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UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
SURVEY OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
COALITIONAL PRESIDENTIALISM PROJECT

I am a research consultant working on a project on presidents and legislatures at the University of Oxford. As part of the project we are interviewing 350 representative members of parliament across nine countries including 30 from your country. We are very grateful for your time: it is essential to our research.

We are interested in how presidents build support within parliaments. Although presidents do not sit in parliament, presidents in this country have aimed to form coalitions within parliament in order to ensure that they have a legislative majority to support their legislative agenda. I would like to ask you a few questions about how this process works.

The results of the study will be presented to the academic community as well as governmental and non-governmental bodies that are interested in executive-legislative relations in democratizing societies.

This interview should take about 30-45 minutes to complete. If you do not have any questions, I will start with a small number of multiple choice questions.

	HOUR		MINUTE	
TIME INTERVIEW STARTED: USE 24 HOUR CLOCK				

A. Prior to the Interview – Member’s Background

Interviewer, please answer the first set of questions (A1-A11) prior to the interview. If any of the information is not available, please contact Svitlana Chernykh at svitlana.chernykh@lac.ox.ac.uk **PRIOR** to the interview.

A1	Gender of the respondent	
	Male	1
	Female	2

A2	What year was the respondent first elected to parliament? <i>If the respondent is no longer in parliament please note the date he left</i>	

A3	Which political party is the respondent a member of CURRENTLY?	

A4	Which political party was the respondent a member of when he was first elected to parliament?	

A5	<i>If the country operates a mixed electoral system. If not go to A6.</i> Was the respondent elected as a constituency MP or from a party list?	

A6	What is respondent’s highest level of education?	
	No formal schooling	1
	Primary school only	2
	Some secondary schooling	3
	Complete secondary schooling	4
	Some college/university	5
	Complete college/university diploma	6
	Master’s degree	7
	Doctorate	8

A7	What was respondent’s profession/position/occupational background before entering the parliament?	

A8	Please list all the positions the respondent has held within the legislature or government? <i>Including assistant whip, chief whip, assistant minister, minister, leader, Prime Minister. Try to get dates if possible</i>		
	Position:	From:	To:

A9	Please specify what role(s) the respondent has played during his/her time in parliament? Please note dates of presidential support and dates of opposition life.	
	Coalition member (From-to) 1. 2. 3.	Opposition member (From-to): 1. 2. 3.

A10	Which is the respondent's current main role: opposition or coalition member?	
	Coalition member	1
	Opposition member	2

A11	Is the respondent a member of: <i>Please note the period you are referring to: _____</i>	
	The president's party	1
	Another party, which is a part of the presidential coalition	2
	An ambiguous, independent group in parliament	3
	An opposition party	4
	No longer in political life	5

B. Structured Questions

Bold text is to be read, text in *italics* is to guide interviewers.

Interviewer, only use 888 or 999 if respondent is completely unable to respond or refuses to answer the questions.

B1	Presidents often face difficult choices when they assemble a base of support in the legislature. Imagine that you were the president, which would be the best strategy to manage relationships with parliament? Please choose only one of the alternatives below.	
	Form a coalition that is more ideologically consistent, even if it doesn't reach an absolute majority in the legislature	1
	Form a coalition that reaches an absolute majority in the legislature, even if it is not consistent in ideological terms	2
	<i>Don't know</i>	888
	<i>Refused</i>	999

B2	In this country presidents have attempted to build coalitions to secure a legislative majority. Some people think that such strategies on the part of presidents led to positive outcomes, others think that they led to negative outcomes. I would like to know to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. <i>Read options</i>					
	In general presidential coalitions: <i>Please read this prompt after every 3-4 items</i>					
		1	2	3	4	888
		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	999
						<i>Don't know</i>
	A. Enhance the quality of public policies					
	B. Encourage the legislature to transfer policy making authority to the president					
	C. Make law-making process more decisive					
	D. Make the president a hostage of the coalition					
	E. Permit the representation of diverse social interests					
	F. Lead to a style of politics based on the exchange of favours					
	G. Make it more difficult for voters to assign accountability					
	H. Encourage political stability					
	I. Undermine the ability of the legislature to hold the president accountable					
	J. Lead to opportunistic support for the government of the day					
	K. Have enhanced the quality of democracy in your country					
	L. Marginalize the influence of the opposition within parliament					

B3	Now I would like to talk about the relationship of the executive to the parliament. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <i>Specify president/period</i>						
		1	2	3	4	888	999
		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Refused</i>
	A. The president can strongly influence the appointment of the speaker						
	B. The president can strongly influence the appointment of committee chairs						
	C. Parliamentarians know the president's position on all major legislation						
	D. To effectively manage a multiparty coalition the president must have strong control over his/her own party						
	E. A party will not join the president's coalition unless it is directly represented in the cabinet						

B4	Which factor do you think is the most important in determining the outcome of legislative proposals? <i>Wait for an answer then ask: Which is the second most important? Specify president/period. Show Card Set A</i>		
		1	2
	A. The position of the committee chair (<i>committee chair relevant to the bill</i>)		
	B. The position of the party leaders on the floor		
	C. The position of the executive branch		
	D. The position of the speaker		
	E. External pressures on the parliament e.g. public opinion or interest groups		
	<i>Don't know</i>		
	<i>Refused</i>		

B5	<p>In this country the executive branch has significant influence over the budgetary process. For which of the following factors is the president's influence over the budget the most decisive? Wait for an answer then ask: And what factor would you put in second place in terms of this budgetary influence? Specify president/period. Show Card Set B</p>		
		1	2
	A. The president's ability to discipline his own political party		
	B. To reward civil society organizations that support the president		
	C. The president's ability to maintain the loyalty of other parties within the coalition		
	D. Enhancement of the re-election prospects of MPs that support the president		
	E. The president's ability to maintain the support of economic interests that support the coalition		
	F. The president's ability to obtain the on-going support of sub-national political executives		
	Don't Know		
	Refused		

B6	<p>Some people say that a president cannot govern without forming a majority in the legislature. But others say that forming a coalition that is too large also can cause problems for presidents. Thinking like a president, in your opinion, what would be the desirable size for a stable and efficient base of support in the legislature? Please state a percentage of the seats in the lower house.</p>		
	<p>_____ % of the seats in the chamber</p>		
	Don't know		888
	Refused		999

B7	<p>I am going to read two statements about the timing of coalition formation, please tell me which is closest to your view? If the respondent says that both are important, ask which one is the most important.</p>		
	The president assembles his coalition during election campaigns		1
	The president assembles his coalition after the elections are over		2
	The respondent insisted that both are equally important		777
	Don't know		888
	Refused		999

B8	Please indicate which of the following factors has the most impact on the president's ability to keep his/her governing coalition together. <i>Wait for an answer then ask: Which is the second most important? Show Card Set C</i>		
		1	2
	A. Economic performance		
	B. The president's ability to stand for re-election		
	C. The level of presidential popularity in opinion polls		
	D. The emergence of corruption scandals within the ruling coalition		
	E. Impending legislative elections		
	Don't Know		
	Refused		

Thank you, the first part of the interview is completed. Now I would like to ask you a few open-ended questions so that we can benefit from the full breadth of your knowledge.

C. Semi-Structured Questions

Interviewer, please write down the answers verbatim (if the interview is not being recorded).

C1. Sometimes it is clear who belongs to a presidential coalition because parties formally declare their support for the president. Are there any other ways to identify supporters of the presidential coalition?

If answers yes, ask to elaborate.

C2. Using your definition, could you please identify who is a part of the current presidential coalition in parliament? *If the respondent has not mentioned opposition MPs or independents then ask: are there any MPs who are formally independents or members of the opposition parties but behave like they are members of the presidential coalition?*

C3. Thinking about the coalition you specified when was the critical moment at which the coalition took shape? *If the respondent replies only with the date, ask what was important about that particular moment.*

C4. And which tools or strategies did the president use to form it?

C5. Are there any examples in this country of presidents who were ineffective in forming and maintaining coalitions? If so, what do you think were the primary reasons for this? *If the respondent talks only about formation or maintenance, ask him/her to elaborate on the other dimension as well.*

C6. In general what are the rewards or benefits for parties or politicians that join the presidential coalition? *If the respondent does not mention the budgetary process, ask if the respondent thinks the budgetary powers of the president are important.*

C7. In general what are the disadvantages for parties or politicians that are outside of the coalition?

Interviewer, at this point please classify your respondent as having more political experience as a coalition member or as an opposition member



If answering as a coalition member proceed to C8A and C9A



If answering as an opposition member proceed to C8B and C9B

C8A. Thinking about a moment in which you belonged to the presidential coalition, what role, if any, did the president and/or representatives of the presidential administration play at meetings of your party?

C9A. Thinking about a moment in which you belonged to the presidential coalition, do you recall any instances of legislative proposals on which your party adopted a position contrary to the stated position of the executive? What, if any, were the costs to your party for taking a dissenting position? Could you talk a little bit about one of these instances of conflict and describe how you arrived at your voting decision?

C8B. Thinking about a moment in which you belonged to the opposition bloc, what was the role of the opposition when the president had a stable coalition in parliament? *Prompt: what did you focus your activities on during the period?*

C9B. Thinking about a moment in which you belonged to the opposition bloc, do you recall any instances of legislative proposals in which you or other members of your party voted with the presidential coalition against the stated position of your party leadership? What, if any, were the costs to you or your colleagues for taking a dissenting position? Could you talk a little bit about one of these instances of conflict and describe how you arrived at your voting decision?

C10. Were there any situations when the parliament has held the president to account? *Interviewer, if the respondent says yes ask: Did accountability occur because the president was accountable to his/her coalition or to parliament as an institution? If the respondent says no, inquire why the respondent thinks that accountability is so weak.*

C11. What factors do you think would lead a party to consider leaving a presidential coalition?

C12. Presidents use different types of strategies to manage multiparty coalitions. Some may use primarily formal tools, for example giving parties cabinet positions. Others may use informal tools such as the exchange of personal favours, resources, or jobs. Thinking of recent history, could you identify presidents who relied more heavily on one or the other type of tools? *If the respondent talks only about formal tools, ask to think about the presidents that used informal tools. If the answer is informal, ask to elaborate on specific strategies.*

I would like to conclude our interview with three final questions.

B9	Here are some reasons why a political party might choose to join a presidential coalition. Looking at the card, please indicate which you think is the most important. Wait for an answer then ask: And the second most important? Show Card Set D.		
		1	2
	A. To acquire strategic posts in the legislature for the party (i.e. speaker, committee chairs)		
	B. To increase the party's influence over public policy		
	C. To maximize the party's influence over the budgetary process		
	D. To secure cabinet positions for the party		
	E. To secure favourable treatment (by the executive) for party members and interests represented by the party		
	F. To boost electoral support for the party		
	Don't know		
	Refused		

B10	In this country presidents have formed coalitions to secure a legislative majority. Please rank the following tools presidents may use to form a legislative coalition in terms of their effectiveness. Show Card Set E and ask the respondent to order the cards and rank the tools in order of importance (from top to bottom).					
		1	2	3	4	5
	A. Direct legislative powers of the president (such as decree or veto powers)					
	B. Budgetary control					
	C. Power to appoint to the Cabinet					
	D. Control over their party					
	E. Exchange of favours					
	Don't know					
	Refused					

B11	Thinking about a country like yours, which of the following comes closest to your view? <i>Interviewer, if the respondent insists that both are true, repeat the phrase: "comes closest to your view"</i>	
	A presidential coalition that dominates parliament is beneficial to this country because it generates political stability	1
	A presidential coalition that dominates parliament is harmful to this country because it weakens democratic accountability	2
	The respondent insisted that both are true in his/her view	777
	Don't know	888
	Refused	999

Thank you for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW

	HOUR	MINUTE
TIME INTERVIEW ENDED: USE 24 HOUR CLOCK		

D. After the Interview

Interviewer, please complete this section AFTER the interview

D1	Where did the interview take place?	
	MP's office or other private office	1
	Public place in parliamentary premises	2
	Public place outside parliamentary premises	3
	Lobby of MP motel/living quarters/complex	4
	The MP's house	5
	Your house	6
	Other, please specify: _____	90

D2	Were others present?	
	No	0
	Yes	1

D3	Which of the following were present? <i>Tick all that apply</i>	
	None were present	0
	Staff of the MP	1
	Other MPs	2
	Senior party leaders	3
	Junior party leaders	4
	Friends of the MP	5
	Other, please specify: _____	90

D4	Did MP check with others for information before answering?	
	No	0
	Yes	1

D5	Who did he check with? <i>Tick all that apply</i>	
	Nobody	0
	Staff of the MP	1
	Other MPs	2
	Senior party leaders	3

	Junior party leaders	4
	Friends of the MP	5
	Other, please specify: _____	90

D6	What proportion of the questions do you feel the respondent had difficulty answering?	
	None	0
	A few	1
	Some	2
	Most	3
	All	4
	Specific questions <i>If particular questions stood out please specify:</i> _____	

D7	What proportion of the questions do you feel the respondent was uncomfortable answering?	
	None	0
	A few	1
	Some	2
	Most	3
	All	4
	Specific questions <i>If particular questions stood out please specify:</i> _____	

D8	What was the MP's attitude toward you during the interview?			
		1	2	3
	A. S/he was	Friendly	In Between	Hostile
	B. S/he was	Interested	In Between	Bored
	C. S/he was	Cooperative	In Between	Uncooperative
	D. S/he was	Patient	In Between	Impatient
	E. S/he was	At ease	In Between	Suspicious
	F. S/he was	Honest	In Between	Misleading