ORGANIZED FACTIONS AND DISORGANIZED PARTIES
Electoral Incentives in Uruguay

Scott Morgenstern

ABSTRACT
This paper extends the study of party organization and legislative voting to factionalized party systems. After developing a typology of factional types, it argues that hierarchically organized factions respond to a competing incentive system. Factions have interests that push them to work together for the good of the party, but at the same time they have interests in distinguishing themselves for electoral purposes. Further, the electoral cycle drives the weights of these competing pressures, leading factional cooperation to break down as elections near. These patterns and incentives are particularly evident in Uruguay, and the paper uses roll call data from that country’s legislature to test the propositions.

KEY WORDS | electoral systems | factions | party organization | Uruguay

Owing to their centrality to democracy, the inner workings of political parties and the factors that influence their organizational structure have been perennial objects of study. These studies have exposed a great diversity in how parties represent the electorate, recruit leaders, mediate between society and government, and generally organize themselves. Parties can have a defined hierarchy like those examined by Michels (1915), they can be loosely organized umbrellas for unorganized individuals or for smaller organizations (factions), they can be grouped in alliances, or their structural system can lie somewhere in between these extremes. While the goal of studying and modeling these organizational features is to understand and predict their behavior, this is a particularly complicated task where party leadership is non-hierarchical or, in Panebianco’s (1988) terms, ‘dispersed’. The volumes of work on the United States have shown, however, that political decisions in countries with diffuse party leadership are understandable and even predictable (Mayhew, 1974; Fiorina, 1977; Cox and McCubbins, 1987).
1993; Aldrich and Rohde, 1997). Through an analysis of Uruguayan legislative voting, this paper extends this type of study to factionalized party systems, which embody a different form of dispersed leadership.

As with parties, the permanence, organization, and influence of factions vary widely. Some, like British tendencies, are ephemeral, rising to challenge particular policies or to compete in elections. Others, like the policy caucuses in the United States, or the historically prominent factions in Italy, Japan, and Uruguay, have longer lives and pursue goals related to policy objectives or the attainment of office across many electoral cycles.

The source of factionalism is also variable. Key (1952), Zariski (1960), Sartori (1976), Rose (1964), Cox and Rosenbluth (1993), and Belloni and Beller (1978) all identify different sources of factionalism. After discussing the importance of the electoral system, the party system, the party structure, and the social setting, Zariski argues that factions result from loosely structured parties (which, it seems, is almost tautological) and primary elections. In their theoretical introduction to the only volume dedicated to the subject, Belloni and Beller focus on Zariski’s findings that factions are the result of the level of competition in the system. Cox and Rosenbluth find another causal electoral variable in their study of Japan, namely the rules for selection of the party leader and for legislative candidates.

The institutionally oriented studies about Japan suggest a close link between a faction’s type and the source of factionalism. Specifically, Ramseyer and Rosenbluth (1993), Cox and Rosenbluth (1993), and Cox et al. (1999) trace the source of the ‘institutionalized factions’ and the competitive structure among them, to rules for nominating legislative candidates, rules for choosing party leaders, and the single non-transferable vote electoral system. This paper demonstrates a similarly close link – but of a distinct type – for the case of Uruguay. In particular, I argue that the Uruguayan electoral laws (a) are the source and sustenance of factionalism per se, (b) generate a particular breed of factionalism, in which hierarchically organized factions operate within loosely organized parties, and (c) create an incentive system that pulls co-partisan factions in opposing directions, similar to prisoners in the classic dilemma. Like the prisoners, the factions can work together for the collective good (legislative seats for the party), or seek their own advantage (seats for their own members) to the possible detriment of party unity. At times, the country’s parties appear to act coherently, since the factions are jointly interested in their parties’ success. This unity, however, is more apparent than real, since the factions are the collective decision-makers in this system, and parties act as a whole only when the factions agree to cooperate.

In addition to demonstrating how organized factions operate within the amorphous parties, the analysis below supports a secondary hypothesis about the relationship between the electoral cycle and the likely timing of the ‘prisoners’, defection. In particular, when elections draw near, the factions’ interest in procuring seats for their own members increases at the
MORGENSTERN: ORGANIZED FACTIONS

expense of interests in in-party unity, especially for factions in the president's party. Analysis of roll call data, details about the organization of factions, and information on the makeup of executive cabinets support this view of party organization and the role of the electoral cycle in explaining varying levels of in-party unity.

The first section of this paper situates Uruguay in a comparative context, focusing on a general framework of factional types and a model of the forces acting upon hierarchically organized factions. The next two sections elaborate the hypotheses and test the model using the Uruguayan case. The concluding section returns to the lessons of this case in a comparative context. Among other issues, it calls attention to the importance of distinguishing among factional types, the conflicting interests pulling on factions, and the electoral cycle as a determinant of legislative behavior.

Party Organization and Factions

Party theorists have generally ignored factions, viewing them as ephemeral and thus generally unimportant. Sartori (1976), for example, dismisses factions, saying that 'parties are instrumental to collective benefits. . . . In short, parties are functional agencies – they serve purposes and fulfill roles – while factions are not' (p. 25; Sartori's emphasis). He later devotes a full chapter to factions, but then goes on to argue that the number of parties – without regard to their internal dynamics – is an important determinant of political polarization. This finding helped fuel a drive to produce tools for counting the number of parties (Rae, 1967; Molinar, 1991; Laakso and Taagepera, 1979).

The statement about the factions lacking a functional role, however, is not well founded. While some factions, such as the British 'tendencies' described by Rose (1964), are little more than loose ephemeral groupings of legislators, others closely fit Epstein's (1967) classic definition of parties, running candidates for all levels of office, even in the general election, under their own label. In the Colombian and Uruguayan presidential systems, multiple intra-party factions can run against one another in the general election, each identified by a faction label. In some parliamentary systems, as much as determining the representation of parties, elections can determine the strength of different factions, which in turn helps determine which groups have the best claims to leadership posts, including the premiership. In addition to their impact on electoral outcomes (Cox et al., 1999), the Japanese case makes clear that factional politics are central to the choice of leaders (Cox and Rosenbluth, 1993), and policy outcomes (McCubbins and Thies, 1997). Further, Laver and Shepsle (1996) make convincing arguments about the importance of intra-party dynamics for 'the making and breaking of governments', and the contributors to a recent volume all depict factions as central to the democratization process in Southern and Eastern Europe.
(Gillespie et al., 1995). In Uruguay, finally, the central role that factions play in elections and policy-making has generated a debate about whether to count factions or parties when characterizing the party system (Bottinelli, 1991; Solari, 1991; Gonzalez 1991; Nohlen, 1993c).

This variation signals the need for a typology of factions, based on the factions' autonomy from their parent parties. Figure 1 portrays a continuum in which a factionalized party can fall between the extremes of having highly organized and independently minded factions at one end and no factions at the other. The left extreme would strongly resemble a multiparty system, with factions operating independently of one another and the parties acting as little more than umbrellas sheltering distinct organizations. Short of the other extreme, where parties are so centralized as to preclude factions, would lie tendencies and other transitory groups of legislators that will not risk party unity for their own advancement.

Whether a system tends toward one end of the scale or the other is a function of the forces that support the rise and maintenance of the factions. In other words, the relative success of a party in containing centrifugal forces is a function of the electoral system, the shape of executive-legislative relations, and other factors that breed factionalism. In the case examined here, independently minded factions are sustained by the electoral system, rendering the Uruguayan parties to the left side of the scale.

The behavior of factions fitting on this side of the typology will illuminate the underlying incentive structure. Since the faction leaders can act independently, their behavior will show how they weight the payoffs for cooperation versus defection. They should see some interest in cooperation with other co-partisan factions to present a positive and relatively unified vision for the good of the party (Coppedge, 1994; Wattenberg, 1991). But they must also consider the possibility of attacking their intra-partisan rivals in an attempt to attract voters to their own faction (Katz, 1986). Analysis of their decision will thus shed light on the relative weights of the conflicting interests. The analysis can also detect whether the weights shift or are consistent over time.

The Uruguayan case presented below suggests that contextual or case-specific variables, as well as a broadly comparative variable, can drive these weights. In this case, the special circumstances surrounding the democratic transition led the parties to fear divisiveness, as they were trying to portray a democratic alternative to the previous regime. This situation buoyed

| Highly organized and independent factions/multi-party façade | Somewhat independent factions | Ephemeral loosely organized factions/tendencies | Centralized party/no factions |

Figure 1. A continuum of factional organization of a single party

238
partisan unity during much of the first post-dictatorial period. The analysis also suggests that the electoral cycle, a broadly applicable variable, has driven partisan unity as well. In particular, while factions in the president's party have come together after elections to take advantage of presidential largesse (such as cabinet posts), the factions have sought to separate themselves from the group in order to woo voters as the terms have waned. The factions' pursuit of their own legislative seats has come at the expense of party unity. In short, the interests in partisan unity have been insufficient to prevent dissension at election time.

Competing Incentives within the Uruguayan Electoral System

In spite of a 12-year dictatorial interlude (1973–85), most analysts agree that Uruguay, a small South American country nestling between Argentina and Brazil, is a solid democracy. Its two 'traditional' political parties (Colorado and Blancos) trace their roots to the previous century, and the growing leftist third party (the Frente Amplio) is not seen as a threat to the democratic system. The system is therefore not highly polarized, and the party system is reasonably stable. But since the end of the civil wars that led to the founding of the two traditional parties in the 1880s, the parties have failed to overcome serious factionalization. The factions have been so prominent that Sartori (1976: 107, n. 11), as well as Uruguayan specialists such as Solari (1991) and Gonzalez (1991), have entered into a debate about whether Uruguay has had a multiparty system, masked by umbrella party labels. This entrenched factionalism makes Uruguay a particularly useful case for this analysis.

Among the dozens of factors that can lead to factional formation, many recent works have stressed the importance of electoral systems. The Uruguayan case provides a particularly good example of this thesis, since most agree that their factions are a direct and intended result of electoral engineering. In 1910, Uruguay's two main parties were hopelessly factionalized, but leaders feared multipartism. They therefore searched for and created a system that would preserve the intra-party factionalization within the bipartisan framework. The solution was the 'double simultaneous vote' (DSV) which, as explained in more detail below, combines a primary and a general election together, thus allowing voters choice among factions within the competing parties.³ By itself this system may not have preserved the legislative factions, however, since factions competed in this manner only for the presidency, not for legislative seats. But in 1934 the system linked presidential and legislative elections, effectively forcing the legislative candidates to compete under a modified form of the DSV. Today's highly institutionalized and disciplined factions, which operate within loosely organized and undisciplined parties,⁴ it will be argued, are a direct result of that change.
The electoral system also makes especially clear that the factions face a contradictory set of incentives. On the one hand they are incited to work for the sake of the party. On the other, however, they are pushed to compete with one another to the detriment of party unity. As a result, party unity is hostage to how the factions weight the value of cooperating with their co-partisan competitors. These values, I argue in the subsequent section, are a function of the electoral system, though special circumstances surrounding the first post-dictatorial period also helped hold the party together for several years.

The Uruguayan Electoral System

Presidents in Uruguay are elected by plurality, senators by closed lists in a single national district, and representatives by closed lists in 19 districts. But the electoral system has a number of quirks, which leads to a very specific relationship among co-partisans, as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 represents the complex choice facing a voter in a single electoral district. It implies that a voter in this hypothetical district must choose among 21 unique ballots (an example is in the appendix), each linking a representative list, a senate list, and a presidential candidate. This wide choice and complex interaction among candidates are the result of three key components to the electoral law:

• Multiple party candidates can compete against one another for the same posts
• Party and factional votes are pooled
• Voters must cast a single vote that links candidates for the presidency, senate, and lower house

First, the Uruguayan electoral law has not forced the parties to hold primaries to determine a singular presidential candidate or a single list of senatorial or lower-house candidates. In place of the primaries, multiple candidates from each party compete against one another as well as against candidates from the other parties in the general election. In each of the first three post-dictatorship elections, the two traditional parties fielded several presidential candidates (depicted by presidential candidates I–III for party 1), and all parties ran multiple closed lists of senators (depicted by senate lists A–F for party 1) and representatives (depicted by representative lists i–xi for party 1). In 1994 the Colorado party alone, for example, offered voters 17 different lists of 30 would-be senators to fill the 30 posts, and in just the capital, Montevideo, the Colorados offered 43 lists for the 47 lower-house seats (each listing 47 candidates plus substitutes). In a district with only two representative seats in the offing, the Colorados gave the voters a choice of 'just' 18 lists.

The second element, that party and faction votes are pooled, implies that the votes for each party's presidential candidates are summed to determine
which party wins the presidency and that a parallel mechanism works among representatives and senators at the factional level. That is, presidential candidate I's vote is the sum of the vote for senate candidates A, B, and C, and the vote for each of these senators is the sum of their associated representatives. Seats for the senators and representatives are distributed proportionally, but at the presidential level the system implies that the
winner is not necessarily the candidate with the most votes, but rather the strongest candidate within the party with the most votes. An example may clarify this (see Table 1). In 1994, the two traditional parties, the Colorados and Blancos (also known as the Nacionales), each ran three candidates, while the leftist Frente Amplio ran a single presidential candidate. As the sum of the three Colorado candidates’ votes was greater than the sum of the candidates for any other party, the biggest vote winner among the Colorados, Sanguinetti, was awarded the presidency, even though the Frente Amplio candidate, Vazquez, won more individual votes.10

The third element of the system is the inseparable vote for the president, senators, and representatives (depicted by the arrows joining lists of candidates running for these three offices). This implies that voters could not pick and choose among the presidential candidates and the lists of senators and representatives as they wished. They had many choices – Montevideans had 23 different options just for supporting Sanguinetti – but they could not choose, for example, Sanguinetti for president with a list of Frente Amplista senators, or even a list of Colorado senators not linked to Sanguinetti.

**Nomination Control and Factional Discipline**

In addition to the basics of the Uruguayan electoral system, the figure also portrays the keys to the nature of Uruguayan parties. To generate the hierarchical factions, the lower-house representatives must be subordinate to the senators and the senators may be subordinate to the presidential candidates. To create independence among factions, however, there must not be an influential leader tying together groups allied with different presidential

---

**Table 1. Presidential voting, 1994**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party and presidential candidates</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colorados</strong></td>
<td>656,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanguinetti (Winner)</td>
<td>500,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batlle</td>
<td>102,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacheco</td>
<td>51,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other and undistributed**</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blancos/Nacionales</strong></td>
<td>633,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramirez</td>
<td>264,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volonte</td>
<td>301,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pereyra</td>
<td>65,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undistributed**</td>
<td>1,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frente Amplio</strong></td>
<td>621,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vazquez</td>
<td>621,226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Table excludes Nuevo Espacio (104,773 votes) and minor parties (13,470 votes).
** Votes counted for the party but undistributed among candidates.
candidates. The Uruguayan system generates this pattern by granting the presidential and senatorial candidates control over the lists, instead of vesting the party with such power. The diagram represents this distinction by using solid arrows to show vote aggregation plus nomination control among presidents, senators and lower house representatives, and broken arrows to show a summation of votes but the absence of nomination control at the party level. The solid arrows, then, predict hierarchical factions, while the broken arrows imply undisciplined parties.

The parties' lack of nomination control is a function of the incentives inherent in the electoral system. While the parties could legally review candidate lists, parties have not had to choose a single candidate at any level, and the two traditional parties lack a serious governing board to make such decisions. Further, since any candidate that attracts even one vote from other parties benefits the party as a whole, there is little incentive for the parties to shun newcomers. This results in the parties accepting candidates from a wide ideological spectrum without the ability to mandate their legislative stances.

It should be noted that the Uruguayans changed their law for the 1999 election, such that parties now have to choose a single presidential candidate for the general election. The multiple list system still continues for the senate and lower-house races, however, and thus the impact on party organization or legislative behavior should be minimal.

While the law has been very lenient in terms of using the party label, the current and former law explicitly state that all members of a list (which until 1999 included a presidential candidate, all senators, representatives, and their substitutes) must assent to their inclusion on a list. This provision created nomination control for presidential candidates over senators and of both presidential and senatorial candidates over representatives. As the data analysis below shows statistically, this pattern of control yielded hierarchical and disciplined factions, but a lack of control and discipline at the party level.

**Conflicting Incentives**

The lack of party-level nomination control does not necessarily generate intra-partisan rivalry. Indeed, the summation of the factions' votes creates a strong incentive for the brethren factions to cooperate, since a victory at the presidential level can bring the factions more access to cabinet posts, budget resources, and policy influence than the opposition.

Ideological differences and the incentives created by the intra-party competition, however, work against factional cooperation. In particular, since each faction wants its head to win the presidency, and to do so it must defeat its co-partisan factions, the factions are incited to attack one another. On top of this, the factions are ideologically disposed to competition. The rightist Colorado faction has been led by the ex-president who helped install the
1973 military coup, while another wing has been led by one of the leaders of the pro-democracy movement. An elite survey suggests that the Colorado factions disagree over economic issues as well. The differences within the Nacionales are a bit less extreme, but they too have clear left and right flanks. Even the leftist Frente Amplio has an extreme left (including an ex-guerrilla legislator who rides a motorcycle and wears jeans and leather jackets to the Congress) and a moderate center.

**Ins, Outs, and the Electoral Cycle**

In addition to the patterns specified by the particularities of the electoral system, the electoral cycle and the factions' relation to the president also affect the factions' behavior. At the beginning of the term the factions in the president's party should demand some payoffs, given that their votes contributed to the victory. Further, early in the electoral cycle presidents are in the best position to provide such payoffs, in terms of cabinet posts and budgetary concessions. These factors should prop up unity for the 'in' party early in the term. But since the incumbent president is barred from re-election, towards the end of the term the president has less to offer and the factions tied to the government should increasingly become concerned with choosing a new leader. The changing composition of LaCalle's cabinets attests to the diminishing value of executive positions. At the start of that administration in 1990, all Blanco factions (except for one one-member faction) were given a cabinet post. But by 1993 all except the president's faction, some independents, and a dying Colorado faction led by the coup-plotter of the 1970s had dropped out of the cabinet. Thus, when elections near, in-party faction leaders should feel increasing incentives to distinguish themselves from intra-party (in addition to extra-party) rivals.

The 'out' parties, alternatively, face a different set of carrots and sticks. Without control of the presidency, the out-party cannot offer significant incentives to keep factions in line, thus contributing to lower discipline of the out-parties generally. But, as elections approach, the main concern of out-party factions is arguably to win the presidency back for their party, creating an added incentive to cooperate. Thus we expect opposing patterns of change in in-party unity. Early in the term, unity should be high for the in-party and low for the out-party, and the parties should move in opposite directions when concerns about an ensuing election increase.

We can model these incentive patterns in a simple game theoretic format. Figure 3a assumes two factions in the out-party, each of which most prefers to win the presidency itself, followed by having a rival faction within the party win, and lastly, having a faction from the opposing party win the election. If the factions maintain a cooperative strategy of using only soft-gloved attacks on one another, their chances of winning the election are high, but each faction has an equal probability of winning. Alternatively, if the factions attack one another, the divisiveness will drive voters away and the
party cannot win, rendering the worst outcome for both factions. If just one of the factions breaks to attack the other, some voters will be pushed away, but the party still stands some chance in the election. By assumption, the attacking faction is advantaged in this situation, and therefore its payoff is higher than for its co-partisan competitor. But with a smaller probability of the party winning, even the attacking factions’ expected payoff is smaller than if it had cooperated. The out-party factions, therefore, are in an assurance game, implying that incentives should lead to cooperation.\textsuperscript{14}

For the in-party (see Figure 3b), the two competing factions are the president’s faction and an alliance partner. If cooperation implies defending the government, then by definition the president’s faction cannot defect.\textsuperscript{15} The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out Parties</th>
<th>Faction 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
<td>(3,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High chance for party victory, equal chance for each faction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defect</td>
<td>(2,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower chance for party victory, faction 2 defeats faction 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3a.** Incentives for cooperation: out-party factions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Party</th>
<th>President’s faction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
<td>(1,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High chance for party victory, President’s faction defeats partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance partner</td>
<td>(2,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower chance of party victory, but partner defeats president’s faction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3b.** Incentives for cooperation: in-party factions
faction not holding the presidency, then, faces a choice of defending the president or not. If that faction cooperates, then the party benefits, but the president's faction should get more credit than the alliance partner. But if the allied faction contests the president's record, that faction can both win some credit for the party's positive record, and maybe win some votes for opposing unpopular policies. Thus, in spite of the diminished likelihood of the party winning (due to the divisiveness), the alliance faction faces a strong incentive to oppose the president.\textsuperscript{16}

**Factional and Party Behavior**

The Uruguayan legislature is officially divided into three houses: the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the General Assembly, which is a combination of the other two houses. The General Assembly is a particularly interesting laboratory for questions about factional behavior, since senators and representatives work and vote together on issues brought to that house.

Veto overrides are among the several issues that the Constitution stipulates be debated in the General Assembly. The Constitution also requires that recorded voice votes, which are not common in the Uruguayan legislature, be taken on veto overrides. Thus, by studying the votes on veto overrides, in addition to knowing the president's preference, we can see the joint action of representatives and senators. Further, since most losing presidential candidates wind up in the Senate,\textsuperscript{17} it is possible to track the faction leaders along with their subordinates.\textsuperscript{18} Lastly, veto overrides are a good subset of legislative activity, since to reach this stage of the legislative process, the bills must be relatively important issues to all parties and both branches of government. Among others, the set of bills deals with the state's role in control and oversight of radio and other telecommunications, urban housing subsidies, the firings and indemnity of union workers, social security for rural workers, and interest group organization. Through the first 10 years of democracy there were 64 such votes on full vetoes or particular articles that were vetoed by the line item veto-wielding president.

**Unified Factions, Divided Parties**

Evidence from congressional voting patterns corroborates the view of generally highly disciplined factions granting conditional assent to their parties. The tables that follow are based on the parties' and factions' Rice scores for each of the 64 veto override votes during the two completed five-year post-dictatorial terms.\textsuperscript{19} Rice scores measure the absolute difference between the percentage of a group's members voting yes and no, and thus an evenly divided faction yields a Rice score of zero and a unanimous vote yields a value of 100.\textsuperscript{20} In symbols, the average Rice score for a given party across n votes is:
Rice = |[(% votes yes) – (% votes no)]| / n.

In the first post-dictatorial period (1985–90), party discipline was quite high for all parties, showing that the factions can bind together for larger collective goals. Table 2 demonstrates this pattern by portraying the distribution of unanimous and contentious intra-party votes in the two time periods. During the first period the faction leaders’ concern with internal competition was arguably less important than reconstructing democratic politics in order to give a sign to the populace and the ex-dictators that democracy had revived and could function as a viable alternative to the dictatorship.

Once the spirit of cooperation necessary to end the dictatorship started to wane, electoral incentives pushed factions into competition. The level of party unity therefore fell precipitously in the second administration. Under Colorado President Sanguinetti (1985–90), there were few cases of less than perfect party discipline, but under the Blanco leader, LaCalle (1990–5), there were very few cases of perfect discipline and many cases of very important splits.21 During the LaCalle presidency, on 43 percent of the votes (10 of 23) the Colorados failed to hold 90 percent of their colleagues together (implying a Rice score of .8); for the president’s Blancos, this figure is even higher (70 percent; 16 of 23).22 Table 3 portrays Rice scores for the parties and factions during LaCalle’s term (except for the Frente Amplio, which continued to maintain extraordinarily high discipline levels). The Colorados weighed in with a Rice index score of 75 and the Blancos with a mere 54. As expected, these scores generally reflect dissension among, not within, factions. The last column shows that two of the four major Colorado factions and two of the three Blanco factions held 90 percent of their members together on the average vote (yielding a Rice score over .8). As explained below, the Colorado score does reflect the partial breakdown of two factions, but the general conclusion that disciplined factions were often at odds with one another still holds.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Party Rice scores: 1985–1995*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of unanimous, highly disciplined, and less disciplined votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorados</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blancos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Amplio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Number of votes with Rice scores of 1, between 1 and 0.8, and below 0.8.
Source: Voting data collected by the author from various editions of the Diario de Sesiones from the Asamblea General and the computer center (Oficina Informática) of the Uruguayan Congress. Information on factional composition was compiled from Albornoz 1989, 1994, 1999.
As noted, two Colorado factions (the Batllistas and the UCB) did not display high levels of unity. This result likely reflects the falling value of these faction leaders' electoral power. Since these leaders were clearly declining in stature, the prospects of electoral benefits that held followers to leaders had dissipated. The rank and file, therefore, had to start looking for new benefactors. The fact that these two factions were decimated in the subsequent election helps confirm this explanation. Most importantly, in spite of these two less disciplined factions, the general tendency is still clear: most factions are quite disciplined, and party discipline is achieved only when it suits the factions.

Behavior of the Ins and Outs as Conditioned by the Electoral Cycle

These data also provide evidence that the electoral cycle had a dramatic effect on party unity in both terms. The parties' or factions' association with the president, however, conditions the effects. These patterns are evident in both presidential terms. In spite of the highly cooperative spirit among factions during most of the first term, the president's Colorado party, but not the Blancos or Frente Amplio, began to unglue towards the end of the term. Between 1985 and 1988 the Colorados' Rice scores never fell below 92, and only twice in 31 votes did they fall below 96. In the election year of 1989, however, the party reached a score of 96 only 3 of 10 times and scored in

248
the 50s for the two votes held two weeks prior to the election. Alternatively, the two out-parties maintained very high discipline throughout.

Table 3 highlights a similar pattern in the second term. Now under a Blanco president, it was the Colorados and again the Frente Amplio that were able to rally together for electoral goals. While the Colorados had relatively low unity for the first four years of the five-year term, in the electoral year of 1994 about 95 percent of Colorados consistently voted together. The party holding the presidency, however, was unable to generate discipline in the final year. Also like their predecessors, the Blancos lost the election.

The table also shows that the factional unity was relatively unaffected by the electoral cycle, with one important exception. The exception was in regard to President LaCalle's Herrerrista faction, which suffered a precipitous fall in unity at the end of the term. While they sported a Rice score over 90 for the first four years of the five-year term, their average dropped to 63 in the last year. Taking just the first four years into account, then, the statistics show even more starkly that the factions were unified internally, but competitive externally. Further, the direction of change of the Herreristas' unity scores adds weight to the hypothesis about the dynamic driving the inter-factional fights. Unlike other factions that concentrate on binding together for the electoral contest, since presidents are barred from immediate re-election, members of the president's faction must first worry about choosing a new leader. Legislators who had unified behind LaCalle, therefore, may have used their votes in the waning part of the term to attempt to align with a new patriarch.

Finally, it is important to consider Uruguay's leftist party, the Frente Amplio, which has consistently maintained high levels of unity. Its high Rice scores in both periods are in part explicable by its relatively extremist ideological position, which virtually closed the option of supporting the governing party. Still, internal ideological divides (as noted above) are a challenge to the party's unity. Thus the party's position as a perennial out-party may also contribute to its high level of unity. Its struggle to dethrone the government has been long and arduous, and as a result the payoffs that have led to rational cooperation for other out-parties have been especially effective for members of the Frente Amplio.

Discussion

As opposed to parties, factions have often been assumed to be transitory loose groupings that arise due to ephemeral circumstances. While some factions do fit the stereotype, the misconception has generally hindered the study of factions. In many cases factions play important roles in elections and legislative debates. This paper has focused on the durable factions and legislative role in one such case. I have shown that rules in the electoral system create an incentive system that fosters disciplined factions and
mitigates against partisan unity. The paper also shows how legislative actors, here the factions, respond to the electoral cycle. Factions in the opposition party come together for electoral purposes, but factions in the president’s party only band together early on to take advantage of the benefits of office. As elections near, however, these bands break as the factions jockey for a chance to succeed the sitting president.

While the particularities of the Uruguayan electoral system are not directly relevant for most other polities, several hypotheses may have wider relevance. First, there are numerous factional types, and the source of the factions bears on their organization. Systems that generate highly centralized parties will not likely allow factions to operate independently. But primaries, open-list systems, and other rules that allow factional participation in elections and hinder partisan unity may foster durable factions. These types should be distinguished in comparative analyses. Second, the extent to which the factions are independent organizations determines the relevance of parties as unified actors. Where parties divide control among several factions, as in Japan, Colombia, Poland, and Uruguay, party unity may be a by-product of incentives that drive factions together. In these cases, then, a shift of the incentive system that could be driven by the electoral cycle or other causes could lead to party disarray.

Third, the Uruguayan case highlights the conflicting incentives pulling legislative actors in different directions. While this case highlights how factions must consider working for themselves or for the good of the party, the analysis may be directly comparable to parties operating within a coalition or even individual members of a party or faction. The Uruguayan electoral rules make the incentive system particularly apparent, but in other systems factions within parties, parties within coalitions, or co-partisan legislators must also decide whether to go their own way or work for the collective. The hypotheses pertaining to the electoral cycle, therefore, may be applicable to coalition politics, and coalition theories may have relevance for the study of factions.

Next, in showing that parties are not necessarily decisive legislative players, the study raises a question about how to define and characterize the central actor in the political system. The case presented here suggests that party discipline scores can help in this endeavor: if a coalition votes together, then it is the central actor, but if a party or faction frequently breaks from the next level of aggregation, then the sub-units seem the more appropriate level of analysis.

Finally, the Uruguayan case suggests that factions, parties, and coalitions respond to the electoral calendar. Even highly unified groups face an important challenge when members must choose between their own and their group’s electoral success. This has important implications for policy cycles and interbranch stalemates, as executives cannot count on unquestioned support in the latter part of their terms. It seems that the prohibition on re-election of the president was an important factor in explaining the parties’
fall in unity at the end of the terms. Where executives can win re-election, therefore, presidents may have more success in maintaining their support coalitions.

Appendix
Sample Ballot

COLORADO PARTY

LIST 2000

Montevideo

President
Julio Maria Sanguinetti (photo)

Vice President
Hugo Batalla

Senate Candidates (and substitutes)
1. Julio Maria Sanguinetti Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3
2. Hugo Fernandez Faingold Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3
3. Luis Bernardo Pozzolo Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3

.
.
.

4.

30. Mario Cesar Fernandez Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3

House Candidates (including and substitutes)
1. Guillermo Stirling 41. Francisco Dobrilavicus 81. Isidoro Baez 121. Carlos Grezzi
3. Julio Aguiar

.
.
.

40 Jose Otero Paradel 80. Norberto Alvite 120. Mauricio Rostkier 160. Martha Canessa

Electoral Commission Candidates
1. Alfredo Menini Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3
2. Diego Acuña Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3
3. Williams Tolmeo Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3

.
.
.

15 Florencio Vazquez Substitute 1 Substitute 2 Substitute 3
Notes

1 Sartori later substitutes the word ‘fraction’ for ‘faction’ to avoid etymological problems.

2 Epstein says: ‘Having a label (which may or may not be on the ballot) rather than an organization is the crucial defining element [of parties].’

3 For more on the ‘double simultaneous vote’, see Rial and Klaczko (1989). The term is supposed to mean that voters choose a party and a candidate at the same time, thereby eliminating primaries. This is one feature of the system, but it neglects the fact, as Bottinelli (1991) notes, that voters really must choose a party, a faction, and a candidate (he thus calls the system ‘triple simultaneous vote’).

4 Cohesion and discipline are generally distinguished in the literature. Most recently, Bowler et al. (1999) cite Ozbudun (1970) to explain that cohesion represents voting or acting together in pursuit of common goals. Discipline is voting or acting together as a result of an authority figure, perhaps in spite of different goals.

5 There are 30 senators and 99 representatives. The district magnitude for the representatives ranges from 2 to about 45.

6 The figure understates the problem for a voter in Montevideo. When entering the voting room (not a booth) in 1994, a Montevidean voter had to choose among a whopping 102 lists.

7 This rule was changed for the presidential election of 1999, but it did not affect the senate and lower-house races.

8 The closed lists imply that voters cannot alter the order of candidates on the list. Seats are distributed by list in a manner proportionate to votes, and to the individuals in accordance with their rank on the particular list.

9 Votes are also pooled at the subfaction level. This creates unneeded confusion for my discussion and does not detract from the principal story.

10 This is also true at the level of factions for senate and house seats. First the faction’s total votes are summed and then the winners are determined by looking at which members of the biggest faction(s) will be awarded seats.

11 Jorge Pacheco died recently.

12 Survey conducted by a team led by Manuela Alcantara of the University of Salamanca, Spain, 1997. For example, in response to a question about privatization (q. 49) of industry, 8 of 21 Colorados answered that the country should only privatize non-profitable firms, while the rest of the respondents answered that either all firms or all non-strategic firms should be privatized. There are similar differences for both parties on other key questions.

13 Since the return to democracy, this faction’s leader, Pacheco (who recently died), had pledged to play the role of the loyal opposition. Maintaining his faction’s cabinet posts was apparently part of that pledge. During the Blanco administration, his faction frequently, though not always, voted with the president’s faction.


15 Though as explained below members of that faction may break away, as happened to Lacalle’s Herreristas.
16 For the in-party we assume that a faction will trade off some likelihood of the party winning the election for the chance that it can beat intra-party rivals. The model therefore assumes that the divisiveness will not necessarily cost the party the election, but that the probability of winning is diminished.

17 Presidential candidates can also run as the head of senate lists (and senators can also run as representatives); thus if they lose the presidency, they can still win a senate seat.

18 In most cases this means that the factions are defined as the group of senators and representatives elected under a given presidential candidate. There is one exception, however. In 1989 the four Colorado factions combined themselves into two pairs to support just two presidential candidates. This combination had little impact on nomination control, since each faction leader could still run his or her own lower-house lists. The analysis therefore deals with the four separate factions.

19 Presidential and legislative terms are all coterminous. Sanguinetti, a Colorado, served as president from 1985 to 1990 and LaCalle, a Blanco, served between 1990 and 1995.

20 Unanimous or near unanimous votes are often eliminated in roll call studies as they generally imply non-controversial items. The data in the table do not eliminate these votes, since all the votes are controversial enough to have gained the president’s veto. Recalculating these figures with a weighting system that eliminates unanimous votes and puts little weight on near unanimous votes yields virtually identical results. In particular, the weighting system multiplies each vote by 1 - (% difference between the total number of yes votes and the no votes). Thus a unanimous vote is multiplied by 0, while a 50–50 split earns a weight of 1.


22 If we take a break point of only 80 percent discipline, the figures are still high: 26 percent for the Colorados and 65 percent for the Blancos.

23 It should also be noted that since the factions are small, one dissenter causes a large fall in the cohesion rates. The UCB and the Batllistas had an average of only seven voters, one dissenter implying a cohesion rate of 86 percent. This one dissenter, however, would have a minimal impact on the party cohesion rate, dropping them from unanimity to 96 percent; it took four dissenters to drop to a level of 85 percent. As such, where cohesion scores for the party are lower than those for the factions we can be confident that the factions are maintaining discipline and opposing one another.

24 The Batllistas made a comeback in 1999 when their long time leader, Jorge Batlle, won their party’s nomination under new rules that ended the multiple presidential candidates. Batlle finished second in the first round of the general election and beat the Frente Amplio candidate in the second round.

25 The fall-off in factional discipline scores for the Blancos in the last year is explained by the party’s fading electoral prospects and rising new leadership. As such, faction members began to realign behind new leaders. The slight rise in the Blanco’s Rice score is insignificant, since the score is still extremely low.

26 In fact, the faction split for the 1994 election.

27 Though I have no data to test its degree, the Frente Amplio has begun to show signs of division since 1994. This may be explained by the party’s now more solid credibility, which has shifted the payoffs. That is, since the party has become a
potential winner in the presidential elections the faction leaders are increasingly concerned with jockeying for the leading role.

References


Laakso, Markku and Rein Taagepera (1979) 'Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to Western Europe', Comparative Political Studies 12: 3–27.


SCOTT MORGENSTERN is an Assistant Professor of political science at Duke University, where he teaches classes in comparative politics with a focus on Latin America. His co-edited book, Legislative Politics in Latin America, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press, and he is finishing a manuscript on legislative voting patterns in the Southern Cone of Latin America.
ADDRESS: Duke University, Department of Political Science, Box 90204, Durham, NC 27708-0204 [email: smorgens@duke.edu]