

Between Typologies and Evidence: Characterizing Executive– Legislative Relations in Acre

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Abstract: Research on subnational policy decision-making has revealed important institutional differences across Brazilian states. Yet these dynamics remain relatively understudied in Brazilian political science, where several federative units continue to be underrepresented. This research note examines Executive–Legislative relations in the state of Acre through the lens of theoretical typologies of interbranch interaction. The analysis covers 3,052 bills introduced between 2007 and 2022 across four legislative terms. Random-effects logistic regression models (GLMMs) are used to estimate the factors associated with bill approval, including ideological proximity between parties, caucus size, membership on the leadership board, affiliation with the governor’s party, and participation in electoral coalitions. The preliminary findings point to a politicized model in which party dynamics play an important role. At the same time, the results reveal institutional features associated with low levels of professionalization, institutionalization, and procedural universalism, alongside a high degree of discretion exercised by legislators holding leadership positions. The study also suggests new avenues for research on state legislatures in Brazil, particularly approaches that systematically incorporate into analytical models both the complexity of Executive–Legislative interactions and the varying degrees of professionalization among legislative assemblies.

Keywords: Subnational politics; Executive–Legislative relations; legislative bills; political parties; electoral coalitions.

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Introduction

Research on policy decision-making at the subnational level remains limited in Brazilian political science, especially with regard to the Northern states. Which have attracted far less scholarly attention than those in the South, Southeast, and Northeast regions (SILAME and SILVA, 2022). In this research note, we examine a set of indicators commonly used in the literature to characterize Executive–Legislative relations in the state of Acre, drawing on legislative output across four legislative terms. Our study also contributes to the literature by employing a random-effects logistic regression model to identify the main determinants of this legislative output.

Pioneering studies of Executive–Legislative relations in Brazil's states generally portrayed legislatures as subordinate to the will of governors. In his now-classic study, Fernando Abrucio (1998) argued that governors derived their strength from what he termed an 'ultra-presidential' political system. Within this arrangement, relations between governors and state assemblies were characterized by what he described as a 'rubber-stamp pact' between the two branches: legislators would approve Executive initiatives with virtually no resistance in exchange for parochial or particularistic benefits for their electoral constituencies and closest political allies. From this perspective, state legislatures were seen as weakly institutionalized and minimally professionalized, reflecting both the concentration of resources in the Executive and the absence of effective mechanisms of oversight and accountability.

The significance of this thesis for the study of Executive–Legislative relations in Brazil's states is undeniable, as Silame and Silva (2022) show that 76% of the scholarship on the subject has drawn on the concept. As Silame and Silva (2022) also argue, however, with the passage of time and the growing historical distance from Brazil's democratic transition, ultra-presidentialism has come to represent only one of several possible patterns structuring relations between the branches of government within the Brazilian Federation.

Research in this field has revealed important variations in institutional arrangements across Brazilian states, both in terms of legislative output and of the internal organization of state assemblies. Accordingly, scholarship on legislatures and Executive–Legislative relations must broaden its analytical lens and move beyond the longstanding neglect of newer Brazilian states, which have consequently received far less scholarly attention. The limited representation of these states in the literature constrains our understanding of subnational institutional dynamics and of the insights these experiences may offer. Addressing this gap requires greater research efforts, particularly in legislative assemblies where access to data is hampered by weaker levels of institutional development, poor archival digitization, and limited transparency in legislative procedures.

This study focuses on a specific case: Executive–Legislative relations in the state of Acre between 2007 and 2022. The topic has received little sustained attention in the literature, whether in studies centered on the State Legislative Assembly of Acre (ALEAC) or in analyses covering longer periods. This is understandable, largely because of the limited information and incomplete records on bills available on the institution’s website, which often makes on-site archival research unavoidable. Still, examining four consecutive legislatures allowed us to identify recurring patterns and evaluate the persistence of certain dynamics, which are discussed in greater detail below.

Studying Executive–Legislative relations in Acre is particularly valuable insofar as it broadens the empirical scope of research on coalition presidentialism at the subnational level by bringing into focus a historically understudied state. The political dynamics observed in Acre offer novel empirical contributions and open new avenues for future research, particularly for comparative analyses with other state legislatures drawing on an original, publicly accessible database developed in accordance with best practices in transparency and replicability.

Acre has undergone one of the most significant political and social transformations in the recent history of the Legal Amazon, making it a particularly valuable case for evaluating established theoretical models of interbranch relations. The state also provides a useful basis for comparison with other governments in Northern Brazil, helping to shed light on broader patterns of regional variation. In addition, examining its Legislative Assembly through the use of an original database contributes to a broader understanding of how Brazilian state legislatures operate, especially those located in the Legal Amazon.

The empirical effort to analyze an understudied state creates opportunities to engage with and replicate findings from the literature on subnational politics, opens new avenues for research, and offers fresh perspectives for the study of subnational legislative assemblies.

This research note is guided by the following question: How should we characterize relations between the Executive and Legislative branches in the state of Acre? To address this question, we first draw on the typology proposed by Silame and Silva (2022) and then, in the conclusion, point to additional lines of inquiry that extend beyond the scope of the present analysis. According to the authors, these relations can be classified into three types: 01. autonomous, when state assemblies formulate their own public policy agenda; 02. politicized, when legislative activity is structured around government–opposition conflict; and 03. ultra-presidential, based on the logic of a ‘rubber-stamp pact’.

From a methodological standpoint, our study contributes by applying generalized linear mixed models (GLMMs) with random effects in this context. We rely on two

complementary analytical strategies. First, we analyze aggregated party-level data and estimate random party effects in order to capture organizational and strategic differences that cannot be directly observed. Second, we analyze individual bills using random effects for bill sponsors, allowing us to control for heterogeneity among legislators in terms of legislative skill, experience, and political networks.

Although widely employed in other areas of the social sciences, this methodological approach remains relatively uncommon in studies of Brazilian subnational legislatures. Accounting for within-group dependence allows the models to produce estimates more accurate of the factors associated with legislative success while also measuring the relative weight of party-level and individual-level characteristics in the legislative process.

The identification of individual characteristics as determinants of legislative success led us to engage with the literature on institutionalization (POLSBY, 1968) and legislative professionalization (SQUIRE, 2007). Our models indicate that holding leadership positions within the Assembly – specifically on the leadership board – is a key variable in determining a legislator’s ability to secure approval for bills, suggesting high levels of discretion and limited procedural universalism and, consequently, low levels of institutionalization and professionalization within the ALEAC.

Data collection and organization

Efforts to collect and organize data on ordinary bills (PLs), complementary bills (PLCs), and proposed constitutional amendments (PECs) between 2007 and 2022 unfolded in three stages.

Stage 01.

Collection of data from the ALEAC digital archive (<https://sapl.al.ac.leg.br/materia/pesquisar-materia>). After the initial data collection, several inconsistencies became apparent, largely due to outdated records and missing information on the status of bills, which required an additional stage of research.

Stage 02.

Review of the index of enacted ordinary and complementary laws to verify and, when necessary, correct the information available in the ALEAC digital archive, while also supplementing the material collected during the first stage by identifying enacted laws and confirming the bills from which they originated.

Stage 03.

On-site examination of the physical archives containing records on bills and legislative proceedings, maintained by the ALEAC Undersecretariat for Legislative Activities, in

order to resolve remaining gaps in the data and verify information collected during earlier stages.

The universe of analysis consists of bills introduced in the ALEAC between 2007 and 2022, corresponding to the four most recently completed legislatures. Earlier periods were excluded because they had already been examined in a 2009 master's thesis on Executive–Legislative relations in Acre between 1999 and 2006 (TESTON, 2009). The data used in this study stem from the broader efforts of the Legal no Acre project¹, whose objectives include developing and publicly disseminating databases on both the state legislature and municipal legislatures. The project team makes these data publicly available through the project's Open Science Framework repository, which also provides all files necessary to replicate the analyses presented in this research note, along with the materials associated with the bulletins published on the laboratory's website.

Preliminary findings

To frame the analysis presented below, we begin by outlining our empirical expectations for each of the patterns of Executive–Legislative relations identified by Silame and Silva (2022).

Under the autonomous legislature model, the assembly is expected to play a leading role in substantive policymaking, while the Executive is expected to have a comparatively limited capacity to introduce and secure approval for bills. A low incidence of symbolic bills would further reinforce the Legislature's central role in shaping the policy agenda. Accordingly, we expect that:

H1a. The Executive will introduce fewer bills and have a lower success rate in securing approval for its bills than the Legislature.

H1b. The Legislature will dominate the relative volume of approved substantive legislation.

Under the politicized model, the Executive's strength rests on party coalitions rather than on one-on-one bargaining with legislators. As a result, parties differ in both the number of bills introduced by their members and in their success rates in securing approval. Symbolic bills tend to attract broad support regardless of ideology or alignment with the government, whereas the approval of substantive legislation depends on a legislator's proximity to the government and inclusion in the governing coalition. We therefore expect that:

¹Laboratory for Geopolitical Studies of the Legal Amazon. Available at < <https://legal-amazonia.org/estado/acre/> >.

H2a. Parties will differ significantly in both the number of bills introduced by their members and in their legislative success rates.

H2b. Symbolic bills will receive high levels of approval regardless of legislators' ideological positions or alignment with the government.

H2c. The approval of substantive bills will be positively associated with legislators' alignment with the government and their inclusion in the governing coalition.

Finally, an ultra-presidential scenario would be characterized by a governor who exercises strong control over the legislative agenda and encounters little resistance in securing approval for government initiatives, regardless of when bills are introduced – whether during the final year of the legislative term, which coincides with the electoral cycle, or earlier (TOMIO and RICCI, 2012). Legislators would be expected to focus on symbolic bills, while substantive legislation would originate primarily from the Executive. Party-level effects, meanwhile, would be expected to be less pronounced. We therefore expect that:

H3a. Legislators will be more likely to introduce symbolic bills than substantive bills.

H3b. The Executive will dominate the approval of substantive legislation.

H3c. Differences in legislative success rates across parties and between members and non-members of the governing coalition will be small or statistically insignificant.

H3d. Approval rates for Executive bills will show no significant variation during the final year of the legislative term.

We now turn to the data analysis. Between 2007 and 2022, legislators introduced a total of 3,052 bills in the ALEAC. Of these, 2,767 (90.7%) were ordinary bills (PLs), 248 (8.1%) were complementary bills (PLCs), and 37 (1.2%) were proposed constitutional amendments (PECs).

Although legislators introduced more bills and even secured approval for a larger number of them in absolute terms, the Executive achieved considerably higher rates of legislative success. Of the 925 bills introduced by the Executive, 861 (93.1%) were approved. By comparison, Acrean legislators secured approval for 1,330 (65.0%) of the 2,046 bills they introduced. Executive dominance – measured as the percentage of bills introduced by the governor and approved relative to all bills approved by the Assembly – reached 39.3%. The relative ease with which the Executive secured approval for its agenda does not appear consistent with an autonomous legislature scenario (H1a, H1b).

Examining the legislatures individually, we find that legislators introduced a larger number of bills in every legislature, with average success rates consistently above 50%, especially during the 12th Legislature (2007–2010), when more than 80% of legislators' bills were approved. As noted above, Executive dominance over lawmaking remained relatively stable across all included periods, with the Executive responsible for roughly 40% of all approved legislation (Table 01). The share of Executive-sponsored bills enacted into law exceeded 90% in three of the four legislatures studied, closely mirroring the pattern observed in the National Congress. Particularly striking, however, is the decline of more than 10 percentage points in Executive success between the first and last periods analyzed – the latter corresponding to the 2019–2022 legislature, during Governor Gladson Cameli's (PP) first term in office.

Table 01. Legislative success by branch and executive dominance by legislature

Legislature	Executive Success Rate	Legislative Success Rate	Total Bills Approved	Executive Dominance*
2007-2010	97.8%	81.8%	551	40.7%
2011-2014	97.0%	69.5%	579	39.7%
2015-2018	90.3%	59.3%	416	40.4%
2019-2022	87.5%	55.9%	645	37.1%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: *Indicates the percentage of Executive-sponsored bills approved relative to all bills approved by the Assembly.

In addition to the success rates calculated for each legislature as a whole, Table 02 reports approval rates specifically for the final year of each legislative term. Variation throughout a legislature, particularly during election years, can serve as an indicator of government stability and may signal changes in the Executive's legislative support base (TOMIO and RICCI, 2012). Approval rates for Executive-sponsored bills remained stable throughout the first three legislatures, all under PT administrations, with no evidence of decline in the final year of each term (2010, 2014, and 2018), which could otherwise suggest difficulties in sustaining the government's agenda in the ALEAC. Under Cameli's administration (PP), however, the decline observed in 2022 was more pronounced: nearly 20% of the governor's bills failed to secure approval, mirroring the broader pattern observed throughout the administration.

Throughout the period considered, the governor consistently achieved higher success rates than legislators. The pattern observed under Cameli's administration, however, diverges from the expectations of the ultra-presidentialism thesis, which holds that the Executive's success rate should remain stable over the course of a term in office (H3d). Instead, the Executive was unable to sustain the same level of legislative performance achieved by previous administrations, with approval rates declining substantially in the administration's final year.

Table 02. Legislative success by branch and executive dominance in the final year of each legislature

Year	Executive success rate	Legislative success rate	Total bills aproved	Executive dominance*
2010	100%	89.1%	149	39.6%
2014	96.7%	75.6%	91	31.9%
2018	90.0%	48.4%	24	37.5%
2022	81.2%	67.4%	181	35.9%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

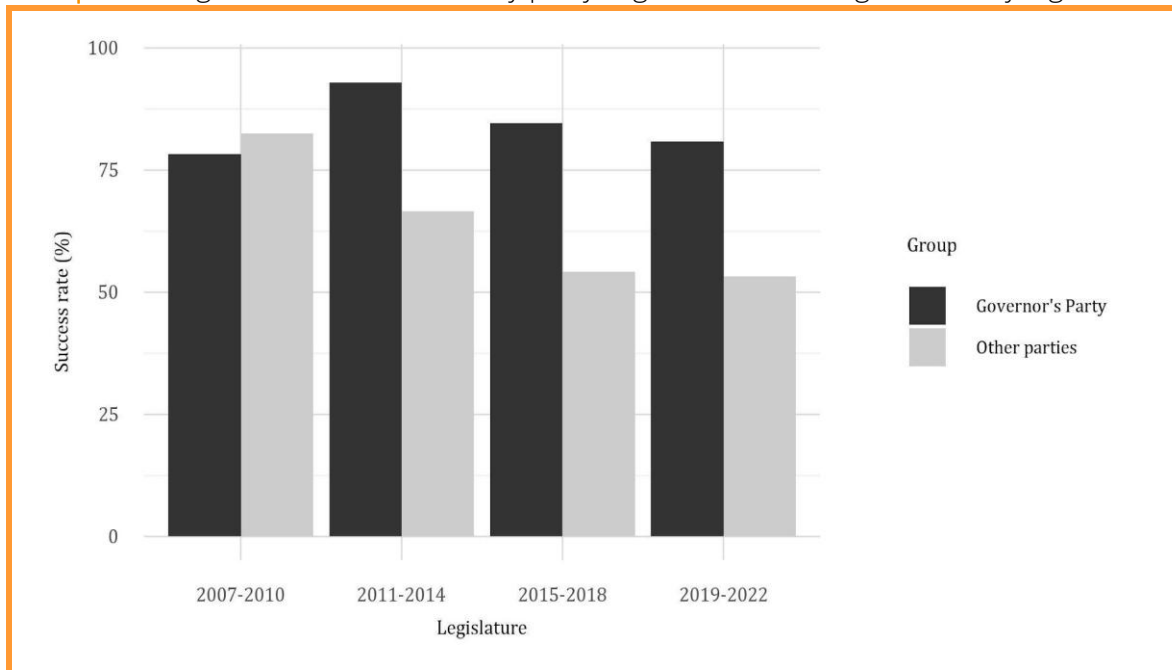
Notes: * Indicates the percentage of Executive-sponsored bills approved relative to all bills approved by the Assembly.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that, during Binho Marques's administration (2007–2010), 100% of the bills introduced by the Executive secured approval in the Assembly. This period also saw the highest legislative success rates for state legislators across the entire timeframe, with 89.79% of their bills approved. Explaining these variations may require closer attention to party dynamics and the formation of governing coalitions in more politicized political environments.

PT legislators – the party that controlled the Executive during the first three analyzed legislatures (2007–2018) – recorded a success rate of 84.7% under PT administrations and 70.0% under the PP administration (2019–2022). They also introduced more bills than any other party during this period, accounting for 13.7% of all bills introduced and approved by legislators. PP legislators, meanwhile, achieved an approval rate of 75.8% under PT administrations and 80.9% once their own party came to power, suggesting that affiliation with the governor's party may be an important determinant of legislative success. This difference is illustrated in Graph 01, which contrasts the performance of government-aligned legislators with that of the rest of the legislature. The variation observed across parties is consistent with the politicized model discussed above.

Beyond distinguishing bills by approval outcome, the data also allow us to analyze them by subject matter. Compared with federal deputies and senators, state legislators typically achieve higher approval rates for their bills, although these rates tend to decline when attention is restricted to substantive bills (ABRUCIO, TEIXEIRA and COSTA, 2001; ARAÚJO, 2018; DOMINGUES, 2001; TOMIO and RICCI, 2012). In other words, a portion of state legislators' output consists of symbolic bills with no direct effect on public policy – including honorary measures, commemorative dates, and the naming of public institutions.

Graph 01. Legislative success rates by party alignment with the governor, by legislature



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 03 classifies bills according to their origin and primary subject area. Nearly 50% of all bills introduced by legislators are honorary or symbolic in nature; by the same token, this means that roughly half of legislative output is non-symbolic – a share that is far from insignificant. Executive-sponsored bills, by contrast, are concentrated primarily in the areas of politics and public administration (73.5%).

In addition to legislative output, we also considered the ideological composition of each legislature and its proximity to the Executive's party ideology (Table 04). To do so, we drew on self-placement data from members of the National Congress serving during the corresponding legislative terms, collected through the Brazilian Legislative Survey (ZUCCO, 2023). Although these measures cannot be treated as fully accurate representations of party ideology at the subnational level, they provide the best available alternative in the absence of equivalent data for the state legislature.

The Executive's ideological orientation shifted more sharply with the transition from PT administrations (2007–2018) to the PP government beginning in 2019. Even so, the ideological distance between the governor and the assembly during this period was the second smallest observed across the period analyzed. Moreover, except for the first legislature examined, the assembly's ideological average remained relatively stable, already reflecting the broader rightward shift in Brazil's party system. Thus, it was during Binho Marques's PT administration (2007–2010) that both the Executive and the Legislature recorded their highest approval rates, precisely in the legislature where the ideological distance between the two branches was smallest and at a time when the PT still controlled a large share of seats in the ALEAC.

Table 03. Distribution of bills by subject area and branch

Subject area	Executive		Legislative	
	N	%	N	%
Government and public administration	680	73.5	263	12.9
Economy	102	11.0	28	1.4
Budget	39	4.2	18	0.9
Environment	17	1.8	25	1.2
Education, Culture, and Sports	14	1.5	98	4.8
Labor, Social Security, and Welfare	12	1.3	14	0.7
Human Rights	11	1.2	125	6.1
Honorary and Symbolic	9	1.0	1018	49.8
Pandemic	9	1.0	101	4.9
Health	7	0.8	114	5.6
Urban Affairs and Transportation	6	0.6	35	1.7
Public Security	5	0.5	27	1.3
Agriculture	5	0.5	18	0.9
Consumer Protection	4	0.4	59	2.9
Science, Technology, and Communications	4	0.4	6	0.3
Public Utility Declarations	1	0.1	90	4.4
Other	0	0.0	7	0.3

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: Each bill was classified into a single subject area.

Table 04. Ideological distance between the Assembly and the Executive

Legislature	Assembly Ideology	Executive Ideology	Ideological Distance
2007-2010	3.68	3.00	0.68
2011-2014	4.54	2.62	1.92
2015-2018	4.92	2.47	2.45
2019-2022	4.72	6.00	1.28

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Up to this point, the findings point to a politicized pattern of Executive–Legislative relations, while also showing that some expectations associated with other models do not hold in this case. The analysis now turns to how party dynamics help account for the legislative outcomes observed.

To better understand how ideological proximity between the branches affects the approval rates of party-sponsored bills, we first estimated two logistic regression models. In this case, the dependent variable is binary, corresponding to whether or not a sponsor's bills were approved, grouped by party. The models include each party's ideological distance from the assembly average, its ideological distance from the Executive party, and the size of its legislative caucus (Table 05).

Table 05. Party-level regression models

Coefficient	Model 01		Model 02	
	β	$\exp(\beta)$		$\exp(\beta)$
Intercept	0.195	1.22	0.401	1.49
Distance from the Assembly	0.351***	1.42	0.355***	1.43
Distance from the Executive	-0.279***	0.76	-0.279***	0.76
Caucus Size	0.312***	1.37	0.307***	1.36
Polarization			-0.114	0.89

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: * *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Model 01 indicates that, for each additional point in the ideological distance between the sponsoring party and the assembly's average ideological position, the probability of approval increases by 42%. In other words, parties located farther from the assembly's average ideological position tend to achieve higher success rates. At first glance, this finding is somewhat counterintuitive and runs counter to our initial expectations. One possible explanation is that parties positioned farther from the average legislator tend to introduce fewer bills, or only do so when other factors increase the likelihood of approval. Alternatively, this finding may simply indicate that ideology plays a limited role in structuring legislative outcomes in this context. It is important to note that the ideological data refer to parties at the national level, and ideological differences at the state level may therefore, not be fully captured.

In the same model, we find that the closer a party is to the governor, the greater the likelihood that a sponsor from that party will secure approval for a bill: each additional point of ideological distance from the governor reduces the likelihood of approval by 24%. This finding is consistent with expectations, given the higher approval rates previously observed among members of the governor's party throughout the analyzed period, which further reinforces the importance of alignment with the Executive. Finally, Model 01 indicates that caucus size is an important predictor of legislative success, as expected. Each additional seat held by a party is associated with a 37% increase in the likelihood that a bill sponsored by one of its members will be approved.

Model 02 introduces legislative polarization as an additional explanatory variable. Polarization is measured through the assembly's internal ideological dispersion and captures the degree of fragmentation within the legislature. To operationalize this measure, we use the weighted standard deviation of the assembly's ideological average, with weights based on caucus size. The results show little variation between the two models and indicate that polarization has no significant effect.

One important consideration is that caucus size, much like ideology, does not capture the full range of differences between parties. Even parties with similarly sized caucuses and distinct ideological profiles may differ in their programmatic orientations and political interests, effectively making them different kinds of political ‘animals’. Caucus size and ideological distance capture part of what makes a party more or less successful, but party-specific characteristics – such as organizational resources, voting discipline, historical reputation, and networks of interparty cooperation – are not fully captured by these variables. In addition, bills introduced by members of the same party share unobserved characteristics that create within-group dependence, thereby violating the independence assumptions underlying traditional regression models. In other words, the models estimated thus far assume that, once the included variables are controlled for, all bills have the same baseline probability of approval. Once heterogeneity across parties is taken into account, however, a different model specification becomes necessary.

Accordingly, by incorporating the assumption of heterogeneity, we propose a logistic regression model with random effects (GLMM), in which bills introduced by members of the same party are expected to resemble one another more closely than bills sponsored by members of other parties. Rather than including a dummy variable for each party – which would lead to overparameterization given the large number of parties and the small number of legislators within each one – the model presented in Table 06 estimates a distribution of party-level random effects. This approach allows us to: 01. capture unobserved heterogeneity across parties; 02. account for within-group correlation, thereby producing more precise standard errors; and 03. quantify the share of variance attributable to differences between parties through the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient.

Table 06. Logistic regression model with party-level random effects

Fixed effects	Estimate	p-value
Intercept	1.614***	<0.001
Distance from the Assembly	-0.118	0.345
Distance from the Executive	-0.264***	<0.001
Caucus Size	0.011	0.906
Random effects	Variance	ICC
Party	1.182	0.26

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: * *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

To begin with, the variance of the party-level random intercept (1.182) suggests that parties account for a substantial portion of the variation in legislative success within the ALEAC. To further assess the extent to which parties contribute, on average, to legislators’ legislative success, we calculated the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) based on the variance of the party-level random intercept:

$$ICC = \frac{\sigma_{party}^2}{\sigma_{party}^2 + \pi^2/3}$$

The ICC value of approximately 0.26 indicates that around 26% of the variance in the probability of legislative success is attributable to differences between parties.

As for the remaining parameters in the model, only distance from the Executive remains statistically significant. In other words, much of what had previously been attributed to caucus size or ideological distance from the rest of the assembly is actually the result of party-level heterogeneity. The only ideological dimension that remains significant after controlling for party effects is proximity to the governor's party: the closer a party is to the governor, the greater the likelihood that one of its members will secure approval for a bill. In this model, internal polarization and caucus strength proved less important than the party affiliation of the bill sponsor, reinforcing the idea that party culture and organizational resources – captured through the random effects – play a crucial role.

Finally, we arrived at the main model of this study. We estimated the model at the level of individual bills rather than relying on party-level aggregates. The goal was to assess whether, and to what extent, party affiliation and the individual characteristics of bill sponsors influenced the legislative success of each bill. To this end, we introduced the following modifications to the model: 01. we added a binary variable indicating membership in the ALEAC leadership board during the corresponding legislature in order to control for the sponsor's greater institutional capacity; 02. we removed the indicators of party ideological distance – given the absence of individual-level ideology measures and to avoid collinearity between party affiliation and ideology – but included a variable indicating membership in the governor's party; 03. we included individual legislators as random effects, capturing unobserved differences among legislators (e.g., legislative skill, experience, prestige, and political networks) that may systematically affect their approval rates; and 04. we included electoral coalitions as a proxy for governing coalitions, assuming that legislators belonging to the governing coalition are more likely to secure approval for their bills. We opted to use electoral coalitions because data on governing coalitions themselves were unavailable.

A few observations about these choices are warranted. First, one would normally expect a regression model to include individual-level control variables for legislators, such as gender, education, professional background, political experience, and similar characteristics. Although these factors are not directly related to the mechanisms explored in our analysis, they could still affect the results and would therefore typically be included as controls. Our decision not to include individual-level variables in the main model, however, stems from the multilevel design itself. Logistic regression with random effects allows us to account for unobserved heterogeneity at the legislator level through the random intercept for bill authorship, which absorbs systematic

individual differences that cannot be directly observed. Because the purpose of the article is to assess the relevance of political, partisan, and institutional factors – rather than explain individual variation in legislative performance – these characteristics were treated as part of the unstructured individual-level variance. Even so, we present two additional models below including individual-level controls as a robustness check.

Table 07 presents two models with this specification: one including all bills (Model 04) and another including only non-symbolic bills (Model 05).

Table 07. Regression models at the bill level

Model 04			Model 05	
Fixed effects	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value
Intercept	0.868**	0.002	-0.992***	<0.001
Caucus Size	-0.114	0.393	-0.003	0.979
Member of the Governing Coalition	0.312	0.141	0.590*	0.012
Member of the Governor's Party	1.257**	0.006	1.263*	0.012
Member of the Leadership Board	-0.026	0.878	0.660**	0.006
Random effects	Variance	ICC	Variance	ICC
Bill Sponsor	0.503	0.126	0.497	0.131
Party	0.211	0.053	≈0.000	0.000
Residual ($\pi^2/3$)	—	0.822	—	0.869

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: * *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

In Model 04, which includes all bills, one notable finding is that caucus size appears to have a negative effect on the likelihood of a bill being approved, contrary to our initial expectations. However, although the estimated coefficient is negative, the effect is uncertain and statistically insignificant. The only statistically significant effect is membership in the governor's party: the odds of approval are more than three times higher for members of the governor's party (odds ratio = 3.51). We also observe a decline in the importance of party affiliation relative to the previous aggregated model. In this specification, party affiliation accounts for only 5.4% of the variation in the probability of bill approval, whereas 12.8% is explained by heterogeneity among bill sponsors. Overall, among the variables considered here, membership in the governor's party stands out as the strongest predictor of legislative success.

Everything changes, however, once we exclude honorific and symbolic bills in Model 05. Although the coefficient for caucus size remains negative, the effect itself is substantively negligible and statistically insignificant. Membership in the governing coalition and in the governor's party, by contrast, both have positive and statistically significant effects on the likelihood of approval. Members of the governing coalition

were 80% more likely to secure approval for their bills, consistent with hypothesis H2c. At the same time, the independent effect of party affiliation disappears. Thus, the relevance of parties in the approval of substantive legislation ultimately comes down to whether legislators belong to the governor's party or governing coalition. Once again, this suggests that the main distinction between parties may lie in their alignment with the Executive party. Future research dedicated to identifying governing coalitions over time – and across different stages of the legislative term – may help provide a more accurate account of legislative outcomes in the state.

In addition, membership on the ALEAC leadership board exerts a positive and statistically significant effect, indicating that legislators who hold these positions are more likely to secure approval for their bills because of the institutional advantages associated with the office (odds ratio = 1.93). This is an important finding and the strongest effect in the model. The institutional prerogatives of the leadership board largely explain this advantage in the legislative process. Members of the leadership board are responsible for organizing legislative business and overseeing the institution's proceedings, including setting the voting agenda. This privileged position gives these legislators greater control over the progress of their own bills, making it easier to place them on the agenda and prioritize debate at strategically favorable moments.

This finding is also consistent with the literature on subnational legislatures, which has emphasized the importance of internal power structures in determining legislative outcomes. More specifically, the results underscore the importance of examining the professionalization of state legislatures and the career trajectories typically associated with them – a dimension absent from the typology proposed by Silame and Silva (2022). The advantage enjoyed by legislators in privileged institutional positions in securing approval for their bills suggests that internal negotiations and hierarchies deserve greater analytical attention.

In both models, approximately 13% of the variation is explained at the legislator level, indicating substantial heterogeneity among bill sponsors. Both models also demonstrate that symbolic and substantive bills differ significantly in the factors that affect their likelihood of approval, a distinction that should be considered when studying subnational legislatures with high volumes of symbolic bills.

Taken together, the results indicate that parties do matter in the legislative dynamics of the state of Acre, even if their overall impact is limited. As for the type of Executive–Legislative relationship observed, the evidence suggests that relations within the ALEAC more closely resemble the politicized model, in which legislative outcomes are structured by party dynamics rather than by legislative autonomy or a rubber-stamp arrangement.

We found evidence contrary to both hypotheses associated with legislative autonomy (H1a and H1b). The Executive achieved higher approval rates for its bills while contributing relatively little to symbolic legislation, an area largely dominated by the Legislature.

Among the hypotheses associated with ultra-presidentialism, only H3b receives partial support, insofar as the Executive dominates the approval of substantive legislation. Although the Executive remains the central actor in the legislative process, legislators' participation was far from negligible. With respect to H3a, legislators introduced slightly more substantive than symbolic bills, even if the difference between them remained modest. We also identified meaningful differences across parties, particularly among those belonging to the governing coalition, pointing to the importance of party negotiations – contrary to the expectations of the ultra-presidentialism thesis, according to which negotiations occur primarily at the individual level (H3c). Finally, we found variation in the Executive's approval rate over the course of one gubernatorial term, a result that does not support hypothesis H3d.

Thus, although the Executive is clearly strong and faces little difficulty in securing approval for its agenda, our findings suggest that this process depends on negotiation with parties in the Assembly rather than on a rubber-stamp arrangement.

Overall, the evidence lends greater support to the hypotheses associated with the politicized model. We found that, when symbolic bills are included, membership in the governing coalition has little predictive power – a pattern that changes substantially once the analysis is restricted to substantive legislation (H2b and H2c). With regard to H2a, the main differences between parties appear to revolve around their level of support for the government. And, whether they belong to the governor's party.

Beyond the article's main questions, once individual-level heterogeneity among bill sponsors is taken into account, variables related to the Assembly's degree of institutionalization and professionalization emerge as potentially important explanatory factors, pointing to promising avenues for future research.

Lastly, we present two additional models that incorporate individual-level controls for legislators as a robustness check for the results presented thus far (Table 08): one including all bills (Model 06) and another excluding symbolic bills (Model 07). Three new variables were added: legislator gender, age, and educational attainment. Age refers to the legislator's age at the time of electoral registration and therefore remains constant throughout the period under analysis. Its coefficient should therefore be interpreted as reflecting generational differences among legislators rather than changes associated with aging over the course of successive legislatures.

Educational attainment was recoded into three broader categories (primary, secondary, and higher education) in order to avoid sparse categories and ensure the

statistical stability of the model while preserving substantively meaningful distinctions in legislators' educational backgrounds.

We obtained the data from the electoral records of the Superior Electoral Court. Missing information for substitute legislators serving in office was manually completed using official sources for the corresponding legislative year, without overwriting the original observations.

Overall, the results of the main models remain largely unchanged. In the model including all bills (Model 06), legislator age emerges as a statistically significant factor, suggesting that younger legislators are more likely to secure approval for their bills – an effect that disappears once the analysis is restricted to non-symbolic legislation.

Table 08. Robustness test with the inclusion of individual-level control variables

	Model 06		Model 07	
Fixed effects	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value
Intercept	1.197*	0.048	-1.917**	0.008
Caucus Size	-0.218	0.139	-0.030	0.862
Member of the Governing Coalition	0.285	0.210	0.578*	0.016
Member of the Governor's Party	1.622**	0.001	1.344*	0.019
Member of the Leadership Board	0.122	0.503	0.703**	0.004
Sponsor Gender (*male)	-0.141	0.698	0.069	0.852
Secondary Education	0.156	0.778	1.170	0.051
Higher Education	-0.155	0.736	0.960	0.079
Age	-0.055***	< 0.001	-0.006	0.670
Random effects	Variance	ICC	Variance	ICC
Bill Sponsor	0.616	0.149	0.374	0.102
Party	0.216	0.052	0.022	0.006
Residual ($\pi^2/3$)	—	0.798	—	0.892

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Notes: * *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Concluding remarks

In this research note, we examined legislative activity in the ALEAC across four legislative terms in order to address the following guiding question: How should we characterize relations between the Executive and Legislative branches in the state of Acre?

Considering the typology proposed by Silame and Silva (2022), we found no evidence of a pattern typically associated with autonomous legislatures – that is, one in which the Assembly pursues an independent public policy agenda. Instead, the results point to a scenario in which the Executive encounters relatively little difficulty in securing approval for its agenda, even though its success rate declined over time. Overall legislative activity remained relatively balanced, with the Executive’s dominance rate hovering at around 40% across all legislative terms.

At the same time, roughly half of the bills introduced by legislators consisted of symbolic measures, while the Executive remained the primary sponsor of substantive legislation. This pattern partially aligns with expectations associated with a ‘rubber-stamp arrangement’, according to which parliamentary activity tends to be low-impact and parochial. On the other hand, the fact that nearly half of legislators’ bills did not fall into the honorific category suggests that there was also room for initiatives with more substantive policy effects. Moreover, most legislation enacted in the state continued to originate from the Legislature rather than from the Executive.

We found no evidence that the Legislature lacked the political capacity to influence state policymaking. Although governors displayed high dominance rates and encountered little resistance in securing approval for their policy agendas, the findings point to clear party differences, highlighting the importance of this dimension. Belonging to the governor’s party, participation in the governing coalition, and variation across parties all help account for part of the legislative outcomes observed during the period analyzed. We also emphasize the importance of legislators’ membership on the ALEAC leadership board, which indicates a low degree of procedural universalism along the lines proposed by Polsby (1968) and may also reflect comparatively low levels of legislative professionalization overall (Squire, 2007).

Therefore, the preliminary results point to a politicized pattern in which parties play a meaningful role. Differences across parties – especially in relation to the governor’s party – emerge both in the number of bills introduced and in their success rates. Likewise, the electoral coalitions formed during the period help explain part of the legislative outcomes observed, suggesting that governing coalitions also shape legislative outcomes. In this sense, the Executive appears to build its legislative support base through negotiations with parties rather than exclusively – or even primarily – through negotiations with individual legislators.

In a study examining variation in legislators’ views on the most effective strategies governors can use to secure legislative support, Nunes (2012) highlights the importance attributed to political parties. By emphasizing the complexity of negotiations between the two branches – especially in fragmented party systems – the author proposes an alternative approach that considers not only discrete choices, but also strategic interactions. Rather than viewing governors as actors seeking to

maximize one strategy over another, the empirical findings suggest that they may pursue both simultaneously. Some legislators favor direct negotiations, whereas others view the formation of a multiparty cabinet and the construction of a legislative coalition as the more effective strategy. In other words, different allies respond to different incentives, leading the Executive to adopt different strategies depending on the nature of the negotiations at hand.

This pattern of party dynamics is consistent with most of the recent literature on Executive–Legislative relations and resembles the pattern observed in the National Congress, albeit with features specific to the subnational level (NUNES, 2012; SILAME and SILVA, 2022; TOMIO and RICCI, 2012). In our case, perhaps the main peculiarity lies in the low degree of legislative professionalization and procedural universalism, coupled with the broad discretion exercised by legislators occupying leadership positions, especially those serving on the leadership board.

Beyond its local particularities, the case of Acre offers useful insights for comparative analyses of Brazilian legislative assemblies, especially those outside the South–Southeast axis. The findings indicate that a politicized dynamic can coexist with low levels of professionalization and institutionalization. The decisive influence of the leadership board on legislative success further suggests that, in states where the legislative bureaucracy is less developed, control over internal procedures becomes a power resource as important as – or even more important than – ideology or caucus size.

Finally, we sought to demonstrate that random-effects regression models (GLMMs) offer a useful methodological approach for analyzing Executive–Legislative dynamics, especially in contexts characterized by limited data availability and poorly institutionalized information systems, as is the case in many state legislative assemblies.

We hope this research note helps open a new avenue for the study of state legislatures in Brazil, one that systematically incorporates into analytical models both the complexity of Executive–Legislative interactions and the varying degrees of professionalization among legislative assemblies.

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