

**Rethinking the “Presidentialism Debate”:
Coalitional Politics in Cross-Regional Perspective**

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Rethinking the “Presidentialism Debate”: Coalitional Politics in Cross-Regional Perspective

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Introduction

Over the past 20 years, research on political democratization has been closely linked to the literature on institutional design. Nowhere is this symbiosis more evident than in the long-running debate on the merits of competing executive formats: presidentialism, parliamentarism, and semipresidentialism. Political scientists and political practitioners have argued in favour of one or the other formula, deploying both theoretical and empirical arguments in their efforts to defend a particular institutional choice. Although this dialogue has increased our understanding of the role of institutional variables in the study of democratic sustainability, the evolution of what we will term the “presidentialism debate” has displayed four key deficiencies. The debate has too often been univariate (looking at one institutional variable to the exclusion of others); it has too frequently been divorced from local context (ignoring national histories, cultures, and trajectories); it has unwisely ignored the role of informal institutions; and it has often tried to stake grand comparative generalizations on the experience of a single world region.

In this paper, we try to correct some of these biases while analyzing a phenomenon largely unanticipated in the early years of this debate: the surprising sustainability of multiparty presidentialism in new democracies. Following recent trends in the literature (e.g. Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004), we accept that the survival of this regime format is owed largely to successful coalition formation. However, we push the debate forward by examining *how* presidents cultivate multiparty alliances in emerging democracies. We also

widen the analytical lens by drawing on evidence from new presidential systems located in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and the former Soviet Union.

To date, the literature on each region has typically focused on the ability of presidents to use one or two distinctive strategies to manage fragmented multiparty legislatures. Our cross-regional focus enables us to reveal the limitations in the extant work on legislative-presidential relations in two important ways. First, by comparing experiences across the three regions, we demonstrate that despite strong cross-regional variations in political landscapes, elected presidents tend to draw on five key governing tools: agenda power, budgetary authority, cabinet management, partisan powers, and informal institutions. Following Pereira, Power, and Raile (2011), we term this the “executive toolbox.” Second, we show that while there are clear regional variations in the various admixtures of these tools, it is only by considering the ability of presidents to master the toolbox as a whole that one can account for the success of presidents in managing inter-party alliances.

This paper proceeds in four sections. In the first section, we discuss how the presidentialism debate has evolved from concern with democratic breakdown to a focus on coalitional governance. In the second section, we discuss our theoretical framework and develop the notion of the executive toolbox. Our third section draws together some lessons from recent research on executive-legislative relations in Africa, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union. The fourth section discusses the value of cross-regional analysis for further research on presidentialism.

From the “Perils of Presidentialism” to the Coalitional Approach

Coalitional presidentialism is a strategic response to the institutional dilemmas posed by the coexistence of a presidential executive with a fragmented multiparty legislature. In

order to win support for the legislative agenda of the executive, presidents must behave much like prime ministers in the multiparty democracies of Western Europe: they must first assemble and then cultivate interparty coalitions on the floor of the assembly. The objective of the president is to foster the emergence of a legislative cartel which will reliably defend the preferences of the executive branch.

The idea that directly elected presidents could serve as coalitional formateurs was not well anticipated by scholars of democratization in the 1980s and 1990s, many of whom expected that multiparty presidential regimes were doomed to collapse (Linz 1990; Mainwaring 1993; Stepan and Skach 1993). Yet today, there is a growing consensus that “presidentialism can work like parliamentarism” (Colomer and Negretto 2005). How was it, then, that scholars shifted their emphases from the “perils of presidentialism” to a recognition of coalitional practices over the past 20 years?

Modifying Elgie’s (2005) useful periodization, we can divide the “presidentialism debate” into three phases. The first phase was dominated by Linz’s classic argument for the superiority of parliamentarism over presidentialism, especially for young, untested democracies. Linz (1990) claimed that the competing democratic legitimacies under presidentialism (the president and legislature being elected separately) would lead to recurrent conflicts. Conflicts would be exacerbated by the winner-take-all nature of presidential elections, the two-dimensional nature of the presidential office (the president represents both the state and a partisan option) and the overall inflexibility of the system (long, fixed executive terms). In the second phase of the debate, Mainwaring (1993) argued that the problem was not presidentialism per se, but rather the “difficult combination” of presidentialism with fragmented multiparty systems. In a third phase, the “difficult combination” argument was assailed by scholars claiming that presidentialism could work like parliamentarism: presidents were capable of building stable multiparty coalitions, even in

weakly institutionalized party systems (Chasquetti 2008). In one of the most remarkable recent examples of South-North knowledge transfer in comparative politics, the core of this argument was rolled out between 1997 and 2007 mostly by young Latin American scholars completing doctoral dissertations in U.S. and European universities (Deheza 1997; Amorim Neto 1998; Pereira 2000; Altman 2001; Zelaznik 2001; Mejía-Acosta 2004; Martínez-Gallardo 2005; Martorelli Hernández 2007; Zucco Jr. 2007).

Although Latin America received the most attention, scholars of Africa independently came to similar conclusions about their region. Chabal and Daloz (1999) and Van de Walle (2003) found that African presidents' flexible use of formal and informal powers enabled them to dominate even highly fragmented legislatures. Similarly, research on post-Soviet parliaments, in particular the Russian State Duma and Ukrainian Rada, has also begun to focus on the range of tools used by presidents to build parliamentary majorities. Cross-national quantitative research has supplied additional support for the ideas that coalition formation is common under presidentialism and that multipartyism does not significantly reduce the legislative success rates of directly elected executives (Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004; Cheibub 2007). To summarize, there is an emerging consensus that many presidents enjoy tools of government which allow them to overcome the disincentives to cooperation deriving from multipartyism.

With coalitional governance now widely recognized as the "solution" to the dilemmas posed by Linz and Mainwaring, the presidentialism debate has reached a plateau and runs the risk of stagnating. To move forward, researchers should be far more precise about what exactly empowers presidents to manage unwieldy coalitions — in other words, about what resources are found inside the "presidential toolbox" in different cases. Scholars should ask whether these governing tools work in similar ways across different regions and national contexts.

Theoretical Framework

At the heart of our theoretical framework is an institutionalist approach to executive-legislative relations. We assume that conflict and cooperation between the president and assembly are conditioned by fundamental questions of institutional design. Institutions do not merely shape the strategies of actors: they also affect the probability distribution of certain political outcomes (Przeworski 1986; O'Donnell 1996). Several well-established institutionalist axioms undergird our approach here. For example, other things being equal, the greater the number of political parties, the more difficult it is to form a stable coalition in the legislature (Lijphart 1999); the more difficult it is to form stable coalitions, the less likely the assembly will approve legislation proposed by the executive (Cheibub 2007); the persistence of legislative gridlock is more threatening to young, fragile democracies than to established democratic regimes (Linz 1994); and so on. Axioms such as these shaped the early and pessimistic views about multiparty presidentialism.

Our approach moves beyond previous institutionalist work in four main ways. First, rather than assume that a single institutional resource permits presidents to elicit multiparty support, whether it be agenda power (Figueiredo and Limongi 2000; Amorim Neto, Cox, and McCubbins 2003), management of cabinet portfolios (Amorim Neto 2002; Martínez-Gallardo 2005), or budgetary authority or “pork” (Ames 2001), we assume that presidents have access to a *plurality* of tools which can be used to incentivize coalition formation and legislative support—the “presidential toolbox” (Raile, Pereira, and Power 2011). Given the extraordinary diversity among presidential (Shugart and Carey 1992) and semipresidential (Elgie 1999) systems around the world, our preliminary identification of five broad clusters of tools should not be taken as an exhaustive typology. Other strategies of coalition

management exist and the particular combination of tools deployed by presidents will vary across political systems. Below we proceed inductively and make no *a priori* claim that any one presidential tool is more important than the others, either within systems or across systems; however, we do suggest that generalizations like these are both possible and desirable in the next wave of presidential research.

Second, we recognise the importance of informal institutions (O'Donnell 1996; Helmke and Levitsky 2006) in presidential governance. For example, the historical consolidation of American presidentialism is often linked to paraconstitutional practices such as the Congressional committee system or informal institutions such as the spoils system (Riggs 1988). Informal mechanisms of executive-legislative exchange are important to emerging democracies as well. In Latin America, clientelism and side-payments to legislators are well-known tools of governance; in the post-Soviet regimes, the executive's power to regulate the transition to a market economy created space for the cultivation of particularistic networks; in Africa, ethnic and regional loyalties overlay and often overcome partisan and institutional interests (Berman 1998; Bratton 2007).

Third, we hold that theory-building needs to come to terms with certain contextual variables which mediate the explanatory power of political institutions. Executive-legislative relations do not occur in a vacuum. Presidential strategies of coalition management will vary from case to case, depending on the electoral system, on the degree of party discipline, on the ideological proximity of the available coalition partners, on whether the country is federal or unitary, etc. Even when presidential tools are held constant, the ability of executives to deploy them effectively is still contingent on context. As Neustadt (1990) demonstrated for the United States, presidential power derives from the president's standing with the public (popularity) and from her reputation within the political class (professional prestige). Other contextual variables which impact the executive-legislative relationship are time (the

electoral calendar, e.g. “honeymoon” and “lame duck” effects, routinely shapes the assembly’s propensity to cooperate with the executive), economic performance, the quality of presidential leadership, the relevance of actors exogenous to the executive-legislative relationship (e.g. presidential aspirants, powerful governors, antisystem forces), and of course national history and culture (Premph 2008). Some frequently studied institutional variables (e.g. presidential prerogatives, party and factional organization in legislatures) may in fact have radically different impacts and meanings across various systems.

Fourth and finally, theory must be built on and tested in diverse settings. Extant theory on coalitional presidentialism is derived from the experience of a single case or region, typically Latin America. In part this is due to historical reasons: although coalitional presidentialism existed in Latin America during the Second Wave of democratization (Stepan 1978; Valenzuela 1978), it is only since the early 1990s — when the Third Wave of democratization extended to sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe — that we have a significant number of comparable cases in more than one world region. As the selection of cases in Table 1 shows, the necessity of constructing interparty coalitions is a reality for presidents in all three regions.¹

[TABLE 1 HERE]

The Presidential Toolbox

To derive the tools that presidents use to manage diverse coalitions, we compare the existing literature on the strategies utilized by executives across the three regions. In the following review of the presidential literature on Latin America, the former Soviet Union and

¹ Four cases were selected from each region according to two criteria: first, they meet the threshold of at least “partially democratic” in the well-known Polity dataset (Marshall and Jaggers 2008); and, second, they represent cases in which presidential power is most concentrated. The latter criterion only applies to states in Africa and the former Soviet Union where semi-presidentialism was a popular constitutional choice.

Africa, we integrate several streams of research that have hitherto been disconnected. This inductive approach leads to the classification of presidential tools into five broad clusters: *agenda power* (legislative powers awarded to the president, executive decree authority), *budgetary prerogatives* (control of public spending), *cabinet management* (distribution of portfolios to alliance members), *partisan powers* (influence of the president over one or more coalition parties), and *informal institutions* (a diverse residual category reflecting country-specific historical and cultural factors, which we therefore approach inductively across our cases below).

Latin America's "Proactive Presidents"

The early comparative literature on executive-legislative relations under presidentialism was heavily influenced by the Latin American experience. This literature traces its origins to the early 1990s, approximately the moment at which comparativists first began to test the Linzian hypotheses empirically. Scholars did so by naturally turning to Latin America as the region with the greatest number of presidential regimes, and they were influenced by the theoretical perspectives ascendant in comparative politics at the time, e.g. rational choice institutionalism and especially principal-agent models (both of which in turn had been imported from contemporaneous research agendas on the U.S. Congress). The paradigmatic work from this period is Shugart and Carey's *Presidents and Assemblies* (1992), which was the first major comparative study of presidentialism and remained the central reference on the topic until the publication of Cheibub's *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy* (2007).

Taking their lead from Shugart and Carey, scholars began to catalogue and measure formal presidential powers (e.g. Metcalf 2000; Payne et al. 2002). Certain legislative powers

were singled out for their efficiency in guaranteeing presidential dominance, for example decree authority (Negretto 2004) or vetoes (Alemán and Schwartz 2006). From a theoretical perspective, the general framework that unified these studies was “agenda control,” with the general message being that the numerous formal powers granted to Latin American presidents endowed them not only with a first-mover advantage and with significant control over legislative process, but also with the tools necessary to form and maintain multiparty support coalitions within legislatures (Chasquetti 2001; Cox and Morgenstern 2001; Figueiredo and Limongi 2000; Foweraker 1998; Tsebelis and Alemán 2005).

A favorite case study was Brazil, judged by Shugart and Carey to have the most powerful presidency in the democratic world as of 1991. Several key tools permit the Brazilian executive to establish and defend the bargaining status quo, thus helping to keep coalitions together (Figueiredo and Limongi 2000). The most striking power in the Constitution of 1988 is the ability of the president to legislate via executive decrees (*medidas provisórias*). Executive decrees not only give the president the power to legislate immediately and without congressional approval, they also give her influence over the ongoing legislative agenda (Pereira, Power, and Rennó, 2005; 2008). Presidents can call Congress out of recess at will, and special sessions deal exclusively with executive initiatives. The Brazilian constitution also allows the president to defend the status quo by reacting to the legislature’s attempt to change it, either through package or line-item vetoes. Furthermore, the executive has the prerogative to dislodge a bill from a committee by requesting urgency, sending it immediately to floor consideration. With the president enjoying such immense agenda-setting powers, it is perhaps not surprising that approximately 80% of all legislation in Brazil over the past two decades has originated in executive proposals, and that the three presidents since 1995 have found it possible to assemble supermajoritarian coalitions surpassing 70% of the seats in the lower house.

In explaining coalitional politics, the strong formal powers of Latin American presidents drew significant attention because they are constitutionally codified, frequently used and (relatively) easy to document and measure. By the end of the 1990s, a consensus had emerged that many Latin American presidents enjoyed institutional powers which allowed them to overcome the challenges posed by proportional representation and party fragmentation (Foweraker 1998). However, despite the intuitive appeal of constitutional powers, not all studies shared this formalist impulse. Some scholars preferred to emphasize the strategic dimensions of cabinet formation: many presidents chose to elicit legislative support by recruiting ministers from other parties, even though they are not constitutionally required to do so in any Latin American case (Amorim Neto 2002, 2006; Martínez-Gallardo 2005). Cabinet inclusiveness is essentially a *political* choice, and it is a function of the partisan powers of the president as well as of the ideological distribution within the assembly. Other scholars emphasized informal practices, such as patronage politics and extra-institutional dealmaking, whether in the allocation of state power (Mejía-Acosta 2004) or in vertical relationships between presidents and subnational executives (Jones 1997; Samuels and Abrucio 2000; De Luca 2008). Still others began to investigate contextual and less tangible aspects of presidential power, such as popularity (Pereira, Power, and Rennó 2005; Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Thus, the ability of Latin American presidents to manage multiparty coalitions and win legislative support is not reducible to their formal powers: informal institutions, micropolitical interactions and contextual variables all play some role.

“Superpresidentialism” and “Patronal Presidentialism” in the former Soviet Union

Although technically semi-presidential, the constitutions of many post-Soviet states also concentrate a high degree of formal power in the office of president. During the post-

communist transitions of the 1990s, post-Soviet constitution makers were keenly aware of the obstacles that systems of separated powers presented to their rulers. This is illustrated by comparative indexes that have been used to measure the concentration of presidential power in these new constitutions (Hellman, 1996; Frye, 1997). They show that even across the post-communist world the formal powers of presidents in the non-Baltic former Soviet Union greatly exceed their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Consequently, many of these political systems were rebranded “super-presidential” by country specialists (Holmes, 1993; Ishiyama and Kennedy, 2001; Fish, 2005).

This focus on the formal concentration of presidential power, especially within the legislative realm, has produced analysis that downgrades the significance of institutional and political constraints, notably parliaments and parties (Fish, 2006). Echoing earlier studies of so-called “delegative democracies” in Latin America (O’Donnell, 1998), presidents are portrayed as essentially unrestrained between elections, with the electoral process itself open to manipulation. In policy-making, presidents are able to get their way using a variety of formal powers. Emphasis is placed on the high concentration of the proactive law-making authority that presidents have at their disposal. They include *inter alia* decree powers and the power to arbitrate in inter-branch conflicts (Kubicek, 1994; Parrish, 1998; Beliaev, 2006).

Super-presidentialism is also interpreted as the formal manifestation of a system of neo-patrimonialism, which empowers presidents in other ways. The weakness of institutional checks and balances is portrayed as a legacy of Soviet political culture, which enabled leaders to govern through patronage and personal rule (Robinson, 2000; Hale, 2005). This form of “patronal presidentialism”, Hale asserts, combines great formal power with informal power and resources derived from the networks of patron-client relations that span the state and economy (Hale, 2005, p. 138).

Thus, scholars of the post-Soviet world have generally agreed that the collapse of communism produced political systems that greatly empowered presidents at the expense of alternative centres of institutional power. The “super-presidential” or “patronal” presidencies of the region have coexisted with legislatures that enjoy relatively low levels of public confidence. As a consequence, the theoretical claim that the instability of presidentialism is caused by its dual channels of legitimacy—the separate election of the president and parliament—has not materialised in the way hypothesized by Linz. On the contrary, it is the overconcentration of power in the presidency that is the source of presidentialism’s vulnerability in the former Soviet Union. The “coloured revolutions” in the region have occurred as a result of less seemingly perilous institutional arrangements: presidential term limits (Hale, 2005, p.135).

Yet, notwithstanding their significant institutional powers, early post-Soviet presidents generally lacked the party support needed to bind coalitions in parliament (see Table 1). Contrary to stereotype, presidents were not able to maintain coalitions via executive decree authority. In Russia, for example, the fact that presidential decrees are subordinate to parliamentary statutes in the Russian Constitution deprived presidents of the authority to guarantee credible commitments in substantive policy areas (Remington, Smith and Haspel, 1998). Although Boris Yeltsin in particular favored the use of decrees in the absence of parliamentary support, the threat to use his decree authority was never sufficient on its own to force legislators to capitulate to presidential legislative demands. In practice, Yeltsin and other post-Soviet presidents found that formal legislative powers are most effective when they are used in combination with other tools: decrees provide an important means of distributing patronage in the political system (Protsyk (2004), and the power of presidents to initiate legislation is a decisive resource only when presidents have reliable partisan tools of control.

Over the last decade, post-Soviet presidents have become increasingly reliant on their partisan powers to build more reliable coalitions. In Russia, the executive's partisan authority was significantly strengthened during President Putin's rule with the formation of a pro-Kremlin legislative coalition of four parties, which later became United Russia. This development brought the parliament's agenda-setting bodies under the president's control, and the partisan power-sharing of the Yeltsin years was replaced by a legislative system that became highly majoritarian (Chaisty, 2008).

However, partisan powers have not been a perfect substitute for other tools. Although Russian presidents today have far greater control over budgetary resources than was the case in the 1990s (Thames, 2000; Chaisty, forthcoming), they have continued to use pork to reconcile distributive legislative conflicts within the presidential party, United Russia (Remington, 2008); and in other post-Soviet states budgetary pork and other side payments, notably patronage payments, are still important for cementing presidential support. Cabinet appointments in Ukraine and Armenia, for instance, appear to have been more frequently used than is the case in Russia, and thus closer to the patterns identified for Latin America by Amorim Neto (2006). Moreover, even in Russia, cabinet appointments did play an important role in the 1990s when Boris Yeltsin was forced to accommodate a hostile parliament (Morgan-Jones and Schleiter, 2004).

Finally, post-Soviet presidents have been shown to influence coalition formation in a variety of informal ways, especially by addressing the particularistic interests of legislators. Since 1993, the business lobbying of deputies has been a prominent feature of legislative politics in the region. To further their interests, legislators rely on their informal relationships with ministries and other executive agencies; these connections give presidents the means to form legislative cartels. Studies of Ukrainian legislative politics allude to vote buying, which

has included patronage, intimidation and bribery (Van Zon, 2005). Thus, there is much more to the story than just formal constitutional powers.

'Paper' legislatures and 'Big Man' rule in African presidentialism

The literature on the process of political liberalization in Africa from the late 1980s onwards is in broad agreement that the reintroduction of multi-party politics in the early 1990s did little to undercut the capacity of incumbent presidents to dominate the political landscape (Chabal and Daloz, 2004; Hyden, 2005). In most cases, political liberalization did not extend to the introduction of serious constitutional constraints on presidential power. Especially in the continent's former one-party states, such as Kenya and Zambia, governments legalized opposition parties but effected little change to the rest of the constitutional architecture. Even in regimes like South Africa and Benin that underwent a negotiated transition, presidential powers of appointment and access to resources combined with the low technical capacity of parliaments typically resulted in a pattern of legislative subservience. Moreover, in those Francophone countries that adopted semi-presidentialism, the dual executive has rarely hindered presidents from operating with the same degree of unfettered authority, even during periods of cohabitation (van Cranenburgh, 2008; Cheeseman and Tendi 2010).

Although the formal agenda setting powers available to most presidents are well understood, many scholars have placed greater weight on the impact of the informal rules of the game, most notably the influence of neo-patrimonial networks. Established patterns of informal behavior are seen to erode the significance of formal institutions in Africa, in ways similar to the post-Soviet cases discussed above. In the African context, presidents are understood to wield power through highly personalized patron-client networks that are

typically—but not exclusively—organized around ethno-regional communities (Medard 1982). Such networks may enable ordinary voters to exert a ‘pull’ on their clients (Kim et al, 1983; Hyden, 2005) but they are also highly unequal and empower ‘Big Men’ to circumvent the formal rules of the game. Culturalist analyses have generally displaced the study of formal institutions, which are depicted as existing solely on paper (Chabal and Daloz 2004).²

While it is important not to underestimate the significance of informal processes in Africa, this overriding preoccupation of the literature has obscured the challenges presidents face when interacting with parliaments, and the variety of tools they use to manage legislative relations. Scholars frequently ignore the fact that many African presidents face deeply divided legislatures in which they lack a clear majority. In Africa’s highly fragmented party systems, such as Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Malawi, the party of the president has often won just a fraction of the seats within parliament (see Table 1). In such a context presidents are forced to operate more like prime ministers, carefully constructing legislative alliances, just as in many Latin American cases. The personal distribution of funds and favours remain important in this process, but the formal capacity of presidents to control the legislative agenda and their ability to manage the cabinet effectively are equally critical to legislative success. For example, presidents typically seek to meet the challenge of coalitional presidentialism by constructing broad alliances cemented through the appointment of larger cabinets that are more representative of the balance of parties within parliament (Cheeseman 2008). In both Liberia and Benin, where the president’s party has regularly secured less than a quarter of parliamentary seats, the executive has had little choice but to engage in complex processes of alliance formation, appointing representatives of

² Even among those political scientists who are more sympathetic to institutionalist approaches, formal legislative structures and rules are largely downplayed. For example, parliaments comprise just two pages of Bratton and van de Walle’s seminal *Democratic Experiments in Africa* (1994) and do not even feature in the index of Goran Hyden’s *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* (2005).

opposition parties to the cabinet.³ Thus, as in Latin America, the size and the composition of the cabinet have been of central importance to the ability of the executive to control parliament. Yet expanding the size of the cabinet is not without costs, as it dilutes the executive's ability to monopolize resources and policy influence.

As formal political rules such as term-limits start to take a greater hold across the continent (Posner and Young, 2007), presidents in multiparty systems are likely to find it increasingly difficult to manage effectively their legislative alliances. Joel Barkan has argued—in one of the only texts to make legislatures a focus of the analysis—that in a small but important number of countries, reform-minded MPs have been able to increase the powers and technical capacity of parliament since the reintroduction of multipartyism, thereby creating further challenges for incumbents (2009). Even in Kenya, often depicted as an archetypal neopatrimonial political system, the increasing confidence of legislators and the strengthening of legislative committees enabled MPs to investigate and publicize the involvement of the government in the Anglo Leasing scandal, leading to the resignation of a number of cabinet ministers (World Bank, 2010). As parliaments become more assertive, the ability of presidents to use their agenda power, budgetary prerogatives, and cabinet management tools will become increasingly significant to the battle for legislative control.

The value of cross-regional analysis for the “presidentialism debate”

This integration of disparate literatures throws into sharp relief the often univariate bias of much of the early comparative work on presidentialism. Our review suggests that rather than constitutional arrangements and incentives driving the dynamics of presidential regimes, in particular the legislative dimension of the separation of powers, presidents draw

³ In some elections presidents in Benin have officially run as independents, although it is widely accepted that they are supported by particular parties or electoral coalitions.

on a variety of tools and resources when they interact with parliaments. This finding highlights one advantage of extending the analysis of presidentialism beyond the traditional focus on the United States and Latin America, where dominant accounts have drawn heavily on constitutionally-derived rational choice theories of interbranch relations. A broader, cross-regional focus shows that the constitutional powers of presidents are by no means the only ones in play.

A broader comparative focus suggests that presidents tend to overcompensate for the anticipated perils of separated powers by utilizing a diverse set of tools, which they deploy in many different combinations. This toolbox makes the task of predicting *a priori* the dynamics of coalitional presidentialism much more complicated, and might explain why presidentialism has not had the destabilizing effects that were anticipated by the first wave of presidential scholars.

Cross-regional analysis recommends an initial typology of tools available to directly elected presidents. We see these tools as falling into five distinct clusters: agenda power, cabinet management, budgetary prerogatives, partisan powers, and informal institutions. Although this list of tools is by no means exhaustive, it provides the basic rudiments of presidential power in each region. These tools have been used by presidents to overcome the ongoing presence of party fragmentation, which early analyses (Mainwaring 1993, Stepan and Skach 1993) depicted as extremely unfavorable for the survival of presidential democracy. These analyses held that interparty coalition formation, although common in parliamentary systems, was unlikely or unattainable in presidential systems. Recent large-N cross-national studies (e.g. Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh 2004) have shown this fear to be unfounded: coalitions are nearly as common under presidentialism as under parliamentarism. However, large-N research is still mainly concerned with the *outputs* of presidentialism: democracy and regime stability. To explain these outputs, we need to look inside the black

box of coalitional presidentialism. In other words, the next step is to learn more about the *inputs* (tools) that presidents use to form interparty coalitions and generate legislative support.

Our very preliminary review here already suggests that presidents draw upon diverse resources to construct legislative support in different cultural and political contexts. In Latin America, the distribution of pork and cabinet posts has helped to augment and fine-tune the already considerable constitutional powers enjoyed by executives. In the former Soviet Union, presidents have enjoyed far reaching formal powers, but they have also come to make far greater use of partisan powers in recent years. In Africa, cabinet management has been more important than has commonly been recognized, but informal strategies such as the development of personalized patron-client relations have underpinned the capacity of incumbents to control legislative processes, too. There are also important commonalities across the three regions. Patronage—unfortunately one of the most difficult resources to operationalize and quantify—is one resource that presidents everywhere seem to favor. The extent to which patronage becomes part of the open political process (such as in the allocation of ministerial portfolios) does vary across regions, but its importance in bolstering presidential power is a constant across Africa, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union.

Context appears to play an important role in the selection and strength of tools. Changing levels of popular and parliamentary support are shown to have different effects on the tools selected by presidents. Individual cases from each region illustrate this point. In Russia, presidents have tended to favour partisan tools of control when politically powerful, whereas in Brazil the tools of choice have been cabinet access and generous allocations of pork. Despite considerable formal powers, Kenyan presidents lacking a strong parliamentary majority have relied heavily on their ability to appoint cabinet ministers and their control over patronage resources.

We also find that when presidents act they typically utilize a multiplicity of tools, and the combinations of tools that they choose affect the usage and strength of other parts of the presidential toolkit. Univariate accounts fail to capture the dynamics of how presidents select, abandon, and combine tools. Evidence exists that certain tools can be substituted, often imperfectly, by other tools in response to changing political circumstances (Raile, Pereira, and Power 2011). Hence, in practice presidents almost always use a multi-pronged approach to building interparty coalitions in the legislature.

Evidence from cases in each region supports this conjecture. In Ukraine and Russia, the president's weak partisan powers in the 1990s necessitated Kuchma and Yeltsin to employ their cabinet management powers to build legislative support in times of political crisis. However, the bargaining that took place tended to be over distributive issues rather than policy. Thus, in conditions of weak partisan powers Kuchma and Yeltsin used a combination of cabinet management, informal and budgetary tools to build legislative support. In Brazil, Lula and Cardoso clearly transferred more budgetary resources to individual legislators when faced with unfavorable political environments (e.g. corruption scandals or dwindling popularity). Argentine presidents, by way of contrast, often find it more efficient to lean on state governors, in the expectation that these subnational executives will in turn discipline their state's delegates to the national legislature. In Argentina as in Russia, executive prerogatives, federal structures and informal institutions are often activated simultaneously whenever presidents need to mount a show of support. In Kenya, President Kibaki took still another multi-track approach to a volatile assembly by expanding the size of the cabinet, increasing the level of funds flowing through the ruling party's patron-client networks, and exploiting his residual control over the legislative agenda via the Speaker. Thus Kibaki blended cabinet management, informal institutions, and agenda power into a single coherent strategy for coalition management. President Nicéphore Soglo of Benin

deployed a similar combination of tools following his election in 1991. Facing a parliament in which the largest party controlled just 19% of the seats Soglo constructed a series of coalitions by extending patronage and including opposition parties in the cabinet, but also invested in his informal patron-client network to exert influence over the parliamentary agenda by the back door. Although the range of tools deployed by Soglo enabled him to avoid permanent deadlock despite a deeply divided legislature, parliament rejected the president's budget in 1994, demonstrating that weak partisan powers may undermine the ability of the executive to effectively deploy other tools. As examples like these show, it is more productive analytically to focus on toolboxes, and the way that tools can be combined in different admixtures, than on individual tools.

Yet, this review also suggests that while the effectiveness of the toolbox has enabled presidents to ameliorate some of the problems identified by earlier scholars of presidentialism, presidential empowerment has come with its own set of negative externalities. The provision of multiple and powerful tools to presidents may retard the development of robust and autonomous institutions capable of resisting executive manipulation. The tendency for presidents to overcompensate for the shortcomings of separated powers produces executive-centric politics that in many cases reduces legislative capacity, horizontal accountability, transparency, and stunts the development of political parties.

The scale of this problem clearly differs from region to region. Authoritarian outcomes in the post-Soviet world have not been replicated in Latin America. But, there are similarities in terms of the effects of certain tools. The distribution of side payments to coalition partners in the form of pork, patronage and legislative concessions has impeded transparency, and has curtailed the development of programmatic parties. Even the strengthening of the president's partisan powers in the former Soviet Union has not produced

greater programmatic coherence in legislative decision making, while in Latin America and Africa presidents have been able to deploy pork and patronage to overcome the ideological, ethnic, or historical barriers separating parties. This factor has undermined the capacity of legislatures in each country to enforce horizontal accountability and to facilitate the emergence of more stable and robust party systems.

We have now come full circle back to the “presidentialism debate” referenced in the introduction to this paper. Twenty years of research have shown presidentialism to be remarkably durable, and in particular its multiparty variant has vastly overperformed relative to early predictions. It is tempting to claim now that this “success” is due to the effective formation of interparty coalitions and thus declare an end to the debate. However, we still know very little about the tools of coalition formation in comparative perspective, and about how these tools work in combination. Moreover, it is clear that the very same presidential tools that enhance governability may also undermine accountability — a tradeoff that has been largely overlooked even as analysts celebrate the survival of multiparty presidential democracy. This built-in tradeoff of presidentialism is far more perilous to the political systems that exist in Africa, Latin America and the former Soviet Union than the dual legitimacy generated by separated powers. The governability versus accountability tradeoff is a persistent challenge to emerging presidential systems and should form the basis for a new research agenda that focuses on presidentialism and its second-generation perils.

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Table 1: The necessity for multiparty coalitions in Latin America, the former Soviet Union and Africa

<i>Region/Country</i>	<i>Effective Number of Parties in Lower House</i>	<i>Lower House Seats Held by President's Party (%)</i>	<i>Index of Coalitional Necessity</i>
Latin America			
Brazil (2002)	7.81	18	63.65
Ecuador (2002)	6.71	25	50.33
Chile (2001)	5.08	8 ⁴	46.57
Argentina (2001)	3.18	48	16.54
Former Soviet Union			
Russia (1999)	4.51	16 ⁵	46.17
Ukraine (2006)	3.41	18	27.98
Armenia (2003)	5.27	25 ⁶	27.36
Georgia (1999)	2.65	54	12.00
Africa			
Liberia (2005)	7.59	13	66.03
Kenya (2002)	3.48	27 ⁷	25.42
Benin (2006)	3.89	42 ⁸	22.56
Malawi (2004)	3.11	41 ⁹	18.35

Note: Index of Coalitional Necessity is obtained by multiplying the effective number of parties by the inverse of the percentage of seats held by the president's own party, then dividing by 10 for ease of interpretation.

Source: The data used in these calculations were compiled from Jones (2007) for Latin America; <http://africanelections.tripod.com/>, <http://www.bunge.go.ke/>, <http://www.gouv.bj/spip.php?article645>, <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/>, and <http://www.parliament.gov.mw/> for Africa; and <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp> for the former Soviet Union.

⁴ For Chile, if the two longstanding alliances (Concertación and Alianza) were considered as de facto parties, the figures in the table would be 2.02, 55, and 9.09 respectively. However, parties and interparty coalitions are conceptually distinct, and should not be conflated even when they are identically reproduced over time.

⁵ This was before the Kremlin established a slender majority in the spring of 2001 with an alliance of the Unity, Fatherland-All Russia, People's Deputy and Russia's Regions parliamentary party groups.

⁶ The president was officially independent. This figure represents the combined seats of the Republican Party, the Rule of Law Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Party. While supporting the president the three parties competed against each other in the parliamentary election.

⁷ Following the break-up of National Rainbow Coalition (NaRC). Thus, the components of NaRC are treated as separate parties.

⁸ The president was officially 'independent'. This figure represents the size of party most closely allied to the president

⁹ Following the president's decision to leave the United Democratic Front (UDF) and form the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).