Research on presidential coalition governments shares many of the same topics covered by research on their parliamentary counterparts. That is to say, we can roughly separate the literature on coalitional presidentialism into three broad fields of study (Couto et al. 2021; Laver and Schofield 1990; Müller and Strøm 1999). First of all, some scholars have especially been interested in the formation of coalition governments (Alemán and Tsebelis 2011; Freudenreich 2016). Others have sought to delve into coalition governance (Bertholini and Pereira 2017; Pereira and Mueller 2003; Silva and Medina 2023). Finally, some are keen on unpacking the reasons behind the breaking of presidential coalitions (Altman 2000; Chasquetti 2006).

Even still, we can further divide studies on the formation of coalition governments into two connected but quite different research streams. Coalition formation is actually an umbrella that encompasses both studies concerned with the partisan composition of coalitions and the distribution of ministerial portfolios within multiparty governments (De Winter et al. 2002). This paper is preoccupied explicitly with the former, asking about the degree to which pre-electoral coalitions influence the formation of subsequent governments.

Until recently, the literature had largely overlooked the timing issue in coalitional bargaining. As a matter of fact, the negligence of the temporal aspect had been the

norm rather than the exception for a long time in different areas of study within political science (Gibson 1999; Pierson 2004). Nevertheless, accompanying the discipline evolution, the landscape has drastically changed in the past few years when it comes to coalition cabinets. Irrespective of the form of government, the literature has shown the different ways in which bargainings prior to elections affect and constrain the behaviour of future coalition governments (Carroll 2007; Golder 2006; Kellam 2017; Strøm et al. 1994).

In a similar vein, the literature has also discussed how legislative polarisation impinges on the different facets of coalitions in distinct systems of government (Golder 2010; Kellam 2015; Laver and Shepsle 1994). For instance, research on legislative polarisation has shed light on how the divisiveness of party systems affects not only the formation but also the rupture of coalition governments (Albala et al. 2023a; Chiru 2015; Indridason 2011; Martin and Vanberg 2003).

In stark contrast, the interplay between legislative polarisation and pre-electoral agreements to bring about new governments has received much lesser treatment thus far, even though the scholarly literature has paid attention to either separately. In order to take the first step towards filling this gap in research on presidential regimes, I thus ask whether and to what extent legislative polarisation exerts influence on cabinet formation by reinforcing the effect of pre-electoral coalitions.

The starting point is that pre-electoral coalition formation might impact government formation in presidential regimes. However, this is a contested claim in coalition theories. On the one hand, some argue that parties lacking competitive presidential candidates would be deprived of office-oriented incentives to join pre-electoral pacts since the president-elect could decide not to stick to her end of the bargain and simply decide not to designate any executive office position to members of the original pre-electoral agreement (Kellam 2017). On the other hand, others argue that pre-electoral pacts not only play a role in forming the next governments (Freudenreich 2016), but parties which were members of pre-electoral coalitions receive portfolios more proportionally to their legislative contribution than their counterparts that did not make part of the pre-electoral coalition

(Carroll 2007). Hence, the second line of thought suggests that pre-electoral coalitions ought to have an impact on government formation, whilst the first contradicts this idea.

Against this backdrop, my core claim departs from the argument that pre-electoral agreements matter for government formation. However, I take a step back and argue that the presidential parties' leeway towards government formation is conditional on the extent of legislative polarisation. The reason for this is that high ideological polarisation in the legislature substantially increases bargaining complexity. As reaching a multiparty agreement is not a simple task in polarised settings, *formateurs* have great incentives to build governments around the original pact, especially as breaking already-established commitments is increasingly risky and costly under these contexts. In this way, I argue that pre-electoral coalitions serve as focal points on which presidential parties can objectively lay their foundations when party systems have parties far apart from one another on the left-right dimension. Conversely, party systems barely polarised allow presidents to seek better bargains than those made pre-electorally insofar as parties do not have highly antagonistic ideological preferences. As such, pre-election coalition members can fail to make it into the cabinet if the *formateurs* have greater wiggle room in selecting with whom to govern.

The remaining of the work proceeds as follows. The second section brings the literature on pre-electoral coalitions in parliamentary and presidential regimes to the fore. Thereafter, I present how legislative polarisation influences government formation. The fourth section shows the connection between pre-electoral alliances and legislative polarisation on the unrolling of government formation under presidentialism. In this section, I outline how governments based on pre-election coalitions are more likely to form than fully post-electoral coalitions. The fifth section is devoted to presenting my research design. Subsequently, the sixth section displays and discusses the results. I then wrap up the article by summarising my claims and findings, in addition to suggesting new paths of research and discussing the degree to which my theory travels to other contexts.

2 Discussing Matters Prior to the Elections

Forming pre-electoral agreements is not a mere 'flavour of the month' issue in either parliamentary or presidential regimes. Pre-electoral commitments have been around at least since the end of World War II in parliamentary polities (Golder 2005), whereas trails of pre-electoral pacts trace back to 1925 for their presidential counterparts (Borges et al. 2021; Kellam 2015). Continuing the trend, more recent elections have also been marked by pre-electoral commitments. More recently, the literature has recognised that pre-electoral alliances are beyond the contours of Central Europe and are pretty common today in parliamentary systems located in Eastern Europe (Ibenskas 2016). Similarly, presidential regimes continue to witness the presence of pre-electoral pacts as both the 2021 Chilean and the 2022 Colombian presidential elections had various parties taking part in different alliances.[1]

Early scholarship on pre-electoral coalitions has revealed that potential governments that coalesce at an early stage of the electoral cycle are more likely to form as actual governments than purely post-electoral governments in parliamentary systems (Martin and Stevenson 2001; Strøm et al. 1994). The rationale is pretty consolidated: political parties engage in pre-electoral bargaining to increase their likelihood of either forming or being a part of the upcoming government (Golder 2006; Debus 2009; Ibenskas 2016). In other words, parties join efforts and resources once they rationalise they can form the government together. The point is that parties expect to receive more votes in general elections when they form pre-electoral alliances than when they compete on their own (Allern and Aylott 2009; Christiansen et al. 2014). In general, in this context, parties coalesce around other parties with not-so-distant ideological preferences, and this is so for two solid reasons. Firstly, parties strive not to lose potential voters to other parties or coalitions. Secondly, it is much more challenging to strike policy agreements when parties disagree over several issues than when coalition partners have preferences close to one another (Cutler et al. 2016; Golder 2010).

The picture is quite different when we take a glimpse at presidential regimes. Initial

research on presidentialism would deem the construction of pre-electoral agreements as unreasonable. The president-elect and her party would have no incentive to abandon some presidential perks in favour of their pre-electoral coalition partners since powers are fundamentally independent of one another (Stepan and Skach 1993), and the presidential election is basically a zero-sum game (Linz 1990, 1994). In contrast, as presidents dispose of constitutionally fixed terms, even if they renege on their promises, the parties that comprised the pre-electoral coalition would not be able to expel them from office earlier than expected (Cheibub 2007; Samuels and Shugart 2010).[2]

Nonetheless, as shown previously, pre-electoral alliances are not rare in presidential democracies. In fact, Albala (2021) even goes so far as to say that presidential polities have far more coalition cabinets derived from pre-election alliances than their parliamentary counterparts. Therefore, how does the literature explain the emergence of pre-electoral coalitions in presidentialism? More precisely, why would a party with a competitive presidential candidate search to make pacts with other partisan organisations to back its own candidacy for the presidential office? Contrariwise, why would parties prefer to support someone else's application for the presidency rather than launching their own contestant?

To flesh out the reasons behind the construction of pre-electoral coalitions in presidential systems, I start by addressing the first question. Firstly, mirroring what occurs in parliamentary regimes, parties with competitive presidential candidates aim to form multiparty alliances in order to boost the vote share of their respective candidacies in the election looming on the horizon. Indeed, recent scholarship has brought to attention how presidential tickets strategically include vice-presidential candidates with specific traits to expand their potential voter base (Lopes 2022). This is the case as even in the absence of a viable presidential candidate, other parties might still provide politicians well-suited to a vote-seeking strategy in the presidential arena as vice presidents. This is only a single instance of how parties in a pre-electoral coalition combine different kinds of assets to leverage their odds of winning the presidential election.[3]

Outside vote-seeking considerations, engaging in pre-electoral alliances also enhances the presidential party's likelihood of securing a legislative majority in the aftermath of the election (Borges et al. 2021; Carroll 2007). Despite minority governments not being stripped out of their governability (Strøm 1990), it bears noting that presidential parties have compelling incentives to look for a majority parliamentary basis even prior to the elections. Majority status confers governments with higher capabilities of passing their legislative agenda, thus circumventing possible stalemates in the legislature and making governability more straightforward (Amorim Neto et al. 2003; Cheibub et al. 2004; Hiroi and Renno 2014; Kim 2008). In addition to increasing the likelihood of forming majority governments, pre-electoral coalitions are also the underpinning for long-standing coalition cabinets (Albala et al. 2023a). Accordingly, the formation of pre-electoral coalitions grants legislative support for a long time for presidents to get their bills approved.

Hence, political parties with competitive presidential candidates have clear-cut reasons to go after pre-electoral agreements. Still, we have not addressed the other side of the coin yet. Why do parties relinquish from running in the presidential elections on their own? In brief, the response lies in the fact that parties are able to reap vote, policy and office benefits from being a member of a successful pre-electoral coalition, whereas they could have gotten out of the presidential contest with empty hands had they chosen to launch a frail candidate.

The premise is that political parties without presidential aspirations do not abide by pre-electoral agreements at no cost. To start with, support in the presidential elections might come in exchange for benefits in elections at other levels, notably in gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional electoral disputes (Borges 2019; Borges and Turgeon 2019). In this sense, some parties deliberately opt not to run for the national majoritarian election in order to focus on other electoral disputes (Borges et al. 2017; Spoon and West 2015). In return, presidential parties might directly or indirectly endorse their partners' contestants in other electoral races by withdrawing their own candidates. In fact, this was a standard procedure in the Chilean centre-left coalition *Concertación* in the wake of the fall of Pinochet (Albala 2013; Siavelis 2002).

Additionally, in a similar vein to parliamentary coalition agreements (Moury 2011), parties constrain the president-elect to stick to her electoral policy promises (Kellam 2017). Although governing coalitions do not necessarily form and display written agreements in presidential systems, the enacted public policy might be close to the preferences of pre-electoral parties because presidents might feel compelled to fulfil their electoral pledges and avoid disappointing their voters.

To conclude, pre-electoral coalitions also envision distributing office rewards to their members (Carroll 2007). As a result, parties engage in pre-electoral agreements while knowing beforehand that they will probably have a cabinet position if the pre-electoral coalition succeeds in the presidential election.

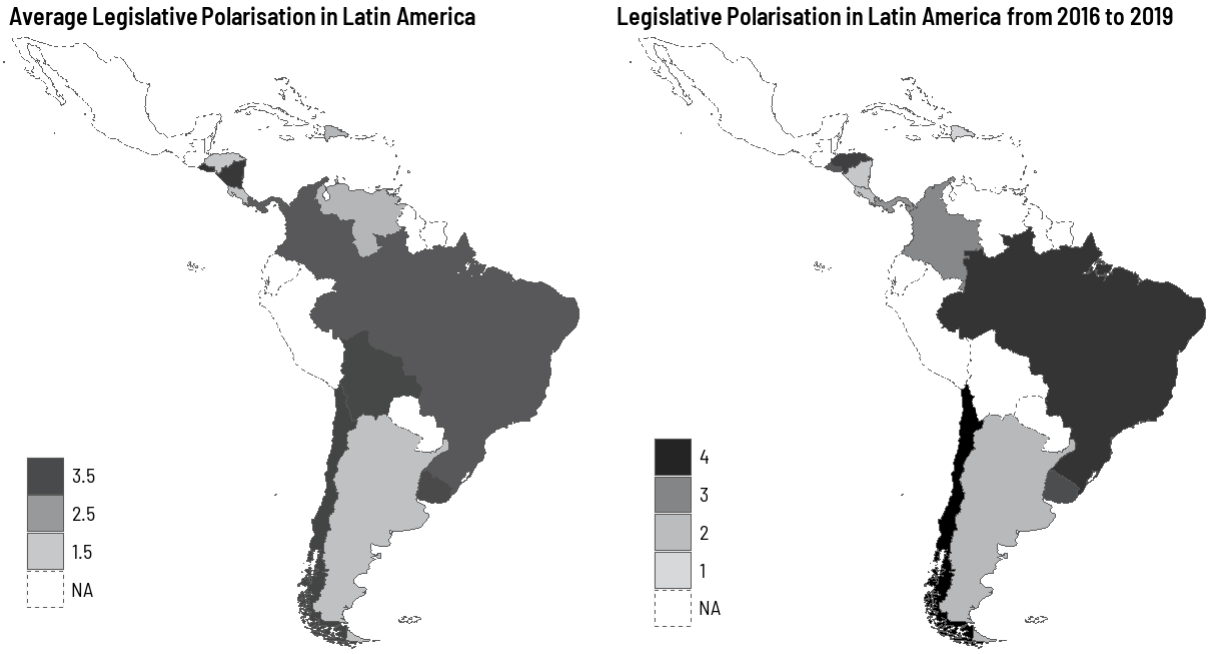
Yet, pre-electoral agreements are not set in stone. A colourful example is that not rarely pre-electoral coalitions are enlarged to accommodate other parties in post-electoral settings (Albala 2017; Freudenreich 2016). This article points out a nuance around the government formation hitherto not explored in presidential regimes. The whole procedure of forming governments does not occur in a vacuum; instead, it takes place on a board where parties are spread across ideological preferences. Put differently, the government formation game takes place in party systems where political parties are ideologically less or more separated from one another. This study puts forward the idea that pre-electoral coalitions are more binding in the degree to which ideological polarisation increases in the legislature, and the following sections explain why this should be so.

3 Legislative Polarisation and Government Formation

In general, polarisation is a broad concept that refers to the distance between groups regarding their stance on a specific issue. In recent years, research on polarisation has focused heavily on affective polarisation (e.g. Garzia et al. 2023), but other topics have also attracted attention, such as activist polarisation (Collitt and Highton 2021) and mass polarisation (Levendusky 2009). In this paper, I am more concerned with ideological polarisation in the legislature.

Legislative polarisation depicts how far political parties are ideologically distant from one another in the legislature of a given party system. By and large, party systems have varying levels of legislative polarisation over time. There is only a single instance where polarisation is null: when all parties share the very same political preferences. However, this is hardly the case in any democratic regime. To demonstrate this point, the left panel of Figure 1 shows the average level of legislative polarisation in Latin America in the period under study. In a complementary manner, to show how legislative polarisation is not stationary over time, the right panel of Figure 1 illustrates the degree of ideological polarisation at the party system level from 2016 to 2019 in the same region. As can be seen, Brazil's 2018 and Chile's 2017 general elections resulted in a degree of polarisation above the countries' respective averages, as opposed to Colombia's 2018 and Panama's 2019 general elections, which were below their countries' average levels of ideological polarisation.

Figure 1: Legislative Polarisation in Latin America



Note: Parties' size and ideology come mostly from the DPEILA (Borges et al. forthcoming). Legislative polarisation has been measured by means of Dalton's Index and runs from 0 to 10 (see below for more information).

At the outset, coalition theories ruled out the influence of ideological preferences on the government formation process. Rooted primarily in office-seeking assumptions, scholars

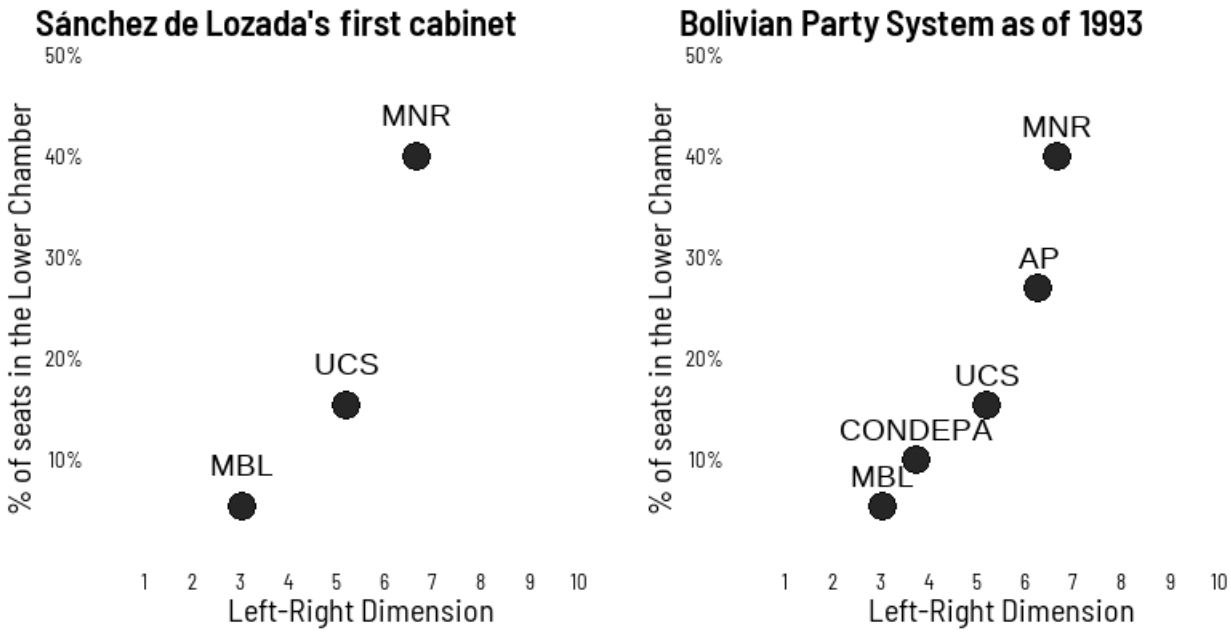
argued that actual governments should consist of either minimal winning coalitions or coalitions with the fewest possible number of parties to retain a majority (Leiserson 1966; Riker 1962). In short, either form would emerge as a consequence of parties' unwillingness to share the spoils of government with more parties than needed. However, initial models of government formation suffered from dismaying predictive power and frequently failed to explain the process underlying the rise of governments (De Winter et al. 2002; Laver and Schofield 1990). As a result, coalition theories rapidly acknowledged that political parties are also pushed by policy incentives (Axelrod 1970; De Swaan 1973).

More recently, most studies include both office- and policy-seeking propositions in their models of coalition formation (Druckman et al. 2005; Eppner and Ganghof 2017; Freudenreich 2016; Giannetti and Pinto 2018). The background is that potential cabinets marked by high ideological division are far less likely to form than alternatives that are ideologically homogeneous. Despite taking policy penchant seriously, the literature still has a tendency to resort to a crude measure of the policy-seeking approach (Indridason 2011). In general, the bulk of studies on government formation operationalise ideological division as the distance between the most left-wing and the most right-wing parties within each potential government, thereby leaving aside the overall division among the parties comprising the party system.

As such, this measure entails one major problem: it disregards the general polarisation of party systems. To see how this can be troublesome, consider Bolivia's Sánchez de Lozada's first cabinet in his first term in 1993. Figure 2 displays the percentage of seats in the lower chamber and the position of each political party in Bolivia along the economic left-right dimension,[4] except for minor and regionalist parties.

On the left, Figure 2 shows the composition of Sánchez de Lozada's first cabinet. Overall, the cabinet was comprised of three parties: the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR, *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*), the Civic Solidarity Union (UCS, *Unión Cívica Solidaridad*), and the Free Bolivia Movement (MBL, *Movimiento Bolivia Libre*). The ideological position of each party present in the party system and their

Figure 2: Sánchez de Lozada's Government Formation



Note: Parties' size and ideology hail from the V-Party dataset (Lindberg et al. 2022). The original 7-point scale was transformed into a 10-point scale for the sake of better visualisation. There was no available information on minor and regionalist parties. Patriotic Accord (AP, *Acuerdo Patriótico*) was a coalition composed of the Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN, *Acción Democrática Nacionalista*) and the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR, *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario*), for which there are no data for each party individually.

respective size in the legislature can be seen on the right side of the Figure 2.

The Bolivian party system in 1993 helps to understand why the lack of proper attention to polarisation may cast a shadow on our knowledge about government formation in presidential regimes. Theoretically, the less likely outcome of the formation game in such a scenario would be the emergence of a coalition composed of the MNR and the MBL, as both parties are located at each extremity of the ideological camp. However, this is exactly what happened. How could one explain this incongruence? As I shall elaborate in the next section, the answer may lie in the combination of legislative polarisation and the formation of a pre-election coalition. The bottom line is that legislative polarisation and pre-electoral coalitions constrain the government formation to the point where the decision as to whom to invite to the cabinet does not depend solely on the parties that ultimately were invited to take a seat but also on the other parties available in the pool of parties (Indridason 2011, p. 692). That is, amongst other things, the MNR's decision to form the cabinet in tandem with the UCS and the MBL was made consciously after

grasping how far parties were apart in the party system and considering that there was already a pre-electoral coalition up and running.

4 The Entanglement between Pre-Electoral Coalitions, Legislative Polarisation, and Government Formation

The vast majority of the literature on pre-electoral coalitions in presidential democracies argues that being part of pre-electoral pact matters for portfolio allocation in the post-electoral scenario (Albala 2021; Albala et al. 2023a; Borges et al. 2021; Carroll 2007; Freudenreich 2016; Peron 2018). I take a step back and claim that the degree of legislative polarisation has a decisive impact on converting pre-electoral coalitions into coalition cabinets.

Legislative polarisation is known for increasing the complexity around multiparty bargaining in parliamentary regimes. This is materialised by the fact that governments take longer to form as legislative polarisation increases (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013; Golder 2010; Martin and Vanberg 2003). This clearly cannot happen under presidentialism because both the executive and the legislature have constitutionally fixed terms (Linz 1994), which means that governments have not only a date to end, but also a date to begin their tenure. Nevertheless, this does not preclude legislative polarisation from disturbing the government formation in presidentialism.

Multiparty negotiations are inherently more difficult as legislative polarisation increases since parties hold increasingly irreconcilable views on various issues. Consequently, highly polarised settings present presidential parties with a smaller set of viable alternative governments, thereby reducing presidents' leeway to build their cabinets. Conversely, slight legislative polarisation represents the best scenario for the executive once they have a great variety of feasible coalition alternatives.

My point is that pre-electoral agreements counteract the effect of legislative polarisation on cabinet formation. Although polarisation implies more bargaining complexity,

pre-electoral agreements make parties abide by several compromises even *before* the elections take place. In the midst of these compromises, parties discuss common grounds over public policies to be implemented, which policies should be left aside, and ministries to be distributed amongst coalition members (Peron 2018). Thus, presidential parties have significant incentives to keep to their end of the bargain under polarised contexts. The rationale is straightforward: building the new government around a previous, settled pre-electoral agreement is much simpler than finding the middle ground amongst other arrays of parties in an inhospitable party system.

Note that my contention does not implicate that legislative polarisation leads to greater or lesser formation of pre-electoral coalitions. On the contrary, my claim starts from the fact that pre-electoral pacts have already been made and, subsequently, are more binding to the extent that *formateur* parties face greater ideological hurdles in parliament. Also, I do not argue that parties far apart from one another cannot be part of the same pre-electoral pact. Even if their ideological positions are starkly different, they can make concessions to each other and meet at the halfway. This can be exemplified by the pre-electoral coalition formed between the National Convergence (CN, *Convergencia Nacional*) and the Movement toward Socialism (MAS, *Movimiento al Socialismo*) in 1993 Venezuela, two parties located at opposite ends of the ideological camp. In spite of the distance between the parties at the same pre-electoral pact, my argument continues the same: the CN had more incentives to build the government around the pre-electoral coalition to the extent that legislative polarisation was moderately acute in the party system.[5]

By contrast, meagre polarisation along economic and social policy lines provides fewer incentives for presidents to form governments based on pre-electoral alliances. Consider the following chain of events. To start, as legislative polarisation decreases, parties become less differentiated from one another and, as a consequence, have fewer disagreements over policy issues. In this sense, coalition bargaining is more amenable to be undertaken and might have many different outcomes. The greater resemblance in the party system ultimately favours presidential parties since they can forgo their original pre-electoral pact

and strive to build a bargain more beneficial to themselves. In a hypothetical situation, where the party system would look like an undifferentiated amalgam of parties from similar ideological positions, presidents could dismount their pre-electoral coalition and, rather than building a multiparty cabinet, decide to govern through *ad-hoc* coalitions.

This discussion relates to the question of fairness in coalition governments and returns to the conundrum of whether presidents share office payoffs with pre-electoral coalition parties. Some scholars suggest that coalition governments under parliamentarism have an internalised norm by which executive office positions are proportionally allocated in relation to each member's size in the legislature (Browne and Rice 1979; Browne and Frendreis 1980). The rationale is that proportional portfolio allocation does not derive from a purely rational approach but rather from a social norm about fairness.[6] This reasoning could be roughly applied to pre-electoral agreements under presidentialism, where one could argue that pre-electoral coalitions should naturally transform into post-electoral coalition cabinets. Coalition cabinets fully composed of pre-electoral coalitions should be the fairer outcome amongst all possible alternative governments once all parties relinquishing from launching a presidential candidate would still be compensated by being part of the next government.

Arguments based on norm-driven behaviours, though, remain untested in the studies on government formation in presidential regimes. The literature is, nevertheless, split into different explanations based on the rational choice theory. On the one hand, presidential parties lack incentives to maintain a bargain struck prior to the elections since their survival is not reliant upon the legislature (Kellam 2017). On the other hand, presidents honour the pre-electoral pact because, in rational choice terminology, governing is a repeated interaction between presidents and parties in the legislature, in which presidential parties reap the benefits of keeping their word in pre-electoral agreements by demonstrating to be credible coalition partners (Borges et al. 2021).[7]

These contradictory claims can be illustrated through the Brazilian case. Following the first stream of studies, as office-seeking would be out of the question, parties should

join pre-electoral coalitions based solely on policy-seeking considerations (Kellam 2017). In this way, pre-electoral agreements should not thrive in Brazil as office-seeking parties abound in the country (Borges 2021). However, much to the contrary, the Brazilian presidential elections have been inundated with pre-electoral coalitions since the return to democracy, in 1985. More surprisingly, several party leaders only agree to engage in multiparty bargaining if they can have an eye on portfolio distribution, even if the presidential and legislative elections have not taken place yet (Peron 2018). Taken together, the Brazilian experience has pointed out that parties without viable presidential candidates do expect office perks by joining a pre-electoral pact. Of course, though, anecdotal evidence from a single-case study still suffers from low generalisability.

That being said, my theory adds a nuance to the discussion about pre-election coalitions and their post-electoral fulfilment. Although the literature has mainly supported the idea that pre-electoral agreements matter once the government is in place, Kellam (2017) still has a point when she argues that presidents might enjoy their constitutional privileges and try to exploit the office payoffs of being the *formateur* of the coalition. In other words, presidents might break out from pre-electoral arrangements when they can construct a more beneficial bargain for themselves. This should be most likely to happen when the legislative polarisation is low, where presidential parties have more feasible alternative governments to build than they would have when parties are far apart from one another in the standard left-right dimension. This is in line with previous studies that have stood out how presidents resort to institutional features to favour themselves in the coalition formation and lawmaking process (Inácio and Llanos 2015; Silva 2022). By contrast, presidential parties have compelling incentives to form governments around pre-electoral agreements when the ideological polarisation in the legislature is high, as pre-electoral pacts serve as focal points that reduce bargaining costs, especially in comparison to forming a new government from scratch. Thus:

Hypothesis: The marginal effect of pre-electoral composition on cabinet formation grows in strength as legislative polarisation gets larger; this positive effect is strongest when

legislative polarisation is at its highest and vanishes as legislative polarisation decreases.

5 Research Design

In order to test my argument, I analyse patterns of government formation in thirteen Latin American countries. A comparative research design appears well-suited to the task as coalition governments are quite common in presidential regimes (Cheibub 2007; Cheibub et al. 2004), especially in Latin America (Chaisty et al. 2018; Couto et al. 2021). In other words, coalitional presidentialism is not a whim of a handful of countries but rather is a real tool to engender legislative majorities in the region.

My focus resides in Latin America for a few reasons. First, focusing on a single region helps to preserve the unit homogeneity of the research (King et al. 1994). Otherwise, the results could be biased if the study had drawn on presidential regimes across different continents once non-observable features could be at play. At the same time, however, it could be said that the same logic discussed above regarding pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation could be extended to encompass presidential government formation outside the Latin American scope. This leads to a second reason for centring the analysis on the Latin American context. Despite a few remarkable exceptions (Ariotti and Golder 2018; Hanan 2012; Kim 2011), data on presidential coalition governments in regions other than Latin America are not aggregated yet, thereby hindering comparative enterprises. Indeed, pre-election agreements have been scarcely addressed in African, Asian and Eastern European presidential countries[8] in contrast to the well-documented evidence when it comes to Latin American countries (Albala 2021; Borges et al. 2021; Freudenreich 2016; Kellam 2017).

To effectively test my hypothesis, I follow Freudenreich's (2016) lead and employ conditional logit models to study the patterns of government formation in presidentialism. In fact, the use of models based on conditional probabilities is not strange to political science. This can be exemplified by the fact that conditional logit techniques are widely employed by the scholarship on party-switching (e.g. Desposato and Scheiner 2008; Radean 2019).

Most remarkably, conditional logit techniques have a close-knit relationship with the literature on government formation under parliamentarian (e.g. Martin and Stevenson 2001). As Freudenreich (2016, p. 90) well noted, though, studies on presidential regimes have not followed the same methodological approach. A plausible reason for such a difference is that presidential systems significantly restrain the set of potential cabinets once the presidential parties are, most of the time, the *formateur* parties.[9] This institutional feature might have prompted scholars to consider only the formed presidential cabinets in their analyses regarding the characteristics of presidential cabinets, such as their status in the legislature (e.g. Figueiredo et al. 2012).

The most popular statistical techniques to deal with coalitional presidentialism, however, provide misspecified estimates to grasp patterns of government formation. This happens because the structure of government formation makes the likelihood of forming a specific cabinet contingent on the other potential governments that could have borne out. In this way, government formation is a choice problem in which presidential parties contrast the utility of forming each alternative government with one another. To put it in presidential terminology, presidents have a whole set of possible governments from which they can choose only a single instance to come into existence. That is, just like passengers choose among different transportation systems to get to a destination (McFadden 1974), presidents are confronted with varying alternatives from which they have to choose one to form. An illustration of this process can be found in the Supplementary Material.

The dependent variable depicts whether the potential government was formed by assigning one to actual governments and zero to all others that remained only in the theoretical plan. It is worth noting that, since my claim pertains to the transition from pre-electoral coalitions to coalition cabinets, I examine only government formation opportunities that follow legislative or presidential elections. In this case, reshuffled cabinets are not present in what follows.

Data on government formation come from the ground-breaking work done by Freudenreich (2016), which I have updated to cover more recent cases of cabinet formation.[10]

Table 1: Dataset Summary

Country	Period	Actual Governments	%
Argentina	1983-2019	20	13.89
Bolivia	1982-2014	9	6.25
Brazil	1989-2018	10	6.94
Chile	1989-2018	9	6.25
Colombia	1978-2018	12	8.33
Costa Rica	1970-2020	14	9.72
Dom. Republic	1978-2016	15	10.41
El Salvador	1984-2019	18	12.5
Honduras	1982-2018	10	6.94
Nicaragua	1997-2016	5	3.47
Panama	1989-2019	8	5.56
Uruguay	1985-2020	8	5.56
Venezuela	1974-1999	6	4.16
Total	1970-2020	144	100

Following the standard procedure in parliamentary studies, only significant parties are taken into account for government formation processes. That is, parties with extremely minor legislative seats are excluded from the analysis since their size in the legislature does not influence interparty negotiations[11] (Budge et al. 2001; Sartori 1979). In practical terms, parties with less than one percentage of seats in the legislature are disregarded.

Table 1 displays the countries included in the dataset, their respective temporal coverage and their number of actual governments.[12]

Information on political parties' ideological preferences and legislative polarisation comes from the Dataset of Parties, Elections and Ideology in Latin America (DPEILA) (Borges et al. forthcoming). The DPEILA provides the positioning of parties along the traditional economic left-right dimension by transforming the V-Party scores to a twenty-point scale. In turn, ideological polarisation in the legislature is measured using Dalton's (2008) Polarisation Index, calculated with a slight modification from the original formula.[13]

$$LegislativePolarisationIndex = \sum_{i=1}^{n} Pi(\frac{Si - Mj}{9.5} * 10)^2 \quad (1)$$

Where Pi is the share of seats of the party i, Si is the position of the party i in the left-right divide, and Mj is the average left-right position of the party system j. In plain terms, Dalton's Polarisation Index allows grasping the degree to which party systems are divided in the post-electoral scenario by weighting parties' position by their size in the legislature.[14] More importantly, in the current ocean of different measures of polarisation, Dalton's index was explicitly built with party systems in mind. As such, it comes as no coincidence that this measurement has gained prominence among scholars in the last years (e.g. Carroll and Kubo 2021; Ecker and Meyer 2015; Lupu 2015).

6 Results

Table 2 provides the results for the empirical implication of my theoretical argument. The first model considers only minority government formation bargaining processes, as coalition formation is more natural when presidential parties lack a legislative majority. The second model considers all presidents, regardless of their legislative status. The models employ most of the original variables used by Freudenreich (2016) to serve as controls for my hypothesised claim.[15]

To start the analysis, as legislative polarisation never reaches zero, I focus the interpretation here mainly on the interaction term (Brambor et al. 2007). Both models indicate that the effect of pre-electoral coalitions appears to be conditional on the degree of legislative polarisation at the 0.01 level. For government formation opportunities under minority presidential parties, the first model tells us that, on average, the increase of one unit of legislative polarisation makes potential governments based on pre-electoral coalitions approximately 14 times more likely to form than alternative governments that exclude any pre-election coalition partner of their composition. The same pattern holds true for majority presidents, as potential coalitions based on pre-election coalitions are more likely to form as legislative polarisation increases.

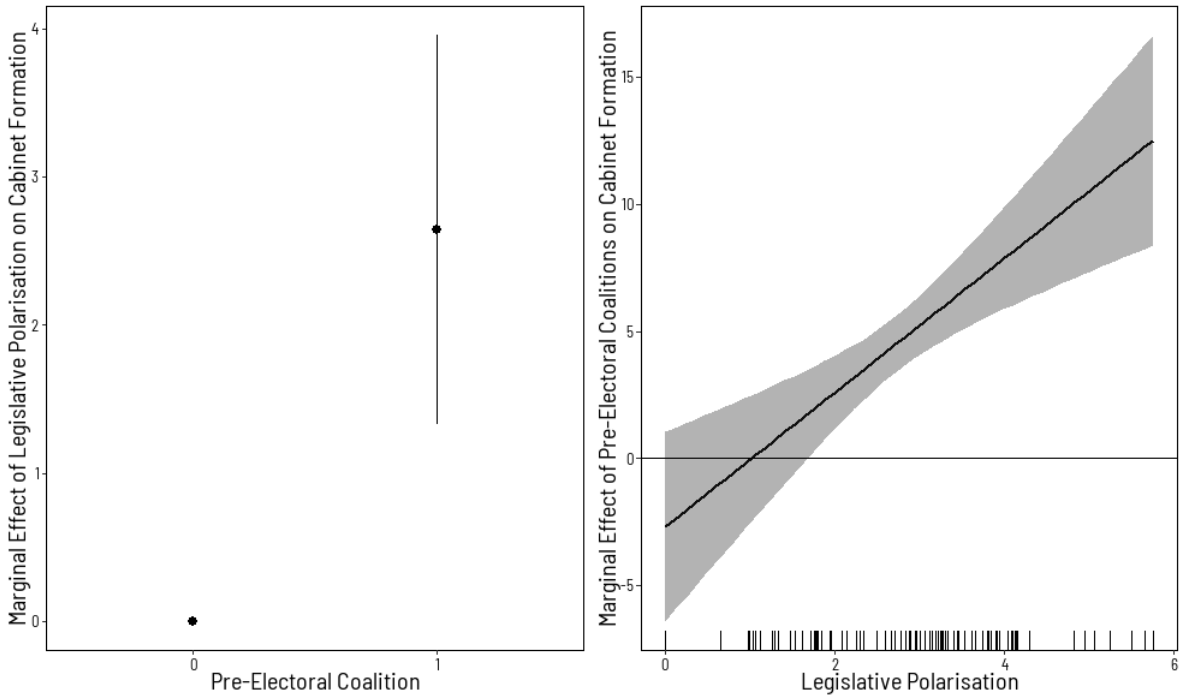
To have a better view and a more consistent analysis of this relationship, Figure 3 plots the marginal effect of pre-election coalitions on government formation across a range

Table 2: Government Formation in Latin America

	Minority Presidents	All Presidents
	(1)	(2)
Minority	-1.397^{***}	-1.214^{***}
	(0.334)	(0.315)
Number of Parties	-1.812^{***}	-1.781^{***}
	(0.164)	(0.149)
Ideological Division	-0.175^{***}	-0.157^{***}
	(0.056)	(0.051)
Median Party	1.321^{***}	1.220^{***}
	(0.327)	(0.314)
Extreme Parties	0.228	0.163
	(0.508)	(0.493)
Runner-up Party	-1.385^{***}	-0.939^{***}
	(0.397)	(0.326)
Pre-Electoral Coalition (PEC)	-2.682	-2.463
	(1.901)	(1.547)
PEC * Legislative Polarisation	2.644^{***}	2.542^{***}
	(0.669)	(0.567)
Cabinets	104	144
Number of Alternative Cabinets	147,736	149,452
Log Likelihood	-251.904	-302.924
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

of values of legislative polarisation based on Model 1.

Figure 3: Conditional Marginal Effect of Pre-Electoral Coalitions on Cabinet Formation



All else being equal, the plot on the left shows that, when based on a pre-electoral coalition, potential governments are 1.3 to 3.9 times more likely to be formed. In a complementary fashion, the plot on the right confirms the Table 2's findings and depicts that legislative polarisation indeed conditions the effects of pre-electoral coalitions on cabinet formation. Except for low levels of ideological polarisation, where the 95% confidence intervals do not let us assure the exact impact of pre-electoral pacts on the formation of presidential governments, pre-election coalitions matter most as parties are more distanced from one another on the left-right policy dimension.[16] From a Legislative Polarisation Index of 1.76 onwards, the construction of pre-electoral pacts exerts increasingly more pressure on cabinet formation, increasing from 1.97 (0.30; 3.63) to 12.51 (8.38; 16.64) times the likelihood of formation of potential governments based on pre-electoral alliances. To attest to the empirical importance of this finding, 86 out of 104 formation opportunities analysed by the first model score more than 1.76 in the index of Legislative Polarisation, which means that disregarding legislative polarisation when studying pre-electoral affairs and government formation in Latin America is quite inadvisable.

To probe whether the above findings are robust, I conduct a series of robustness tests, all of which are available in the Supplementary Material. I test whether the purported relationship between pre-electoral alliances and legislative polarisation is sensitive to the distribution of upper chamber seats, the choice of ideological measure, the number of effective parliamentary parties, the occurrence of party primaries for the selection of the presidential contestants, specific electoral institutions, party system institutionalisation, and electoral volatility. Additionally, I re-run the models excluding one country each time to assess whether my results are driven by a particular country. Overall, the robustness checks yield essentially the same results as compared to those from the original models. More remarkably, the interaction between pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation never loses statistical significance and, in fact, in some models, has a more pronounced coefficient than what was previously registered. Therefore, the findings are consistent across different modelling strategies.

7 Concluding Remarks

Pre-electoral coalitions are a trademark of electoral democracies. This paper has been concerned primarily with the impact of pre-electoral coalitions on government formation in presidential polities, albeit agreements that pre-date elections are equally pivotal in parliamentary regimes (Golder 2006; Ibenskas 2016). This focus arises from the fact that the literature on coalitional presidentialism has long been puzzled about whether pre-electoral pacts matter or not to government formation. On the one hand, the impact of pre-election coalitions is belittled as presidents' party need not act in accordance with the pledges made towards other parties (Kellam 2017). After all, presidential parties' survival in the executive is not reliant on the legislature (Linz 1990, 1994; Samuels and Shugart 2010). On the other hand, pre-electoral coalitions are seen as the spearhead of coalition cabinets. In this view, presidents do commit to allocating office pay-offs to pre-electoral coalition members, even if they are not constitutionally obliged to stick to their electoral promises (Carroll 2007; Freudenreich 2016; Peron 2018).

This paper has sought to bring nuance to this discussion. I argue that presidents do not behave in such a black-and-white manner. Actually, their decision to build coalition cabinets around pre-electoral agreements depends on which context the government is embedded in. More specifically, pre-electoral pacts should be more binding to the extent that legislative polarisation is more pervasive in the party system. The explanation resides in the fact that an increased ideological dividedness at the party system level reduces presidents' wiggle room to build governing coalitions since parties have conflicting policy preferences. In this context, the utility of forming governments around pre-electoral pacts increases as they largely reduce bargaining costs. Conversely, agreements struck prior to the elections do not offer the same advantage when legislative polarisation is shallow. When a party system is not composed of parties with too many disagreements on the left-right ideological dimension, presidential parties have varying possible multiparty governments at their disposal, and they may end up forming a government different from those derived from pre-electoral pacts.

To test my claim, I make use of a dataset comprising alternative coalitions of thirteen Latin American countries over 50 years. The conditional logit models highlight across different specifications that the effect of pre-election coalitions is substantially conditional on the degree of legislative polarisation. In other words, potential governments based on pre-electoral agreements are more likely to form as ideological polarisation increases in the legislature.

Despite being tested on Latin American cases only, the theory put forward here applies to presidential democracies located outside the boundaries of Latin America. However, the generalisability of this work's findings depends on how the political competition is structured in other countries. More specifically, the results of this study are meaningful for presidential democracies that have party competition at least *minimally* subsumed in the typical economic left-right spectrum. If this is not the case and the policy space is either multidimensional or based on non-programmatic lines, then it follows logically that we cannot extend the idea that the effect of pre-election alliances is conditional on the degree of legislative polarisation.

Looking down the road, the literature would greatly benefit from taking any policy dimension other than the traditional economic left-right division into consideration, even if it means sacrificing a comparative perspective at first. For example, African and Asian presidential democracies seem to have other prominent political cleavages shaping their party systems other than the traditional left-right divide (Hanan 2012; Kim 2011). Against this backdrop, the fact that not mere legislative polarisation, but multidimensional legislative polarisation can moderate the impact of pre-electoral coalitions in these countries merits further scholarly attention.

Finally, it should be stressed that pre-electoral coalitions not only influence party and electoral systems but also the accountability between voters and parties. As well noted by Spoon and West (2015, p. 401), even if pre-electoral coalitions may be mutually beneficial to pre-electoral coalition members, they are not necessarily a blessing for representation. Much to the contrary, multiparty electoral coordination may preclude voters from casting a vote on their favourite option, as pre-electoral alliances shrink the number of available candidates on the election day. However, to the best of my knowledge, the link between pre-election coalitions and representation has been weakly explored thus far, either from a theoretical or an empirical standpoint. Hence, future studies would thrive from closing the gap in our knowledge about the relationship between pre-electoral coalition and representation, especially in presidential regimes in Latin America, which are known for their low levels of partisanship.

Notes

1. Four out of seven candidacies to the presidential office in Chile resorted to pre-electoral agreements in 2021, whilst the major presidential contestants arranged themselves around pre-electoral pacts in the months leading up to the 2022 presidential election in Colombia.

2. There is a persisting idea that presidents need not be concerned with their parties' seat share in the legislature to secure their survival in office (e.g. Jang 2023). However, this is the subject of an ongoing debate. Thus far, the literature has found mixed results regarding the effect of the size of the presidents' legislative contingent on their survival (Hochstetler and Edwards 2009; Lehoucq and Pérez-Liñán 2014;

Negretto 2006; Pérez-Liñán and Polga-Hecimovich 2017). Hence, what we can take out of this discussion is that presidents are not necessarily doomed to fail if they lack control of a majority in the legislature.

3. As another example, in the Brazilian presidential elections, pre-electoral coalition members take advantage of the electoral legislation to increase the amount of free political advertising time on the media for their presidential candidate. This is because each party is allocated a corresponding amount of free airtime relative to its legislative seat share. Hence, reliant on their parties and their coalesced parties, presidential candidates may have a more extensive time of electoral free broadcasting than their foes.

4. For the purpose of this study, the policy dimension refers only to the traditional economic left-right line.

5. The 1993 Venezuelan party system would have a low legislative polarisation in comparative terms. From a national perspective, however, the ideological polarisation in 1993 was at its peak at the time. In the end, the CN preferred to form the government with the MAS as opposed to inviting other right-wing parties into the cabinet.

6. Of course, other scholars firmly disagree with this view and argue that coalition governments are primarily driven by rational thinking (Bäck et al. 2009; Ecker and Meyer 2019; Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013).

7. An extension of this argument could preview that presidents may even increase cabinet size to accommodate pre-electoral coalition members. However, a recent study has shown that this is not the case (Albala et al. 2023b).

8. Kadima and Owuor (2014) and Kim (2008) are notable exceptions.

9. Strictly speaking, the presidential party can even stay out of office. The justification for that resides in the fact that some presidents maximise their utility by not including their party in the cabinet, thus opting for reaping the benefits of building co-optation or non-partisan cabinets (Albala 2013; Amorim Neto 1998).

10. The steps behind the updating process are discussed in the Supplementary Material.

11. Furthermore, excluding very small parties from the sample is a way to deal with measurement errors, as experts get into trouble in estimating their policies' position (Marks et al. 2007).

12. Further descriptive statistics for the variables can be found in the Appendix.

13. This is not necessarily a problem, as the reason for such a difference stems from the fact that the scales of ideological preferences are different. While Dalton (2008) relies on a ten-point scale, the DPEILA makes use of a twenty-point scale to locate parties across the ideology continuum.

14. A brief discussion on the Legislative Polarisation Index is available in the Supplementary Material.

15. Due to data unavailability on party's seat share in upper chambers across Latin America, I cannot gauge whether the distribution of seats in second chambers confounds the entangled relation between pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation on the formation of presidential cabinets with the entire updated dataset. To examine if this is the case, I conduct a few robustness tests regarding bicameral settings.

16. It is worth noting that the statistical insignificance of the point estimate when legislative polarisation reaches low levels does not raise concerns for the hypothesis tested here. This is because the underlying theory posits that the effect of pre-electoral coalitions should be larger as legislative polarisation increases; this effect is expected to lose strength as legislative polarisation decreases.

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Supplementary Material for 'Government Formation in Presidentialism: disentangling the combined effects of pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation'

1 Updating Dataset on Government Formation in Latin America

Here, I briefly outline the updating process of the dataset on government formation in Latin America, which was originally developed by Freudenreich (2016). The first step was ensuring that only democratic periods were inserted in the dataset. To do so, I checked which country-years were democratic based on Bjørnskov and Rode (2020) and the Polity V (Marshall and Gurr, 2020). Country-years deemed as either undemocratic or scoring below score six on Polity V Index have been cast aside. Next, I retrieved information on the Latin American party systems to be updated from the DPEILA (Borges et al., forthcoming) and the V-Party dataset (Lindberg et al., 2022), such as the number of parties in the parliament, their seat share, and their location on the left–right ideology scale. In the next stage, I looked for data on the composition of presidential cabinets and coded actual governments following Amorim Neto (2019), Camerlo and Martínez-Gallardo (2018), Nyrup and Bramwell (2020) and Silva (2022). Then, the last step consisted of coding which potential governments were based on pre-election coalitions. Data on most recent Latin American pre-election coalitions come mostly from Borges et al. (2021) and Lopes (2022), and, for the cases not covered by scholarly literature yet,

I relied on the countries' respective electoral committees or similar departments charged with electoral affairs.

To avoid falling victim to the violation of the independence of irrelevant alternatives (IIA), a different procedure was made to include Brazil's case in the wake of its 2018 legislative and presidential elections. In the aggregate, thirty parties gained representation in the lower chamber after the elections, with twenty-two holding more than one per cent of the share of seats. As a consequence, this number of parties would have generated more than two million potential governments and, thus, would make conditional logit regressions inviable. The solution found was to raise the threshold for inclusion in the dataset for this specific election from one to roughly two-and-a-half per cent of seats. However, to prevent losing information, I also considered relevant parties with known policy positions on the DPEILA, despite not holding two-and-a-half per cent of the seats of the Chamber of Deputies.

Relatedly, I draw attention to the importance of not including minor parties in the dataset. As a matter of fact, the exclusion of parties with less than one percentage of legislative seats is far from being a mere subtlety. More often than not, research on government formation considers that *formateur* parties have various coalition alternatives from which they choose only one to actually form. Taking out non-significant parties from the analysis prevents researchers from stumbling at measurement errors. To see why this is the case, let me consider the 2002 pre-electoral coalition led by Lula. Despite being comprised of five parties, the pre-electoral coalition embraced two very small parties, the Party of National Mobilization (PMN, *Partido da Mobilização Nacional*) and the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB, *Partido Comunista Brasileiro*). Together, both parties accounted for exactly one seat following the 2002 general election in Brazil. Not surprisingly, neither party was invited to be part of the upcoming government. If the PMN and the PCB had been in the dataset on government formation, they would have caused two problems of major concern. Firstly, they would have wrongly generated more options of feasible coalition alternatives than there actually were. Secondly, and posing a graver threat to the research design, the inclusion of these petite parties would have made

the researchers incorrectly assign the formed government as non-driven by a pre-election pact, as the two members had been dropped.

2 Government Formation Illustration

Let us examine the process of government formation in presidential democracies with the Uruguayan party system in 2000. By the end of the century, the Uruguayan party system was comprised of four political parties[1]: the Colorado Party (PC, *Partido Colorado*), the National Party (PN, *Partido Nacional*), the Broad Front (FA, *Frente Amplio*), and the New Space (NE, *Nuevo Espacio*). Against this backdrop, as soon Batlle was sworn into office, he could have built his cabinet in eight different ways[2], as listed in Table A.1. The government formation process ultimately led to a coalition between the PC and the PN. In this specific case, the only option to be coded as 1 is the actual government formed between the PC and the PN, while all the remaining options are coded as 0. Thus, the interest resides in explaining why this potential coalition emerged at the expense of the others. In this context, the conditional logit model is particularly well-equipped to provide a broad overview of the reasons for government formation in presidential settings.

Table A.1: Potential governments following the 1999 Uruguayan general election

Formateur	Coalition Partner(s)
PC	–
PC	FA
PC	**PN**
PC	NE
PC	FA - PN
PC	FA - NE
PC	PN - NE
PC	FA - PN - NE

Note: The formed government is highlighted in bold.

3 Brief Discussion on Legislative Polarisation

It is worth mentioning that the Legislative Polarisation Index applied in the main body of the article is not intended to measure the difference in legislative polarisation from the

pre-electoral to the post-electoral scenario; instead, it is aimed to measure the ideological polarisation in the legislature after all actors know the election results. This point raises the question of whether political parties are fully aware of the policy preferences of one another when it is time to form a new cabinet after a general election. This situation is further aggravated by the fact that political actors are in a context inundated with imperfect information and bounded rationality (Shepsle, 2006). In order to circumvent this problem, Curini and Pinto (2016) resort to the "average ideological range" of party systems by looking at the distance between the rightmost party to the leftmost party on a host of policy domains taking into consideration the previous government. However, this solution is far from ideal to be applied in this work for several reasons. Firstly, the hypothesised causal effect put forward here concerns only *the degree* of legislative polarisation, not its *change* in comparison with a previous setting. Secondly, the "average ideological range" is blind to parties' size, thus assigning disproportional weight to small extremist parties and, consequently, not tapping neatly into the concept of legislative polarisation. The final nail in the coffin is the fact that this paper measures ideological polarisation in the legislature for only one dimension, namely the standard economic left-right cleavage, whereas Curini and Pinto (2016) had data for party preferences in eight domains. To sum up, despite the fact that the literature has come up with alternatives to deal with the uncertainty around government formation, changing the polarisation index to a mere ideological range does not seem fruitful for this work.

4 Descriptive Statistics

5 Robustness Tests

To test whether the combined effects of pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation are not achieved by chance, I conduct a whole series of robustness tests to check the validity of my results. The first of them consists of finding out whether the lack of information on upper chamber status is troublesome for my analysis. With that in mind,

Table A.2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max	N
DV:					
Actual Goverment	0.001	0.031	0	1	149,784
IV:					
Minority	0.363	0.480	0	1	149,784
Number of Parties	7.877	2.235	1	17	149,784
Ideological Division	6.911	1.962	0	10	149,784
Median Party	0.568	0.495	0	1	149,784
Extreme Parties	0.555	0.496	0	1	149,784
Runner-up Party	0.498	0.500	0	1	149,784
Pre-Electoral Coalition	0.049	0.217	0	1	149,784
Legislative Polarisation	3.201	0.714	0.0006	5.749	149,452

I first re-run models with Freudenreich's (2016) original data, which have information on minority status in both lower and upper chambers. Then, I divide the original dataset into bicameral and unicameral countries and re-run models for bicameral countries only. I wrap up this part by repeating the last procedure on the updated dataset.

Next, I replace the V-Party measure with Baker and Greene's (2011) ideological classification of Latin American parties. Then, I restrict the sample to include only those party systems with more than 2.5 effective number of parties and once again re-run the conditional logit models. The former test allows checking whether the results remain the same regardless of the ideological measure choice, whereas the latter takes into account that coalitional bargaining is more typical in more fragmented settings.

The last battery of tests concerns gauging whether specific aspects of electoral systems and party systems have empirical implications for my argument. The first feature that may influence the transformation of pre-electoral coalitions into governing coalitions is the undertaking of common party primaries. Let us suppose that a set of parties agreed on defining its presidential and legislative candidates by means of conjoint party primaries. In that case, pre-electoral coalition members naturally have a higher likelihood of composing the next government if the pre-election alliance is successful in the electoral arena, as breaking the pre-electoral coalition apart is immensely costly. Consequently, cabinet formation would not have too much to do with legislative polarisation, but rather

with party primaries *per se*.

Coding common party primaries proves to be extremely difficult, partly due to the nature of the scholarship on party primaries, which has not had a comparative empirical focus (Navarro and Sandri, 2017). To deal with it, I rely on a *proxy* measure by coding whether or not presidential parties chose their candidates through a primary election. Even if I do not tap perfectly into the concept of *common* party primaries, this measure captures the degree of formalisation around the process of selecting presidential candidates and encapsulates pre-election coalitions that chose their presidential runner by resorting to a multiparty primary election. Hence, I narrow down the dataset only to those governments that had their presidents chosen through primary elections and then re-run the models.

I also control for the possible confounding effect of electoral institutions on the relationship between pre-election pacts and legislative polarisation. This is because electoral institutions can encourage interparty coordination across different levels of competition and, consequently, make pre-electoral pacts less prone to breaking in a post-electoral scenario, as parties have made concessions to one another in various arenas. Hence, I control for the use of proportional electoral systems and the application of the D'Hondt formula.

Lastly, I probe the extent to which my findings are valid when taking into account both the degree of party system institutionalisation and electoral volatility. Since governing is an iterative process, where pre-electoral coalition members can punish presidential parties for not inviting them to the cabinet in the past, it may be the case that *formateur* parties refrain from breaking pre-electoral pacts in politically stable party systems, where the vote turnover among parties is low from one election to another, and political brands remain the same over time. To see if this is the case, I use data on party system institutionalisation from Coppedge et al. (2023) and calculate electoral volatility based on the Pedersen Index (Pedersen, 1983) with information on parties' vote share from the DPEILA (Borges et al., forthcoming). I then restrict the sample to those cases above and below the median for both measures, respectively, and re-run the models.[3]

Table A.3: Robustness Checks for Government Formation in Latin America

	Freudenreich Original (FO)	Bicameral Systems in FO	Bicameral Systems	Baker and Greene (2011)	ENPP >2.5	With Primaries	Proportional Systems	D'Hondt Method	PSI >0.724	Elec. Volat. <2.0%
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Lower Chamber Minority	−0.961**	−1.493***	−1.641***	−0.823*	−1.522***	−0.672	−1.224***	−0.798	−1.575**	−1.606**
	(0.397)	(0.505)	(0.417)	(0.450)	(0.347)	(0.566)	(0.357)	(0.616)	(0.800)	(0.721)
Upper Chamber Minority	−1.140**	−0.393								
	(0.460)	(0.528)								
Number of Parties	−1.974***	−1.728***	−1.646***	−1.708***	−1.793***	−2.077***	−1.766***	−2.407***	−1.339***	−0.542***
	(0.201)	(0.213)	(0.181)	(0.215)	(0.165)	(0.302)	(0.171)	(0.348)	(0.337)	(0.201)
Ideological Division	0.634	0.692	0.360	0.830	0.226	1.002	0.498	−0.117	−3.839	0.581
	(0.594)	(0.667)	(0.570)	(0.556)	(0.509)	(0.781)	(0.552)	(1.099)	(4.221)	(0.853)
Median Party	−0.134**	−0.133*	−0.158**	−0.138*	−0.184***	−0.015	−0.179***	0.036	−0.526***	−0.387***
	(0.063)	(0.074)	(0.069)	(0.077)	(0.058)	(0.107)	(0.059)	(0.105)	(0.149)	(0.147)
Extreme Parties	1.345***	1.214**	1.448***	1.482***	1.281***	1.793***	1.229***	1.407**	0.562	2.272**
	(0.405)	(0.514)	(0.431)	(0.519)	(0.333)	(0.616)	(0.347)	(0.654)	(0.699)	(1.119)
Runner-up Party	−1.677***	−1.472***	−1.619***	−1.188**	−1.308***	−1.214*	−1.312***	−0.483	−0.820	−3.826***
	(0.499)	(0.544)	(0.499)	(0.545)	(0.407)	(0.653)	(0.428)	(0.608)	(0.837)	(1.324)
Pre-Electoral Coalition (PEC)	−2.539	−4.488*	−4.251**	−10.877***	−2.675	0.001	−3.685*	−9.182**	−13.354	−19.956
	(2.159)	(2.556)	(2.131)	(4.051)	(1.896)	(2.447)	(2.239)	(4.617)	(14.255)	(13.874)
PEC * Legislative Polarisation	2.511***	2.953***	3.003***		2.617***	1.666**	2.982***	6.621***	8.057*	7.386*
	(0.749)	(0.901)	(0.775)		(0.666)	(0.833)	(0.792)	(2.085)	(4.514)	(4.291)
PEC * Legislative Polarisation (BG)				4.705***						
				(1.257)						
Cabinets	79	52	64	55	94	41	93	41	36	22
Number of Alternative Cabinets	55,432	49,492	141,236	53,328	147,644	6,136	142,528	23,424	149,200	211,528
Log Likelihood	-185.549	-150.321	-189.082	-150.247	-242.776	-88.958	-227.380	-72.632	-54.185	-126.760

Note: PSI stands for Party System Institutionalisation. $^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

Table A.3 exhibits the results for these initial tests.

Crucially, moreover, the conditional logit models have a particularity of being fixed-effect models, thereby soaking up all countries' features that remain constant over time. This entails two consequences. First, as the estimation is based on fixed effects, there is no need to control for country when employing conditional logit models. Second, and perhaps unexpectedly, differences in the number of alternative coalitions provided for each country are unproblematic insofar as country units do not bias the results. This last consequence is of particular interest as countries starkly differ from one another with regard to the number of potential coalitions. I, thus, examine whether a particular country heavily influences the results by re-running the regressions excluding one country at a time.

Table A.4: Iterative exclusion of countries

	Without Argentina	Without Bolivia	Without Brazil	Without Chile	Without Colombia	Without Costa Rica	Without Dom. Rep.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Minority	−1.776***	−1.195***	−1.381***	−1.364***	−1.341***	−1.480***	−1.331***
	(0.375)	(0.357)	(0.374)	(0.342)	(0.344)	(0.355)	(0.343)
Number of Parties	−1.585***	−1.879***	−2.301***	−1.829***	−1.772***	−1.796***	−1.787***
	(0.172)	(0.178)	(0.214)	(0.167)	(0.176)	(0.171)	(0.166)
Ideological Division	−0.255***	−0.190***	−0.095	−0.146***	−0.195***	−0.174***	−0.209***
	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.060)
Median Party	1.090***	1.320***	1.545***	1.331***	1.151***	1.313***	1.496***
	(0.351)	(0.346)	(0.357)	(0.332)	(0.349)	(0.340)	(0.336)
Extreme Parties	−0.018	0.478	−0.662	0.265	0.465	0.226	0.299
	(0.552)	(0.529)	(0.804)	(0.504)	(0.515)	(0.511)	(0.513)
Runner-up Party	−1.387***	−1.085***	−1.099***	−1.348***	−1.721***	−1.397***	−1.357***
	(0.411)	(0.405)	(0.415)	(0.400)	(0.461)	(0.414)	(0.419)
Pre-Electoral Coalition (PEC)	−0.993	−5.950**	−2.609	−2.370	−2.019	−2.679	−2.673
	(2.564)	(2.799)	(1.948)	(1.887)	(1.854)	(1.898)	(1.914)
PEC * Legislative Polarisation	2.004**	4.479***	2.882***	2.299***	2.320***	2.619***	2.637***
	(0.841)	(1.152)	(0.689)	(0.667)	(0.648)	(0.668)	(0.674)
Cabinets	88	98	94	95	97	94	97
Number of Alternative Cabinets	134,680	141,336	38,680	146,712	136,980	146,856	147,704
Log Likelihood	-216.374	-215.570	-180.570	-243.511	-225.783	-230.715	-241.811

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Overall, the robustness checks yield essentially the same results as compared to those

from the original models. More remarkably, the interaction between pre-electoral coalitions and legislative polarisation never loses statistical significance and, in fact, in some models, has a more pronounced coefficient than what was previously registered. All in all, the findings are consistent across different specifications.

Table A.4: Cont.

	Without El Salvador	Without Honduras	Without Nicaragua	Without Panama	Without Uruguay	Without Venezuela
	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
Minority	−1.507***	−1.528***	−1.343***	−1.275***	−1.267***	−1.478***
	(0.355)	(0.343)	(0.338)	(0.344)	(0.340)	(0.342)
Number of Parties	−1.780***	−1.808***	−1.766***	−1.763***	−1.875***	−1.773***
	(0.169)	(0.164)	(0.165)	(0.168)	(0.170)	(0.165)
Ideological Division	−0.166***	−0.169***	−0.192***	−0.162***	−0.140**	−0.185***
	(0.062)	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Median Party	1.637***	1.227***	1.327***	1.215***	1.369***	1.287***
	(0.380)	(0.331)	(0.329)	(0.340)	(0.339)	(0.330)
Extreme Parties	0.290	0.214	0.224	0.307	0.243	0.299
	(0.521)	(0.509)	(0.509)	(0.542)	(0.510)	(0.509)
Runner-up Party	−1.564***	−1.384***	−1.351***	−1.447***	−1.627***	−1.362***
	(0.439)	(0.399)	(0.400)	(0.422)	(0.444)	(0.398)
Pre-Electoral Coalition (PEC)	−2.694	−2.676	−2.677	−4.318**	−2.701	−1.928
	(1.921)	(1.893)	(1.896)	(2.122)	(1.914)	(2.038)
PEC * Legislative Polarisation	2.580***	2.623***	2.625***	3.198***	2.693***	2.352***
	(0.673)	(0.665)	(0.668)	(0.777)	(0.675)	(0.689)
Cabinets	88	99	102	97	99	100
Number of Alternative Cabinets	147,188	147,672	147,216	143,248	147,640	146,920
Log Likelihood	-230.939	-247.891	-248.252	-239.702	-239.096	-245.926

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Notes

1. The Uruguayan party system is much more complex than the one depicted here. The Uruguayan political parties are composed of several disparate factions. Following the comparative literature on Latin America, I refer to political parties *per se* instead of focusing on the intraparty dimension.

2. In presidential democracies, the number of potential governments is given by the formula 2^n, where n is the number of parties excluding the president's party. In their parliamentary counterparts, the number of potential governments is calculated through $2^n - 1$, where n is the number of parties in the party

system. This slight difference is due to the fact that the *formateur* cannot be any other party than the presidents' party in presidentialism, whereas any party can be the *formateur* in parliamentarism.

3. Initially, some tests did not converge due to their small sample size. This is not surprising, though. After all, all soundness tests inevitably involve reducing the number of cabinets under study to some extent. To circumvent this issue, some models were estimated on data encompassing not only government formation bargaining processes following presidential and legislative elections but reshuffled cabinets as well. If anything, their inclusion in the analysis should bias against my findings, as presidential cabinets based on pre-electoral coalitions tend to be more durable (Albala et al., 2023) and, as a result, do not lead to as many reshuffles as their counterparts not based on any version of pre-electoral pacts. In any case, even if this work's conditional theory does not pertain to the domain of cabinet reshuffles, their inclusion is necessary to make some models possible (e.g., Model 6, Model 9, and Model 10 of the Table A.3).

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