

# Parliamentary Control of the Executive and the Duration of Government Formation

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One particularly striking difference between parliamentary democracies is the length of time it takes to form a government after a general election, with consequences for governability and democratic accountability. This study contributes to the literature on government formation duration by exploring whether parties find it more difficult to form a government when parliament has greater control over what the executive can do. All else equal, parliamentary control reduces cabinet autonomy, meaning parties face greater uncertainty as to whether they will be able to achieve their policy goals if they enter government. This institution-generated incomplete information exacerbates bargaining uncertainty, ultimately increases bargaining delays during government formation. Using newly collected data on two measures of parliamentary control - committee powers and budgetary powers - covering 36 non-presidential countries, we find that post-election government formation tends to take more time in countries where parliamentary control of the cabinet is stronger.

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One especially striking difference between parliamentary democracies is the length of time it takes to form a government after a general election. Following the 2013 Austrian parliamentary election, the second Faymann government took about two months to form, even though the two eventual coalition partners were already in government together before the election and had secured a parliamentary majority in the election. After the 2018 Swedish general election, the government formation process took 134 days, even though it ended up consisting of the same coalition partners and the same prime minister (Bäck et al. 2020). In contrast, the 2010 British coalition government took only five days to form, despite the two coalition partners having run on different electoral platforms and the United Kingdom having little tradition of coalition government. Other recent examples of post-election government formation duration include 21 days in Slovakia, 45 days in Estonia, 58 days in Spain, 139 days in Ireland, 171 days in Germany, 225 days in the Netherlands and 541 days in Belgium.<sup>1</sup> The ‘caretaker’ governments holding office during these formation periods often lack the constitutional ability or political legitimacy to govern and make decisions (Bernhard and Leblang 2002; Golder 2010; Laver and Shepsle, 1996: 144 ).<sup>2</sup>

We contribute to the literature on parliaments and government formation by suggesting that it may take political parties longer to form a government in parliamentary systems where parliament

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<sup>1</sup> See various other (post-election) government formation lengths in the ParlGov dataset by Döring and Manow (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Bargaining failure may ultimately lead to new elections. Recent examples include second and third elections in Israel following the April 2019 election (leading to new elections in September 2019 and March 2020), and the April 2019 Spanish general election (which led to a new election in November 2019).

has greater control over the cabinet.<sup>3</sup> By parliamentary control we mean the formal institutional capacity of the national legislature to constrain the ability of the executive to make and implement public policy.<sup>4</sup> When parliament has relatively more control over the cabinet, the cabinet has less autonomy to act as it wishes. Parties confronted with stronger parliamentary control face greater uncertainty as to whether they will be able to achieve their policy goals if they enter government. When constrained by parliament, parties in government may be less able to obtain ideal policy outcomes, potentially reducing the (policy) benefits of entering governments. Uncertainty over policy payoffs brought about by parliamentary control deepens the incomplete information nature of bargaining over government formation— including the necessary ‘private’ information parties need to make an informed decision over whether to enter government, and on what terms. The institution-generated incomplete information which we describe in this paper adds to bargaining uncertainty, which in turn (à la Diermeier and Rozendaal 1998) adds to the time it takes to form a government. In contrast, a proto-government formed in a system with weaker parliamentary institutions need worry less about being constrained by parliament, giving participating parties – and actors within each party - greater confidence that they can meet their policy goals, thus lessening bargaining uncertainty and decreasing the time it takes to form a government.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Although our focus here is exclusively on parliamentary and semi-presidential systems, we use the terms parliament/parliamentary and legislature/legislative interchangeably throughout the paper. The terms cabinet, government and executive are similarly employed interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the paper, we will also refer to this concept as *parliamentary capacity* or *parliamentary power*.

<sup>5</sup> To clarify, we are not exploring here the role of parliament in the formal government formation process (Rasch et al. 2014), a point we return to later in the paper.

We test the argument that parliamentary control of the cabinet associates with longer formation duration using data on government formation duration for 295 government formations in 36 non-presidential systems from 1990 to 2019. We collect new data on two measures of parliamentary capacity: the power of parliamentary committees and parliamentary budgetary power. The results show substantial evidence in favor of the arguments. Greater parliamentary power, especially in the case of committees, is associated with a substantial protraction of government formation, even controlling for other institutional and party-system factors.

This paper adds to the growing literature on the causes of variation in formation duration in the absence of a majority party in the national legislature. Existing research finds that the time taken to form a government is increased by factors such as bargaining uncertainty arising from imperfect information about parties' preferences (Diermeier and Roozendaal 1998; Golder 2010) and bargaining complexity arising from, among other things, a fragmented legislative party system and policy differences between parties (De Winter and Dumont 2008; Laver and Benoit 2015; de Marchi et al. 2020). Golder (2010) suggests that the impact of bargaining complexity is conditional on the level of bargaining uncertainty. Morini and Cilento (2020) note that increases in the effective number of parties in Europe correlates with longer formation duration. De Winter and Dumont 2008 and Savage (2018) find that formation duration is shorter in semi-presidential regimes. Ecker and Meyer (2017) find that negotiations are swifter when parties emphasize different issue areas, when they have been in government before, and when leaders have been in office for a long time. Bäck et al. (2022) suggest that the presence of populist radical parties with whom other parties would be unwilling to govern adds to bargaining complexity, thus prolonging

the government formation process. Bäck et al. (2023) find that bargaining duration is delayed when parties have a history of governing together and where a pre-electoral coalition has achieved a majority of seats. Although the national legislature is at the center of government formation in parliamentary democracies, existing research on formation duration has largely discounted the formal role of the legislature, with one notable exception. As Golder (2010: 14) notes, the need to explicitly obtain the support of a legislative majority (positive parliamentarism) increases the length of time that it takes to form a government after an election (Diermeier and van Roozendaal, 1998).

Absent from existing research on government formation is an understanding of whether, by determining the level of autonomy the executive (coalition or single-party) that eventually forms will have as it governs, legislative institutions shape government formation, and in particular the confidence a party can have that it will be able to meet its policy goals. Thus, while we agree with Diermeier and Roozendaal's (1998) view that bargaining uncertainty arising from incomplete information increases formation duration, we build on their perspective by suggesting that the shape of legislative institutions during the governing stage may add to the level of incomplete information parties have at the government formation stage. Thus, we identify institution-generated incomplete information as a key mechanism that helps explain the duration of government formation.

The lack of focus on how legislative control of the cabinet potentially impacts government formation (and for us formation duration) arguably mirrors a wider pattern in the government

formation literature which often views the game of government formation as ending with the agreement of a bargain. But as Laver and Shepsle (1990: 873) noted, “forming a government is not the end of politics, but the beginning,” arguing that “what happens after a government has been formed or to have rational expectations about what will happen influences the formation process itself.” In this paper, we demonstrate exactly this: executive-legislative relations once the government is in office potentially impact government formation, and we illustrate how and why this is the case with regards to the question of formation duration.

Our approach builds on, and potentially even challenges key paradigmatic assumptions in, some of the most significant work in comparative legislative studies. We provide here two examples. In a seminal contribution, Strøm (1984, 1990) suggests that strong parliamentary committees increase the prevalence of minority governments, all else equal. The argument is beautifully parsimonious but nonetheless novel and has been widely impactful in the fields of party politics, government formation, and legislative organisation: policy-oriented parties may be more inclined to forego membership of the government when they can influence public policy from outside government via a parliament’s committee system. Although Strøm’s work did not explore formation duration, a natural extension of his argument in the context of this paper’s topic could be that stronger committees, by providing the opposition opportunities for policy influence, reduces the incentive for parties to enter government, thus making it more difficult **and time-consuming** (our emphasis) for a government to form. While the link between the prevalence of minority governments and committee strength is not always clear (for a recent discussion see Field and Martin 2022), and this paper’s core argument focus on incomplete information at the

government formation stage, we do acknowledge a strong similarity of thinking with regard to how legislative organization can shape government formation – in Strøm’s case the propensity for minority governments to emerge; in our case, the duration of bargaining over government formation.

If this current paper has parallels with Strøm’s work on minority governments, it also connects to one of the more recent seminal developments in parliamentary studies: the idea that strong committees can be used by parties in multiparty government to monitor each other (Martin and Vanberg; see also Bäck et al. 2022). This body of work is noteworthy not least because it draws attention to the role of legislative organization in coalition governance and to the capacity of legislative committees to facilitate otherwise competitive political parties working together in government to implement an agreed set of coalition policies. Viewed from the lens of this paper’s focus on government formation (and formation duration) one might expect that if stronger committees do indeed aid coalition governance by making the policy implementation of coalition agreements more likely and more predictable, a stronger committee system should ease the path of policy-oriented parties towards entering government (we are unaware of this argument ever having been made). While not seeking to question the veracity of the ‘committees as coalition monitoring devices’ thesis, this paper does provide an alternative viewpoint on how legislative organisation interacts not just with coalition governance but also how legislative organization influences parties’ decisions to enter, or not to enter, government.

The rest of the paper has the following structure: we first present our argument in more detail. Then we present our data and estimation for our study of government formation time in 36 non-presidential countries, before showing the results of this analysis. The final section concludes.

### Theoretical argument

Our focus in this paper is on the consequences for government formation of *ex-post* parliamentary oversight of the government. Consequently, our argument developed here and later empirical test concerns post-election government formation rather than government formation that takes place after coalition breakdowns or in other circumstances where no parliamentary election has been held.<sup>6</sup>

Our core suggestion is that it may take parties longer to form a government when parliament has greater control over the cabinet. In this section we expand on this logic, explaining why stronger parliamentary control potentially reduces the capacity of the cabinet to govern as it wants, the uncertainty this creates for parties in terms of their ability to meet their goals, the additional informational problem caused by this uncertainty at the government formation stage, and why, in keeping with the existing literature, informational problems increase the time it takes to form a

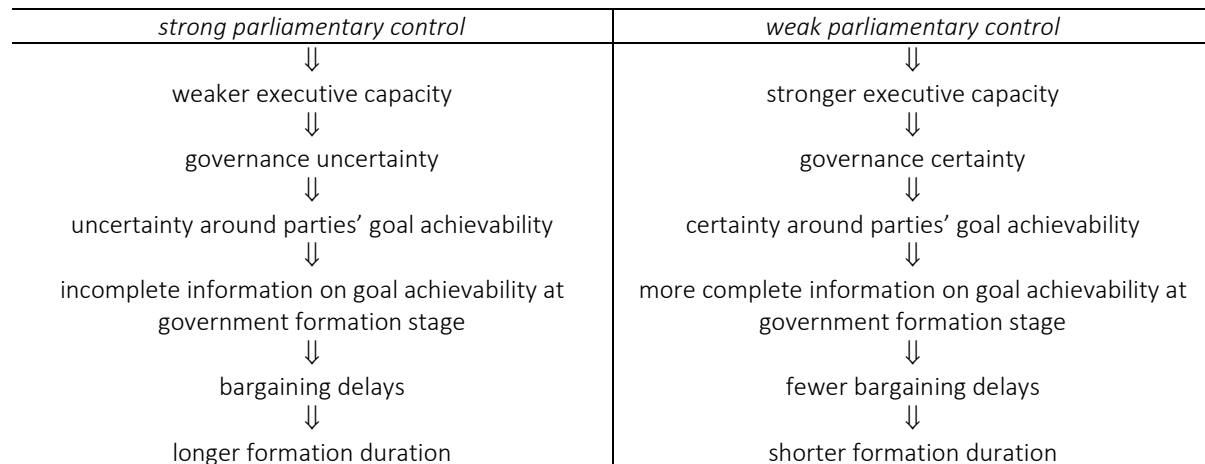
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<sup>6</sup> Of course, governments do form at times other than after general elections, typically when one or more party leaves a coalition mid-cycle and a new government is formed without a general election being called. We are not suggesting that parliamentary oversight is only relevant in post-election situations, but rather our suggestion is that the level of uncertainty over parliamentary oversight and thus the impact of uncertainty over parliamentary oversight is greatest in the cases of bargaining over government formation at the start of a parliamentary term. We return to this point in the conclusion.

government. Our argument is illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the consequences of two types of legislative organization: a parliament with relatively stronger control of the executive, and a parliament with weaker control of the executive.

Political parties have multiple goals, particularly around the government formation stage (Müller and Strøm 1999). And of course, legislators within the same party may have divergent interests. Our focus in this paper is on a party's ability to achieve policy goals, and thus an assumption is that political parties are motivated, at least in part, by policy goals. Ultimately, we see policy-motivation not just as a proximate goal, but potentially as a means to achieving other goals. For example, failure to achieve policy goals while in government may have an electoral cost, which in turn would make it difficult for a political party to retain legislative seats and future government office. In the next subsection, we flesh out our argument in greater detail.

**Figure 1: Core Argument**



*Institutional context: variation in parliamentary control*

In parliamentary systems, the government acts as an agent of the legislature and remains accountable to it (Strøm 2000). While an important theme in parliamentary studies has been the observation that executives have come to dominate the legislature, we do see variation in the power relationship between legislatures and executives within parliamentary systems. Our specific interest here is in *parliamentary control*, by which we mean the capacity of the national legislature to shape, oversee, and constrain the ability of the executive to directly or indirectly shape public policy. Existing research points to significant cross-national variation in the capacity of legislatures to control the executive (Strøm et al. 2010).

Hence, an important assumption in our argument is that the executive does not necessarily dominate the legislature. Instead, the legislature *potentially* plays a role in making public policy and overseeing policy implementation. From this perspective, the legislative coalition may or may not be distinct from the cabinet coalition. But the cabinet cannot take for granted the automatic support of the legislature. While an underexplored aspect of parliamentary government, and a deviation from earlier accounts of parliaments as little more than ‘rubber-stamps,’ recent research points to the role of parliaments in parliamentary systems as substantive actors in the policy-making process. The literature on UK executive-legislative relations provides a good illustration. Home to the Westminster majoritarian model, Parliament was long viewed as having virtually no effective role in law making, with the governing party or parties presumed to be able to progress the cabinet’s legislative agenda, without any difficulty. But this archetypical case of cabinet dominance has been called into question by research which demonstrates that parliament does

influence public policy (Russell and Gover 2017; Russell and Cowley 2016). Comparatively, research has also pointed to the policy-influencing impact of opposition parties in parliamentary government even in the face of executives with a working legislative majority (Wegmann 2022).

Two sets of institutions appear particularly pivotal in determining the degree to which parliament can exercise control of the executive once appointed. Chief amongst these is a system of committees, allowing the legislature to monitor the government and/or influence legislation. Legislative scholars have long understood the importance of committees to parliament, dating back to Wilson’s canonical observation that “Congress in its committee-rooms is Congress at work” (Wilson 1963 [1885], 69). However, both the monitoring (e.g., ability to compel ministers and civil servants to attend committee meetings) and direct policymaking power (e.g., legislative initiating power and own legal and economic staff) of parliamentary committees can vary substantially between countries.

Second, is a parliament’s role in the budgetary process –the power of the purse (for a recent review, see Wehner 2014). As Cox (2014: 712) argues “[l]egislatures can effectively hold executives accountable for their actions if and only if they are armed with a secure power over the purse.”<sup>7</sup> However, parliamentary power over the budget (e.g., budgetary amendment power) also varies substantially across countries (Wehner 2006). Combined, the strength of the parliamentary

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<sup>7</sup> Cox goes on to argue that “the distinction between regimes with and without fiscally strong legislatures may be more fundamental than the canonical distinction between presidential, semi-presidential, and parliamentary regimes.”

committee system and budgetary process represent some of the most fundamental aspects of how a legislature is organized and how the executive and legislature relate to each other.

The level of parliamentary control of the executive shapes the level of executive capacity – the ability of the executive to act as it sees fit and without the need to actively subject itself to the control of parliament. Thus, variation in parliamentary control leads to variation in executive capacity. Consider, for example, a legislature with little parliamentary control of the executive. Here, while the government in a parliamentary system may *de jure* be the agent of the legislature, in practice, the government has a much freer hand to do what it wants; its proposed legislation will become law, and with little oversight. Moreover, lacking capacity to investigate the executive's actions or control the budget, the legislature has little competence to oversee or hold the executive accountable for policy implementation. We know from US and comparative research that legislative statutes provide the executive and bureaucracy with significant discretion (Huber and Shipan 2002). In terms of policy implementation, this discretion sets the boundaries within which the government can lawfully act. In a political system with a weak legislature in terms of parliamentary oversight, the government's policy preferences and the rule of law are the only institutional factors limiting the government's capacity to implement policy as it sees fit.<sup>8</sup>

Now consider as an alternative a legislature with strong parliamentary control of the executive. This permits the legislature to question proposed legislation and act as, in the parlance of

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<sup>8</sup> Admittedly this provides a very simple picture of law-making. All democratic politics operates in the shadow of elections, and governments are often limited by international agreements and fiscal constraints.

McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), “police-patrols” on existing statutes, to ensure they are being implemented appropriately by the government. Here, this constraint effectively reduces the ability of the cabinet to both shape and implement policy, and consequently the legislature, and its non-government parties, have much greater influence over public policy. The presence of stronger parliamentary control mechanisms ensures that the cabinet is – in their policy making and implementation - much more like an agent of the legislature than autonomous policy entrepreneurs.

Importantly, parliamentary control may not necessarily constrain the capacity of the cabinet. Parliament, even a parliament with an effective committee system and strong budgetary powers, may be perfectly content to defer to the cabinet’s ultimate wishes. Where a cabinet is acting faithfully as the agent of the parliamentary majority, for example, parliament may want to avoid using the tools available to it to control the executive. Such a perspective comes closest to an implicit assumption that the legislative coalition/party/majority is indistinctive from the cabinet coalition/party/majority. For us, the important point is that parliamentary powers have the *potential* to reduce the capacity of the cabinet to govern as the cabinet sees fit. Parliamentary powers facilitate the parliamentary majority (and specifically factions within) breaking with the cabinet. Consequently, we argue that this potential for reducing the governing capacity of the cabinet leads to uncertainty with regards to political parties’ perceived ability to pursue their policy goals when in government.

While the focus of the thinking above is on the institutional capacity of ‘parliament,’ it is also worth unpacking briefly who we believe will be the key actors who would employ and operate any such institutional capacity. Afterall, a strong committee system or strong parliamentary budgetary process are parchment exercises unless an actor or actors choose to actively engage them and invest resources to use the tools. We believe that the tools can be used by, first and foremost, opposition parties, motivated perhaps to challenge, weaken, and perhaps even derail the governing coalition (Whitaker and Martin 2022), but perhaps also by ‘disgruntled’ legislators or factions from one or more of the governing parties whose loyalty to the government and ability to abide by the policy compromises being enacted as part of any coalition agreement are not wholehearted.

#### *Governance Uncertainty and Party Goals*

Parties in a system with strong parliamentary control must contend with, among other things, the potential that parliament will harness that control to somehow limit what a government can do. In other words, this potential to employ parliamentary control to constrain the executive produces uncertainty. By potentially reducing the policy making and policy implementation capacity of the executive, greater parliamentary capacity makes it more difficult for the political party or political parties in government to be certain that they can shape and implement any coalition agreement and/or their preferred outcomes. All else equal, it may be difficult for parties in government to achieve their policy goals when the legislature has relatively stronger parliamentary control.

### *The effects on government formation and formation duration*

How does this institution-based uncertainty over what parties can achieve if they enter government impact the process of government formation? Parliamentary control of the cabinet creates added uncertainty for parties at the government formation stage. Greater parliamentary capacity both to oversee and constrain the executive and to directly influence public policy makes the policy rewards of being in government less certain. Consequently, all else equal, this uncertainty means that parties should be more cautious about considering joining coalition government when parliamentary oversight of the executive is strong. We argue that by introducing uncertainty regarding what a party can achieve in office, the degree of parliamentary control of the executive complicates further a party's cost-benefit calculus regarding whether to join a government or remain in opposition. This is a well-known calculus which all parties contemplating entering government most consider: how the potential benefits of entering government compare with the potential costs - in terms of policy, office, and electoral goals. Our perspective on the impact of parliamentary oversight adds an element of uncertainty regarding what parties can expect to achieve if they enter government, thus complicating further their cost-benefit calculations regarding whether to enter government or join the ranks of the opposition. Thus, the government formation process in a country with greater parliamentary capacity will be characterized by greater uncertainty.

Existing scholarship demonstrates that incomplete information is often central to delays in agreeing a bargaining outcome (Chatterjee and Samuelson 1987). Indeed, incomplete information

is already known to be a primary explanation for why it can take some governments a long time to form (Diermeier and Roozendaal 1998; Golder 2010). To date, our understanding of incomplete information and bargaining delays in government formation has focused on a party's ability to predict other parties' reservation prices (what it is a party needs to secure in terms of policy and office payoffs to enter governments). From this perspective, the lack of complete information on other party's preferences with regards to government formation is what causes delays in agreeing to the bargain.

We compliment this existing thinking (with which we agree), by noting that incomplete information in government formation may not only relate to a party's incomplete information on the preferences of other parties, but to the party's own reservation price: what it needs to secure in terms of policy and office payoffs to meet its policy goals. In countries with lower parliamentary capacity, a party should find it relatively easier to calculate its costs and benefits of entering government. It may have incomplete information on other actors preferences, and must account for exogenous governing events, but it can rely on parliament not seeking to control what the cabinet wants to do. In contrast, in countries with strong parliamentary control, the ability to fulfill (ideological) policy goals under stronger parliamentary oversight institutions, a political party will need to expend more effort to understand the likely costs and benefits of joining a government in the presence of strong parliamentary control of the government. Indeed, in any cost-benefit equation, uncertainty over the capacity to govern becomes a variable in its own right. Parties have a more complex set of variables to consider when defining their own reservation price, and uncertainty over that reservation price with regards to other parties.

How does incomplete information on goal achievability actually translate into bargaining delays? Here we build on the original argument by Keenan and Wilson (1993) who identified the disclosure of otherwise private information on each actors' reservation prices in strategic bargaining environments by a by a series of offers, rejections and counteroffer as the (often costly) cause in delay in reaching a negotiated outcome. As applied to the game of government formation by Diermeier and Roozendaal (1998), parties collect otherwise private information on other parties' reservation prices by a series of offers, rejections and counteroffers, and it is this back and forth between parties to gather information during government formation that causes the delays we observe. Moreover, parties are not unitary actors, especially when it comes to the issue of government formation (Maor 1995). We expect that the greater uncertainty due to parliamentary capacity requires parties to coordinate more closely with both powerful factions within their party and different actors within the party.<sup>9</sup> These factions and actors may have different incentives around government formation and each may need to calculate their reservation price, again faced with the challenge of relatively more incomplete information arising from parliamentary powers about their ability to win or lose, and by how much, from agreeing to enter government. For example, Martin (2016) suggests that even in systems where incumbent governing parties are electorally punished, because cabinet ministers can use their perquisites of office to win additional electoral support in preferential electoral environments, legislators likely to become a cabinet minister have a very different payoff structure concerning government formation compared to co-partisans who will not become ministers. Our approach in this paper linking parliamentary

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<sup>9</sup> We are very grateful to a reviewer for this suggestion.

powers and bargaining uncertainty means that any need to coordinate as part of a multi-level intra-party game (Maor 1995; Putnam 1988) in the presence of uncertainty induced by parliamentary power, serves only to exacerbate bargaining delays.

Our thinking leads us to a straightforward empirical expectation: Formation duration will be longer in countries where parliaments have greater capacity to constrain the executive compared to countries where the legislature has weaker control over the executive.

### **Data and estimation**

To test the effect of parliamentary capacity on government formation duration, we use a panel of up to 295 government formations in 36 non-presidential OECD and/or European countries from 1990 to 2019.<sup>10</sup> We exclude caretaker governments from the analysis and only analyze the first government formation after each parliamentary election. For our dependent variable, we record the number of days it takes to form a new government after each parliamentary election based on data from the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2019). This is done by subtracting the date in which the government takes office from the date of the election. The ParlGov database is also used as the basis for the seat share of the parties in parliament which are used to generate some of the control variables.

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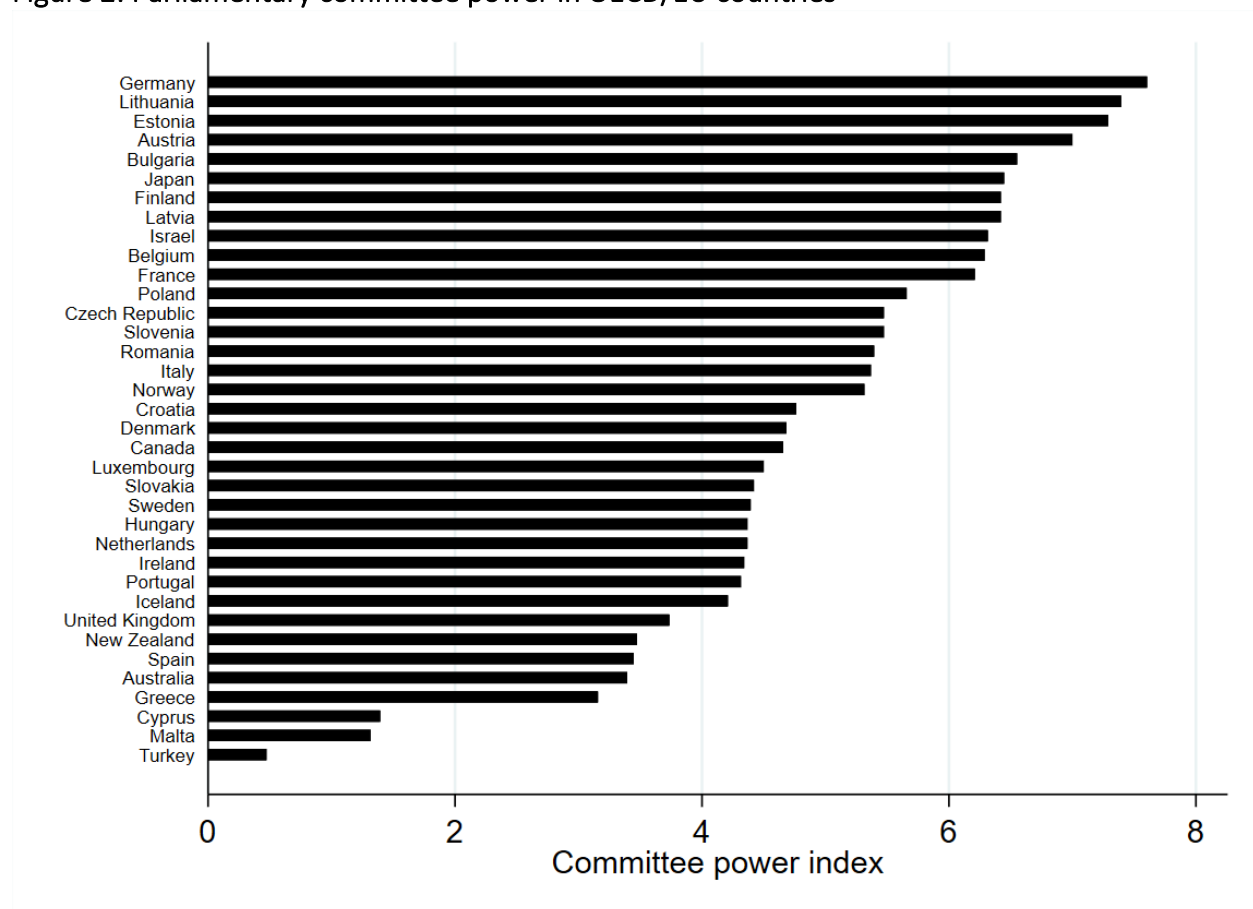
<sup>10</sup> Countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom. See Appendix A for a full list of the countries and the (election) years of the data.

For our independent variables, we explore two different measures of parliamentary capacity.<sup>11</sup> The first is an index of parliamentary committee power. Building on existing approaches to measuring committee strength in national legislatures (André et al. 2016; Martin, 2011; Mattson and Strøm 1995; Strøm 1990), this index consists of an addition of nine components which shape the ability of a parliamentary committee system to impact the legislature's capacity vis-à-vis the executive. These factors include the number of committees, ability to compel ministerial attendance, resources, and formal role in the legislative process. Details of the components of the index of committee powers and our rationales for their inclusion is presented in Appendix B. Data for the index was collected in the Spring of 2020 using searches of parliamentary websites, national constitutions, and the legislatures' standing orders. For missing data, we contacted the relevant parliament to secure the necessary information. The individual countries' score on this additive index can be seen in Figure 2.

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<sup>11</sup> In the case of bicameral legislatures, we limit our analysis to the organization of the lower chamber only. In most, but not all, bicameral parliamentary democracies, the executive emerges from and is accountable to the lower chamber. One interesting extension of our argument would be to consider whether bicameralism and in particular strong bicameralism (Lijphart 2012), could reduce parties' incentives to seek to govern and we include in Appendix G a control for the legislature's cameral structure.

Figure 2: Parliamentary committee power in OECD/EU countries



Our second measure of government capacity is parliamentary budgetary power - the legislature's ability to influence the public budget's size and composition, the level of fiscal information available to the legislatures and the legislature's ability to constrain the executive in the budgetary decision and implementation phases. To measure parliament's budgetary powers, we rely on the framework provided by Wehner (2006). Wehner developed an index of legislative budget institutions and collected data on these features for 36 countries using a 2003 survey of budgeting procedures. Wehner's index focuses on six features of the budgetary process, including a parliament's power to amend the proposed budget, the budgetary reversion (what happens if no

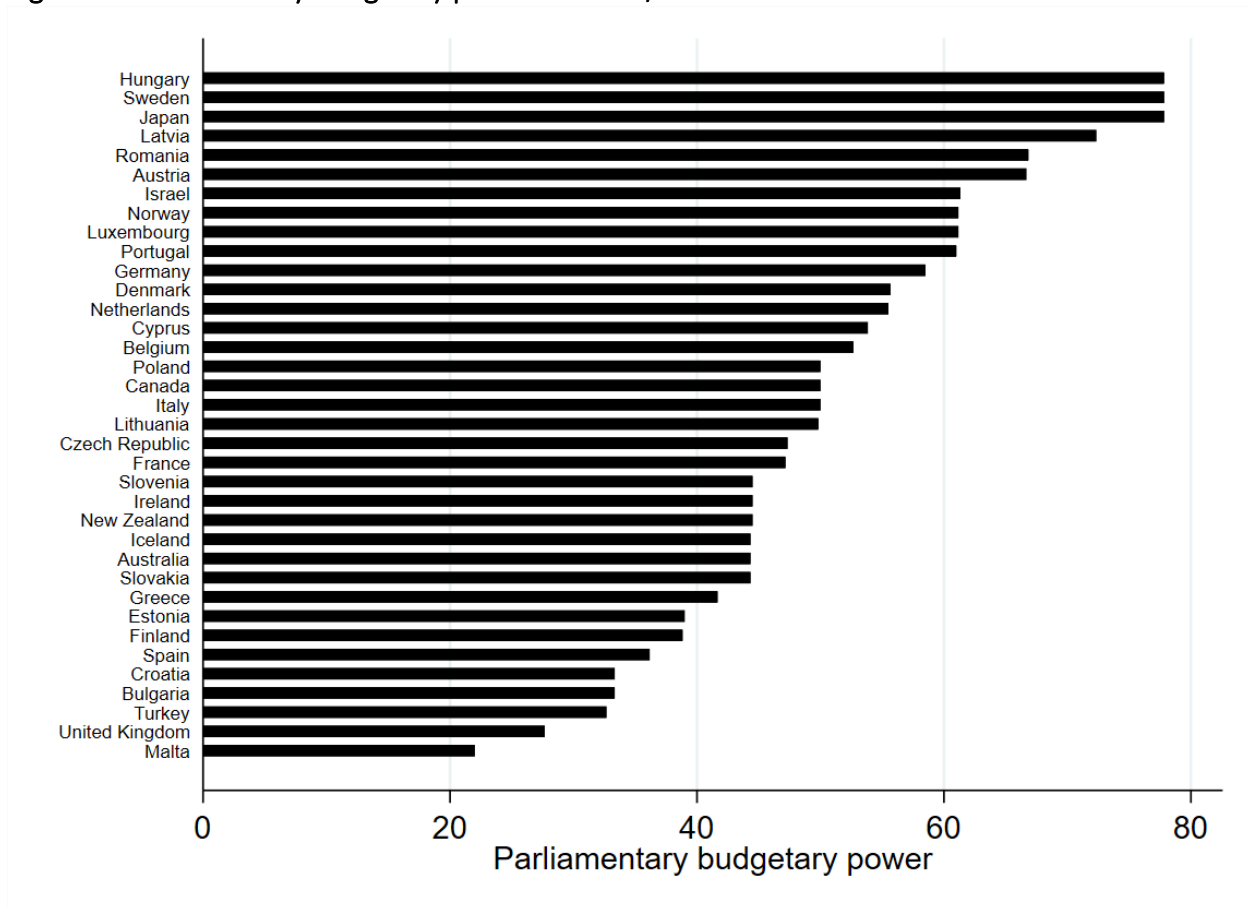
budget is agreed), executive flexibility in spending the budget, the amount of time available for parliament to consider the budget, the significance of legislative committees in the budgetary process, and the level of budgetary information available to the legislative assembly.

Data for the updated index of budgetary powers comes from several sources. Primarily, we relied on the OECD's *Budgeting and Public Expenditures in OECD Countries 2019*. That report provides a comprehensive view of practices and procedures, including the role of national parliaments in budgeting for most countries in our study. We cross referenced information in this report with the International Budget Practices and Procedures Database. We supplemented this information by reviewing material on national parliaments' websites and the standing orders of parliament. For countries not included on the OECD report, we relied exclusively on a search of parliamentary websites, national constitutions, and the parliament's standing orders. For missing data, we contacted the relevant parliament to secure the necessary information. Each country's score on the budgetary power index can be seen in Figure 3.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The two measures of parliamentary capacity are related but distinct concepts. Their internal correlation is 0.3785.

Figure 3: Parliamentary budgetary power in OECD/EU countries



It is important to note that our two measures of parliamentary capacity are based on data from 2019/2020 and are thus time-invariant. While we believe our measures of parliamentary capacity are relatively sticky – legislative organization tending not to change significantly (Martin 2011, although see further Sieberer et al. 2016 for an alternative viewpoint), in Appendix D, we restrict our sample to the years 2000-2019 to alleviate concerns that there might have been substantial changes to our key measures of parliamentary capacity during the 1990s. In Appendix E, we also carry out an alternative sample restriction by only looking at cabinet formation which takes place within the first 100 days of a parliamentary election to make sure the results are robust to the

removal of very outlying instances of cabinet formation. However, the results in these estimations are largely similar to the main analysis.<sup>13</sup>

We also include several additional control variables which have been found to influence cabinet formation time in parliamentary democracies (Golder 2010; Diermeier et al. 2003; Ecker and Meyer 2020) and which might be endogenously related to parliamentary capacity. One is whether the eventual prime minister's party (formateur party) has a majority in parliament which should decrease the need to negotiate coalition partners and thus reduce the average cabinet formation time. Another is the use of a formal majority investiture vote before a government can be formed (positive parliamentarism). If a formal investiture vote is needed to form a government, there should be a greater need for formal agreement among parties in government, including non-coalition support parties, which should increase the time to form a cabinet.<sup>14</sup> Another set of controls relates to the size, fragmentation, and ideological composition of parliament. One of these is the effective number of legislative parties based on data from the Comparative Political Dataset (Armingeon et al. 2019). This variable handles the potential endogenous relationship between parliamentary institutions and the fragmentation of the party system. Another party system control variable is the seat-share adjusted standard deviation of parliamentary parties' ideological positions (using the so-called *rile* indicator) using data from the Manifestos Project (Volkens et al. 2019) which serves as a measure of average ideological fragmentation in parliament. We also construct a seat-share adjusted measure of the average distance to the prime

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<sup>13</sup> Particularly the effects of parliamentary committee power.

<sup>14</sup> See also Diermeier et al. (2003).

minister's party's ideological position (again using the *rile* indicator) to measure how far the average party is ideologically from the *formateur*. If parties are ideologically closer to each other, or at least to the formateur party, we should expect shorter cabinet formation time (Ecker and Meyer 2020). Finally, we control for whether the country is semi-presidential (based on data from the Comparative Political Dataset, supplemented by our own coding) which has also been found to affect cabinet formation time (Ecker and Meyer 2020). Due to data availability in the political datasets, especially the Comparative Political Dataset (where we rely on the 2017 version), the number of observations drop slightly when some of these control variables are included. Descriptive statistics can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics**

Variable name	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max	N
Days to form a cabinet	37.56	46.99	0.01	541	295
Committee power index	4.93	1.62	0.47	7.61	295
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	51.11	13.86	22	77.83	295
PM party parliamentary majority	0.21	0.41	0	1	295
Investiture	0.57	0.50	0	1	295
Effective number of legislative parties	3.85	1.48	1.74	10.91	257
Adjusted ideological fragmentation	3.31	2.18	0.45	13.66	272
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM	15.29	7.02	4.18	49.90	250
Semi-presidentialism	0.36	0.48	0	1	269

Note: To carry out the survival analysis, we have added 0.01 to the "Days to form a cabinet" variable.

To analyze the effect of parliamentary capacity on cabinet formation duration, we follow Golder (2010) and use Cox survival models to assess which factors increase or decrease the chance

(hazard) of a cabinet formation.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, factors which decrease the hazard ratio of a cabinet formation increase cabinet formation time and vice versa.<sup>16</sup> As there might be a time trend in the length of government formations as well as in some of our control variables, all estimations include year-fixed effects. However, since our measures of parliamentary capacity are time-invariant, we are not able to include country-fixed effects. Due to issues of autocorrelation, standard errors are clustered at the country-level.

## Results

In Table 2, the effects of government committee power on cabinet formation time can be seen. In all specifications, a higher score on the committee power index decreases the hazard rate and thus decreases the chance that a cabinet is formed. In other words, and in accordance with the theoretical argument, a legislature with greater parliamentary committee power increases the time it takes to form a cabinet in parliamentary systems. This effect remains of a substantial size as well as statistically significant with the addition of all the extra control variables. These all tend to have the expected sign (e.g., when the prime minister's party has a majority in parliament cabinet formation time shrinks). But when analyzed together, in column 8, only average ideological fragmentation and ideological proximity to the prime minister's party seem to statistically significantly increase the hazard rate. Due to some missing data for some of the control variables,

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<sup>15</sup> Efron method is applied to handle tied failures. Schoenfeld tests indicate that the proportional-hazards assumption is not violated for neither the two main independent variables and the models as a whole in the full models of column 8 in Tables 2 and 3.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix G contains OLS estimates, where the dependent variable is the absolute number of days to form a cabinet after an election. See also Appendix C for scatterplots of the relationship between cabinet formation time and our two parliamentary capacity variables.

the number of observations also shrinks somewhat in the different model, and in model 8 Turkey and Israel drop from the analysis.<sup>17</sup>

All in all, when parliamentary capacity is measured as committee strength, there is substantial evidence in favor of the argument that greater parliamentary capacity increases cabinet formation time in line with the theoretical arguments presented earlier.

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<sup>17</sup> In Appendix D, we show the results from all the eight estimations using the sample from the full specification in column 8.

Table 2: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019: Cox hazard models

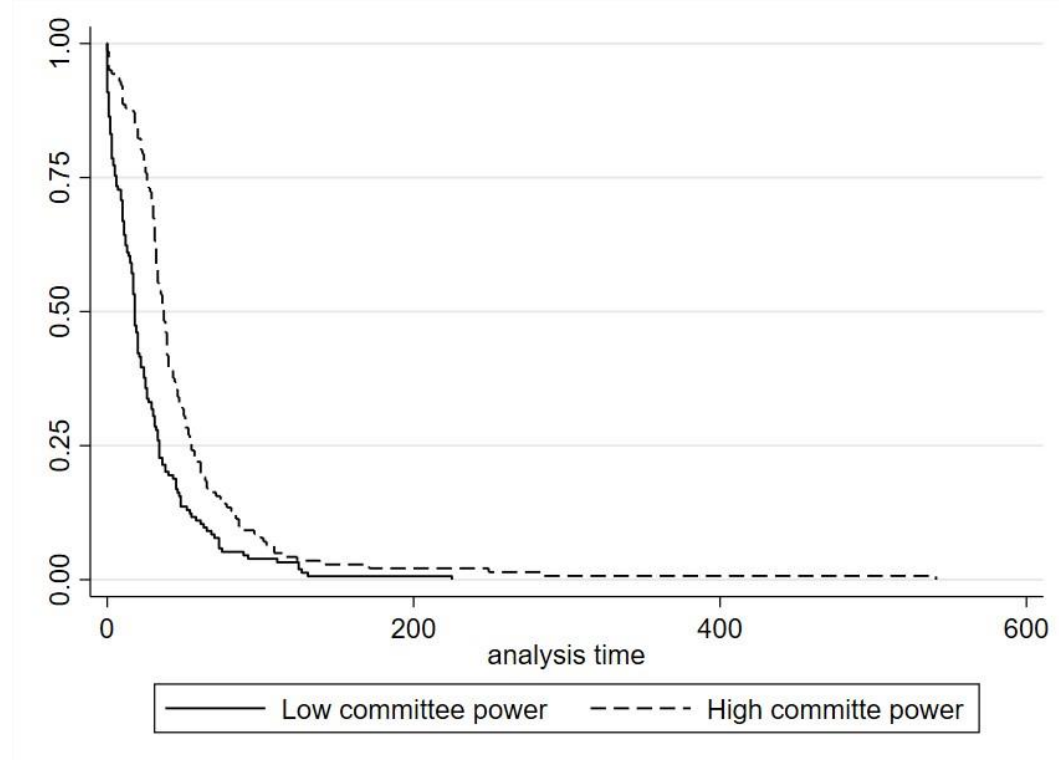
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	-0.25 (0.08)***	-0.21 (0.08)***	-0.25 (0.08)***	-0.33 (0.12)***	-0.22 (0.07)***	-0.18 (0.09)**	-0.23 (0.08)***	-0.38 (0.14)***
PM party parliamentary majority		0.75 (0.23)***						0.02 (0.16)
Investiture			-0.15 (0.29)					0.14 (0.33)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.33 (0.09)***				-0.14 (0.11)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.16 (0.03)***			0.12 (0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.05 (0.02)***		0.05 (0.02)***
Semi-presidentialism							0.04 (0.25)	-0.05 (0.25)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	295	295	295	257	272	250	269	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-1347.06	-1338.24	-1346.39	-1111.63	-1208.68	-1092.81	-1209.82	-946.64

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days). Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

In Figure 4, we further illustrate the effect of parliamentary committee power on government formation duration by estimating Kaplan-Meier survival rates for countries with high (above average) parliamentary committee power and countries with low (at or below average) parliamentary committee power. Again, we clearly see that the chance of a government forming relatively quickly after an election is higher in countries with low parliamentary capacity compared to countries with high parliamentary capacity. Around 50 days after a general election, a country with high parliamentary committee power has an around 25 percent risk of not having a government formed, whereas this risk is closer to 10 percent for a country with low parliamentary committee power.

Figure 4: Parliamentary committee power and Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for government formation, 1990-2017



In Table 3, the effect of parliamentary budgetary power on cabinet formation can be seen. In accordance with the theoretical argument, greater parliamentary capacity within the budget area is associated with lower hazard ratios and thus longer cabinet formation time. However, this effect is only statistically significant (at the 0.10 level) when all control variables are added to the estimation in column 8. While there is support for the argument that greater parliamentary capacity leads to a longer cabinet formation process, the effect of parliamentary budget powers is much more uncertain compared to when parliamentary capacity is measured as parliamentary committee power. The control variables generally behave as in Table 2.

**Table 3: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019: Cox hazard models**

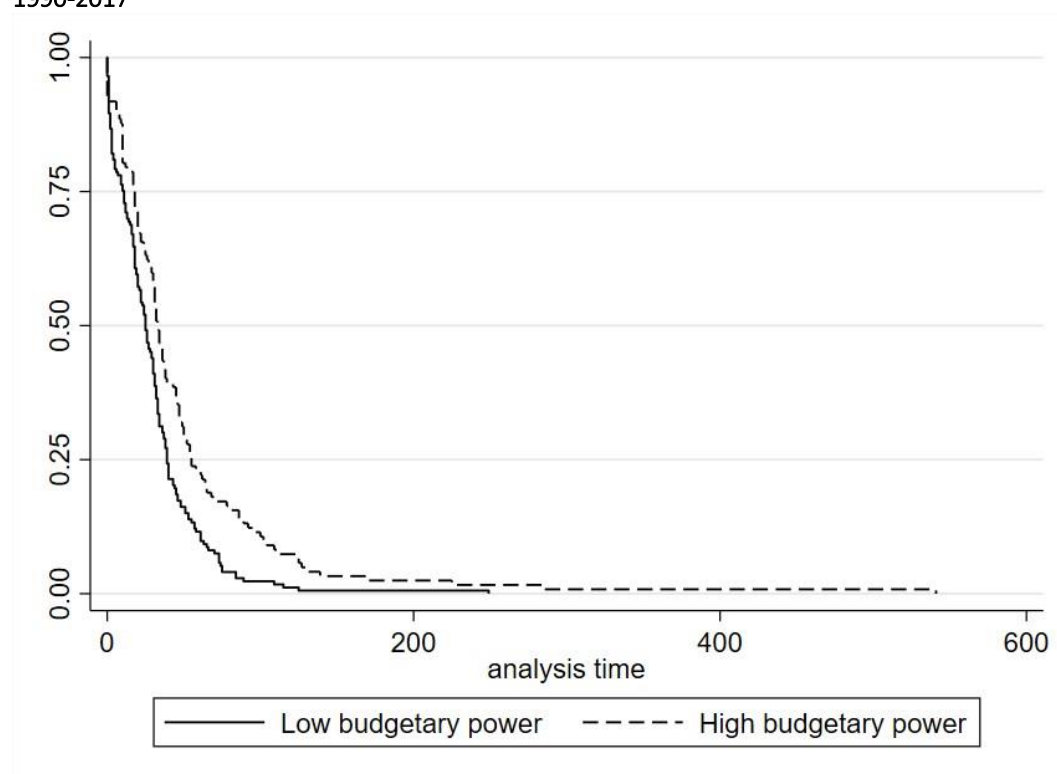
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)*
PM party parliamentary majority		0.96 (0.23)***						0.10 (0.19)
Investiture			-0.35 (0.33)					-0.33 (0.28)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.39 (0.08)***				-0.30 (0.08)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.17 (0.03)***			0.08 (0.03)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.06 (0.01)***		0.03 (0.02)
Semi-presidentialism							-0.29 (0.27)	-0.46 (0.27)*
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	295	295	295	257	272	250	269	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-1363.52	-1348.56	-1360.38	-1126.46	-1219.95	-1100.73	-1221.38	-955.79

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days). Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

In Figure 5, we show the Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for countries with high (above average) parliamentary budgetary power and countries with low (at or below average) parliamentary budgetary power. The same pattern as in table 3 emerges, countries with lower levels of parliamentary budgetary power have, on average, a higher chance of forming a government relatively quickly after an election compared to countries with greater parliamentary budgetary power. E.g., a country with low parliamentary budget power has only about half the risk of not having formed a government 50 days after the election compared to a country with high parliamentary budget power.

Figure 5: Parliamentary budgetary power and Kaplan-Meier survival estimates for government formation, 1990-2017



## Robustness tests

Our previous results have provided evidence in favor of greater parliamentary control as increasing cabinet formation time, especially for parliamentary committee strength. However, to test the robustness of these results, we carry out several tests, the majority of which can be found in the appendices.

First, while we have previously analyzed our two measures of parliamentary capacity separately – given that they serve as measures of the same underlying concept and have a non-trivial positive correlation<sup>18</sup> – in Table 4, we analyze include these two measures in the same estimations. We find that while parliamentary committee power remains a robust and statistically predictor of longer cabinet formation time, our index of parliamentary budget power fails to reach levels of statistical significance, indicating that – it least in the way our indicators are measured – it seems to be primarily parliamentary capacity related to committees that increases cabinet formation length.

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<sup>18</sup> Around 0.38.

**Table 4: Parliamentary capacity power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019: Cox hazard models**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	-0.24 (0.08)***	-0.20 (0.09)**	-0.23 (0.09)***	-0.32 (0.12)***	-0.21 (0.08)***	-0.17 (0.09)**	-0.22 (0.09)***	-0.35 (0.15)**
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
PM party parliamentary majority		0.76 (0.23)***						0.04 (0.17)
Investiture			-0.19 (0.31)					0.08 (0.36)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.33 (0.09)***				-0.15 (0.12)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.16 (0.03)***			0.11 (0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.05 (0.02)***		0.05 (0.02)**
Semi-presidentialism							-0.05 (0.26)	-0.09 (0.25)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	295	295	295	257	272	250	269	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-1346.95	-1338.05	-1346.05	-1111.09	-1208.58	-1092.77	-1209.71	-946.11

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days). Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .



In Appendix D, as previously mentioned, we restrict our sample to the 2000-2019 period to alleviate concerns that parliamentary institutions might have undergone changes in the 1990s. The effect remains statistically robust (and even increase in effect size) for our parliamentary committee power index. However, while parliamentary budget power still has approximately the same effects size, it fails to achieve statistical significance in any of the estimations. Then, in Appendix E, we restrict the sample to cabinet formations within the first 100 days of the election to alleviate outlier concerns. Here, the results remain statistically robust for parliamentary committee power but not for parliamentary budget power. This is also the case in Appendix F, where we exclude instances with prime minister party parliamentary majority. Here, the parliamentary committee power index actually increases in effect size.

In Appendix G, we add a dummy for minority government or bicameralism<sup>19</sup> to the full estimations from Tables 2 and 3, and we again find statistically significant effects of the parliamentary committee power index. But again, the parliamentary budget power index fails to reach levels of conventional statistical significance. In Appendix H, we change the estimation method to ordinary OLS and estimate the effect of our two parliamentary capacity variables on cabinet formation time (in days). We find that one unit increase in the parliamentary committee power index increases cabinet formation time in the

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<sup>19</sup> We count Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom as bicameral systems.

ranges between about 5 to 8 days with effects which are always statistically significant (at least the at the  $p > 0.1$  level). However, while the parliamentary power index also has a positive effect on cabinet formation time, these effects are never statistically significant. Finally, in Appendix I, as our last robustness test, we carry out a series of manual jackknife tests removing each of the countries of the analysis in turn employing the full set of control variables. The effect of parliamentary committee power seems to be much influenced by the experience of Austria but is otherwise robust to the removal of all the other countries. However, committee power is still statistically significant without control variables when Austria is excluded.<sup>20</sup> The parliamentary budget power index remains statistically significant with some but not will all countries removed.

All in all, these robustness tests confirm the conclusions from our main analysis: Parliamentary committee power seems to have a statistically robust effect on increasing cabinet formation time, whereas the effect of parliamentary budget powers is much more uncertain.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that post-election government formation is more behaviorally complex for political parties (and the various actors within a political party) in countries where parliament's control of the executive is stronger. By potentially

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<sup>20</sup> Results are available upon request.

curtailing an executive's capacity to act, parliamentary control represents an institution-generated uncertainty as to whether a party's policy goals can be achieved if they enter government. The uncertainty created by relatively greater levels of parliamentary control over the cabinet makes it more difficult for a party contemplating entering government (and factions or interest diverging actors within a party) to calculate the costs and benefits of doing so, at least in terms of achieving policy goals. Because of this, and all else equal, we believe parties will find it more difficult to calculate their own reservation and thus reach a decision as to whether to join a government where parliamentary control of the executive is strong. Uncertainty over the achievability of parties' goals makes bargaining to form a government more complex, resulting in lengthier formation durations.

We tested our argument linking parliamentary powers, bargaining uncertainty, and bargaining delays using data on government formation duration for 295 government formations in 36 non-presidential countries from 1990 to 2019 and newly collected data on power of parliamentary committees and parliamentary budgetary power. The results show substantial evidence in favor of the arguments. Greater parliamentary control, especially in the case of parliamentary committees, is associated with a substantial protraction of government formation, even controlling for other institutional and party system factors. However, it should be noted that we have relied on time-invariant

measures of parliamentary capacity and therefore have explored between-country variation. While we have argued that parliamentary institutions tend to be sticky, future research could collect more data on parliamentary capacity over time and check whether the findings of this paper replicate in a within-county setting.

Additionally, our line of thinking can be extended in various ways. First, although we explore the impact of parliamentary control of the executive on formation duration, the impact of parliamentary controls on other government formation outcomes could be explored. For example, it may be that parliamentary controls impact the degree to which more ideologically homogeneous or ideologically heterogeneous coalitions or minority versus majority cabinets are likely to emerge. Second, it may be worth exploring other parliamentary control mechanisms beyond committees and budgetary powers. For example, do tools such as parliamentary question or interpellations influence parties' motivations to enter government and (building on Giannetti et al. 2020) what role does cameral incongruence play in the motivation to enter office? Third, this paper has focused on post-election government formation, but future research could look theoretically and empirically at the impact of parliamentary powers on government formation at times other than after a general election. Many governments do terminate mid-term and this often results in a new government being formed without the need for a general election. Our intuition is that while parliamentary powers still add to

uncertainty in this bargaining environment, the level of uncertainty should be lower given that parliament has already been operating and the impact of parliamentary powers may be more visible to all actors. Finally, qualitative research could explore the impact of parliamentary capacity building programs in different settings. Parliamentary capacity building programs – a broad term to describe institutional reform and additional resource allocation aimed at allowing parliament to control the executive more effectively– are now common in both well-established democracies and countries in transition to democracy. But as we have suggested in this paper, parliamentary control of the executive, while normatively desirable, may have unintended and, heretofore unconsidered, consequences.

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## Government Formation and Parliamentary Control of the Executive: Appendix

## A List of countries and election years

Table A.1: List of countries and election years included in the analysis

Country	Election years
Australia	1990; 1993; 1996; 1998; 2001; 2004; 2007; 2010; 2013; 2016
Austria	1990; 1994; 1995; 1999; 2002; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2017
Belgium	1991; 1995; 1999; 2003; 2007; 2010; 2014
Bulgaria	1991; 1994; 1997; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2014; 2017
Canada	1993; 1997; 2000; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2011; 2015
Croatia	2000; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2016
Cyprus	1991; 1996; 2001; 2006; 2011; 2016
Czech Republic	1990; 1992; 1996; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2013; 2017
Denmark	1990; 1994; 1998; 2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019
Estonia	1992; 1995; 1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019
Finland	1991; 1995; 1999; 2003; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019

France	1993; 1997; 2002; 2007; 2012; 2017
Germany	1990; 1994; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017
Greece	1990; 1993; 1996; 2000; 2004; 2007; 2009; 2012; 2015a; 2015b; 2019
Hungary	1990; 1994; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018
Iceland	1991; 1995; 1999; 2003; 2007; 2009; 2013; 2016; 2017
Ireland	1992; 1997; 2002; 2007; 2011; 2016
Israel	1992; 1996; 1999; 2003; 2006; 2009; 2013; 2015
Italy	1992; 1994; 1996; 2001; 2006; 2008; 2013; 2018
Japan	1990; 1993; 1996; 2000; 2003; 2005; 2009; 2012; 2014; 2017
Latvia	1990; 1993; 1995; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2011; 2014; 2018
Lithuania	1990; 1992; 1996; 2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016
Luxembourg	1994; 1999; 2004; 2009; 2013; 2018
Malta	1992; 1996; 1998; 2003; 2008; 2013; 2017
Netherlands	1994; 1998; 2002; 2003; 2006; 2010; 2012; 2017

New Zealand	1990; 1993; 1996; 1999; 2002; 2005; 2008; 2011; 2014; 2017
Norway	1993; 1997; 2001; 2005; 2009; 2013; 2017
Poland	1991; 1993; 1997; 2001; 2005; 2007; 2011; 2015; 2019
Portugal	1991; 1995; 1999; 2002; 2005; 2009; 2011; 2015; 2019
Romania	1990; 1992; 1996; 2000; 2004; 2008; 2012; 2016
Sweden	1991; 1994; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2014; 2018
Slovakia	1990; 1992; 1994; 1998; 2002; 2006; 2010; 2012; 2016
Slovenia	1990; 1992; 1996; 2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2014; 2018
Spain	1993; 1996; 2000; 2004; 2008; 2011; 2016; 2019a; 2019b
Turkey	1991; 1995; 1999; 2002; 2007; 2011; 2015
UK	1992; 1997; 2001; 2005; 2010; 2015; 2017; 2019

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## **B Components of the Index of Committee Strength**

To study the impact of committee systems on government formation duration, and building on seminal approaches in the field of legislative studies to understanding parliamentary committees (see, for example, André et al. 2016; Martin 2011; Mattson and Strøm 1995), we create an additive index comprising nine component parts. Each component of the index reflects what we believe to be an important aspect of how parliamentary committees can add to their capacity, and through this, the capacity of the legislature. The nine component parts are as follows:

1. The number of committees ( $n/38$ ): Having more committees allows for greater gains from specialization and gains from trade, increasing the capacity of the committee system to perform their legislative functions. For example, with only six committees, the Greek Parliament's committee system provides only limited opportunities to limit legislative capacity. Note that we exclude from our calculations both housekeeping/procedural or ad hoc committees. The score for this component, which is added to the index, is  $n/38$ , where  $n$  is the number of parliamentary committees in the country and 38 is the maximum number of parliamentary committees (the case of Austria) in the sample of countries.

2. Correspondence (0 or 1): Committee portfolios may correspond more or less to ministerial portfolios. Correspondence happens when the committee system mirrors the ministerial system – for example if there is an agricultural ministry, there will be a corresponding agricultural committee in the legislature. We do allow for additional committees to exist, but focus our coding decision on whether each government ministry has a corresponding committee in parliament. The more closely the committee system corresponds to ministerial portfolios the more likely committees are

to hold 'property rights' over a particular area of policy and capacity and information to control the ministry and minister.

3. Right to compel ministerial attendance (0 or 1): Having the power to compel individual cabinet ministers to attend a committee meeting and supply oral testimony places committees in a strong position in terms of oversight and potential policy influence relative to cases where ministers may not be required, or expected to attend.

4. Right to compel civil servants (0 or 1): Civil servants act as an important source of information for committees. Committee systems empowered to compel public servants to attend and supply oral testimony have, all else equal, greater legislative capacity.

5. Availability of professional staff (0 or 1): Legislators have competing demands on their time and resources, with varying electoral or other motivation to engage in committee work. Professional staff, such as subject specialists and researchers, can assist the committee system to perform its functions. The more professional staff available to committees, the more capacity the committee system will have.

6. Ability to initiate legislation (0 or 1): The ability to act independently of the executive by introducing legislative proposals indicates a strong agenda setting role for committee systems – potentially acting an alternative source of public policy to the executive.

7. When committees consider bills prior to the plenary (0 or 1): The earlier a committee involves itself in the process of law-making, the more influential it is likely to be.

8. Subject of the plenary vote (0 or 1): In some cases, the plenary votes not on the executive's bill but on the bill as it was amended in committee. If the plenary considered a bill as amended by the committee, the committee has significant agenda-setting powers relative to a situation where a government bill is considered in the plenary in the first instance without any committee amendments.

9. Committee timetable autonomy (0 or 1): The degree of control a committee has over its timetable will shape its ability to contribute to the

capacity of the legislature. Greater committee autonomy to set its own timetable (for example, to consider proposed legislation or conduct investigations), will make for a relatively stronger and more effective committee system, increasing the capacity of the legislature.

## C Scatter plots

Figure C.1: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2017

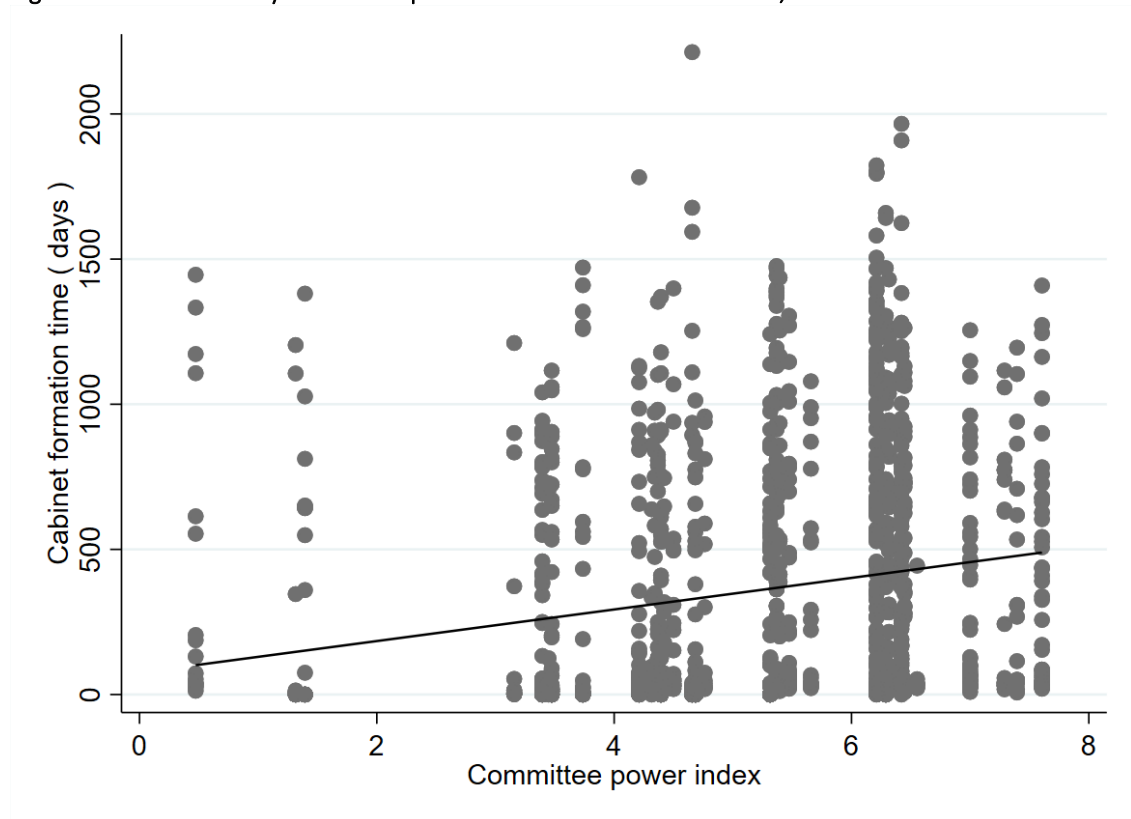
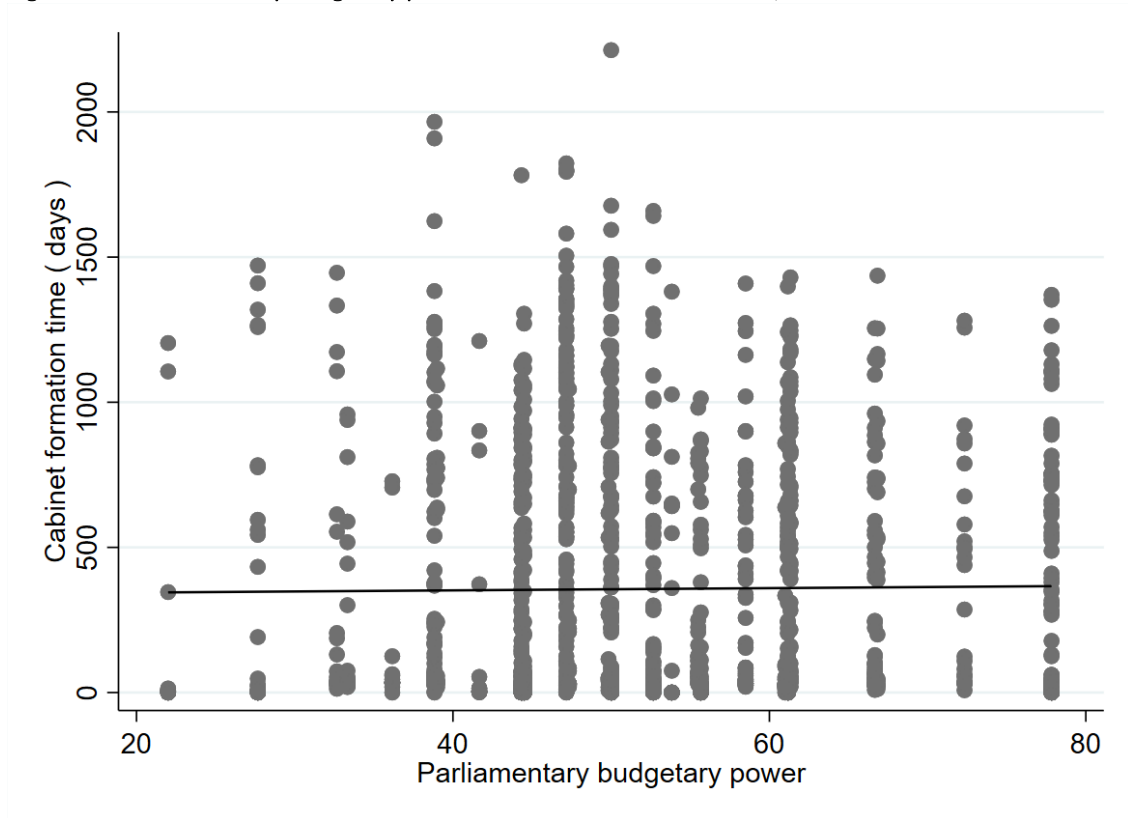


Figure C.2: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2017



**D Restricting the sample to 2000-2019 & the sample  
from the full specification**

Table D.1: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 2000-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	-0.30 (0.09)***	-0.22 (0.10)**	-0.31 (0.09)***	-0.29 (0.12)**	-0.28 (0.08)***	-0.21 (0.10)**	-0.28 (0.09)***	-0.44 (0.17)***
PM party parliamentary majority		0.79 (0.33)						-0.15 (0.19)
Investiture			0.04 (0.32)					0.06 (0.33)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.42 (0.12)***				-0.23 (0.15)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.16 (0.04)***			0.10 (0.04)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.05 (0.02)**		0.06 (0.02)**
Semi-presidentialism							-0.04 (0.29)	0.16 (0.28)

Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	193	193	193	163	174	158	175	144
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	35	35	36	33
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-796.24	-791.57	-796.20	-626.81	-693.50	-616.58	-710.75	-530.51

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table D.2: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 2000-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
PM party parliamentary majority		1.24 (0.27)***						0.09 (0.29)
Investiture			-0.23 (0.37)					-.38 (0.30)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.50 (0.11)***				-0.40 (0.11)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.17 (0.04)***			0.08 (0.04)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.06 (0.02)**		0.02 (0.02)
Semi-presidentialism							-0.27	-0.20

							(0.30)	(0.31)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	193	193	193	163	174	158	175	144
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	35	35	36	33
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-812.34	-797.75	-811.48	-634.19	-704.26	-624.07	-722.47	-538.66

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table D.3: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, full specification sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	-0.41 (0.12)***	-0.38 (0.12)***	-0.42 (0.13)***	-0.32 (0.12)***	-0.37 (0.12)***	-0.41 (0.11)***	0.42 (0.13)***	-0.38 (0.14)***
PM party parliamentary majority		0.70						0.02

				(0.20)***				(0.16)
Investiture			0.10					0.14
			(0.33)					(0.33)
Effective number of legislative parties			-0.33					-0.14
			(0.10)***					(0.11)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation				0.16				0.12
				(0.03)***				(0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM					0.07			0.05
					(0.02)***			(0.02)***
Semi-presidentialism						0.11		-0.05
					✓	(0.26)		(0.25)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<i>Observations</i>	227	227	227	227	227	227	227	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-972.36	-966.68	-972.18	-955.49	-961.45	-956.84	-972.13	-946.64

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table D.4: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, full specification sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)*
PM party parliamentary majority		0.90 (0.24)***						0.10 (0.19)
Investiture			-0.32 (0.34)					-0.33 (0.28)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.39 (0.08)***				-0.30 (0.08)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.19 (0.03)***			0.08 (0.03)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.07		0.03

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						(0.02)***		(0.02)
Semi-presidentialism							-0.33	-0.46
						✓	(0.28)	(0.27)*
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<i>Observations</i>	227	227	227	227	227	227	227	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-991.83	-982.59	-989.98	-967.84	-977.14	-978.49	-989.44	-955.79

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**E Restricting sample to cabinet formations within  
100 days of an election**

Table E.1: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	-0.21 (0.07)***	-0.16 (0.07)**	-0.20 (0.07)***	-0.27 (0.09)***	-0.15 (0.06)**	-0.14 (0.07)*	-0.16 (0.07)**	-0.21 (0.10)**
PM party parliamentary majority		0.80 (0.19)						0.41 (0.18)**
Investiture			-0.38 (0.26)					-0.13 (0.30)
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.22 (0.08)***				0.00 (0.10)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.13 (0.03)***			0.10 (0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.04 (0.01)***		0.04 (0.02)**
Semi-presidentialism							-0.34 (0.21)	-0.28 (0.21)

Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	281	281	281	247	258	238	259	218
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-1274.87	-1265.33	-1270.99	-1076.59	-1143.41	-1039.66	-1154.27	-914.43

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table E.2: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
PM party parliamentary majority		0.99 (0.22)						0.47 (0.20)**
Investiture			-0.57 (0.28)**					-0.43 (0.25)*
Effective number of legislative parties				-0.30 (0.08)***				-0.11 (0.08)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					0.14 (0.03)***			0.08 (0.03)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						0.05 (0.01)***		0.03 (0.02)*
Semi-presidentialism							-0.57 (0.25)**	-0.54 (0.25)**
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<i>Observations</i>	281	281	280	247	258	238	259	218
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-1285.76	-1270.33	-1277.59	-1086.07	-1148.53	-1044.12	-1158.48	-914.58

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**F Excluding instances with PM party parliamentary majorities**

Table F.1: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019: Cox hazard models

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Committee power index	-0.41 (0.13)***	-0.44 (0.13)***	-0.34 (0.14)**	-0.41 (0.13)***	-0.53 (0.12)***	-0.45 (0.15)***	-0.48 (0.17)***
Investiture		0.30 (0.31)					0.20 (0.34)
Effective number of legislative parties			-0.42 (0.13)***				-0.25 (0.17)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation				0.16 (0.05)***			0.13 (0.06)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM					0.09 (0.02)***		0.04 (0.03)
Semi-presidentialism						0.26 (0.30)	0.19 (0.32)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	155	155	133	146	131	141	121
<i>Number of countries</i>	34	34	33	34	34	34	33

<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-603.23	-602.05	-486.87	-554.89	-478.92	-539.88	-426.33
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Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table F.2: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019: Cox hazard models

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Investiture		-0.09 (0.37)					-0.11 (0.37)
Effective number of legislative parties			-0.48 (0.11)***				-0.47 (0.13)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation				0.18 (0.05)***			0.13 (0.06)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM					0.06 (0.03)***		-0.02 (0.03)
Semi-presidentialism						-0.13 (0.32)	-0.14 (0.33)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	155	155	133	146	131	141	121
<i>Number of countries</i>	34	34	33	34	34	34	33

<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-617.71	-617.60	-494.89	-567.43	-497.95	-553.10	-435.57
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Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## **G Controlling for minority governments and bicameralism**

Table G.1: Parliamentary committee power, control for minority government

	1
Committee power index	-0.36 (0.15)**
PM party parliamentary majority	0.15 (0.18)
Investiture	0.14 (0.33)
Effective number of legislative parties	-0.12 (0.12)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation	0.12 (0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM	0.06 (0.02)***
Semi-presidentialism	0.01 (0.26)
Minority government	0.43 (0.26)*
Year-fixed effects	✓
<i>Observations</i>	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-944.40

Note: Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

Table G.2: Parliamentary committee power, control for bicameralism

	1
Committee power index	-0.36 (0.14)*
PM party parliamentary majority	0.01 (0.18)
Investiture	0.15 (0.35)
Effective number of legislative parties	-0.13 (0.11)
Adjusted ideological fragmentation	0.13 (0.03)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM	0.04 (0.02)***
Semi-presidentialism	-0.05 (0.23)
Bicameralism	-0.44 (0.27)*
Year-fixed effects	✓
<i>Observations</i>	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-942.53

Note: Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

Table G.3: Parliamentary budgetary power, control for minority government

	1
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.02 (0.01)
PM party parliamentary majority	0.24 (0.21)
Investiture	-0.30 (0.27)
Effective number of legislative parties	-0.26 (0.09)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation	0.08 (0.03)**
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM	0.04 (0.02)**
Semi-presidentialism	-0.37 (0.27)
Minority government	0.52 (0.24)**
Year-fixed effects	✓
<i>Observations</i>	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-952.53

Note: Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

Table G.3: Parliamentary budgetary power, control for minority government

	1
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	-0.02 (0.01)
PM party parliamentary majority	0.07 (0.21)
Investiture	-0.29 (0.29)
Effective number of legislative parties	-0.29 (0.08)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation	0.10 (0.04)***
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM	0.02 (0.02)
Semi-presidentialism	-0.44 (0.26)*
Bicameralism	-0.54 (0.29)*
Year-fixed effects	✓
<i>Observations</i>	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	34
<i>Log pseudolikelihood</i>	-949.85

Note: Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

## **H     OLS estimates**

Table H.1: Parliamentary committee power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Committee power index	7.79 (2.77)***	6.63 (2.78)**	8.16 (3.51)**	5.06 (2.61)*	6.28 (2.93)**	5.68 (3.17)*	7.35 (3.19)***	6.53 (3.40)*
PM party parliamentary majority		-14.81 (5.74)**						14.53 (8.14)*
Investiture			-4.59 (12.26)					-9.66 (10.82)
Effective number of legislative parties				13.10 (5.32)**				14.14 (5.79)**
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					-3.63 (1.25)***			-1.44 (1.05)
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						-1.20 (0.78)		-0.29 (0.57)

Semi-presidentialism							-2.67	1.52
							(9.63)	(7.72)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	295	295	295	257	272	250	269	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.18	0.20	0.19	0.31	0.21	0.20	0.15	0.33

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Table H.2: Parliamentary budgetary power and cabinet formation time, 1990-2019

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)	0.37 (0.30)	0.27 (0.23)	0.38 (0.30)	0.16 (0.25)	0.28 (0.25)	0.13 (0.31)	0.36 (0.28)	0.18 (0.32)
PM party parliamentary majority		-21.97 (6.43)***						14.25 (8.64)
Investiture			3.00 (10.99)					-2.75 (9.34)
Effective number of legislative parties				14.70 (5.04)***				16.54 (6.02)***
Adjusted ideological fragmentation					-4.40 (1.35)***			-1.19 (1.09)
Av. adjusted ideological proximity to PM						-1.52 (0.83)*		-0.19 (0.63)
Semi-presidentialism							5.37	6.95

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							(9.57)	(10.13)
Year-fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Observations</i>	295	295	295	257	272	250	269	227
<i>Number of countries</i>	36	36	36	34	36	36	36	34
<i>R</i> <sub>2</sub>	0.13	0.16	0.13	0.29	0.18	0.17	0.10	0.30

Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days).

Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

## **I     Jackknife tests**

Table I.1: Jackknife test

Country excluded	Committee power index	Parliamentary budgetary power (Wehner Index)
Australia	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Austria	-0.21 (0.19)	-0.01 (0.01)
Belgium	-0.35 (0.14)**	-0.02 (0.01)
Bulgaria	-0.37 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Canada	-0.41 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Croatia	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Cyprus	-0.31 (0.14)**	-0.02 (0.01)*
Czech Republic	-0.38 (0.15)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Denmark	-0.39 (0.15)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Estonia	-0.40 (0.15)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Finland	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
France	-0.44 (0.13)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Germany	-0.39 (0.16)**	-0.02 (0.01)*
Greece	-0.36 (0.14)**	-0.02 (0.01)
Hungary	-0.40 (0.14)***	-0.01 (0.01)
Iceland	-0.33 (0.13)**	-0.02 (0.01)
Ireland	-0.37 (0.14)**	-0.02 (0.01)

Italy	-0.37 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Japan	-0.44 (0.14)***	-0.03 (0.01)**
Latvia	-0.38 (0.15)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Lithuania	-0.37 (0.15)**	-0.02 (0.01)*
Luxembourg	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Malta	-0.37 (0.15)**	-0.02 (0.01)
Netherlands	-0.44 (0.15)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
New Zealand	-0.37 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Norway	-0.39 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Poland	-0.37 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)
Portugal	-0.37 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Romania	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Sweden	-0.39 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)**
Slovakia	-0.35 (0.14)**	-0.02 (0.01)
Slovenia	-0.38 (0.14)***	-0.02 (0.01)*
Spain	-0.43 (0.14)***	-0.03 (0.01)**
UK	-0.36 (0.15)**	-0.01 (0.01)

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Note: Based on the full estimations in tables 2 and 3. Dependent variable is cabinet formation time (days). Coefficients for the two parliamentary control variables in columns. Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses.

\* p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

## Appendix References

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