

Research Notes

Foreign Policy Specificity: An Analysis of Ministerial Survival in Latin America, 1945–2020

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ABSTRACT

This research note analyzes the incentives of different types of policy areas for a president to keep or dismiss a minister. It uses ministerial survival analysis to compare foreign and domestic policy areas, focusing on comparable and analogous presidential decisions among countries and portfolios. The research utilizes ministerial survival data for education, finance, health, and foreign policy between 1945 and 2020 in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. Using Cox regression models, we find that a foreign policy portfolio has a positive effect on ministerial survival, but the specificity of this portfolio does not hold for autocratic governments. Autocracies show higher levels of ministerial survival in all four portfolios, but a foreign policy portfolio is no more stable than domestic portfolios. Democratic presidents have the incentive to signal stability to the international audience, preserving the foreign policy portfolio from the frequent ministerial changes in domestic portfolios.

Keywords: Foreign policy, domestic policy, ministerial survival, Latin America

The distinction between foreign policy and domestic public policy areas is a crucial debate in the history and development of foreign policy analysis as a discipline. Pioneering authors such as Rosenau (1969) and Friedrich (1966) considered the distinction dispensable. However, as Hermann (1983) argues, the consolidation of the concept of foreign policy and its specificity in relation to domestic policies was an important attribute in the search for widely accepted assumptions about the phenomenon of foreign policy, allowing for the rise of a paradigm in the scientific development of the area.

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Many different definitions of foreign policy share a common attribute: noting that decisionmaking is directed toward the external environment of the state (Modelski 1963; Wallace 1974; Hermann 1983; Hudson 2005). For instance, foreign policy can be defined as an official activity formulated and implemented by authorized agents of a sovereign state directed at its external environment (Milner and Tingley 2015). Its specificity is the starting point for a field of analysis centered on foreign policy as a subject distinct from domestic public policy.

At a time of a growing literature that advocates for the characterization of foreign policy as a public policy, revisiting this foundational debate in the discipline (Milani and Pinheiro 2013; Garcé and López 2014; Tokatlian and Merke 2014; Pimenta de Faria 2021), this study examines the impact of foreign and domestic policy on political behavior, contributing to the ongoing debate in the regional literature. It specifically analyzes the incentives that different policy areas create for presidents when deciding whether to retain or dismiss ministers. By comparing ministerial survival in foreign and domestic policy ministries, we can identify unique decisionmaking processes in each area. The analysis focuses on comparable presidential decisions across countries and policy portfolios. The research data span the period 1945 to 2020 and include ministerial survival in education, finance, health, and foreign policy portfolios in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Using Cox regression models, we find that holding a foreign policy portfolio has a positive effect on ministerial survival. In other words, when compared to the ministries for domestic policy areas (education, finance, and health), ministries of foreign affairs undergo fewer ministerial changes. Even so, this relationship is not uniform among democracies and autocracies of the sample.

Three main empirical regularities are found regarding political regime, foreign policy specificity, and ministerial survival: autocratic regimes present more stability in all four portfolios when compared with democratic regimes; among autocratic governments there is no significant difference in ministerial survival between foreign and domestic portfolios; and in democratic governments, foreign policy portfolios are significantly more stable than domestic policy portfolios. Furthermore, the regression model reveals that having a higher income level, fostering economic growth, having technical expertise, and membership in the president's political group are all significant survival factors, increasing the chances that a minister remains in office. On the other hand, previous electoral political experience is a significant risk factor, reducing the probability that a minister will remain in office.

We argue that the international audience values stability in the conduct of a government's foreign policy, which establishes a positive incentive for the president to keep a chancellor in office. Because autocratic governments present higher levels of ministerial stability across different portfolios when compared with democratic regimes, the stability incentive coming from the international audience does not result in different levels of ministerial stability between foreign and domestic policies; this appears only in democratic regimes.

RESEARCH DESIGN, HYPOTHESIS, AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Decisionmaking processes vary significantly among public policy areas. While some policies need legislative or collective approval, others can be implemented by presidential decree. These differences can make it difficult to compare different policy areas, such as foreign policy, health, education, and finance, by adding confounding factors to the analysis. Using ministerial survival solves this comparative difficulty by standardizing the decisionmaking locus: the presidency.

Presidents, as opposed to prime ministers, have individual rather than collective responsibility (Neto, 2020). This is of note when it comes to appointing or dismissing ministers. We can classify the decisionmaking process of appointing or dismissing a minister as the “predominant leader” type (Hermann et al. 2001), characterized by the fact that no actors other than the president can veto the decision to implement a change of minister. In our sample and time series, the president had the exclusive right to appoint ministers.¹ (A small exception is a recent period in Peru.)² The countries’ constitutions delegate this responsibility to the president, although there is some variation in terms of the rules for dismissing ministers through the legislature. It is important to note that we did not register in our sample cases in which ministers were dismissed by any actor other than the president, with the exception of some recent cases in Peru. Thus, we isolate the possible effects of different decisionmaking arrangements among countries and, principally, among policy areas.

The Choice of Ministries

The choice of ministries included in this study was guided by three fundamental criteria: proximity to everyday matters, which distinguishes foreign policy from other portfolios; longevity of the ministerial portfolio in the country; and homogeneity in the portfolio’s functions among the countries in the sample.

The first inclusion criterion draws on differences in policy subject areas. That is, by choosing education, finance, and health, we chose ministries responsible for areas that are of high interest to the population, in which citizens perceive policies as more relevant than foreign policy and see them as producing a direct distributive effect on society.

The second and third criteria, the longevity of ministerial portfolios and homogeneity of ministerial functions, aim to ensure comparability among countries in the sample. In our time series (1945–2020) there have been many changes in the emergence and disappearance of ministries. To avoid a huge deficiency of missing data and low temporal coincidence, the chosen portfolios should preferably date back to 1945. In the seven countries in our sample, the ministries of foreign policy and finance date back to the nineteenth century. However, not all countries have had ministries for education and health since 1945. In the case of education, Argentina created the ministry in 1949, and Uruguay in 1967. In Uruguay, Peru, Mexico, and Paraguay, the

creation of ministries of health dates back to 1945. By the 1960s, all countries had established a health ministry. Therefore, the ministries compared in our seven-country sample have been in place over a substantial period of our time series, providing good grounds for comparison.

Although some specific functions differ in each country over time, the four ministries share similar core attributions. For example, the ministry of finance is responsible for collecting taxes; foreign affairs manages all diplomatic representations; education is responsible for school guidelines; and health is responsible for disease control.³ Thus, the intersection of these three characteristics—longevity, stability, and homogeneity of functions—justifies the choice of the four portfolios for comparison.

The Foreign Policy Specificity Hypothesis

The decisionmaking environment is a crucial difference between foreign and domestic policies. Kaplan (1961, 472) highlights this specificity by stating that in the international system, the most relevant organizational forms and patterns are informal and distinct from formal patterns at the national level. This peculiar characteristic of the international environment has also significantly influenced theories of foreign policy (Milner and Tingley 2015). The specificity of foreign policy in relation to other public policies centers on incentives arising from the international arena in decisionmaking. An informal decisionmaking environment encourages the president to keep the foreign affairs minister, given how fragile agreements negotiated between chancellors can be. As compliance with international agreements and arrangements is strongly based on trust between actors, stability in ministries of foreign affairs is viewed as an asset to credibility.

The asset of ministerial stability in an informal environment, in which agreements depend heavily on trust between parties, encourages the leader to keep the main negotiator and interlocutor to the international audience. The international audience encourages the president to guarantee greater stability in the positions of the ministry of foreign affairs when compared to the finance, education, and health portfolios. Based on predictions about how other actors will behave, policymakers make decisions and define policies that will maximize their goals (Eskenazi 2015). Thus, the uncertainty embedded in a strategic policy is not only about future events but also about reactions from other actors to policy choices. Given that it deals with sovereign entities in an informal decisionmaking environment, strategy in foreign policy is substantially different from that in domestic policy. The different incentives foreign and domestic policies offer decisionmakers are the basis of our main hypothesis on the specificity of the foreign affairs portfolio.

Literature Review

Ministerial stability can affect the performance of policy portfolios. Permanence in a portfolio's command post gives ministers the experience and knowledge needed to execute a policy agenda (Huber and Martínez-Gallardo 2008). In the last two decades,

we have observed a growing number of comparative analyses and case studies on ministerial survival in Latin America (Avendaño and Dávila 2012; Chasquetti and Buquet 2018; Martínez-Gallardo 2014; Sosa Villagarcía 2014; Olivares 2015; Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán 2015; González Bustamante and Olivares 2016; Camerlo and Martínez-Gallardo 2018; Perissinotto et al. 2020). This accumulated knowledge allows us to more accurately select the relevant controls for the survival model (Cox regression) in order to capture the effect of the difference between foreign and domestic policy in terms of a theoretically oriented empirical model. Thus, by choosing a well-studied subject, we have greater confidence in the selection of variables that are “rival explanations” to the distinction between foreign and domestic policy, our main variable of interest.

We can classify the most relevant variables influencing ministerial survival in the literature into economic, social, institutional, political, and individual. Two variables refer to the economy: economic growth and GDP per capita. Studies on ministerial survival in different countries also find a negative relationship between the deterioration of economic indicators and the permanence of ministers in office (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2010; Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán 2015; Olivares 2015).

One relevant institutional aspect of governments is the type of political regime. The argument goes that an autocratic president suffers less pressure, particularly electoral pressure, to discharge ministers on account of poor performance (actual or perceived) when compared to a democratic president (Shevchenko 2005; Fischer et al. 2012). In this scenario, an autocratic regime would tend to increase the ministerial survival time when compared to democratic regimes.

Other variables included focus on attributes of governments and presidents. The formation of coalitions in multiparty presidential systems is an extremely common phenomenon, as the president’s party rarely holds a majority in Congress (Chasquetti 2001). The formation of a legislative majority thus becomes crucial for governmental stability in multiparty presidential systems (Negretto 2006), and the appointment of positions in the public administration becomes a vital factor when forming a majority coalition (Batista 2017). The existence of partisan coalitions supporting the government restricts the president’s capacity to implement ministerial changes, tying the choice for ministerial permanence or replacement to a more costly negotiation for the entire legislative support structure of the government (Budge 1985). Therefore, intense negotiations within the coalition may favor ministerial stability, forcing further caution in the candidate selection process (Huber and Martínez-Gallardo 2008). Other analyses do not find significant differences between single-party government and coalition governments (Perissinotto et al. 2020) or associate the presence of coalitions with greater instability (Shevchenko 2005), because the change of minister seeks to maintain the cohesion of the coalition (Avendaño and Dávila 2012) or because the end of a coalition causes changes in the cabinet (Chasquetti and Buquet 2018).

Related to coalitions, in multiparty presidential systems a relevant variable is precisely how multiparty the political system is, commonly measured by the effective

number of parties (ENP). In general, the larger the ENP, the more difficult the formation of majority coalitions and the greater the president's propensity to make ministerial changes to manage the coalition (García Montero 2009). Thus, a high ENP can increase political instability and decrease ministerial survival, being a relevant institutional characteristic as a control in the survival model. The relationship between the number of the president's legislative seats in Congress and the choice and maintenance of ministers is also reported in the literature (Altman 2000). In a comparative study of Latin American countries from 1982 to 2012, Martínez-Gallardo (2014) demonstrates that ministers tend to be changed in contexts in which presidents have little legislative support and a political party with few seats in Parliament.

Another important institutional factor in presidential regimes is the degree of need for the president to cooperate with Congress. That is, greater legislative powers increase the president's autonomy to legislate and allow presidents to change ministers more independently (Martínez-Gallardo 2012). Powerful presidents, with the ability to legislate by decree, for example, are less likely to commit efforts and resources to creating and maintaining a supportive coalition in Congress (Alemán and Tsebelis 2005), being less constrained to change ministers.

A president's popularity can significantly affect a minister's decision to remain in or leave government. Significant drops in presidential popularity encourage the president to take actions that seek to rebuild credibility (Martínez-Gallardo 2014). Additionally, unpopular presidents increase the incentives for ministers to pursue personal strategies and leave the government (Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán, 2015). In the case of a popular president with a high chance of reelection, ministers have no incentives to migrate to the opposition. Social pressure on a government is another important feature that can make the president change the cabinet in response to the mobilization of civil society (Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán 2015; Olivares 2022). For this reason we include in the models the annual frequency of popular demonstrations against the government.

The last set of variables included refers to attributes of the ministers. Based on the literature, we expect greater ministerial survival if the minister is part of the president's political group (Bäck et al. 2021; Olivares 2022), has previous political experience in elective positions, and has technical expertise in the portfolio area (Camerlo 2013; Dargent 2014; Sosa Villagarcía 2014; González Bustamante and Olivares 2016; Bäck et al. 2021).

DATA, METHODS, AND RESULTS

When building our dataset, we included only permanently appointed ministers, excluding from the sample those who assumed the position on an interim basis. As ministerial appointments are in the remit of the executive, the survival of a minister is usually associated with the fate of their political leader. That is, in a scenario in which there is a departure from the political leadership of the government, the chance of ministerial change is very high (Quiroz Flores 2009). Therefore, we constructed a

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

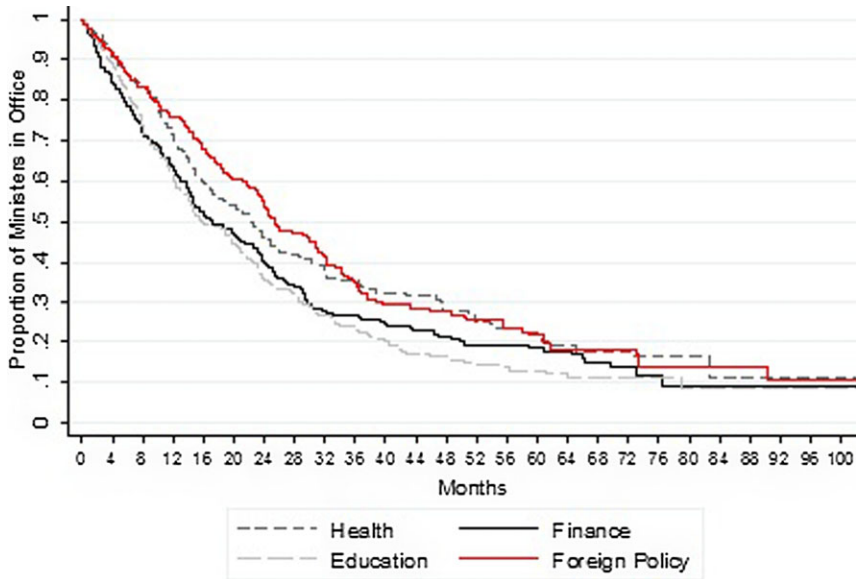
Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max
Autocracy	1,229	0.28	—	0	1
Coalition	1,229	0.55	—	0	1
Economic growth	1,229	1.09	4.31	-13.8	11.88
Effective number of parties	1,110	4.04	2.49	1	16.4
Foreign policy	1,229	0.23	—	0	1
GDP/capita	1,229	8.01	0.73	6.42	9.62
Legislative powers	1,229	52.3	19.9	1	100
Manifestations	1,120	1.11	2.66	0	26
Political group of the president	1,229	0.43	—	0	1
Politician	1,229	0.26	—	0	1
Popularity	547	40.8	18.16	2.44	87.2
Percent of president's legislative seats	1,110	38.71	—	0	100
Technocrat	1,229	0.5	—	0	1

dependent variable recording failures when there was a change of minister during the same presidential term, accounting for 763 (62 percent) events. The ministers who remained in office until the end of the presidential term and those who left their post for reasons of health, death, or change of president were not counted as failures, nor were the ministers who still remained in office in December 2020. The dismissal of ministers was treated as a censoring event. Our database includes 1,229 ministers from the four portfolios during the 75 years, bringing together 131 presidents.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics about the independent variables drawn from the specialized literature. The names of the variables are shown in the first column, followed by the number of observations (Obs), the mean, standard deviation (Std. Dev.), minimum value (Min), and maximum value (Max). To access the source of the data, see the supplementary document.

As table 1 shows, just over a quarter (28 percent) of the cases analyzed took place during autocratic regimes. The president's legislative seats average 38.7 percent with large variability. The variable *Coalition* indicates that more than half of the governments in the sample were coalitions. The economic growth of the countries has an annual average of 1.09 percent, with great variation in the time series. An average 43 percent of the ministers were part of the president's political group, and the average effective number of parties was 4.04; some cases had more than 16 effective parties, and others had only one effective party, such as Mexico and the Institutional Revolutionary Party. GDP/capita, measured in thousands, shows an average of \$8,000 and a low standard deviation (0.73).

Figure 1. Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimation by Ministry (1945–2020)



The president's legislative powers, in turn, have an average of 52.3 and a range that varies across the scale of the variable, from 1 to 100. Only 26 percent of ministers held elective office before arriving at their ministry. Technocrats make up precisely half of the sample. As expected, almost a quarter of the ministers (23 percent) hold a foreign policy portfolio. The average presidential approval in the four countries is 40.8 percent, with significant variation, ranging from presidents with 2.44 percent approval at minimum to 87.2 percent maximum.

The results begin with figure 1, which presents the Kaplan-Meier curve for ministerial survival disaggregated by portfolio. The red line represents the ministry of foreign affairs; the solid black line represents the ministry of finance; the dashed gray line represents education; and the dotted black line represents health. The horizontal axis displays months and the vertical axis the proportion of ministers who remained in office. For visual clarity, we have limited the horizontal axis to 100 months, including 99 percent of the ministries in our sample.

Figure 1 partially confirms the propensity for higher survival of ministers of foreign affairs when compared to other portfolios. After six months, health and foreign affairs make up around 15 percent of the ministers dismissed, while finance and education make up around 25 percent. After one year, education and finance show 40 percent laid off while health displays 30 percent dismissed and foreign policy shows approximately 25 percent. In two years, the foreign policy line splits from health with 45 percent and 55 percent, respectively, of ministers replaced. In the same two years, education and finance lose 60 percent of their ministers. Nearly 36 months later,

health and foreign affairs converge again, with just over 30 percent of ministers still in office. Education, at this same level, has approximately 80 percent of ministers dismissed, emerging as the most unstable ministry in the region, closely followed by finance.

After four years, finance is more clearly delineated from education, with 20 percent of ministers kept in office. Foreign policy converges again with health with close to 30 percent of ministers held in office. Martínez-Gallardo (2014) finds a similar result in a comparative sample of Latin American countries, suggesting that the constant economic crises in the region are a possible explanation for ministerial instability in finance portfolios. The author also cites the ministry of foreign affairs as an opposite example of stability (Martínez-Gallardo 2014), concurring with our results.

Table 2 presents the Cox regression models for our longitudinal time-to-event data presented earlier. In this type of estimation, the dependent variable is transformed into a hazard rate, interpreted in our case as the instantaneous probability for a minister being dismissed from a ministry, assuming that it has not happened already. The advantage of using Cox models is their flexibility when dealing with time-dependent coefficients, not requiring very strong parametric assumptions about the distribution of probabilities for the event to occur (Therneau and Grambsch 2000).

The Cox regression models were adjusted using the Efron method, due to its suitability for the analysis of adjacent events observed at the same time, such as ministerial rotation in different countries (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). Another relevant aspect of the Cox regression estimation performed is the use of shared frailty (Cox shared-frailty model), which allows us to detect how latent variables can affect the survival function. This type of estimation is analogous to the use of random effects in a linear regression model. The logic behind this model is to assume that some ministers may be more likely to leave office because of unobserved country attributes. Data were organized into groups represented by the seven countries, whose observations share a Theta weakness (Therneau and Grambsch 2000). The proportional hazards model is adjusted for fragility and estimated with the logarithm of maximum likelihood (Log likelihood) weighted by Theta, conditioning the calculation of coefficients and standard error to the assumed weakness.

To determine the robustness of the estimated models, we checked the nonviolation of the proportionality assumption, based on the constant effect of the variables in the analysis. In addition, we evaluated the fit of the model using Cox-Senell residuals, which indicate a good fit when the cumulative hazard function has an exponential distribution with a hazard rate equal to 1 (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004). We also applied the variance inflation factor (VIF) test on the variables and models to check for multicollinearity. The estimated models, with the exception of model 3 (m3), showed adequacy in relation to the proportionality assumption, model adjustment and absence of multicollinearity. The VIF test indicated the necessity of excluding some variables, like *GDP/capita*, from models 4, 5, and 6.

Table 2. Results

	m1	m2	m3	m4	m5	m6
Foreign policy	.774** (.066)	.742*** (.066)	.706*** (.072)	.728*** (.067)	.581*** (.094)	.648*** (.069)
Economic growth		.969*** (.008)	.978 (.010)	.956*** (.008)	.959** (.013)	.969** (.009)
GDP/capita		.540*** (.043)	.441*** (.058)			
Politician		1.09 (.096)	1.10 (.104)	1.16 (.105)	1.66*** (.238)	
Autocracy		.633*** (.067)	.447*** (.074)	.724*** (.079)	.609 (.084)	.475*** (.067)
President's political group		.797** (.062)	.830* (.074)	.736*** (.059)	.605*** (.084)	.802** (.067)
Coalition		1.10 (.109)	1.05 (.124)	1.06 (.113)	1.01 (.166)	
Technocrat		.736*** (.056)	.761** (0.09)	.740*** (.059)	.704** (.089)	.714*** (.057)
Legislative powers			.994** (.002)	.989*** (.001)		.989*** (.001)

(continued on next page)

Table 2. Results (*continued*)

	m1	m2	m3	m4	m5	m6
Effective number of parties			1.11** (.038)			.994 (.023)
Demonstrations			1.01 (.018)	1.01 (.015)	1.02 (.019)	
Percent of president's legislative seats			1.00 (.003)		1.01* (.004)	
Popularity					.994 (.004)	
Autocracy x Foreign policy						1.85** (.446)
Observations	1,229	1,229	1,001	1,120	443	1,110
Groups (country)	7	7	7	7	7	7
Failures	763	763	622	716	272	669
χ^2	8.41**	148.3***	163.8***	125.53***	54.3***	126.6***
Log likelihood	-4690.8	-4621.4	-3619.5	-4283.6	-1380.6	-3982.6
Theta	0.20 (0.11)	0.18 (0.10)	0.24 (0.14)	0.20 (0.11)	0.08 (0.06)	0.22 (0.12)
PH assumption	0.05	9.41	31.7**	14.26	14.18	14.79
VIF	—	2.56	6.01	1.78	2.42	2.20

***p<0 .001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

Note: Hazard ratios with standard errors in parentheses (conditional on frailty of the six models; grouped by country). Efron Method.

Table 2 displays the six Cox regression models estimated using relevant variables from the literature described earlier. The hazard ratio coefficients shown in the table represent the relative risk corresponding to a change of one unit in the independent variable. When the coefficient is less than 1, the variable is characterized as predicting survival, since it reduces the chance of failure. Coefficients greater than 1, on the contrary, represent a risk factor, which increases the probability of dismissal. Model 1 includes only the dichotomous variable *Foreign policy*, whose relative risk coefficient is less than 1 and statistically significant. It is important to note that the same six models estimated for foreign policy were also estimated for finance, education, and health, which results are reported in the supplementary document.

As the intention of this section is to observe the relevance of the foreign policy portfolio in the face of important controls in the literature, model 1 serves to analyze the suitability of the central variable of analysis in the survival model.

The last rows of table 2 show the number of observations: 1,229 ministers is the maximum number in the sample. The number of groups used to estimate the frailty survival model includes 7 countries in our case.⁴ The number of dismissals and ministerial changes in the same presidential term is shown as failures, and the probability of obtaining the chi-square statistic (8.41 in model 1) is shown, given that the null hypothesis is true (χ^2). The log likelihood is of the model that serves to compare models. Theta, as explained above, represents the shared weakness of the frailty model of the seven countries being used to weight the calculations of coefficients and standard error (in parentheses). The PH assumption reveals the values of the tests of violation or not of the proportionality assumption, whose non-significant values indicate adequacy to the assumption.⁵ The average VIF (variance inflation factor) of the model detects multicollinearity.

Model 2 (m2) includes all the independent variables drawn from our literature review that do not have missing data, keeping to 1,229 observations. Here we can already observe the effect of foreign policy, controlling for economic growth, GDP/capita, political regime, coalition government, technocrat minister, political group of the president, and political experience of the minister. The foreign policy coefficient remains stable and significant in all six estimated models, giving robustness to the conclusion of a positive effect of foreign policy on the probability of ministers' remaining in office.

A very useful way of interpreting hazard ratio coefficients (HR) is to convert them into probabilities: $p = HR/(1 + HR)$. In model 2, keeping the aforementioned variables constant, the foreign policy portfolio is 42.5 percent more likely to retain ministers when compared to the education, finance, and health portfolios. Regarding the independent variables used as controls in model 2, some confirm their associated theoretical expectation. Technocratic ministers have an informational advantage over nontechnocrats and tend to survive longer in their position. The same occurs with ministers who belong to the president's political group, a factor that reduces the chance of dismissal. The ideological proximity between the minister and the presidency, prior knowledge, and greater scrutiny are elements that provide stability in the position. The economic variables—*Economic growth* and *GDP/capita*—are significant ministerial

stability factors in model 2, indicating that economic stability allows the president to maintain the ministerial team for a longer time. The variables *Coalition government* and *Politician* were not significant.

Model 3 includes all the variables collected except for the president's popularity. The total number of observations drops to 1,001 ministers, due to missing data. This is the reason to run the model separately. As can be seen at the bottom of table 2, model 3 violates the proportionality assumption, indicating inadequacy. Also, we found in model 3 variables with high VIF: *GDP/capita*, *Effective number of parties*, and the *Percent of president's legislative seats*. This is the reason we ran model 4 without those three variables. With better accuracy than model 3, model 4 confirms the relevance of foreign policy, economic growth, autocracy, belonging to the president's political group, the legislative powers of the president, and the technocrat minister as survival factors in our analysis.

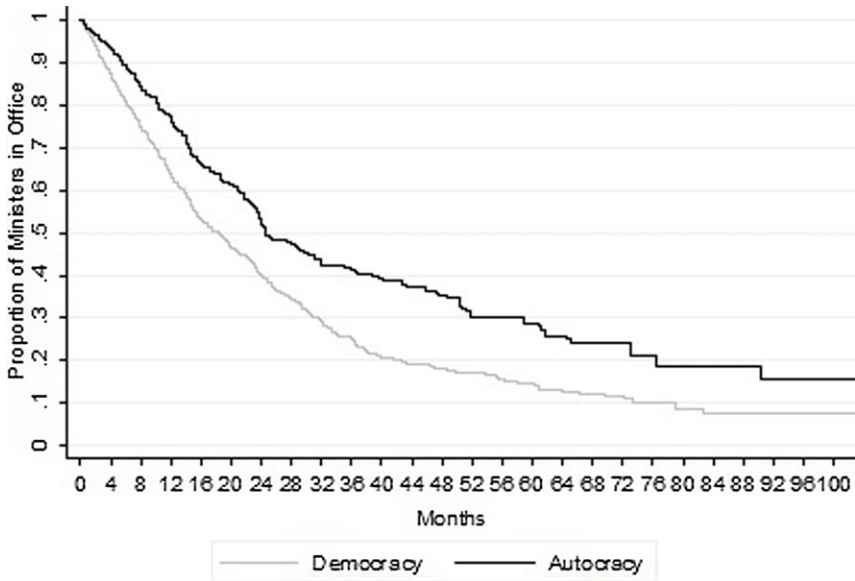
Model 5 includes all the variables in model 4 plus *Presidential popularity*, which drops the number of observations to 443, due to the availability of popularity data from 1979 on only. Therefore, for example, the variable *Autocracy* loses statistical relevance in model 5 but maintains its relevance in models 2, 3, 4, and 6, in which observations cover the entire authoritarian period in the countries of the sample.

The popularity variable, which was the central motivation for estimating model 5, was not significant. However, for this reduced sample the variables *Politician* and *Percentage of the president's legislative seats* were statistically significant. The more seats the president's party has, the greater the propensity for ministers to be dismissed, a result contrary to what is expected in the literature. This was observed mostly in the postdemocratization period. While in model 5 coalition governments have a coefficient that suggests a risk factor for survival, there is no statistical significance.

The greater propensity of authoritarian regimes to keep ministers in their positions is an interesting result that can contribute to an important discussion regarding political appointments and ministerial stability in the research agenda about autocracies (Buckley and Reuter 2019). To further explore the relevance of political regime in our database, we ran interaction terms between foreign policy and the significant variables in models 2 and 4. Only autocracy revealed significant interaction with foreign policy. We also tested interactions between autocracy and the finance, education, and health portfolios. None of those were significant (see supplementary document).

Model 6 shows the results of the model with an interaction term between autocracy and foreign policy and the variables that had statistical relevance in the other models and at the same time did not present a VIF higher than 10. Before interpreting the estimate of the interaction between autocracy and foreign policy, we tested its statistical significance. We estimated model 6 without the interaction and then with the interaction. With that result, we applied the likelihood ratio test that suggests evidence of interaction ($p = 0.01$).⁶ In other words, there is evidence that the effect of the political regime on greater ministerial survival is not the same in foreign and domestic policy portfolios. The detection of a statistically significant interaction means that the risk rate of ministerial change depends on the value of another independent variable. In model 6, the hazard ratio of the interaction is greater than 1,

Figure 2. Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimation by Regime Type (1945–2020)



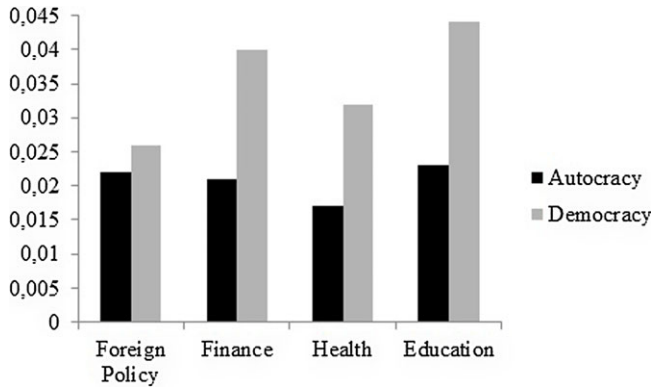
meaning an increased risk of removal. Political regime is mediating the difference in stability between foreign and domestic portfolios, indicating that in autocratic regimes, foreign ministers have a greater risk of removal than domestic ministers. We further explore this result with some disaggregated descriptive statistics to better understand the relationship between political regime, foreign and domestic policies, and ministerial survival. Figure 2 shows the Kaplan-Meier curve for ministerial survival disaggregated by political regime.

Figure 2 clearly exposes the greater ministerial stability in the autocratic regimes, graphically corroborating the results of the models shown in table 2. Autocratic regimes have a higher proportion of ministers remaining in office compared to democratic regimes throughout the series of months displayed on the horizontal axis.

To compare the greater stability in autocracies, taking into account the difference between foreign and domestic policies, figure 3 presents a descriptive comparison of ministers' survival by portfolio and political regime. It places the incidence rate of ministers' changes on the vertical axis. The incidence rate is the number of observations of ministers leaving office divided by the risk measured in months. The risk, in turn, is calculated through the frequency of ministers in each portfolio and the sum of the time they have been in office. The higher the incidence rate, the greater the ministerial volatility.

Three main empirical regularities can be extracted from the results in figure 3. First, chancelleries in autocracies are more stable than chancelleries in democracies. Second, in autocracies, the foreign policy portfolio is a little more unstable than

Figure 3. Incidence Rate of Ministerial Dismissal by Portfolio and Political Regime (1945–2020)



finance, a little more stable than education, and more unstable than health. Third, in democracies, foreign policy is more stable than the three domestic portfolios. While democratic presidents make fewer changes in ministries of foreign affairs when compared with domestic portfolios, this difference is not observed in autocratic presidents.

The hypothesis of the specificity of foreign policy that we have outlined is valid only in democratic regimes. Due to the greater ministerial stability of autocratic regimes in all portfolios analyzed, the international audience's incentive for stability in the chancellery is diluted in comparison with domestic policy. As autocratic chancelleries are more stable than democratic ones, it does not seem reasonable to conclude that foreign policy is a risk factor in the ministerial survival of autocratic regimes. The autocracies in the present sample signaled ministerial stability to international partners, including chancelleries. Democracies, on the contrary, show high instability in relevant domestic portfolios. In this scenario of domestic instability in democracies, the incentives arising from the international audience affect the greater stability of the foreign policy ministry when compared to the domestic portfolios.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The fundamental finding of this empirical research is that foreign policy ministers in democratic regimes are more likely to stay in their posts for a longer time than their peers in finance, education, and health. The comparison is valid, as it controls for confounding factors characteristic to each policy area, focusing the analysis on the same type of presidential decision. Furthermore, the Cox regression models include relevant explanations for ministerial survival, identified through the extensive literature on the subject, lending robustness to the finding. It was possible to identify

the political regime as an important intervenient variable to the relationship between ministerial survival and the foreign and domestic portfolios. The foreign policy tendency toward less risk of ministerial removal is valid only for democratic regimes.

The analysis of foreign policy, which is essentially interdisciplinary, substantiates its specialization by drawing on the unique characteristics of this policy area when compared to domestic policies. The incentives coming from the international audience are the main difference highlighted between foreign policy and domestic policy. In the international arena, a change of the main figure responsible for diplomacy below the president can harm informal arrangements and agreements between states. The fulfillment of agreements depends on trust between parties. A change of minister can generate instability in negotiations and arrangements in progress, especially those of an informal nature carried out directly between the chancellors of two countries. There is greater credibility in the political compromise between two nations if the negotiators who formulate the informal arrangement remain in their positions. Foreign policy specificity can be observed in the differential behavior of decisionmakers in democracies, highlighting its difference from other public policy areas in that institutional context.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/lap.2023.21>

NOTES

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1. <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Comp/Ejecutivo/Ministros/nombramiento.html>

2. In the Peruvian Constitution of 1993, the president can appoint and remove ministers, but this must be done in coordination with the council of ministers, whose chief is also appointed by the president. One notable difference is the censure vote, as stated in article 132 of the constitution. Within 30 days of ministerial appointments, the National Congress must provide a vote of confidence.

3. Uruguay has institutional particularities.

4. To test the need for the frailty option (Cox shared-frailty model), we applied the test of equality of survival functions by country in the sample. The result rejects the null hypothesis of equal distributions between countries, indicating the adequacy of using the frailty model.

5. In order to review the suitability of the six estimated Cox regression models, we have performed an analysis of the Cox-Snell residuals, comparing the Nelson-Aalen accumulated risk function with the 45 degree pending function of the residuals.

6. LR $\chi^2(1) = 6.09$; Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0136$

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