Tenuous Pacts and Multiparty Coalitions: The Politics of Presidential Impeachment in Latin America

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Appendix

This appendix offers an extended discussion of the empirical strategy and methodological decisions the authors made in conducting this research. It also offers an elaborated discussion of alternative explanations or additional factors that might account for the divergent outcomes of impeachment. We begin by discussing in greater detail why qualitative process-tracing methods are most appropriate for analysing impeachment and our propositions, and how we sequenced and iterated our case analyses. We then discuss our case selection strategy based on theoretical scope conditions, and address how we identify our explanatory variable separate and apart from the outcome of interest. Last, we address alternative explanations.

Scope Conditions and Case Selection

The case selection we present in this article follows the logic of an indirect method of difference, or what Rihoux and Ragin label a most similar/different outcome (MSDO) research design.[1] This design helps to isolate the causal effects of a key explanatory variable − in our analysis, coalition management − that produces different outcomes (either impeachment or non-impeachment) across otherwise similar cases. All of our cases are drawn from Latin America during a narrowly bounded time period, and all consist of minority presidents who relied on multiparty coalitions to govern and, ultimately, avoid impeachment. Likewise, all of these presidents confronted major

[1] Benoît Rihoux and Charles Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009).

scandals or political crises that posed a serious risk of impeachment and removal from office. Following Mahoney and Goertz's 'possibility principle',[2] we only considered cases of embattled presidents facing a crisis or scandal that provided a pretext for impeachment, as we see such crises as a scope condition for the operation of the impeachment dynamics in question. This scope condition naturally led to a focus on minority presidents in the Latin American context, where coalitional presidentialism is common; in other contexts, beyond the scope of this article, majority presidents governing with factionalised or undisciplined parties might also encounter plausible impeachment threats, potentially activating intra-party coalition management challenges analogous to those examined in this article.

Although the basic logic of our comparative analysis is MSDO, we also exploit natural variation across our cases to incorporate elements of Seawright and Gerring's 'diverse' method of case selection, which can provide analytical leverage for testing plausible rival explanations.[3] The diverse method leverages variation in the values on both X and Y to encompass the full range of variation in the population of cases. This can be seen in Table 1, reproduced from the main article, which displays the selected cases and their values on the dependent variable and the key explanatory variable, as well as their values on other potential explanatory factors, which is where Seawright and Gerring's diverse method is employed. All four Latin American presidents faced credible threats of impeachment between 2012 and 2018. The limited regional and temporal scope of these cases minimises the risk of confounded inferences and allows us to focus on the empirical variation of greatest theoretical interest. Of these presidents, three ultimately fell. Temer and Kuczynski both faced two serious impeachment attempts, providing additional

[2] James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, 'The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research', *American Political Science Review*, 98: 4 (2004), pp. 653–69.
[3] Jason Seawright and John Gerring, 'Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options', *Political Research Quarterly*, 61: 2 (2008), pp. 294–308.

within-country variation that highlights the dynamic and contingent nature of the coalitional politics behind impeachment. Lugo and Rousseff also faced multiple less-serious impeachment attempts by opposition legislators prior to the successful impeachments that terminated their presidencies. Most important, these cases provide leverage to identify the causal effect of our independent variable of interest, coalition management and cohesion. By comparing these cases cross-sectionally and longitudinally, we are able to demonstrate that successful impeachments only occur under a specific configuration of causal factors − that is, in cases where crises are combined with coalitional disintegration. Other potential explanatory factors are not consistently associated with the outcome of interest.

Table 1. Outcomes and Explanatory Factors

	(Paraguay) Lugo	(Brazil) Rousseff	(Brazil) Temer	(Peru) Kuczynski
Minority president	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Crisis or scandal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public support for impeachment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mobilisation demanding impeachment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Political ideology of president	Centre-left	Centre-left	Centre-right	Centre-right
Majority coalition	No	Yes	Yes	No
Ideological alignment with coalition	No	No	Yes	Yes
Coalitional cohesion	**No**	**No**	**Yes, Yes**	**Yes, No**
President ousted	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No, No**	**No, Yes**

Source: Authors' elaboration (reproduced from main article).

The diverse case selection strategy thus provides additional variation that helps us to adjudicate between alternative explanatory factors. All presidents but Lugo faced significant public demands for impeachment, yet the absence of such demands in Paraguay clearly demonstrates that they are not a necessary condition for impeachment. These cases also offer variation on presidents' political ideologies and whether or not they were ideologically aligned with their partners in Congress, two potential alternative arguments for why presidents are impeached. While Lugo and Rousseff are examples of leftist presidents impeached by conservative allies, the

case of Temer highlights the risks conservative presidents can still face from co-partisans and ideological allies, and Kuczynski was a conservative president impeached by a conservative legislature. The comparative analysis demonstrates, therefore, that impeachment is not a simple function of ideological conflict; such conflict may complicate the politics of coalition management, weaken multiparty coalitions and place presidents on a tighter 'leash' held by coalition partners, but ideological misalignment is a contributing factor, not a necessary condition, for legislatures to impeach a president. The sword of impeachment was one of the many ways by which conservative actors brought an end to Latin America's so-called 'Left Turn' during the second decade of the twenty-first century,[4] but the weapon was not used exclusively against leftist presidents, nor was it deployed in service of ideological goals.

These cases all meet our scope condition of the presence of crisis or scandal theorised in prior research. But most importantly, this selection of cases also avoids selecting cases on the dependent variable − that is, only considering cases where presidents are in fact impeached and removed from office. Instead, we are able to compare positive and negative cases cross-sectionally and longitudinally to better evaluate our propositions and the precise mechanisms that lead to impeachment.

Process-Tracing Methods and Sequencing

Process tracing multiple cases of impeachment is most appropriate for our analysis given the dynamic nature of impeachment threats and proceedings, and given our argument that the strategic interactions among coalition partners are iterative and successive. Process tracing,

[4] Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts, *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

therefore, allows us to examine within-case evidence, that is, 'evidence from within the temporal, spatial, or topical domain' of the impeachment process from beginning to end.[5] In short, our hypothesis is that presidential impeachments are determined most proximately by the strategic interactions between coalition partners, who may abandon presidents and support impeachment when they feel it is no longer in their interest to remain in the coalition. We expect, in particular, that the relationship between coalition partners will change over time, and that impeachments will be preceded by worsening strains among coalition partners, strains that eventually lead coalition allies to conclude that their interests are better served by defecting from the president and supporting impeachment. By contrast, we expect that embattled presidents will successfully evade impeachment attempts when their coalitions remain cohesive and well managed – that is, when presidents' interests are aligned with their coalition allies, and when strains that pit the president's interests against those of her allies do not emerge.

The dynamic nature of our propositions requires observation of the causal processes that unfold over time, and of the intermediate events and actions taken by key actors to determine which factors were most influential in shaping how and why impeachments take place, as well as why they do not. Whereas a number of previous studies of impeachment and 'presidential failure' rely on quantitative analysis to establish the correlates of such outcomes,[6] we focus on weighing and adjudicating between the importance of conventional factors in how impeachment processes and

[5] Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds.), *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 8.

[6] Kathryn Hochstetler, 'Rethinking Presidentialism: Challenges and Presidential Falls in South America', *Comparative Politics*, 38: 4 (2006), pp. 401–18; Kathryn Hochstetler and Margaret E. Edwards, 'Failed Presidencies: Identifying and Explaining a South American Anomaly', *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 1: 2 (2009), pp. 31–57; Margaret E. Edwards, 'Understanding Presidential Failure in South America', *Latin American Politics and Society*, 57: 2 (2015), pp. 111–31; Mariana Llanos and Leiv Marsteintredet (eds.), *Presidential Breakdowns in Latin America: Causes and Outcomes of Executive Instability in Developing Democracies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Young Hun Kim and Donna Bahry, 'Interrupted Presidencies in Third Wave Democracies', *Journal of Politics*, 70: 3 (2008), pp. 807–22.

proceedings unfold in each case. We seek to establish not simply *that* a given factor affects impeachment outcomes, but *how* and *why* it does. This is possible in our comparative analysis because the strategic interaction that leads to impeachment is an iterative process that unfolds over time across a series of successive stages. In early stages, attempts by staunch opposition members to impeach the president are blocked by the coalition allies in Congress, who exercise discretion over whether to take up impeachment petitions (signs of a functional legislative shield). In later stages, as conflicts and strains between the president and coalition partners worsen, coalitions may fray and become dysfunctional in ways that interrupt governance, but allies may not necessarily support impeachment. In subsequent iterations, when allies question whether the coalition continues to serve their interests, coalition partners seize opportunities to remove presidents who no longer serve, or may in fact threaten, their interests.

Causal process observations allow us to observe the state of the coalition and how broader political conditions shift for both the president and coalition allies. In our analyses, we devote attention to:

- the nature and basis of the coalition when it was formed
- whether and to what extent the president fulfilled the expectations of coalition partners as time passed
- under what conditions so-called crises emerged
- whether crises created (or worsened) strains within coalitions that required attention from the president
- or whether crises served as an opportunity, or 'way out', for coalition allies.

No one score on a single variable could capture the complexity of the shifting political context and the strategic interactions between coalition partners. Qualitative analysis allows for careful

consideration of the dynamic and contingent politics around impeachment, as well as for the weighing of various factors potentially related to impeachment.

The sequencing of our process-tracing analyses most closely followed Beach and Pedersen's iterative approach, in which cases were analysed multiple times before arriving to a satisfactory explanation of divergent outcomes.[7] Our analysis was initially motivated by the stunning impeachments of Lugo and Rousseff, which we analysed by drawing on existing literature to understand how two presidents could be impeached by their ostensible allies ('outcome-explaining' process tracing). Finding extant explanations unsatisfactory, we employed 'theory-building' process tracing in a second iteration, aiming to distil from these cases the critical factors and proximate causes of impeachment in each case. Having arrived at a satisfactory revision of existing theories, we then expanded our case selection to capture full variation on dependent and independent variables. Including the cases of Temer and Kuczynski allowed us to employ 'theory-testing' process tracing and evaluate whether the dynamics we identified in 'positive' cases operated as hypothesised in 'negative' cases, and in cases involving right-wing as well as left-wing presidents.

Conceptualising and Identifying Coalition Management and Cohesion

Our argument on the centrality of coalitional politics builds on the concept first advanced by Abranches and the framework developed by Chaisty, Cheeseman and Power.[8] Coalitional presidentialism is particularly prominent in fragmented party systems, in which the president's

[7] Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2019).
[8] Sérgio Henrique Hudson de Abranches, 'Presidencialismo de coalizão: O dilema institucional brasileiro', *Dados*, 31: 1 (1988), pp. 5–38; Paul Chaisty, Nic Cheeseman and Timothy Power, *Coalitional Presidentialism in Comparative Perspective: Minority Presidents in Multiparty Systems* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

party does not command a majority of seats in the legislature. Minority presidents thus require a multiparty coalition to pass legislation and enact an agenda. In our analysis, the key members of the president's coalition include congressional leaders of upper and lower chambers (or the unicameral chamber, in the case of Peru) who not only control the legislative agenda, but also exercise discretion over the levers of impeachment. While demands for impeachment might emerge from below in the form of protest, or from within Congress in the form of impeachment petitions, the power to decide whether such demands lead to formal impeachment proceedings lies with congressional leaders, who must accept petitions and schedule and oversee votes on impeachment proceedings.

Vice-presidents are also central actors in the coalition, especially when they belong to an allied, rather than the president's, party.[9] Without a crisis, vice-presidents can play important roles in the coalition of a minority president, acting as brokers between the president and allied parties in Congress. In return, vice-presidents often seek benefits for doing so: influence over the policy agenda, promises of alternation in power, cabinet posts for partisan or other allies, and control over government contracts, any of which might also be leveraged for pay-offs in the form of kickbacks, bribes or extra-legal campaign contributions. In crisis or high-risk situations, the loyalties or interests of the vice-president may not necessarily lie with the president, especially when they do not belong to the same party. Crisis situations might rupture the coalition, or exacerbate pre-existing strains within it, by putting pressure on points of divergence among the president and vice-president, leading the interests of vice-presidents to align more closely with coalition allies in Congress, rather than the president. Crisis situations, then, interact with the

[9] Leiv Marsteintredet and Fredrik Uggla, 'Allies and Traitors: Vice-Presidents in Latin America', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 51: 3 (2019), pp. 665–88.

internal political dynamics of the president's coalition in ways that can unsettle previously cohesive and functional coalitions, or provide allies of a dysfunctional coalition with an excuse or political cover for defecting from the president.

We assess the nature and management of the president's coalition on a scale from cohesion to conflict. We define a cohesive (and successful) coalition as one in which coalition parties share interests based on the enactment of the president's agenda. This might be purely programmatic, where coalition allies share programmatic commitments and have a political interest in enacting specific policies. Presidents can effectively manage their coalitions by honouring the agreements and expectations of coalition partners (whatever they may be) in exchange for their agenda. More often in our cases, cohesive and well-managed coalitions are seen where coalition partners grant the president her agenda in exchange for either political or material benefit. In Lugo's case, coalition partners expected influence in the selection of cabinet ministers and alternation in power. As allies believed Lugo was not honouring the terms of this pact, the coalition began to fray and became strained, leading allies to use rural violence as a 'way out' of the coalition. In Rousseff's case, coalition partners sought to use their influence to extract bribes and kickbacks with the expectation of impunity or prosecutorial protection. With revelations of the bribery scheme and Rousseff's refusal to interfere or provide protection from investigations, coalition allies came to see Rousseff as a threat, rather than an asset, to their interests.

Conflicted (or dysfunctional) coalitions are those where the president is unable to maintain or enact an agenda as a result of the lack of shared interest around that agenda, or even where coalition partners see each other's interests in conflict. In the case of Lugo, his coalition was most cohesive prior to and shortly after his election, when he and the Liberals shared an interest in defeating the long-dominant Colorado Party. This coalition began to fray, however, as Lugo

did not grant Liberals their expected influence in cabinet selection or policy-making. The final blow to the coalition was Lugo's decision to appoint Colorado politicians to cabinet positions, and not to support a Liberal as his presidential successor, leading Liberals to conclude they would reap no additional benefits from the coalition. In Rousseff's case, her coalition was relatively functional, allowing her to implement her first-term agenda and secure re-election − until the corruption scandal became public. Though Rousseff herself was not responsible for or implicated in the scandal, this deprived her allies of the benefits of serving in her coalition. And likely worse, Rousseff's refusal to provide any interference or protection for her allies made her a threat, relative to the implicated vice-president, in the eyes of her allies. This refusal to cover for her allies not only deprived Rousseff of legislative partners, but also pitted her against the interests of her coalitional partners.

Coalition Management versus Impeachment: Concerns Regarding Circular Reasoning

One inferential concern regarding our argument is whether impeachment and coalition breakdown are independent phenomena. If these are one and the same, then our argument is at risk of employing circular or tautological reasoning, using impeachment itself as evidence of coalition breakdown. This is not the case. Although we argue that under certain circumstances these factors are highly related, impeachment is not the only or natural consequence of coalition breakdown or mismanagement. There are many potential consequences of breakdown that fall short of impeachment, and that are empirically observable separate from impeachment. Clear signs of strain in a coalition include: failing to support (or opposing) the president's legislative agenda, publicly criticising the president, cabinet resignations, fraternising with opposition forces, grumbling behind closed doors, and even formal withdrawal from the coalition and leaving the president without a governing majority. Such are the manifestations of early

iterations of conflict between coalition partners. If the underlying conditions provoking conflict do not improve, or the president does not deploy her resources to manage or reassure her coalition partners that she will tend to their interests, subsequent iterations of conflict may become more serious and threatening for the president.

We are able to empirically identify the shifting status of the coalition in our qualitative analysis because in each case the intra-coalitional politics and fraying (or not) of the coalition is iterative in nature, a series of interactions that unfold over time and that either worsen or stabilise. We find in our analyses that a critical threshold is reached when coalition allies come to perceive the president as a direct threat to their interests.

Alternative Explanations

The Legislative Shield

Perhaps the most influential argument regarding if and when impeachments occur comes from Pérez-Liñán, whose book is best remembered for the discussion of the 'legislative shield'.[10] He argues that presidents whose parties or coalitions are sizeable enough to deprive the opposition of reaching the threshold needed to remove presidents are likely to succeed. Presidents, therefore, with coalitions in Congress that exceed the threshold of the impeachment vote are protected from impeachment since they can count on members of allied parties to vote in support of the president; those without sizeable enough coalitions are likely to face impeachment in the face of crisis or scandal.

[10] Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, *Presidential Impeachment and the New Political Instability in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Our analyses do find some support for this argument. In both of Temer's impeachment threats, and in Kuczynski's second impeachment threat, the legislative shield operated as predicted: Temer (who governed with a sizeable coalition) was shielded by congressional allies and Kuczynski (a minority president with no formal coalition to speak of) was impeached by the fierce congressional opposition. However, the legislative shield accurately accounts for only three of the six outcomes we analyse. Lugo and Rousseff both governed with coalitions sizeable enough to shield them from impeachment, yet both were impeached with support from their allies − the very actors one would expect to uphold the legislative shield. Similarly, although Kuczynski was impeached in the second impeachment attempt (as one would expect given that he lacked a legislative shield), he survived the first despite the ad hoc nature of his anti-impeachment coalition.

The dynamics and interactions we uncover in our process-tracing analysis reveal that presidents cannot safely assume that allies themselves, or members of allied parties, will automatically defend the president in concert. When coalitions fray and presidents lose the support of, or perhaps threaten, members of allied parties, the defence such coalitions ostensibly offer embattled presidents can crumble, leaving them vulnerable to impeachment. Conversely, even presidents who face fierce and majority oppositions in Congress might survive if the opposition itself is not unified and fissures can be capitalised upon. In sum, a president's vulnerability to impeachment cannot be determined mechanically based on the partisan composition of the legislature.

Ideological Alignment and Backlash in the 'Left Turn'

One common explanation for impeachments − in particular as it pertains to the cases of Rousseff and Lugo, both of which gained considerable international attention − is that presidents are

impeached by ideological opponents, especially leftist presidents by conservative allies. Indeed, our investigation into the cases of Lugo and Rousseff began with a similar hypothesis that was dispelled when our analyses revealed political dynamics that were neither ideological in nature nor unique to impeachments of leftist presidents. We first address the question of ideological alignment and then the particular vulnerability of leftist presidents to impeachments carried out by conservative opponents.

Table 1 would suggest that ideological alignment plays some role in determining impeachment outcomes, and, to be sure, ideological factors can contribute to or exacerbate strains and ruptures that build over time within coalitions, as seen in Lugo's case. But impeachment, in all of our cases, is not carried out narrowly to serve ideological ends. Though Kuczynski failed to form a formal governing coalition, his impeachment attempts suggest that impeachment is motivated by competition for power, rather than ideological differences. Indeed, Kuczynski was impeached by fellow ideological conservatives, who easily could have pursued their ideological goals with a conservative president. Instead, shared ideology did little to help him survive: in the first impeachment attempt, he narrowly avoided removal by striking a corrupt bargain with a rival faction *within* the conservative opposition; but once deprived of this flimsy legislative shield, he quickly succumbed to the second impeachment attempt spearheaded by rival conservatives. Temer's inability to count on co-partisans and co-ideologues to shut down impeachment threats also demonstrates the limits of co-partisanship in the absence of party discipline. Temer's shared party and ideology with coalition allies was perhaps a contributing factor to his survival of both impeachment threats; but he still had to use all the levers of the president's office to keep his legislative shield in place, not to mention the shared interest of many legislators in delaying or blocking corruption investigations. When put in broader political context, and with attention to

intra-coalitional dynamics, it is clear that ideology is not a determining factor in impeachment outcomes. And as a constant across the cases of Temer and Kuczynski, ideological alignment fails to account for these divergent impeachment outcomes.

A second ideology-based argument suggests that leftist presidents who govern with conservative allies are particularly susceptible to impeachment due to ideological conflict. But this argument struggles to account for the formation of the coalition in the first place, as well as any period of coalition functionality in the case of Rousseff (and PT governments before hers). Both Lugo and Rousseff governed alongside conservative parties, even including members as their vice-presidents. For Lugo, this helped him bridge an organisational deficit he faced as a political newcomer; for his conservative allies, Lugo allowed them to access the executive branch in the hopes of alternating in power in the future. By the admission of Lugo's allies themselves, the final blow to the coalition was not ideological conflict, but Lugo's failure to honour his allies' expectations of political influence and future power. In Rousseff's case, ideological misalignment was not a hurdle so great as to prevent the PMDB from joining her ticket in 2010 and 2014, and it did not prevent her from successfully completing her first term and securing re-election. Serious conflict did not emerge in this coalition before the revelations of the corruption scandal. In sum, even in ideologically misaligned coalitions, these differences were not so insurmountable so as to prevent coalition formation in the first place. Were conservative parties so ideologically concerned, they likely would have declined invitations to join the coalition and denied presidents their agenda. Instead, Rousseff and Lugo began with functional coalitions (if short-lived in Lugo's case) that unravelled and ultimately sank their presidencies.