

OF COALITION AND SPEED: Passage and Duration of Statutes in Uruguay's Parliament, 1985-2000

Eric Magar and Juan Andrés Moraes

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Eric Magar

Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) and Institut
Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)

emagar@itam.mx

Juan Andrés Moraes

University of Notre Dame, IN, USA

jmoraes@nd.edu

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OF COALITION AND SPEED: PASSAGE AND DURATION OF STATUTES IN URUGUAY'S PARLIAMENT, 1985-2000

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Abstract: We report preliminary findings from analysis of a database under construction. The paper explores the legislative process in search for some of the alleged consequences of cabinet coalitions in a presidential system. Coalition effects should be less evident in the success of executive initiatives: strategic behavior hampers this intuitive measure of performance. Better measures, because less subject to strategic considerations, are the odds of passage of legislators' bills and the time proposals take to be approved. Thus measured, coalition effects are discernible. Analysis of the universe of proposals processed in the fragmented Uruguayan Parliament between 1985 and 2000 reveals that coalition, observed about half the period, swells success rates of coalition members by 60% on average (and by as much as 150% for those close to the president). Event history analysis shows that coalitions cut the wait for an executive bill by 3 months, 1/6th the average wait. The reverse effect is felt on the duration of legislators' bills.

Key words: Presidential Democracy, Coalition, Legislation, Duration Analysis, Uruguay

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1. Introduction

In divided government, support in the assembly for the executive's program can be achieved in one or more of three basic ways: coalitional, by bribing (in a broad sense) opposition parties into voting for executive proposals; transactional, by bribing individual legislators on an *ad-hoc* basis instead; or bully-pulpit, by executives circumventing normal inter-branch bargaining to engage in a popularity contest about the merits of proposals. Cabinet governments in continental Europe offer the prime example of the coalitional way, coalitions agreeing on policy packages when making and breaking executives, and then leaving policymaking in a sort of autopilot (Laver and Shepsle 1990). Brazil offers a good example of the transactional approach, the Federal Congress adding sweeteners in the form of pork for states to bits of the president's agenda (Samuels 2003). The bully-pulpit way was used extensively with the rise of television in the U.S., the president asking voters to exert pressure on swing members of Congress, but appears to be in decay (Baum and Kernell 1999).

The coalitional approach offers advantages. By involving bundles of policy, cheaper prices per unit ought to be attainable in a deal, as in wholesale. It offers more forms of payment: partners can be rewarded with policy concessions and pork, as in the transactional way, but also by offering them a share of the spoils of office in the form of cabinet and sub-cabinet appointments (Warwick and Druckman 2001, Laver and Schofield 1991). And if the parties represented in the coalition acquire majority status in the assembly and stick together for a while, the largest prize is attainable: they can cartelize legislative institutions in favor of coalition members, *de facto* excluding others from access (Cox and McCubbins 2005). *A priori*, when they can afford it, this should be the approach of choice for executives wishing to instate policy change by statutory means.

But serious doubts exist about the feasibility and efficacy of partisan coalition government in presidential democracy. The difficulties arise from the very nature of presidentialism: the separate origin and, especially, survival of the executive from the assembly (Jones 1995a). Unlike in parliamentary systems, coalition partners do not have the power to remove the executive with a vote of no-confidence should the president renege on his part of the deal. Difficulties have not hampered presidents throughout the world from attempting the approach. Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh (2004) put the figure of cabinets that include members of opposition parties at one of every four, or more than half excluding presidents that already had a majority.

The fact that the legislative base of presidential coalition cabinets often remains below the majority threshold adds interest to inquiries about the effects that presidential coalition cabinets have on policy. This paper inspects the universe of bills initiated in the Uruguayan Parliament in the closing 15 years of the 20th century in search for some of these consequences. Analysis of the fate of more than four thousand proposals made by the executive and members of the assembly in the period is revealing. Coalition effects are quite mild on the success rate of the executive --- whose proposals face generally much better odds in the legislative arena --- but substantial for the

success rate of legislators in the coalition. We then turn attention to another measure of performance: the duration of the legislative process. Event history analysis shows that coalition has an effect on the time to approve executive proposals. A coalition cuts about 3 months to the mean waiting time of 1.5 years for bills submitted by the president. And the effect is reversed for bills proposed by deputies and senators: coalitions increase the mean waiting time of 1 year by about 3 months.

A longitudinal perspective on obstructionism offers interesting and novel results. Duration of the legislative process has not received the attention it might deserve. We argue that it is a good indicator of legislative performance. Other things constant, 6 months slower passage means that beneficiaries will forego half a year's worth of the stream of benefits resulting from new legislation. Moreover, where resurrecting bills un-passed after the assembly convenes is difficult, a lengthier process increases the odds that the bill will fail. So speed is desirable to sponsors. While not devoid of problems, duration is less subject to strategic considerations than sheer passage rates, we argue below.

Analysis of a single-country study wins in legislative detail what it lacks in comparative perspective. We were able to collect histories of the universe of bills introduced in a 15-year period. The choice of Uruguay stems from its famously factionalized parties, resulting in a highly fragmented assembly that complicates passing legislation. By relying on cross-party coalition cabinets about half the period under scrutiny --- presumably to improve their legislative performance, the dependent variable of the paper --- Uruguayan presidents offer comparative leverage to assess coalition effects.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 discusses issues related to measuring legislative performance. Section 2 presents our research design and case selection. Sections 3 and 4 contain the substantive portions of our argument, the former analyzing bill success and failure, the latter bill duration in the assembly. Section 5 synthesizes results and section 6 concludes.

2. Coalitions and measurement

2.1. The negotiator executive

Presidents who seek policy in statutory form are keen to follow the coalitional approach. (Cheibub et al. 2004, henceforth CP&S) have shown that, despite structural difficulties, coalition cabinets are quite frequent worldwide. Their study of 33 presidential democracies after 1945 distinguishes 218 episodes where seat distributions between parties remained unchanged in the assembly. In 97 episodes, representing 45%

of all, no party enjoyed majority status by itself.¹ And in 52 of those, a coalition cabinet was present during all or part of the episode. This figure hardly corresponds with a view of unmanageable presidential coalition government (Linz 1990): it is found in more than half of non-majority episodes, and about a quarter of all episodes.

Latin American presidents seem keener at it than their peers elsewhere. In a study of the 106 cabinets that 59 presidents appointed in 13 democracies of the Americas between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, Amorim Neto (2006) found no less than 77 cases of coalition, putting the share at three-quarters of the cabinets in his sample. In a region where legislative multipartism looms large (Mainwaring 1993), presidents broaden (or attempt to broaden) the base of their support in the legislative arena by giving the opposition a share of cabinet appointments. Consistent with this view, CP&S found that coalition cabinets worldwide become likelier the more fractionalized the legislature. Empirical patterns also fit well with the need for statutes: holding other features constant (including the size of the president's party), Amorim Neto found that the share of partisan ministers in the cabinet drops significantly with the majority required constitutionally for a veto override, especially when combined with strong decree powers. In other words, the easier it is for a president to get policy unilaterally, without necessitating statutes, the fewer the efforts to cement a legislative coalition through the cabinet.

These findings, along many others in the new comparative study of presidentialism,² show that executive-legislative relations take place in a strategically rich, and much more interesting environment than assumed by the erstwhile literature. They also confirm similarities in decision-making between divided presidential government and parliamentary multiparty (Peters 1997) or minority (Strom 1990) government.

2.2. A preliminary look to data under construction

If the bargaining story that was sketched above captures a systematic and important part of policymaking, it should also be true that coalition cabinets boost the legislative performance of minority presidents. This paper provides a preliminary, and still very much descriptive, inspection of a database of legislation from Uruguay.

For a sample of 9 presidential democracies in their dataset,³ CP&S report aggregate figures of legislative success of the executive. On average, the percentage of executive-sponsored bills passed by the lower chamber of the national legislature, conditional on majority and coalition status, are the following: 72% for majority-party presidents; 52% for coalition presidents; and 61% for minority-party presidents. On

1. The 121 remaining episodes include cases where the majority party controls the presidency and those where it does not. Nearly all observations of the latter type, corresponding to classic divided government, belong to the case of the U.S.

2. Eg., Buquet et al. 1998, Carey and Shugart 1998, Crisp 2000, Haggard and McCubbins 2001, Jones 1995b, Jones and Hwang 2005, Magar Nd, Mainwaring and Shugart 1997, Morgenstern 2003, Samuels 2003, Shugart and Carey 1992, Siavelis 2000.

3. Argentina (1983-96), Brazil (1946-60, 1963, 1979-81, 1988-98), Chile (1990-93), Costa Rica (1958-69, 1975, 1986-98), Ecuador (1979-96), Honduras (1990-96), United States (1953-96), Uruguay (1985-99), and Venezuela (1959-88).

the face of this evidence, coalition cabinets, it appears, do not to help, but *hinder* the president's ability to get legislation through the assembly.

But measuring performance is no trivial matter. The main complication, recognized by CP&S, arises from strategic behavior. Anticipation of bargaining failure presses instrumentally-rational actors to withdraw contentious policy from the table (cf. Romer and Rosenthal 1978). Observable conflict, such as when the assembly rejects an executive proposal or the executive vetoes a bill, is theoretically associated to the presence of incomplete information (Cameron 2000) or to position-taking incentives as elections approach (Indridason 2000, Magar 2001).

The dataset we inspect is still under construction. But restricting attention to a single country offers the possibility to disaggregate the evidence like the one reported by CP&S in search for the determinants of the variance in legislative success.

2.3. Alternative measures of coalition effects

In the study of presidentialism, especially in Latin America, too much emphasis tends to be given to the president, ignoring the obvious fact that coalitions bring together two or more sides. Why would legislators accept a coalition offer? When looking for coalition effects exclusively in the president's agenda – as is often done – a tacit assumption is being made that office payoffs are the fundamental part of the deal for legislators. But coalition may suit their policy needs as well: in the absence of a majority party, legislative institutions operate towards universalism, giving everyone access to the agenda. Under time constraints, with hundreds of legislators wishing to table projects dear to constituents, the legislative agenda can be rapidly overburdened in a classic collective dilemma depressing the success of everyone in the chamber (cf. Cox 1987). If the cabinet serves to cement a stable coalition with majority status, its members will be in a position to cartelize legislative structure and process. Coalition leaders can then administer the flow of projects, excluding outsiders, to the advantage of all partners (Cox and McCubbins 2005). For this reason, we will inspect the success rate of legislators along the president in section 3, in search for coalition effects.

We also propose a second measure of coalition effects in the *duration of spells in the assembly*, or the time it takes for proposals to navigate through the meanders of the legislative process. The day a bill is tabled in one chamber of the assembly marks the start of its spell; the date when it is finally passed and sent to the executive for signature marks the end of the spell. Masuyama (2001) performs analysis of this nature for all bills in the Japanese Diet in the 1947-96 period to show that the higher hurdles placed by government in the procedural route of bills proposed by maverick MPs from its own ranks appear to work: such bills take significantly longer to pass than government-initiated legislation. Becker and Saalfeld (2004) have similarly analyzed a sample of labor legislation in 17 West European systems in the 1981-91 period.

On first impressions, the meaning of duration is straightforward: the benefits of an accepted legislative proposal is the sum of its future benefits, so a delay in approval for a year means that the proposer – and those (s)he represents – forego a year’s worth of benefits.⁴ Where carryover rules pose difficulties to resurrect bills from one session to the next, slower passage usually translates into higher likelihood of bill failure. So other things constant, shorter spells imply better performance. But as in the case of success rates, not all things remain constant, so quantitative figures of duration may well cover up important qualitative differences between bills. Meaningless proposals (such as renaming a school) can be processed at rather fast speed, whereas those with substantive consequences for large groups in society (such as pensions reform) could take much longer. Shorter average duration could simply indicate that more irrelevant stuff is in the oven. But unless there are hidden reasons why executives should propose more irrelevant stuff under coalition, then finding, like we do, that the average speed of *all legislation* over a period changes significantly depending on coalition status, is in fact an interesting result. And a novel one for the study of presidentialism. By excluding extraneous projects through the cartelization of legislative institutions, majority coalitions should in fact allow members’ proposals to be processed faster.

3. Data and methods

3.1. The case of Uruguay

The paper explores the legislative process between 1985 and 2000 in Uruguay, a presidential system whose executive power is held by a directly elected president while legislative power falls in the hands of a bicameral parliament (a chamber of deputies and a senate), elected concurrently (Jones 1995a).⁵ Reelection is allowed, with an interim wait term for presidents. To be successful, legislation needs passage by both chambers and approval by the president. An executive veto of the amendatory type (Alemán and Schwartz 2006) was overridden, until 1996, by the vote of three-fifths of the joint chambers of the assembly; a three-fifths majority of each chamber is necessary since. The president has some powers to intervene in the legislative agenda but enjoys no unilateral executive decree power, and he appoints and dismisses cabinet ministers at will (Carey et al. 1997).⁶

4. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this formulation.

5. The legislative body is usually referred to as the “legislature” in presidential systems, reserving “parliament” for such systems (see Laver 2006). We retain Uruguay’s original denomination (Parlamento del Uruguay) in the paper.

6. Since 1996, the president even got authority to declare a “cabinet crisis,” allowing the removal of appointees in the middle hierarchy of ministries. When Lacalle’s coalition with Colorado factions broke in 1993, ministers left but a good deal of members of their factions remained in the bureaucracies they controlled. The figure of a cabinet crisis has rendered coalition termination costlier for the factions leaving: they lose all offices.

Table 1. The profile of the branches of government in Uruguay

Part A. President's status in the chambers of Parliament					
Term	president (party)	% seats president's party		% seats president's faction	
		deputies	senate	deputies	senate
1985-1990	J.M. Sanguinetti (Colorado)	41%	45%	34%	32%
1990-1995	L.A. Lacalle (Blanco)	39%	42%	25%	19%
1995-2000	J.M. Sanguinetti (Colorado)	32%	35%	25%	23%

Part B. Coalition status of the cabinet				
	Period		status	president's parliamentary support at start ^b
	[start,	end)		
Sanguinetti-I	[1 Mar. 1985,	15 Feb. 1990) ^a	no coalition	41% [*]
Lacalle	[1 Mar. 1990,	15 Mar. 1991)	majority coalition	65%
	[15 Mar. 1991,	15 Mar. 1993)	minority coalition	48%
	[15 Mar. 1993,	15 Feb. 1995) ^a	minority coalition	31%
Sanguinetti-II	[1 Mar. 1995,	15 Feb. 2000) ^a	majority coalition	65%

Notes: (a) While presidents are inaugurated on 1 March of the corresponding year, the new parliament begins the ordinary session on 15 February of that year. (b) Share of parliamentary seats controlled by factions with cabinet representation; stars indicate that the share of the president's party's seats is reported instead, see text for details.

Source: Chasquetti (1999).

Traditionally, Uruguay was a two-party system, the Blanco (aka Nacional) and Colorado parties winning over 90% of votes (González 1991). Since the early 1970s a third party, the Frente Amplio, gradually increased its share of the vote and seats, leaving the winner without majority status in the assembly throughout the period under study (see Table 1). So the institutional strengths of the Uruguayan presidency have not been matched with parallel partisan powers.

Another key feature of the party system further complicates the executive's situation: the presence, and persistence, of organized factions in Uruguayan parties. Factions maintain a label, have formal hierarchies, and the most important antedate political parties themselves, having histories that go back to the mid-19th century (Buquet et al. 1998, Caetano et al. 1988). Presidents cannot guarantee support from members of other factions from their own party in parliament (Morgenstern 2001). President Lacalle (1990-95), for example, controlled less than half of his party's contingent in the upper chamber, as is evident from figures in Table 1. This feature raises the question of whether parties or some other level of organization are the meaningful unit to look for party-system effects (Cox and Rosenbluth 1993, Morgenstern 2003). The classic approach considers party labels only (eg., Laakso and Taagepera 1979), ignoring organizations at the sub-party- (like Uruguay's factions) or even supra-party-level (like Chile's *Concertación* since 1989, see Carey 2002) that may trump the influence of party hierarchies.

These factors combined have created strong incentives to rely on cross-party coalitions in Uruguay. Presidents in the period appointed members of factions from the other major party to cabinet and sub-cabinet slots, in an effort to counter the lack of support in the assembly (Altman 2000, Chasquetti 1999). The exception was Sanguinetti in his first term in office, giving the study ground to compare the performance of presidents with and without coalitions. And coalition instability under Lacalle, who could not achieve majority status beyond his first year in office, opens room to verify if minority coalitions have different effects than majority ones. The choice to study

Uruguay further opens the possibility of weighing the relative influence of factions *v.* parties on executive-legislative relations.

Factions have been shown to be key players in Japan's parliamentary system, budgetary priorities – more pork, less pork – shifting in systematic association with which of the LDP's mainstream factions joined the government (McCubbins and Thies 1997). Do factional coalitions also matter in a presidential system?

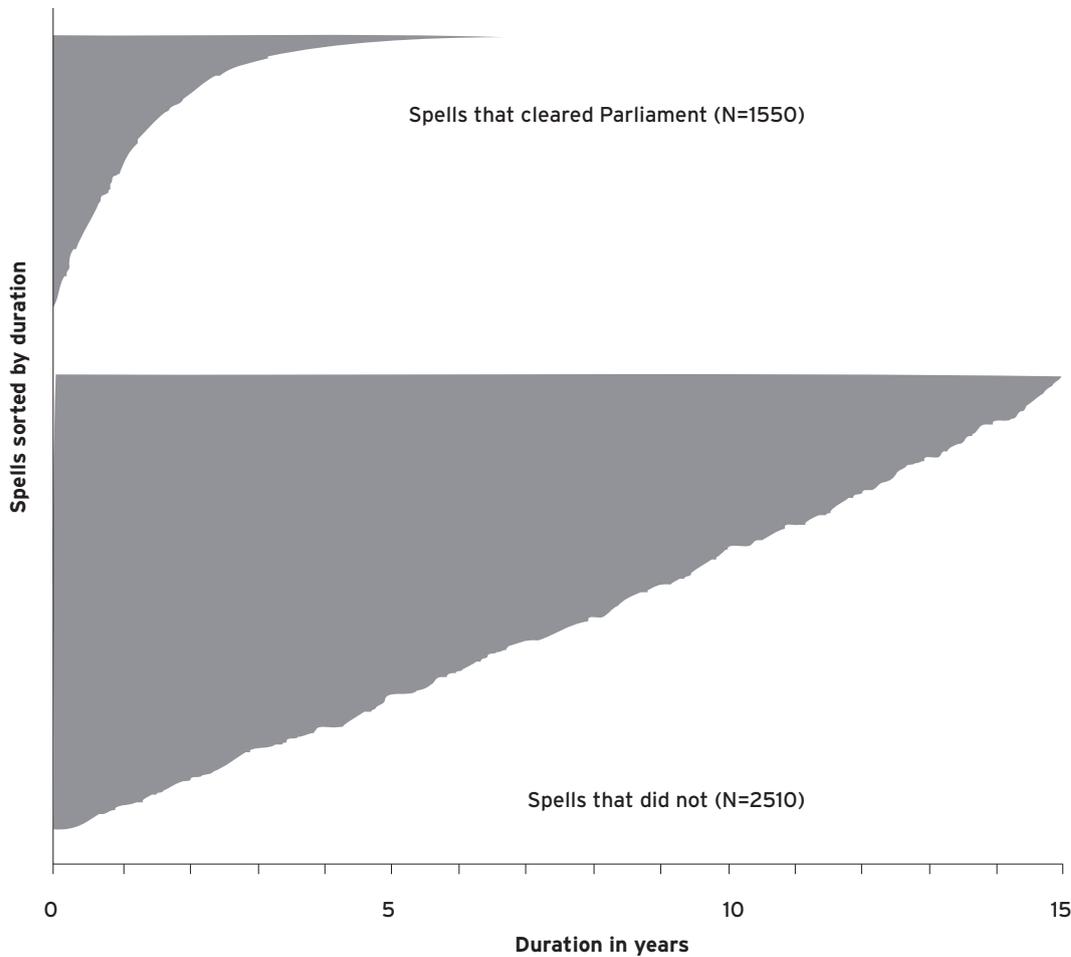
3.2. Right-censoring and the need to end the study in 2000

This is a study of all proposals initiated at the Uruguayan Parliament between 15 February 1985 (the return of a democratically-elected government) and 14 February 2000 (the end of the third subsequent parliament), inclusive. A total of 4,060 proposals were made in the 15-year period. An indicator of whether or not each proposal cleared parliament, and the duration of its spell, were coded. Figure 1 portrays the data, thin horizontal lines representing one spell each, separating cleared from pending matter (and expressing duration in years, for convenience). It is noteworthy that more than 6 of every 10 bills did not clear, raising methodological complications that need some elaboration.

Some bills failed to clear in a typical case of “right-censoring”: given enough extra time after 14 February 2000, they would eventually emerge from the process and join the set of legislation submitted to the executive for promulgation. But there are also bills (most of them, in fact) that will never emerge, no matter how long the wait: a committee did not report them to the floor; or they failed a final passage vote; or they were rejected by the second chamber; etc. None of this valuable information is recorded in the data, making these intrinsically different observations indistinguishable from right-censored ones. In legislatures, such as the U.S. Congress, that permanently archive all matter that remains pending by the time the assembly adjourns, such lack of detail is unproblematic: all can be considered “dead” by the start of the new Congress. In other legislatures, such as the Mexican Congress, the problem is most acute, because all pending matter is inherited by future *Legislaturas*. The Uruguayan Parliament stands somewhere in between, closer to the U.S. Congress: pending legislation is archived at the end of one *Legislatura*, but can be resurrected at the request of the president of either chamber (Reglamento 1991, art. 147). We have records of proposals initiated as long as 11 years before approval, 3 new *Legislaturas* afterwards.

Standard event history analysis handles the problem of right-censoring properly. It relies on the alleged distribution of durations to infer the expected durability of censored spells (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). But this standard model will not work satisfactorily in the presence of unobservable bill death, because it is designed to handle these proposals as right-censored. As a consequence, it overestimates durability, informing the alleged distribution of duration with the mass of spells that had not cleared by 14 February 2000 (the bottom part of Figure 1) *as if they all would*. One solution is to rely on a split-population design (*ibid.*, ch. 9), a non-standard model specifically meant to address heterogeneity of this nature in the data, but that is difficult to estimate.

Figure. 1. Bill Histories in Uruguay, 1985-2000



We rely on a different solution. This study does not admit bills initiated after 14 February 2000, but observation of the set of pending proposals nonetheless continued until 28 February 2007 – seven full years – in order to detect bills that cleared afterwards. Of 2,510 pending bills, 60 passed after the last proposal was admitted in the dataset. They did so in the following yearly frequencies: 11 in the remainder of 2000; 29 in 2001; 10 in 2002; 6 in 2003; 2 in 2004; and 1 each in 2005 and 2006. Seven years of patience after the admission deadline is 4 full standard deviations above the mean 1.25 years duration for bills that cleared. Whatever right-censoring remains is negligible. Analysis will proceed with the **Septennial Quarantine Assumption** that *all bills initiated before 15 February 2000 that had not passed by 28 February 2007 can be considered dead matter*.

Evidence suggests that the Septennial Quarantine Assumption is infinitesimally off the mark.⁷ The practical consequences of this assumption, however, cannot be

7. Archiving rules in Uruguay play in our favor: only 9 bills in the dataset passed 7 years or more after initiation. The maximum observed duration for passed bills in the period is 11.25 years. Also in our favor is the Frente Amplio's capture of the presidency with a parliamentary majority in 2005, displacing the Blanco-Colorado dominance upon which the proposals we analyze were made.

understated, for it allows us to select on the dependent variable with infinitesimally small likelihood of selection bias. Analysis is carried in two parts. Section 3 estimates the determinants of success and failure on the *universe* of proposals. Section 4 then proceeds to drop all failed bills from the dataset (selection on the DV rendered innocuous by the Septennial Quarantine) and analyzes duration of the remainder with standard event history analysis.

4. Tales of success and failure

We begin our investigation of coalition effects with an analysis of bill passage. The first dependent variable will be Y , an indicator of passage for the 4,060 proposals initiated in the period, coded 1 for bills that passed, 0 otherwise. We study presidential proposals and those made by members of parliament (MPs) separately, in order to isolate the differences we expect. Disparities in the legislative activism and the rate of success of the branches of government are noticeable in Table 2, which breaks terms into political years.⁸ MPs authored roughly two out of every three proposals in the period, but the executive had more dazzling batting scores than legislators (a three-to-one differential overall). It is noteworthy how the success rate for MPs remains much more stable from beginning to end of a term than the fortunes of the president, tending to fall noticeably towards the end of each term.

Table 2. Legislative activism and success rates, 1985-2000

	Members of parliament			Presidents		
	year	bills	% passed		bills	% passed
42 nd	1	309	20	Sanguinetti I	115	73
Legislatura	2	194	13		81	67
	3	198	18		83	70
	4	162	11		80	58
	5	132	17		63	43
43 rd	1	204	21	Lacalle	105	67
Legislatura	2	190	23		123	79
	3	147	32		99	72
	4	191	36		109	61
	5	126	29		67	43
44 th	1	204	24	Sanguinetti II	77	71
Legislatura	2	133	31		95	77
	3	178	22		133	78
	4	160	24		103	72
	5	93	17		106	51
Totals		2,621	22		1,439	67

8. Political-years are adapted to the calendar set forth by the Uruguayan constitution. Between 1985 and 1996, inclusive, the political-year began 15 March, with the start of the ordinary session. The exception was inauguration years (calendar-years 1985, 1990, and 1995), when the political-year started 15 February for parliament and 1 March for presidents. Since 1997, the political-year begins 1 March, with an exception for parliaments upon inauguration, starting 15 February.

The study of the determinants of passage is done with a standard logit model. Formal definitions of all the variables in the models, with descriptive statistics, can be found in an appendix to the paper. On the right side of the equation for executive proposals is *Maj.coalition*, a dichotomous variable equal to 1 if a coalition cabinet with majority status in parliament was in place when the proposal was tabled; 0 otherwise. Coalitions of this nature were present during Lacalle's first year in office, and throughout Sanguinetti's second term. *Min.coalition* is defined analogously, for coalitions lacking majority status, observed between the second and fifth years of Lacalle's term. The baseline for this pair of dummies is the absence of coalition, observed throughout Sanguinetti's first full term (in coincidence with no majority party in parliament); the effect is captured by the constant term included in the model. Since the alleged purpose of coalition government is to clear the way for the president's legislation, these factors could be associated with positive coefficient estimates, indicating an increase in the chances of executive proposals vis-à-vis the baseline. It will be interesting to see if minority coalitions have an effect in the probability of passage, and if coalition effects are discernible despite strategic considerations discussed above.

Also in the right side is *Distant election*, an indicator of the share of the term remaining at the time a proposal is launched. This variable adopts a value of 1 for proposals made on the first day of the lustrum, indicating that the full term remains ahead, and decreases linearly until 0 for proposals made the day of the general election. Table 2 suggests a cyclic pattern in the fortunes of proposals, reminiscent of position-taking discussed in section 1. Distant election should detect such temporal differentials in the probability of success. $\text{sq.root}(\textit{Distant election})$, the square root, is also included in the right side to allow for non-linearity in the effect.

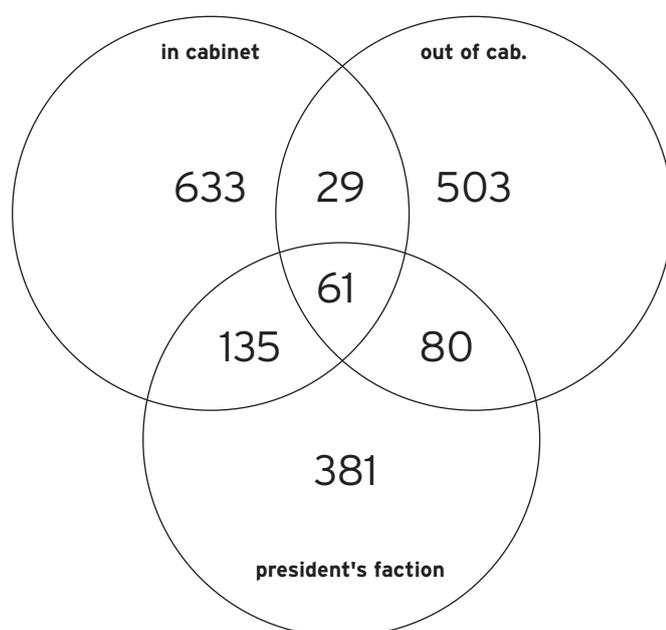
A control variable *Tabled in senate* is included, a dummy equal to 1 if the proposal was introduced in the upper chamber of parliament, 0 otherwise. No a priori expectation is attached to it. A control for the party of the president in office had to be ignored due to the high collinearity of the Blanco category and the *Minority coalition* indicator.

The model for proposals by MPs includes regressors *Distant election*, its square root, and *Tabled in senate*, but handles the coalition status differently in order to account for the influence of parties and factions. Proposals originating in parliament can be sponsored by more than one legislator, something Uruguayan MPs are fond of doing – bills had 2.7 co-sponsors on average in the period.⁹ Multiple signatures diversify sponsorship-profile possibilities: a bill can be endorsed by members of a single faction, by members of factions of one party, or by members of factions of more than one party. Of direct relevance for the argument, some endorsers can also belong to factions that have accepted cabinet portfolios to cement a coalition with the executive. Ignoring proposals that were sponsored exclusively by members of minor parties, Figure 2 identifies three subsets: bills that included members of the president's faction

9. The reported figure is for a sample of 43% of MP proposals for which we retrieved sponsors' names, so the true mean may differ. The faction-membership profile of the remainder bills was unnecessary to code the regressors we define below, so we obviated this rather costly step.

(that always has cabinet representation) among the sponsors; those with members of other factions with cabinet representation among sponsors; and those with members of factions without cabinet representation. The large majority (84%) of these bills belong in one subset but not in others. Yet a fair proportion of them falls in the intersections, giving this study empirical leverage to verify whether or not faction-profile effects vary with coalition status.

Figure 2. Bill sponsorship by factions of major parties



Note: Excluded from Venn diagram are 1,439 bills sponsored by the Executive and 799 sponsored by members of minor parties only.

For each bill, a battery of indicators was coded for this purpose. *Maj.-coal.&-sponsors from pdt.'s faction* equals the share of sponsors belonging to the president's faction for bills initiated when a majority coalition was in place; 0 otherwise. *Min.-coal.&-sponsors from pdt.'s faction*, defined analogously for bills introduced when a minority coalition was in power, is also included to capture possibly different effects of the weight of the president's faction on the dependent variable when the coalition lacks majority status. *Maj.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions in cabinet* and *Min.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions in cabinet* equal the share of sponsors from factions (other than the president's) with cabinet representation conditional on coalition status; 0 otherwise. *Maj.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions off cabinet* and *Min.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions off cabinet* equal the share of sponsors from major parties without cabinet representation conditional on coalition status; 0 otherwise. While *Maj.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-minor parties* and *Min.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-minor parties* are the share of sponsors from minor parties conditional

on coalition status; 0 otherwise.¹⁰ Missing from this battery are situations when no cabinet coalition was in place, so the legislators' equation has the same baseline for coefficient interpretation as the executive equation.

To illustrate, consider bill 80995, co-sponsored on 16 May 1990 by Deputy Carlos Garat of the Blanco party's Herrerista faction (from which President Lacalle, then in office, emanated) and Deputy Jorge Conde Montes de Oca of the Colorado party's Lista 15 faction. Both factions had cabinet portfolios, and by virtue of this coalition the first Lacalle government enjoyed majority status (see Table 1). So for bill 80995, *Maj.-coal.&-sponsors from pdt.'s faction*=1/2 and *Maj.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions in cabinet*=1/2, with all else in the battery at 0. If, instead, bill 80995 had been tabled after 15 March 1991 – when Lista 15 and other factions abandoned the coalition, leaving Lacalle in the minority – then the coding would have been *Min.-coal.&-sponsors from pdt.'s faction*=1/2 and *Min.-coal.&-sp.-fr.-factions off cabinet*=1/2 (with all else at 0). The battery thus captures differences in extra-coalition endorsements for coalitions with minority status (when outside support is necessary for passage) and those with majority status (when inside support should suffice).

If only factions were relevant in Uruguay, the battery of sponsorship-profile indicators would do. To find out if parties also exert an influence of their own, and if faction effects remain significant when parties are taken into account, two more variables complete the list of regressors in the MP equation. *Pdt.'s party sponsors only* equals 1 if the proposal was authored exclusively by members of the party in control of the executive branch; 0 otherwise. *Both majors sponsored* equals 1 if the proposal was made by Colorado and Blanco members jointly, perhaps including other sponsors alongside; 0 otherwise.

We coded information on the originating traits of bills, with more detail for MPs than for the executive. Bills then enter a black box from which we can only observe them exit (pass) or not (fail). Lack of information about the intermediate steps of the legislative process – committee referrals, minority reports, amendments, floor votes, inter-chamber differences and their resolution, and so forth – play against the precision of our estimates.

Table 3 reports maximum-likelihood estimates of the equations for executive (Model 1) and for deputy and senator proposals (Model 2).¹¹ Models perform satisfactorily by two standards of overall goodness-of-fit. The hypothesis that all coefficients minus the constant are jointly nil can be rejected (by Likelihood-Ratio test) at the .01 level or better for both. And the reverse use of estimates correctly predicts passage of more than two-thirds and three-quarters of the cases, respectively, for Models 1 and 2. Given the scant information we have, these rates of correct predictions are very satisfactory.

10. Included among minor parties is the Frente Amplio, the long-time third party that shocked Uruguayan politics by making it to the presidential runoff in 1999, and winning the presidency with a majority in parliament in 2004. Including Frente Amplio among "minor" parties is less of an oddity for a study ending in 2000.

11. All models in the paper estimated with Stata (2003). Figures prepared in R (2006).

Table 3. Determinants of success in Parliament

Variable	Model 1: Executive			Model 2: MPs		
	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-val.	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-val.
Tabled in senate	0.36	(0.12)	<0.01	0.24	(0.11)	0.03
Distant election	-5.34	(1.10)	<0.01	-0.63	(1.02)	0.53
Sq.root(Distant election)	7.69	(1.34)	<0.01	1.15	(1.28)	0.37
Maj.coalition	0.40	(0.14)	0.01			
&sp.sponsors fr.pdt's faction				0.47	(0.24)	0.06
&sp.fr.factions in cabinet				0.32	(0.37)	0.39
&sp.fr.factions off cabinet				0.73	(0.16)	<0.01
&sp.fr.minor parties				-0.05	(0.20)	0.81
Min.coalition	0.20	(0.16)	0.20			
&sp.sponsors fr.pdt's faction				1.60	(0.25)	<0.01
&sp.fr.factions in cabinet				0.49	(0.31)	0.11
&sp.fr.factions off cabinet				0.57	(0.23)	0.01
&sp.fr.minor parties				0.17	(0.22)	0.42
Pdt.'s party sponsors only				0.44	(0.20)	0.03
Both majors sponsored				1.64	(0.15)	<0.01
Constant	-2.16	(0.39)	<0.01	-2.47	(0.39)	<0.01
Constant-only model	65.03		<0.01	240.09		<0.01
Correct predictions	68%			78%		
Log-likelihood	-882			-1,275		
Number of observations	1,439			2,621		

Note: dependent variable is Y; method of estimation is logit.

Bills initiated in the senate had better chances of passing, other factors constant, than bills sent to the chamber of deputies, as shown by positive and significant coefficients. While Lacalle sent half of his proposals to the senate, Sanguinetti switched from sending nearly three-quarters in his first term, to just a bit over one-third in the second. A similar pattern is evident among MP bills, smaller portions initiated in the upper chamber with every new parliament: 45%, 35%, and 28% in each consecutive lustrum. And the electoral timetable differences that Table 2 had suggested appear accentuated when other factors are held constant. Timing of initiation is consequential for Executive, but not for MP proposals, as *Distant election* and its square root obtain statistically significant coefficients in Model 1 but not in Model 2. Timing variables, in fact, obtain the largest coefficients for the president's proposals.

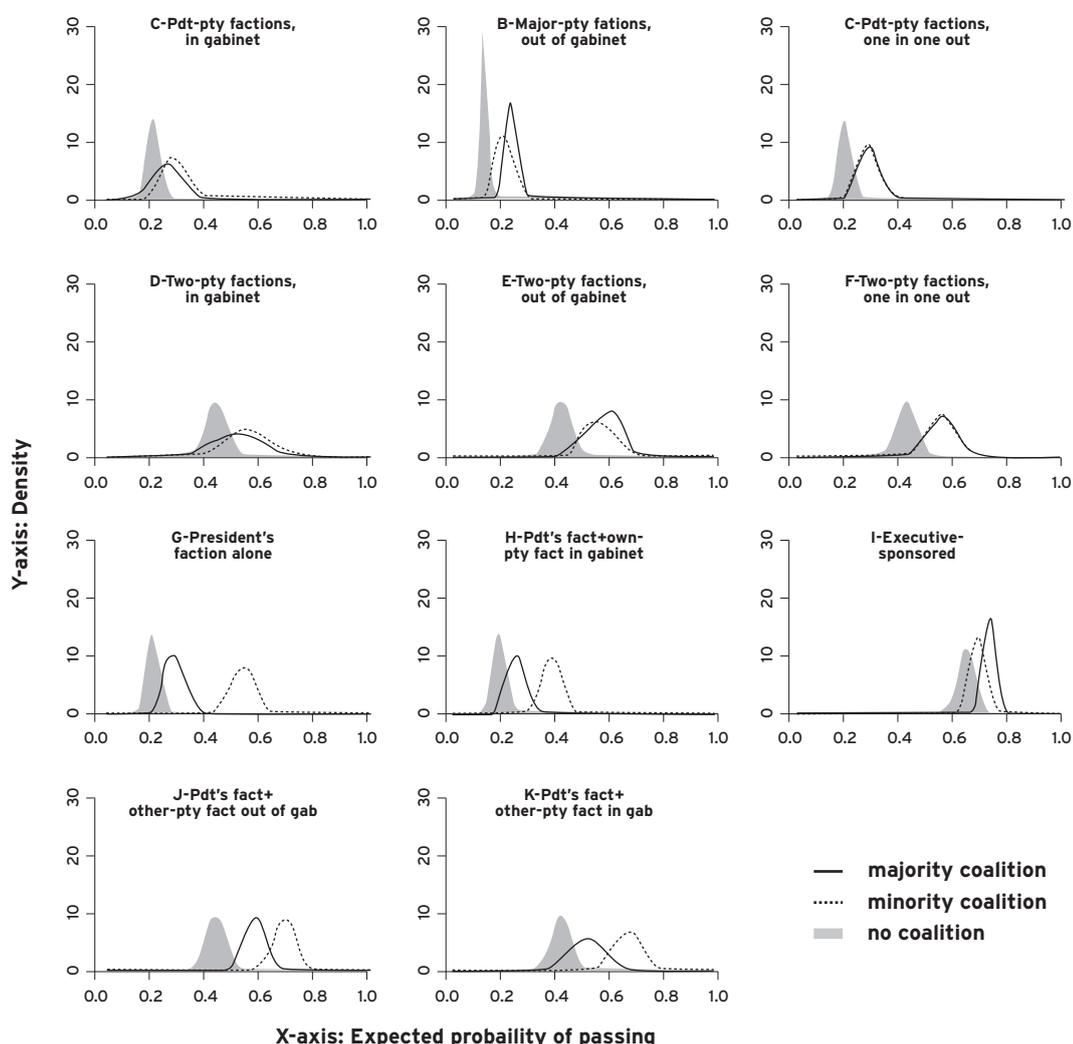
Moving to the paper's theme, estimates convey interesting stories of bill passage. A positive effect of coalitions is manifest on executive legislation, but it acquires statistical significance for majority coalitions only: standard errors for the minority breed are nearly as big as the coefficient itself, translating into a p-value far above the standard .05-level of significance. Other things constant, presidents' bills initiated under the umbrella of a majority coalition were significantly likelier of passing than those made when no coalition is in power.

Looking at the same effects for MP bills sheds more light to the politics of coalition government in presidentialism. Model 2 shows that both majority and minority coalitions can affect the chances of legislators' proposals given the right circumstances. Other factors constant, a larger share of sponsors from the president's faction under any coalition raises the probability of passage compared to the absence of a coalition. This effect is more substantive for minority coalitions, as seen in the size and significance of the coefficients. Bigger shares of sponsors from factions with cabinet representation makes no significant difference in majority coalitions, but nearly does so (at the 0.11-level) under minority coalitions. And larger shares of members from factions that are out of the coalition increases significantly the chances of passage only if the signatories belong to a major party (and does so regardless of the cabinet's legislative support). By these findings, the effects (and possibly the rationale for the puzzling prevalence) of minority coalitions, which were nil for presidents, are to be found among the business of legislators.

Also remarkable are partisan effects that remain distinguishable in Uruguay, even after controlling for the faction/coalition interplay. They have a dual manifestation. Having a president in office is an asset of importance in the legislative arena for all party members, raising the probability of passage for proposals made exclusively by them, regardless of faction. Second, co-sponsorship by members of both major parties has a big impact on the fate of legislation: the corresponding coefficient is the largest of all in the equation. Since most (78%) bills identified by *Both majors sponsored* also included members of minor parties among signatories, it is likely that much of what falls in this category is highly symbolic and of little political relevance, which would explain the high coefficient.¹²

12. The model was estimated with separate indicators for major co-sponsorship with and without minors, with virtually identical results.

Figure 3. Coalition effects on bill fate



Note: Expected probabilities from Models 1 and 2 for a bill with Tabled in senate=1 and Distance to election=0.5. Estimates of uncertainty computed with Clarify.

Monte-Carlo simulations reveal the size of coalition effects and the uncertainty surrounding inferences. We storm the estimates of each model with random noise, using the approach of King et al. (2000). Like trees facing a meteorological storm, estimates with robust statistical roots survive the artificial storm with little change, while those less firmly grounded manifest large oscillation, indicating less certainty. Figure 3 portrays oscillations in expected probabilities from Models 1 and 2 for a bill in eleven counterfactual circumstances. The bill considered in all panels is one initiated in the senate at the middle of the term. What changes from one panel to the next is the faction profile of sponsorship, and curves within each panel portray the spread caused by random noise to the expected probability of passage associated with a minority cabinet coalition (the dotted curve), a majority coalition (the dark curve), and no coalition (the gray area). For illustration, compare panel D, corresponding to a bill sponsored by one Blanco and one Colorado whose factions have both cabinet rep-

resentation, and panel E, for a bill initiated by the same senators whose factions are now out of the cabinet. Coalition effects are somewhat smaller in panel D than in E: a probability of passage of about 0.42 in the absence of coalition surges to about 0.55 with minority coalition in D, to about 0.60 with majority coalition in E. Note how predictions in D are less robust to random noise than those in E, as shown by the spread of the density under each curve. As a result, we can be much less confident of the coalition effect for D than for E: the former overlap to a high degree with the no-coalition gray density, but not the latter.

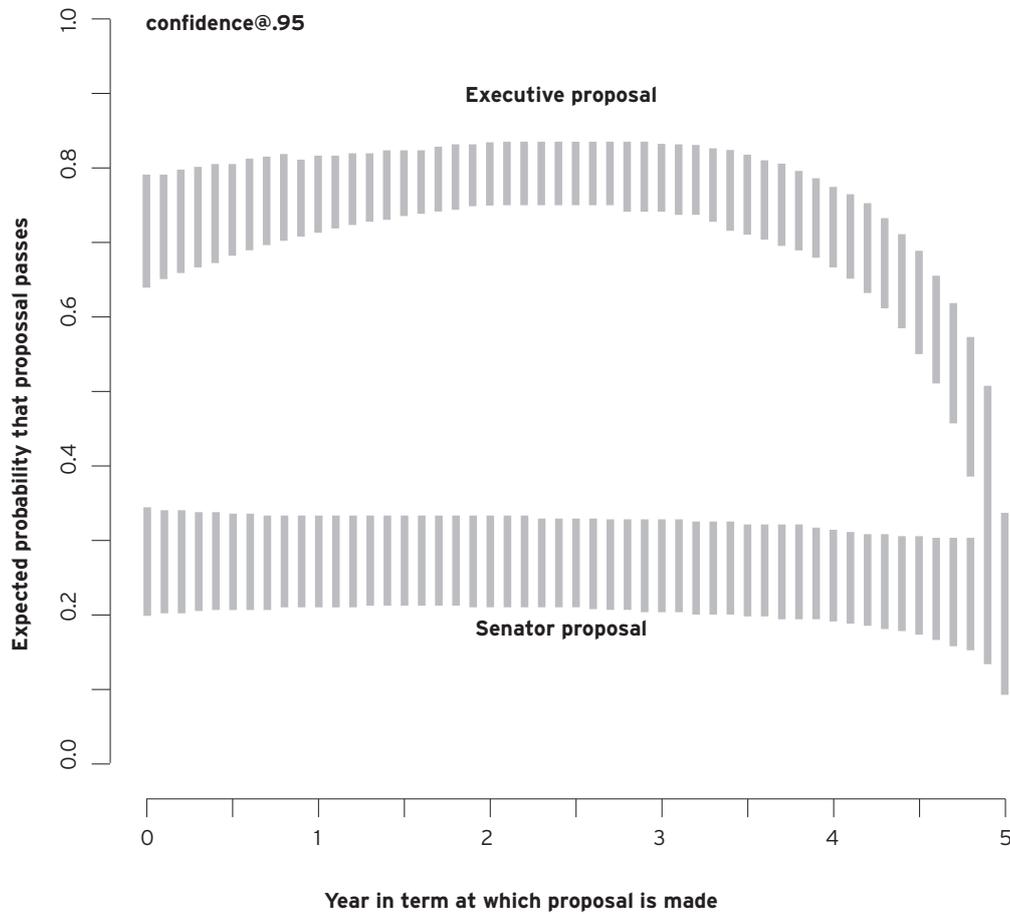
The top six panels of Figure 3 compare bills sponsored by factions from major parties in and out of cabinet. The four panels in the bottom-left quadrant compare bills sponsored by members of the president's faction. Panel I shows the effect for an executive-initiated bill. Comparative statics can be summarized thus.

- **Minority *v.* majority status:** In accordance with a previous remark, effects tend to be greater or equal with minority coalitions for legislators' proposals, but with majority coalitions for executive proposals. The exception are bills by major party factions off cabinet (panels B and E).

- **Effect sizes:** In accordance with expectations of strategic behavior, coalitions cabinets are way more important for the fate of legislators' proposals than the president's. The probability of passage for an executive proposal leaps from about 0.65 without coalition to about 0.75 with majority coalition (panel I), a 15% increase. The surge in the fortunes for MP bills due to coalitions is substantive, averaging 60% across panels, and reaching a 150% increase in probability of passage for bills by members of the president's faction in minority coalition (panel G).

- **Effect certainty:** With the exception of bills from factions of major parties other than the president's faction (panels A and D), curve overlap with the no-coalition baseline is minimal for one (panels H, I, and K) or both (panels B, C, E, F, G, and J) breeds of cabinet coalition. Results are fairly certain.

Figure 4. The fatigue of success



Note: expected probabilities from Models 1 and 2 for a bill tabled in the senate under a majority coalition; MP proposal sponsored by members of factions of the major party not in control of the presidency, without cabinet representation. Vertical lines contain 95% of the Monte-Carlo oscillation computed with Clarify (Tomz et al. 2001).

Timing effects also become clear through simulation. Figure 4 holds majority-coalition status constant to reveal how the term's year at which an executive-sponsored bill (top lines) and one sponsored by major opposition party factions off cabinet (bottom lines) are tabled affects probability of passage. Differences are striking. President proposals have very high odds at the start, which they manage to withhold until about the end of year 3, waning dramatically for bills sent in the last two years. Altman (2000) examines another facet of the cyclic surge in inter-branch conflict as factions abandon cabinet coalitions in preparation for the general election. And (Morgenstern 2001) found that the closer the election, the less often MPs vote with their president. Our result shows that the president also has a part to play in the growing tensions, lame-ducks insisting on proposing stuff that does not pass. Factions in Uruguay, who campaign on their own label, distance themselves from each other through these confrontations in preparation for the general election. Meanwhile, the cycle has little, if any, effect on the fate of MP proposals. Due to this relative resilience, a new executive proposal at the end of the term is as likely of passing as MPs' throughout the term.

5. The duration of the legislative process

Analysis in the previous section appealed to the Septennial Quarantine Assumption in order to equate not clearing with not passing. This section takes full advantage of this to examine only the 1,550 observations that passed, studying how long they remained inside parliament before approval. We perform a standard event history analysis, in a right-censoring-free environment, along the lines elaborated in section 2.

Our second dependent variable is spell duration T , a positive, continuous measure of the time (in days) it took a bill to pass since initiation. The median duration of spells in the analysis (those on top of Figure 1) was 337 days, slightly below 1 year, while the mean, due to the presence of a handful of particularly long spells, goes up to 469 days, about 1.25 years. Median duration for executive bills was 302 days, 387 for MP bills. We rely on the same set of explanatory variables in search for the determinants of duration variance.

Event history analysis involves certain technical complications that need some discussion. Unlike standard regression analysis, it does not model the dependent variable T as a linear combination of explanatory variables. Instead, analysis proceeds by making an assumption about the distribution describing T , and thus about the parameter(s) defining its median, mean, standard deviation, and so forth. It is these parameters that are directly modeled as a function of explanatory variables. As a result, the marginal effect of one explanatory variable is not on T , but on the *hazard rate*. While a bill's hazard at a given time is easy to define (it is the likelihood that the bill will pass at that time, given that it had not yet passed),¹³ it remains a concept that is not particularly easy to grasp to those unfamiliar with the methodology. For present purposes we only need to keep in mind that a positive coefficient estimate in the regressions reported below translates into an increase in the bill's hazard, and hence is associated with shorter spells; a negative coefficient associates with longer spells. An easier way to read coefficient signs is by remembering that they are directly associated to the *speed* of passage. For clarity, effects of coalition and other factors on spell durations will be decoded via simulation, as in the previous section.

The other technicality is the choice of distribution for variable T . It has been shown that this assumption is far from innocuous for statistical inference. Box-Stefensmeier and Jones (2004) have made a strong argument in favor a model known as Cox PH, which remains as agnostic as possible about this distribution. We follow their recommendation, up to a point. The tradeoff about Cox PH is that, precisely by not parameterizing the underlying distribution for T , it loses the capacity to predict expected durations, the measure of substantive interest to this paper. We therefore chose to estimate alternative parametric version in order to select the one (Weibull regression) whose estimates were closest to Cox PH's. This similarity provides assurance that the results we report are not driven by impenetrable assumptions on hazard time-dependence, while allowing us to predict expected durations.

13. Formally, if $f(T)$ is the probability density function of spells, $F(T)$ its cumulative distribution function, and $S(T)=1-F(T)$ the survivor function, the hazard rate of proposals at time t is $h(T=t)=f(T=t)/S(T=t)$.

Table 4. The determinants of speed, Executive bills

Variable	Model 3: Cox PH ^a			Model 4: Weibull		
	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-value	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-value
Tabled in senate	0.07	(0.07)	0.28	0.07	(0.07)	0.33
Distant election	2.21	(0.65)	<0.01	2.26	(0.64)	<0.01
Sq.root(Distant election)	-2.91	(0.79)	<0.01	-2.92	(0.79)	<0.01
Majority coalition	0.15	(0.08)	0.07	0.15	(0.08)	0.07
Minority coalition	0.04	(0.09)	0.63	0.05	(0.09)	0.59
Constant				-5.04	(0.28)	<0.01
Shape parameter				p=0.95	(0.02)	0.03 ^b
Constant-only model	16.67		0.01	16.52		0.01
Log-likelihood	-5,642			-1,549		
Number of observations	962			962		

Notes: dependent variable is (T | Y=1); see text for details.

(a) Efron method for ties. (b) Test that ln(p) is zero.

Table 5. The determinants of speed, MP bills

Variable	Model 3: Cox PH ^a			Model 4: Weibull		
	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-val.	Estim.	(s.e.)	p-val.
Distant election	-1.51	(0.92)	0.10	-0.68	(0.90)	0.45
Sq.root(Distant election)	0.60	(1.13)	0.60	-0.36	(1.10)	0.74
Maj.coalition						
&sp.sponsors fr.pdt's fact.	-0.05	(0.21)	0.83	-0.01	(0.21)	0.96
&sp.fr.factions in cab.	-0.02	(0.32)	0.95	-0.02	(0.32)	0.95
&sp.fr.factions off cab.	-0.21	(0.14)	0.14	-0.21	(0.14)	0.13
&sp.fr.minor parties	-0.47	(0.19)	0.01	-0.44	(0.19)	0.02
Min.coalition						
&sp.sponsors fr.pdt's fact.	-0.41	(0.20)	0.03	-0.34	(0.19)	0.08
&sp.fr.factions in cab.	0.14	(0.26)	0.57	0.16	(0.25)	0.53
&sp.fr.factions off cab.	-0.40	(0.20)	0.05	-0.37	(0.20)	0.07
&sp.fr.minor parties	0.07	(0.19)	0.72	0.09	(0.19)	0.64
Pdt.'s pty. sponsors only	-0.28	(0.18)	0.13	-0.28	(0.18)	0.13
Both majors sponsored	0.37	(0.12)	<0.01	0.35	(0.11)	<0.01
Constant				-5.88	(0.41)	<0.01
Shape parameter				p=1.06	(0.03)	0.08 ^b
Constant-only model	94.14		<0.01	85.87		<0.01
Log-likelihood	-3,119			-902		
Number of observations	588			588		

Notes: dependent variable is (T | Y=1); see text for details.

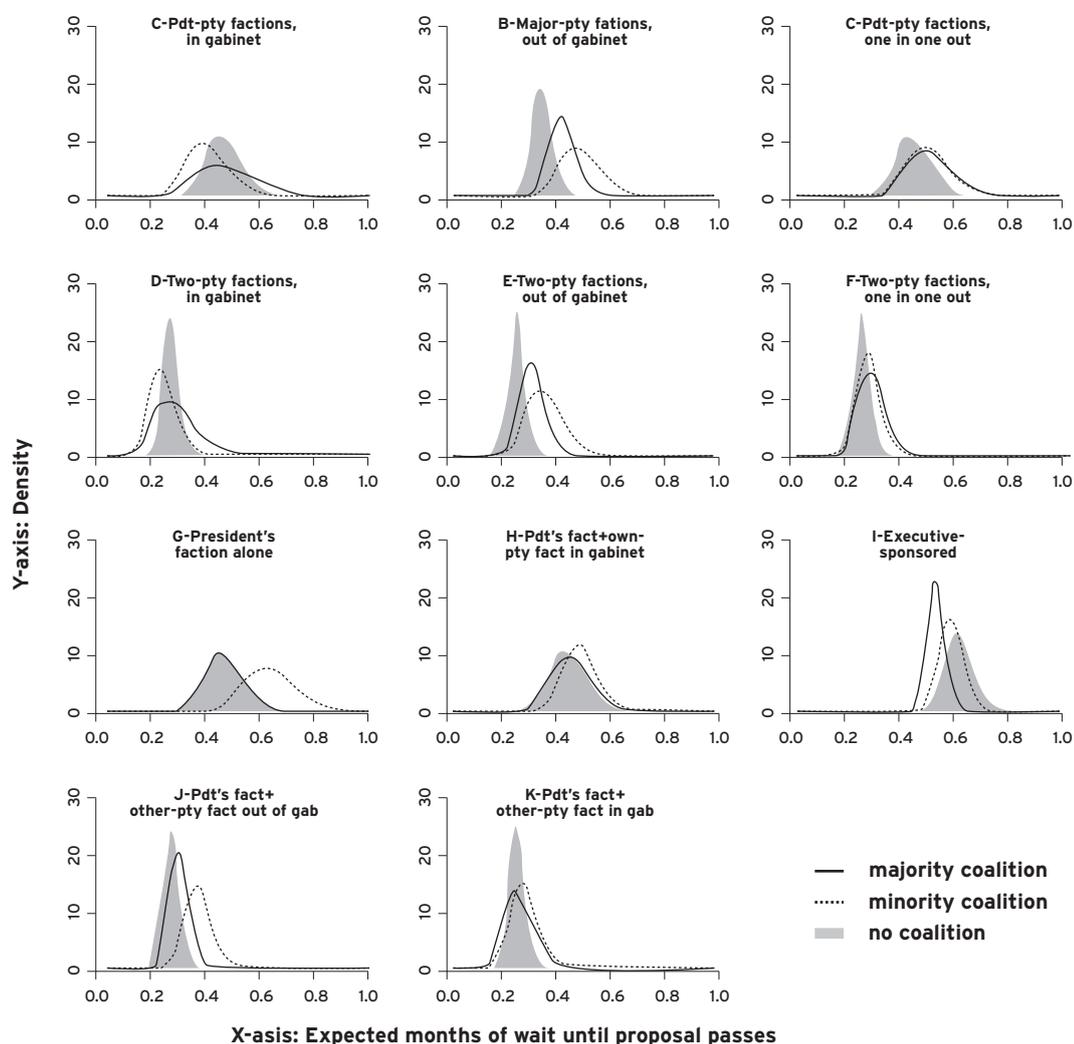
(a) Efron method for ties. (b) Test that ln(p) is zero.

Tables 4 and 5 report maximum-likelihood estimates for executive and MP bills, respectively. Models pass a general goodness-of-fit test, rejecting the hypothesis that all coefficients but the constant are jointly nil. But the executive models do so at the .01-level: although this is below the conventional .05-level, this test is an easy hurdle to pass, a reminder that future studies of duration will need to rely on more detail about bills and their progress in parliament.¹⁴ Coefficients from Weibull regression are very close to those of Cox PH. The one exception is a sign change for coefficients of $\text{sq.root}(\text{Distant election})$ in MP equations; but both are so far from attaining significance (.6 and .74 p-values) as to render the difference negligible. The hypothesis that the shape parameter p of the Weibull distribution equals 1 can be rejected for both Models 4 and 6 (at the .03- and .08-levels, respectively), but with opposite meanings: $p < 1$ for executive bills indicates that the longer a bill stays in parliament (conditional on it passing), the likelihood of it passing fast decreases; $p > 1$ for MP bills indicates the contrary.

Coalition effects on the duration of legislation depict some patterns reminiscent of those in section 3, but also some marked contrasts. The similarities: minority coalitions do not change duration of executive-sponsored bills significantly, but majority coalitions do (albeit at the .07-level). Other factors constant and compared to the absence of a cabinet coalition, majority coalitions significantly speed up passage of the president's agenda. For MP bills, a bigger share of signatories from major parties – whether members of the president's faction or factions with cabinet portfolios – do not exert significant effects on duration when a majority coalition is in place. They do so, significantly, when minority coalitions are in power. The differences are in the sign of coefficients: if majority coalitions accelerate the executive agenda, minority coalitions *decelerate* passage of MP proposals.

14. Our dataset offers information to code a potentially interesting time-varying factor: the changing coalition status as bills proceed, unapproved, through the legislative process. We chose to leave it aside due to the high likelihood of endogeneity: the same legislators deciding to schedule a proposal for passage are deciding to make or break coalitions.

Figure 5. Coalition effects on speed



Note: Expected durations from models 4 and 6 for a proposal submitted in the senate half-way through the term. Estimates of uncertainty computed with Clarify (Tomz et al. 2001).

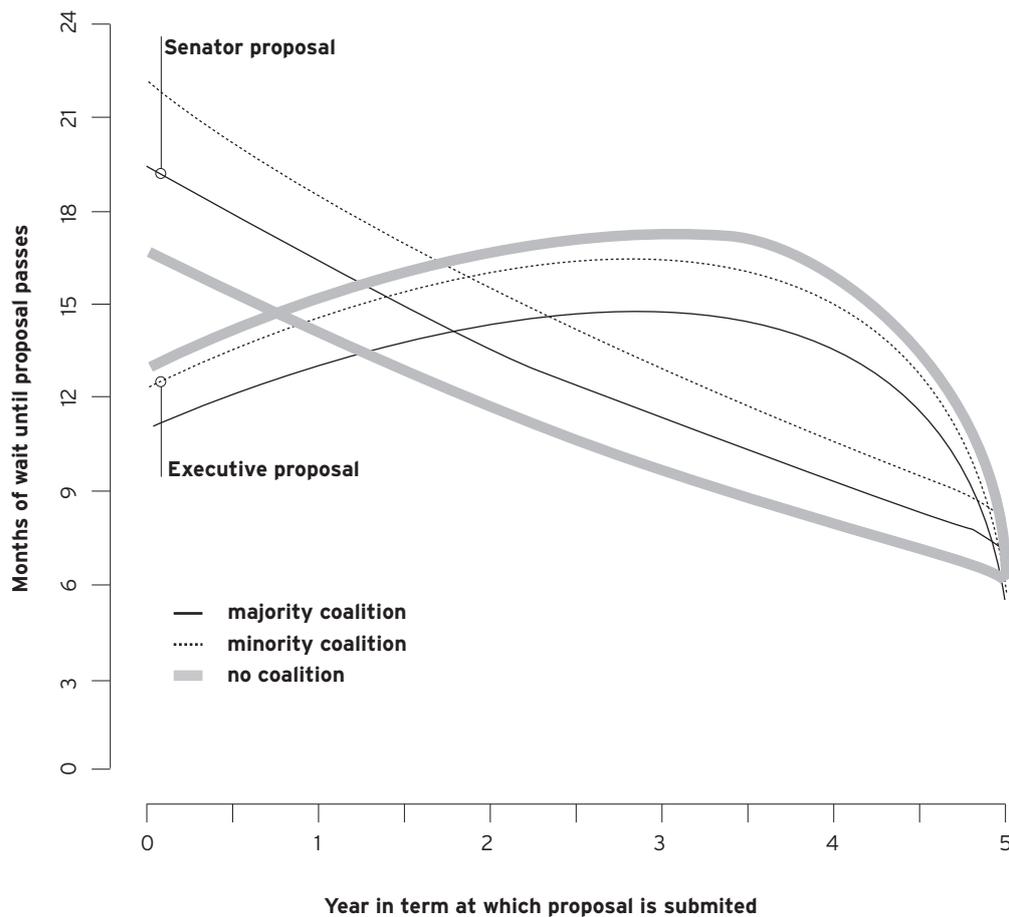
Simulations reveal the magnitude and confidence of coalition effects on duration. Figure 5 has the same organization as Figure 3, but relies on Models 4 and 6 to predict expected spell durations. With exceptions, coalition effects on duration are generally harder to pin down with the information at our disposal than those of the previous section. The patterns can be summarized thus.

– **Minority *v.* majority status:** For legislators' proposals, minority coalitions manifest effects on duration that are always greater or equal than those of majority coalitions. The contrary is true for executive proposals, whose duration is more sensible to majority coalition.

– **Effect sizes and direction:** Coalitions can accelerate or decelerate bill passage. Cabinet coalition cuts about 3 months of wait to executive legislation (15% less in panel I). It does the same to bills sponsored by factions other than the president’s with cabinet representation, saving them between 1.5 and 3 months of wait (about 20% less in panels A and D). But more commonly, coalition slows bill passage by 1 to 5.5 months (5%-45% in the remainder panels). Considering only noticeable effects – see next item – minority cabinet coalitions slow MP bills by 3.5 months on average (about 35% longer waits in panels B, E, G, and J).

– **Effect certainty:** In most cases, changes in duration are impossible to separate from those due to pure chance alone (densities overlap to a very large extent). The exceptions are the effect of minority coalition on bills sponsored by the president’s faction and/or major party factions out of cabinet (panels B, E, G, and J), and the effect of majority coalition on executive-sponsored bills (panel I).

Figure 6. The reverse effect of coalitions on speed



Note: Lines represent predicted median spell duration, calculated with models 4 and 6. Executive proposal tabled in the senate. MP proposal tabled by senators of factions from the major party not in control of the presidency, without cabinet representation.

The electoral calendar exerts remarkable changes in the speed of legislation, as evidenced by the size and significance of coefficients for *Distant election* and its square root in the model for executive bills. As with the probability of passage, the election timetable has a lesser effect on legislators' initiatives. Figure 6 portrays these differences for a bill initiated in the upper chamber by the president (inverse-U-shaped curves) or by a senator from the major opposition party without cabinet representation (the straight lines). Curves relate the predicted median duration for each proposal in the absence of a coalition (thick grey line), a minority one (dotted line), or a majority one (thin black line). A successful proposal by a president in his first year (when most of them are) takes on average one year to pass. That same proposal, initiated at mid-term (when success rates remain high), takes four extra months to pass. But in the final year of the presidency, the wait drops sharply, to between 6 and 9 months total. This coincides with the period when the president's fortunes in the legislative arena wane dramatically: much less succeeds, but does so quite faster. Compare this to waiting times for legislators' bills. Recall that MPs retain a more or less constant success rate throughout the term (Figure 4), and their stream of proposals remains consistently high (Table 2). The average waiting time at the start of the term is around 18 months, shrinking linearly until it reaches about half of that (9 months) in the final year of the term. Unresolved MP proposals pile up from year one on; as the term reaches completion, and a substantial volume of unresolved matter is reached, it would seem as though logrolls permit passage of the lot. MPs who are lucky to get in the agenda towards the end get their proposals considerably faster, and they unclog the plumbing for early-bird proposals.

For want of finer-grained information to provide a more controlled environment, estimates of duration are surrounded by a good deal of uncertainty. But it should be kept in mind that the differences we detect are significant at conventional statistical levels.

6. Discussion

Putting the lessons of sections 3 and 4 together gives an interesting perspective on executive-legislative relations in a presidential system.

- Executive bills are sensible to majority coalitions, MPs' to minority coalitions.
- Coalition improves (slightly, but significantly) the chances *and* accelerates executive legislation.
- Coalition improves the chances of MP bills, but in so doing *slows* their passage.
- The previous item is especially true for members of the president's faction and members of major parties whose factions remain out of the minority coalition.

Combined effects hint that cabinets supported by a coalition, but without majority status in parliament, would appear to leave a part of the business of successfully legislating to MPs themselves instead of the president.

The staff of Latin American legislatures is no match to the technocrats in executive agencies, giving the president an edge to propose complex legislation that legislators typically cannot (cf. Londregan 2000). Longer average wait for presidential legislation is attributable in part to this complexity differential. Another part is no doubt explained by MPs' narrower, district-level constituencies, demanding basic pork more often than the president's national constituency. Note in Figure 5 how minority coalition's deceleration of bills by members of the president's faction alone brings the wait to about 18 months on average (panel G). An 18-month wait is substantially longer than MPs' bills portrayed in the other panels; it also closely approximates the average wait for executive legislation under similar circumstances (panel I). Evidence is insufficient to prove this, but one possibility behind the pattern is that faction partners serve as relatively good agents of the president's interests in the assembly. Faction partners take care of more difficult negotiations in smoke-filled rooms when the minority coalition lacks control of the legislative agenda, achieving necessary trades with outside members to pass elements of the executive's agenda – and, one would expect, parts of their own agenda.

When majority status is achieved by means of cabinet coalition, the executive agenda would seem to take precedence over MP proposals, as evidenced by significantly shorter spells in the assembly. Under this setting, presidents can take the driver's seat, confident that the majority coalition will remove obstacles in the assembly. With a minority coalition, and its little effects on executive-initiated bills, presidents seem to take the back seat more often, letting faction partners handle the parts of his agenda that were accepted as part of the deal.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined legislation initiated in Uruguay in the 15 years following the return to democracy. Analysis revealed, as expected, that coalition has smaller impact on the success rate of matters brought by the president to the assembly in comparison to those brought by legislators – 15% increase for the former; 60% increase on average for the latter, reaching 150% for members of the president's faction. A marked drop in the fortunes of executive legislation as the term expires, expected in relation with electioneering, was also confirmed. And an estimated 3-months difference in the duration of the legislative process with coalitions, speeding-up passage of executive projects while slowing-down passage of legislators'.

Uruguay remains a small and institutionally rare case. It will be useful to investigate if the coalition effects that we detect are also present in other factionalized party systems, such as Colombia, or to fragmented party systems in general. One important advantage of the duration of legislation as an indicator is the ease with which it can be replicated for assemblies worldwide. While idiosyncracies in the procedures of legislatures worldwide surely complicate research design, a truly comparative approach might even be envisaged.

Analysis has also raised new questions, opening venues for future research. Does the president really take the back seat under minority coalition, relying on members of his faction to operate in the assembly? Why is the president such a strong asset, swelling success rates of everyone in the party regardless of faction-membership? Why do parties remain key actors even if Uruguay's famously strong factions are the building blocks of coalition politics? Finally, an examination of the last step of the legislative process – the executive veto – is perhaps the clue to understand why having a president in office swells success rates of everyone in the party, regardless of faction-membership.

8. Appendix: Definitions and Descriptive Statistics

Below are formal definitions of all variables in the analysis. All data was compiled by the authors from the Uruguayan Parliament's archive and its web page www.parlamento.gub.uy.

Y: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill passed; 0 otherwise.

T: (Day bill was sanctioned - Day bill was tabled)+1 if bill passed, (14Feb2000 - Day bill was tabled)+1 if bill did not pass, counting calendar days as a sequence of integers.

Tabled in senate: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill was initiated in the senate, 0 otherwise.

Distant election: (Day of next election - Day bill was tabled)/1,825 counting calendar days as a sequence of integers. Possible Days of next election include 26Nov1989, 27Nov1994, and 28Nov1999, choosing the one immediately following the proposal's Day of initiation for computation. The date for 1999 considers the presidential runoff instead of the first round of 31 October.

Maj.coalition: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill was introduced in parliament in date ranges [1Mar1990, 15Mar1991) or [1Mar1995, 15Feb2000); 0 otherwise.

Min.coalition: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill was introduced in parliament in date range [15Mar1991, 15Feb1995); 0 otherwise.

No coalition: *Majority coalition - Minority coalition* (dropped from equation).

(coalitionStatus)&sp.sponsors from pdt.'s faction: For economy let (coalitionStatus) in {*Majority coalition, Minority coalition, No coalition*}; when (coalitionStatus)=1, equals the share of bill sponsors belonging to the president's faction; 0 otherwise.

(coalitionStatus)&sp.fr.factions in cabinet: When (coalitionStatus)=1 equals the share of bill sponsors belonging to factions other than the president's with cabinet

representation; 0 otherwise.

(coalitionStatus)&sp.fr.factions off cabinet: When (coalitionStatus)=1 equals the share of bill sponsors belonging to major-party factions without cabinet representation; 0 otherwise.

(coalitionStatus)&sponsors from minor parties: When (coalitionStatus)=1 equals the share of bill sponsors belonging to minor parties; 0 otherwise (dropped from equation).

Pdt.'s party sponsors only: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill was sponsored exclusively by members of the party controlling the presidency at the time of initiation; 0 otherwise.

Both majors sponsored: Dummy equal to 1 if the bill was co-sponsored by members of the Colorado and Blanco parties, possibly including sponsors from other parties; 0 otherwise.

Statistics for all proposals in the dataset (used to estimate models 1 and 2) and for proposals that passed only (used for models 3-6) appear below.

A--Continuous variables		N	mean	std.dev	min	max
T	Exec.,all bills:	1,439	1,179	1,441	1	5,464
	passed bills only:	962	455	507	1	4,110
	MPs, all bills:	2,621	2,502	1,798	2	5,478
	passed bills only:	588	491	457	2	3,452
Distant election	Exec., all bills:	1,439	0.489	0.279	0.006	1
	passed bills only:	962	0.510	0.262	0.006	0.948
	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.533	0.284	0.009	0.988
	passed bills only:	588	0.523	0.281	0.009	0.973
Maj.coal.&sp.fr.pdt.'s faction	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.071	0.238	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.096	0.260	0	1
Maj.coal.&sp.fr.fact.in cab.	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.023	0.138	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.027	0.143	0	1
Maj.coal.&sp.fr.factions off cab.	Mps, all bills:	2,621	0.157	0.350	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.181	0.355	0	1
Maj.coal.&sp.fr.minor parties	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.120	0.313	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.084	0.246	0	1
Min.coal.&sp.fr.pdt.'s faction	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.057	0.221	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.129	0.318	0	1
Min.coal.&sp.fr.fact.in cab.	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.036	0.171	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.048	0.191	0	1
Min.coal.&sp.fr.factions off cab.	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.063	0.229	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.074	0.230	0	1
Min.coal.&sp.fr.minor parties	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.093	0.277	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.082	0.244	0	1
No coal.&sp.fr.pdt.'s faction	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.053	0.207	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.070	0.224	0	1
No coal.&sp.fr.fact.in cab.	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.035	0.176	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.024	0.137	0	1
No coal.&sp.fr.factions off cab.	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.154	0.349	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.127	0.309	0	1
No coal.&sp.fr.minor parties	MPs, all bills:	2,621	0.138	0.334	0	1
	passed bills only:	588	0.058	0.209	0	1

B--Dichotomous variables		Freqs. Exec.		Freqs. MPs	
		0	1	0	1
Y	all:	477	962	2,033	588
	Tabledinsenate	686	753	1,904	717
	passed:	439	523	420	168
	Maj.coalition	820	619	1,649	972
	passed:	532	430	360	228
	Min.coalition	1,041	398	1,968	653
	passed:	699	263	392	196
	No coalition	1,017	422	1,625	996
	passed:	693	269	424	164
	Pdt.'s party sponsors only	-	-	2,018	603
	passed:	-	-	414	174
	Both majors sponsored	-	-	2,302	319
	passed:	-	-	435	153

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