

The Different Faces of Presidentialism: Conceptual Debate and Empirical Findings in Eighteen Latin American Countries

Las distintas caras del presidencialismo: debate conceptual y evidencia empírica en dieciocho países de América Latina

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Key words

- Latin America
- Constitutionalism
 - Political Control
 - Executive Power
 - Presidentialism
 - Political System
 - Economic Situation

Palabras clave

- América Latina
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 - Presidencialismo
 - Sistema político
 - Situación económica

Abstract

This article offers a new typology for examining presidentialism, in which the interaction between the political dimension (institutional and partisan presidential powers) and contextual dimension (the state of the economy and presidential approval) determine both the intensity of presidentialism and the type of political and social relationships derived from it. Looking at empirical evidence from eighteen Latin American countries, the article identifies four ideal types of presidentialism: imperial, conditioned, minimal, and transitional. Venezuela and Ecuador are empirical cases of imperial presidentialism while Honduras and Paraguay are on the threshold between conditioned presidentialism, and minimal presidentialism.

Resumen

Este artículo propone una nueva tipología sobre el presidencialismo en la que la interacción de las dimensiones política (poderes institucionales y partidistas del presidente) y contextual (estado de la economía del país y aprobación ciudadana al presidente) da cuenta tanto de la intensidad con la que se presenta dicha forma de gobierno como del tipo de relaciones políticas y sociales que de allí se derivan. Tomando como referentes empíricos a dieciocho países de América Latina, el artículo plantea cuatro tipos ideales de presidencialismo: imperial, condicionado, mínimo y de transición. Venezuela y Ecuador aparecen como los referentes de presidencialismo imperial mientras que Honduras y Paraguay se encuentran en el límite entre el presidencialismo condicionado y el presidencialismo mínimo.

Citation

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INTRODUCTION

Following debates over the benefits of parliamentarism versus presidentialism to strengthen the stability of democracy (Cheibub, 2007; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002; Linz, 1990), academic discussion in Latin America focused on measuring how strong the presidents of the region were (Mustapic, 2002; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Baldez and Carey, 1999; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Nino, 1992)¹. Although research on this issue decreased at the end of the 20th century, the emergence of governments such as those of Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador –intuitively described as “hyper-presidential”– has revived interest in this subject (Penfold, 2010; Pérez-Liñan, 2003: 151). However, most analyses continue to concentrate on the constitutional powers of presidents in relation to other state actors².

Although such a focus is essential, this article proposes a theoretical framework in which the traditional institutional factors used to measure how *presidential* a country is are aggregated with other contextual factors, such as the state of the economy and the popularity of the head of state. In this way, not only are normative factors considered, but also those that form part of the daily praxis of politics and that are related to both the provision of material resources necessary for government administration and the general welfare of the population, as well as to the ability of the president to *represent* and build trust among the public. Based on this theoretical construct, an empirical mea-

sure of levels of presidentialism in eighteen Latin American countries is then proposed. Thus, this article provides an overview of the general state of presidentialism in the region.

This article is in four parts. First, there is a review of the literature on the subject, which focuses on gaps found in the definition of presidentialism and in the methodological strategies used for its measurement. In the second part, a theoretical framework is presented that captures the main features of different types of presidentialism and also aggregates key factors of the economic and social context. The third part presents the methodological strategies used for empirical measurement, and the main findings for the eighteen countries considered in the analysis are discussed. Finally, the fourth part offers some conclusions.

PRESIDENTIALISM: CONCEPTS AND MEASUREMENT IN THE LITERATURE

Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) defined presidentialism as a form of government in which the president is always the chief executive, is elected by popular vote either directly or indirectly, and both presidential and legislature terms are fixed. Sartori (1994: 84) added the idea that a presidential form of government is characterized by the impossibility of removing the chief executive through a parliamentary vote. Besides the idea of the fixed mandate already cited, Linz (1994: 6) added the legitimacy enjoyed by presidents that are directly elected. However, the element cited by Linz seems to be an effect of this form of government more than a defining feature of presidentialism. Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) also noted that in a pure presidentialism, presidents have the right to choose their own ministers, regardless of the composition of the Congress.

Along similar lines, in defining a pure presidentialism, Shugart and Carey (1992: 19) define this concept by the popular elec-

¹ A similar discussion is developed by Elgie (2011) when analyzing the impact of the different types of semi-presidentialism on the performance of democracy. One of his strongest conclusions was that the sub type of a “parliamentarized president” is the most likely to result in weak democracies and that the “premier-presidentialism” sub type is the most favorable for the performance of these political regimes.

² A notable exception is the recent work of Doyle and Elgie (2014).

tion of the chief executive, the fixed terms of the president and the legislature —and the absence of mutual votes of confidence between them— and the freedom of the president to designate the main members of his/her cabinet. In essence, the concept of presidentialism is based on both the separate origin of the executive —by popular direct or indirect election— and on the autonomous mandate of the president and the legislature, as neither of the two powers can shorten the period of the other (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002)³.

From the concepts presented, we see that presidentialism is in opposition to a parliamentary form of government as well as different types of semi-presidentialism (Sedelius and Mashtaler, 2013; Elgie, 1999)⁴. Thus, in presidentialism the chief executive is elected by popular vote, while under parliamentarism he or she is chosen by the will of the legislature. In addition, while terms are fixed under a presidentialist regime, in parliamentarism the term of the chief executive and his/her cabinet can be ended through a vote of no confidence. However, although these concepts are valid for comparative studies between presidentialism and parliamentarism, they are not adequate for the task of examining variations in the degree of presidentialism among countries that share that form of government⁵.

In this regard, most of the literature analysing the intensity of presidentialism in Latin

America starts from the idea that variations between countries are a result of the structure of mutual controls —*checks and balances*— between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. The assumption is that the greater the formal powers of the president with respect to his/her legislative and judicial counterparts, the greater is the intensity of presidentialism. Hence, it is concluded that there is a more intense presidentialism in those contexts in which chief executives have considerably extended spheres of formal political influence in comparison to other state powers (Nino, 1992; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010). At the level of empirical evaluation, the legislative powers of the executive, the executive powers of the legislature, control over the cabinet and influence in designating public servants are some of main empirical factors considered in the literature⁶.

In addition to the already mentioned institutional powers, Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) have shown the importance of legislative support for presidents and for assessing how presidentialist a country is. Regarding partisan powers, these authors note that the strength of the ruling bloc in the legislature is decisive in increasing the capacity of the executive to enact the public policies included in his/her governing agenda (Negretto, 2011; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002: 47). Although some authors have defined this set of factors as *informal powers* (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002: 47), and others conceptualize them as *associated powers* (Morgenstern, *et al.* 2013)⁷, in both cases they represent objec-

³ However, there are countries with presidentialist forms of government in which it is possible for the executive or legislature, under specific conditions, to end the mandate of the other. Ecuador, after the adoption of the 2008 Constitution, is one of these.

⁴ What is conceptualized as forms of presidentialist and parliamentary government in this article has its counterpart in what Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) defined as presidential and parliamentary democracies.

⁵ From the analytical perspective proposed by Tsebelis (2002), the distinction between presidential and parliamentary forms of government disappears, giving way to the idea of veto players and their spatial positioning.

⁶ An understudied aspect of presidentialism in Latin America is the role of certain institutions and officials, who although not a part of the cabinet, have decision-making power within the Executive. One of the seminal works on this subject, the study of “office of the presidency”, is by Inácio and Llanos (2015) and compares the presidencies of Brazil and Argentina.

⁷ For Morgenstern *et al.* (2013), associative powers include indirect constitutional mechanisms that directly strengthen formal legislation or the power of agenda.

tive dimensions that, along with those of an institutional nature, reveal the degree of presidentialism in a country. This perspective is explicitly found in different studies on presidentialism in Latin America (Ackerman-Ross, 2011; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010; Casar, 1999; Nino, 1992).

The connection between institutional and contextual dimensions in determining the degree of presidentialism in a country has also been considered in studies carried out regarding the United States, although based on different empirical factors (Payne *et al.*, 2007; Howell, 2003; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Schelinger, 1974). Indeed, the literature studying presidentialism in the US has identified the ability of the president to mobilize public opinion, style of leadership and the use of the media to gain approval for legislation as part of the contextual dimension reflecting the degree of presidentialism, (Bond *et al.*, 2003; Canes-Wrone and De Marchi, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager and Sullivan, 1994). So important are these factors that Morgenstern *et al.* (2013) have shown that presidents with weak institutional powers can reinforce their capacity to impose their governmental agenda to the extent that they are able to maintain control of the bureaucracy and public opinion.

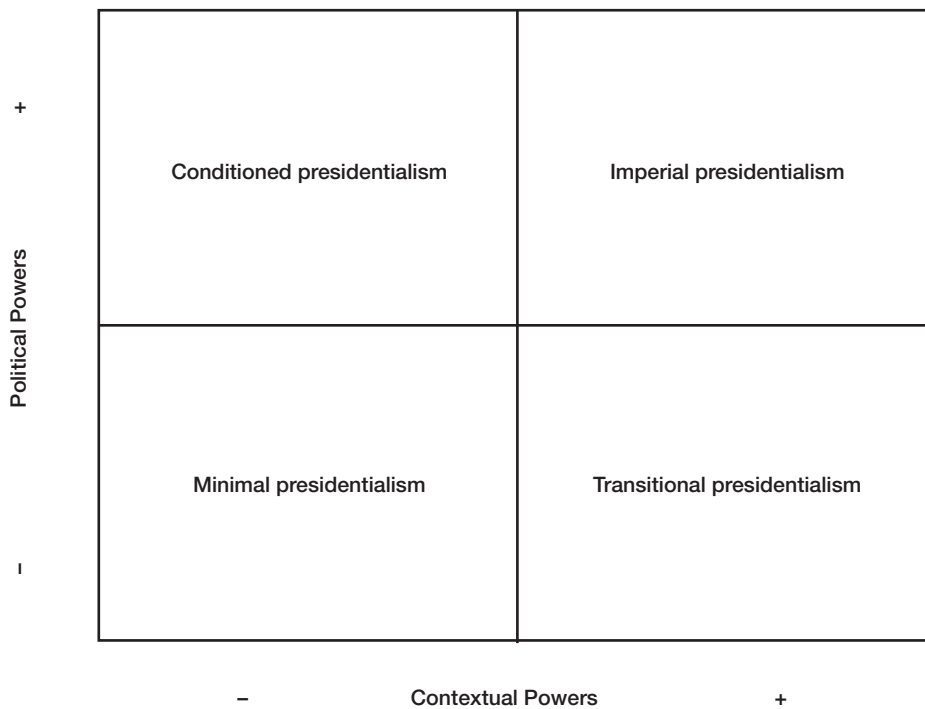
In short, what emerges from the scientific research conducted so far is that to assess the degree of presidentialism in a country it is not enough to consider the formal powers found at the constitutional level, but other contextual dimensions must also be included (Doyle and Elgie, 2014). Although there are studies that have done this, many continue to have a bias toward institutional factors (Doyle and Elgie, 2014; Morgenstern *et al.*, 2013), while others include among the contextual factors only those that are of a political nature (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002). In response to this, in the following section I propose a theoretical framework that includes the different variables identified in the

literature but that permits a more profound and dynamic explanation of both different types of presidentialism and the nature of the political and social interactions that are derived from each type.

POLITICAL POWERS AND CONTEXTUAL POWERS: A TYPOLOGY OF PRESIDENTIALISM

The central idea in this section is that a presidentialist form of government varies in intensity based on the behaviour of institutional and partisan variables and those related to the economic and social context in which heads of state must make decisions. Therefore, to construct a typology of different types of presidentialism I propose two analytical dimensions. The first is political in nature and encompasses the constitutional powers of the president as well as the size of his/her legislative bloc (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Bonvecchi and Zelaznick, 2012; Amorim Neto, 2012; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002). The second dimension is contextual in nature and includes the performance of the economy as well as the public approval rating of the president. As mentioned in the literature, the first dimension affects the ability of the executive branch to carry out its political agenda, while the second influences the degree of control the president has over actors and institutions that are not aligned with his/her political project (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Cheibub, *et al.*, 2011; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager and Sullivan, 1994). Graph 1 presents the typology that results from the interaction of the political and contextual dimensions of presidentialism.

First of all, when the intensity of both political and contextual powers is high, what results is a country in which the president can carry out his or her own agenda without major obstacles or setbacks. Together, economic boom and the high popularity of a

GRAPH 1. *Typology of presidentialism: political powers and contextual powers*

head of state will increase the likelihood that actions to block the presidential agenda by actors and institutions not aligned with the government will be reduced to a minimum. This is the ideal situation for what is known as *imperial presidentialism*. In scenarios of this type, the president is able to enact policies based on his/her ideological orientation without needing the agreement of other legislative forces, as by having a broad legislative bloc within the legislative branch, the need to negotiate and reach agreements is considerably reduced⁸.

In addition, in a context of economic prosperity, combined with a high presidential

approval rating, the executive is in a position to ignore the petitions or demands that may come from political and social actors critical of his or her administration. In fact, there could be cases in which the government tries to persecute or limit the voice of those who are not part of the official project. Chambers of commerce, trade unions, social organizations and the media could be subjects of such attacks. Although a president may enjoy broad political and contextual powers (resources and popularity), the need to extend the spaces of power even more could lead to tensions in relations with any opposing forces to such an extreme that political tolerance disappears.

The other extreme case is represented by scenarios in which presidents govern with institutional designs that offer limited powers to their administration, and in addition, they have limited legislative represen-

⁸ Chile is an exceptional case because despite the existence of a majority ruling bloc in the legislature, agreements and negotiations with other political sectors remain. In this regard see Siavelis (2006).

tation. In these countries, the political agenda that is approved is minimal, as the president must carry out intense negotiations and exchanges in order to maintain government coalitions. As a result, the president's imprint on public policy is almost non-existent. In fact, the legislation that is generated comes primarily from the opposition and, in addition, given the level of exchange and concessions required of the president to deal with his or her legislative opposition, the presidential cabinet must include the opposition. Thus, the work of the president essentially depends on the political juncture, which leads to instability in public policy and incoherency between the actions of the executive and the legislation passed by the legislature.

In this scenario, the economic situation in which the president has to govern is critical and his or her popularity among the population low. This context of conflict leads to growth in pressure from political and social sectors for specific, essentially redistributive demands. The inability of the president to resolve these situations of economic and social tension, coupled with his/her limited popular support, leads to an executive branch that hands over spaces of power indiscriminately. The corporative practices followed in this context are a reflection of the difficulties governing in these countries. This scenario results in what is called in the typology, a case of *minimal presidentialism*.

In the third scenario, although institutional designs offer tools for a president to govern and there is an official bloc of support in the legislature, the country faces economic problems and popular support for the chief of state is low. In other words, although the political powers of the president are considerable, the contextual situation does not offer a favourable environment for the agenda of the executive to be approved without the imposition of economic or social constraints. The relative absence of economic resources and the president's low approval rating in-

crease social conflict to the point that there is a loss of governability and even political stability in the country. These are cases of *conditioned presidentialism*.

The last scenario in this typology is that of presidents with limited institutional powers and little representation in the legislature. On the contextual level, the economy of these countries performs well and the presidents enjoy popular support. In this presidentialist type, defined as *transitional presidentialism*, chief executives cannot carry out their governing agenda due to severe restrictions in the legislature. At the same time, economic stability and popular support for the president allow him or her to use these contextual factors to push for changes in the political arena. The tension that arises between support for the president and the opposition in the legislature constitutes a scenario that could foster structural modifications, which could result in aggressive constitutional reforms or in an open call for Constituent Assemblies.

Having described the different scenarios in which presidentialism can appear, as well as the type of political and social interactions that result from each type, in the following section I will establish the empirical existence of the typology that has been presented. To do so, I will analyse eighteen countries in Latin America, one of the regions in the world where the presidentialist form of government may present variations in intensity, but without major structural differences. Although at one point in time countries such as Bolivia were organized politically based on hybrid institutional designs, today presidentialism has been consolidated as the prevailing form of government in the region⁹.

⁹ Different definitions emerged in analysing the form of government in Bolivia. Some of the most cited have been: semi-presidentialism (Verdesoto, 2005), parliamentary presidentialism (García Montero, 2003; Mayorga, 2001), attenuated presidentialism (Mayorga, 1992) and hybrid presidentialism (Gamarrá, 1992). A broader dis-

TESTING PRESIDENTIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

To empirically evaluate the proposed typology I have analysed eighteen Latin American countries. Observation is synchronous and based on data from 2012 for the two dimensions analysed. Within the political dimension, the variable, “institutional powers of the president”, was evaluated using the following criteria: the president’s legislative capacities, the president’s non-legislative capacities, the capacity of the president to designate high-level authorities, the president’s ability to appoint judicial officials, and if presidential reelection is possible and under what conditions. Next, the institutional scenarios that each criteria could present were identified, assigning a specific value to each of them based on how powerful the president is. The score assigned to each institutional scenario is structured, in general, on a scale of “4” to “0”¹⁰. Details of the coding can be found in Appendix 1. To capture the variable, “partisan powers of the president”, the percentage of legislative seats held by the ruling party was used based on official information from the national legislatures.

In the contextual dimension, for the variable, “presidential approval”, survey data provided by the research firm *Mitofsky*, which provides a periodic ranking of the popularity of presidents in all of the region, was used. For the variable related to the “state of the

economy”, income per capita was used as a *proxy* based on information from the Global Competitiveness Report 2012 of the World Economic Forum. A possible criticism of the idea of constructing the contextual dimension from the aforementioned variables is that the level of correlation of both could be such that independent measurements would raise problems of bias¹¹. However, there are studies that have shown that low economic performance in a country is not necessarily followed by a decrease in support for the president, but on the contrary, tends on occasion to be the starting point for an increase in support for the head of state. Empirical findings reveal this was the case in Chile during the first Bachelet government (Apablaza and Jiménez, 2009) and in Venezuela in the first years of President Chavez’s government (Merolla and Zechmeister, 2010).

Given that the measurement for each of the variables is based on a different scale, to permit comparison all of the values were homogenized, typifying them to a maximum. Thus, the country with the highest score on each of the four variables was assigned a value of “1”. From that reference point, the assessment of the other countries was obtained so that each variable responds to a scale ranging from “1” to “0”. Following the same logic, for the variable, “institutional powers of the president”, the scores assigned to the countries in each of the institutional scenarios were added up to then assign a “1” to the country that obtained the highest score, in this case Panama. Table 1 shows the results of the measurement proposed after the standardization of the data¹².

cussion on the Bolivian case and its form of government prior to the passage of the 2009 Constitution can be found in Pachano (20056).

¹⁰ As an example, if the legislature requires a majority of two thirds of the deputies to impose a partial veto, it is understood that the president enjoys greater powers and is assigned a higher score. The opposite occurs when the legislature requires only a simple majority of those present at the session to impose a partial veto. In the budgetary sphere, if the president has more discretion to develop the national budget he/she is assigned a higher score than in the case in which the legislature has greater scope to modify a budget proposal from the Executive.

¹¹ In statistical terms this would be collinearity bias, in which the values of one variable can be easily inferred from another. The presence of this bias can lead to later problems of over- or under-evaluating statistical coefficients.

¹² The four variables analyzed received the same methodological treatment so that they have been assigned the same weight in the assessment of the intensity and the type of presidentialism.

TABLE 1. *Presidentialism in Latin America (political and contextual powers)*

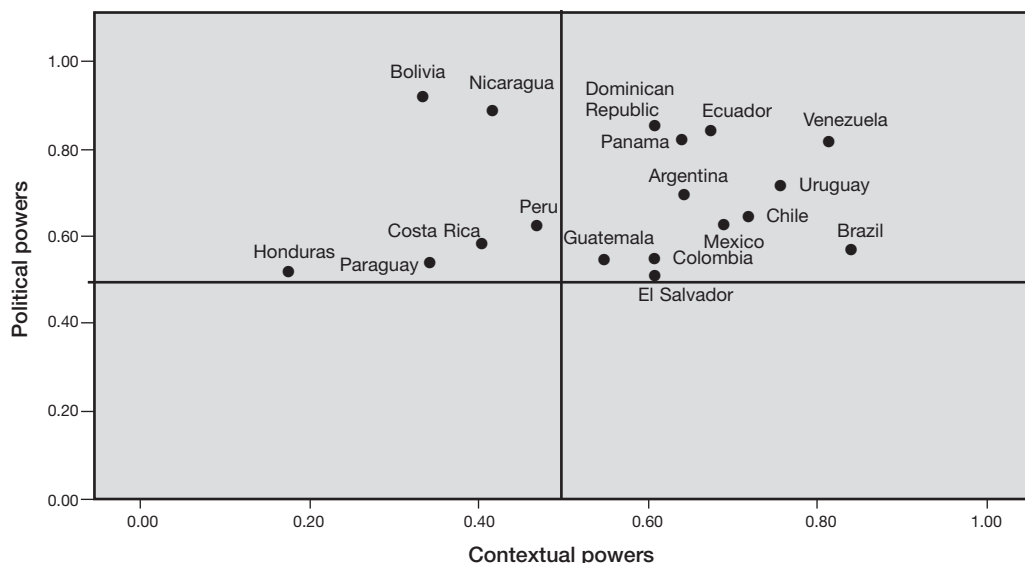
Countries	Political powers		Contextual powers		Index
	Institutional	Partisan	Presidential approval	State of the economy	
Venezuela	0.87	0.77	0.80	0.83	3.27
Ecuador	0.74	0.94	1.00	0.33	3.02
Panama	1.00	0.66	0.65	0.63	2.94
Uruguay	0.77	0.66	0.50	1.00	2.94
Dominican Republic	0.71	1.00	0.76	0.44	2.91
Brazil	0.94	0.21	0.78	0.90	2.82
Chile	0.94	0.35	0.45	0.99	2.72
Argentina	0.90	0.50	0.54	0.76	2.70
Nicaragua	0.90	0.90	0.74	0.09	2.63
Mexico	0.71	0.55	0.58	0.80	2.63
Bolivia	0.94	0.91	0.51	0.15	2.51
Colombia	0.74	0.36	0.68	0.52	2.30
El Salvador	0.55	0.48	0.90	0.31	2.23
Peru	0.81	0.47	0.50	0.43	2.21
Guatemala	0.61	0.47	0.86	0.24	2.18
Costa Rica	0.61	0.55	0.16	0.65	1.97
Paraguay	0.65	0.44	0.45	0.24	1.77
Honduras	0.48	0.55	0.18	0.17	1.37

Source: National constitutions, legislative archives, Mitofsky Consulting Firm and Global Competitiveness Report 2012.

Following, an average for the values assigned to each of the variables that make up both the “political powers” and “contextual powers” dimensions was obtained. From the interaction of both dimensions, the placement of each country in one of the quadrants referred to in the typology was obtained. Graph 2 shows the methodological exercise described. As can be seen, despite the fact that a large number of the countries analysed fall within the quadrant corresponding to imperial presidentialism, there are clear differences between them. On one side, Venezuela and Ecuador appear to be the countries with the strongest features of imperial presidentialism. On the other side, El Salvador is very close to the presidentialism of transition, while Guatemala is closer to conditioned

presidentialism. The fact that the main trend in the countries is found in different points of the quadrant corresponding to imperial presidentialism is consistent with previous empirical findings that reveal that the majority tendency in Latin America is towards granting strong constitutional powers to presidents (Negretto, 2011, 2010). Indeed, if only the institutional powers variable, located in the first column on the left in table 1, is considered, we can see the limited variation in this regard in the region.

In addition, we see that in Bolivia and Nicaragua the form of government is best reflected in conditioned presidentialism. In both countries, institutional designs favour presidential action over other state powers and

GRAPH 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America, 2012*

strong legislative ruling blocs. However, public support for the president and/or the state of the economy are not entirely beneficial for the head of state. Peru and especially Costa Rica have a more moderate position within the quadrant, while Honduras and Paraguay are on the verge of passing to a minimal presidentialism. In the case of Paraguay, the crisis that led to the departure of President Lugo in 2012 could be understood as the result of the weakness of the head of state, both in terms of political powers and the broader contextual dimension (Marsteintredet *et al.*, 2013).

Regarding the quadrants corresponding to transitional and minimal presidentialism, the analysis finds no countries currently fit these types. However, this only reflects the current scenario in Latin America, as there may be previous cases of transitional and minimal presidentialism. The characteristics of the government of Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador (1998-2000) fall perfectly within a minimal presidentialism: moderate institutional powers, low representation in the legislature, limited popular support and economic crisis. In addition, the government of President

Chavez in Venezuela before the adoption of the 1999 Constitution, would fit within the framework of a transitional presidentialism. Both examples not only illustrate intuitively the empty quadrants of the typology, but also reveal the capacity of this tool for observing changes that can occur both in the type of presidentialism and in the political and social dynamics that influence it.

Independent of the the heuristic capacity of the typology, we obtain an index that evaluates the degree of intensity of presidentialism in Latin America from the addition of the four variables included in the political and contextual dimensions. As shown in the rightmost column of Table 1, the index is constructed on a scale from "0" to "4", where "0" corresponds to a country in which the form of presidential government is absolutely marginal, while "4" reflects a president who governs with very broad political and contextual powers. Appendix 3 presents in a more intuitive manner the scores for each country on this index, where it can be clearly seen that Venezuela and Ecuador are the most presidentialist countries of the eighteen ana-

lysed, while Honduras and Paraguay score lowest on the index.

Finally, Appendix 2 shows graphically the scores obtained by the individual countries for each of the four variables included in the two dimensions of analysis proposed and found in Table 1. The four points of each graph show the maximum possible value for each dimension ("1"). By comparing the behaviour of the different variables, we can see that the main points of change are found in both the public acceptance of the president and the economic state of the countries. Of the entire sample, Uruguay and Mexico appear to have the most balanced presidentialism in terms of both political and contextual powers. In contrast, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay and Honduras are the countries with the greatest imbalances, especially in terms of the economic variable.

CONCLUSIONS

This article takes the main ideas raised in the literature on presidentialism and unifies them around two analytical dimensions. The first dimension, the "political", includes both the institutional powers granted to presidents and the strength of the ruling party in the legislature. The second dimension, defined as "contextual", includes two factors key to governance, and which Machiavelli brilliantly identified in "The Prince": the state of the economy of the country and public approval of the president. Thus, the first dimension influences a president's success in getting approval for his/her governing agenda, while the contextual dimension impacts on the form of relationship between the executive and opposition social and political actors. The interaction of the two dimensions is the basis for a typology that represents a heuristic and dynamic tool that allows us to observe not only how presidential a country is but also the nature of the political and social interactions that result from each of the four ideal types.

Empirically, and using objective measures for each of the four variables that constitute the two dimensions, this article provides a description of how presidential the countries of Latin America are. The main findings show that Venezuela and Ecuador are the countries in the region where the presidential form of government is the strongest. According to the typology put forward, both countries could be considered reference cases for imperial presidentialism. This ideal type is close to the concept of hyper-presidentialism used by Penfold (2010) to refer to the governments of President Chavez and to that of de Granda (2012) to describe the administrations of President Correa. However, if we also consider that the contextual powers of the heads of state of Venezuela and Ecuador have tended to decrease in 2015 and 2016, surely the strength of imperial presidentialism in both cases will have suffered modifications. Indeed, the usefulness of the typology that this article provides lies in its ability to adapt to short-term changes and maintain its explanatory power.

Regarding the usefulness of the index of presidentialism presented in this article, its potential goes beyond describing the political power of executives. On the one hand, the analysis of institutional powers allows decision makers to evaluate the direct and indirect effects, in combination with other political, social and economic variables, produced by a constitutional design in which too many powers are granted to presidents. In the case of Venezuela and Ecuador, the adoption of constitutions in which the legislative and judicial spheres of action are limited has been crucial to the wave of assaults on individual freedoms in those countries. On the other hand, the category related to the size of the president's legislative bloc raises the question of limits to the electoral support for governing parties. Although it is essential that presidents have cooperation from the legislature, when they hold an overwhelming majority in the legislative branch, as is the

case of Ecuador and as was the case in Venezuela until recently, the possibility of oversight of the government drops dramatically.

In addition, the index, and specifically regarding the dimension of contextual powers, is useful because it allows us to establish political scenarios based on how important the state of the economy and the approval rating of the executive are for democratic stability and carrying out the president's legislative agenda. The impeachment process initiated against President Rousseff in Brazil reveals how the deterioration of the economy coupled with a decline in the popularity of the head of state may lead to a democratic regime being called into question. As clearly represented in Machiavelli, virtue and fortune are two essential elements not only for maintaining a balanced relationship between voters and rulers, but also for guaranteeing a minimal level of governance.

Finally, both the theoretical proposal and the empirical findings presented in this article call for us to continue the study of presidentialism and its variations as one of the topics of research in Latin America and in other regions of the world where this form of government is prevalent. Although we have included several institutional characteristics of presidentialism that had not been taken into account before, and key contextual factors as well, there are other analytical categories, such as the role of the media in relation to government, that could enrich the analysis even more. In addition, the study of various countries over time would allow us not only to have a broader overview of the evolution of presidentialism, but also to verify or reject the use of the typology presented here. As I mentioned at the beginning of the article, the return of presidents intuitively considered hyper-presidential, regardless of their ideological orientation, brings to the table once again a classic theme of political science that has been of limited importance in research agendas.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president*

Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
<i>Legislative capacities</i>	Total veto	Without the possibility of immediately being overridden by the Assembly	5
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 majority (absolute majority)	4
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 majority of those present in the session	3
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of the total of Assembly members	2
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of those present in the session	1
		Without the capacity for a total veto	0
	Partial veto	Without the possibility of Assembly overriding	5
		With the possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 of total of Assembly members (absolute majority)	4
		With the possibility of the Assembly overriding with 2/3 of those present in the session	3
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of the total of Assembly members	2
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of those present in the Assembly session	1
		Without the capacity for a partial veto	0
	Emergency decrees	Without political or constitutional control	4
		With political control of the Assembly or constitutionality determined by the Courts/Constitutional Court	2
		With political control of the Assembly and constitutionality determined by the Courts/Constitutional Court	1
		Without capacity to make emergency decrees	0
	Legislation in case of economic emergency	Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
		Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly after it becomes effective	2
Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection of the Assembly before it becomes effective		1	
Without the capacity to enact legislation in case of economic emergency		0	

...

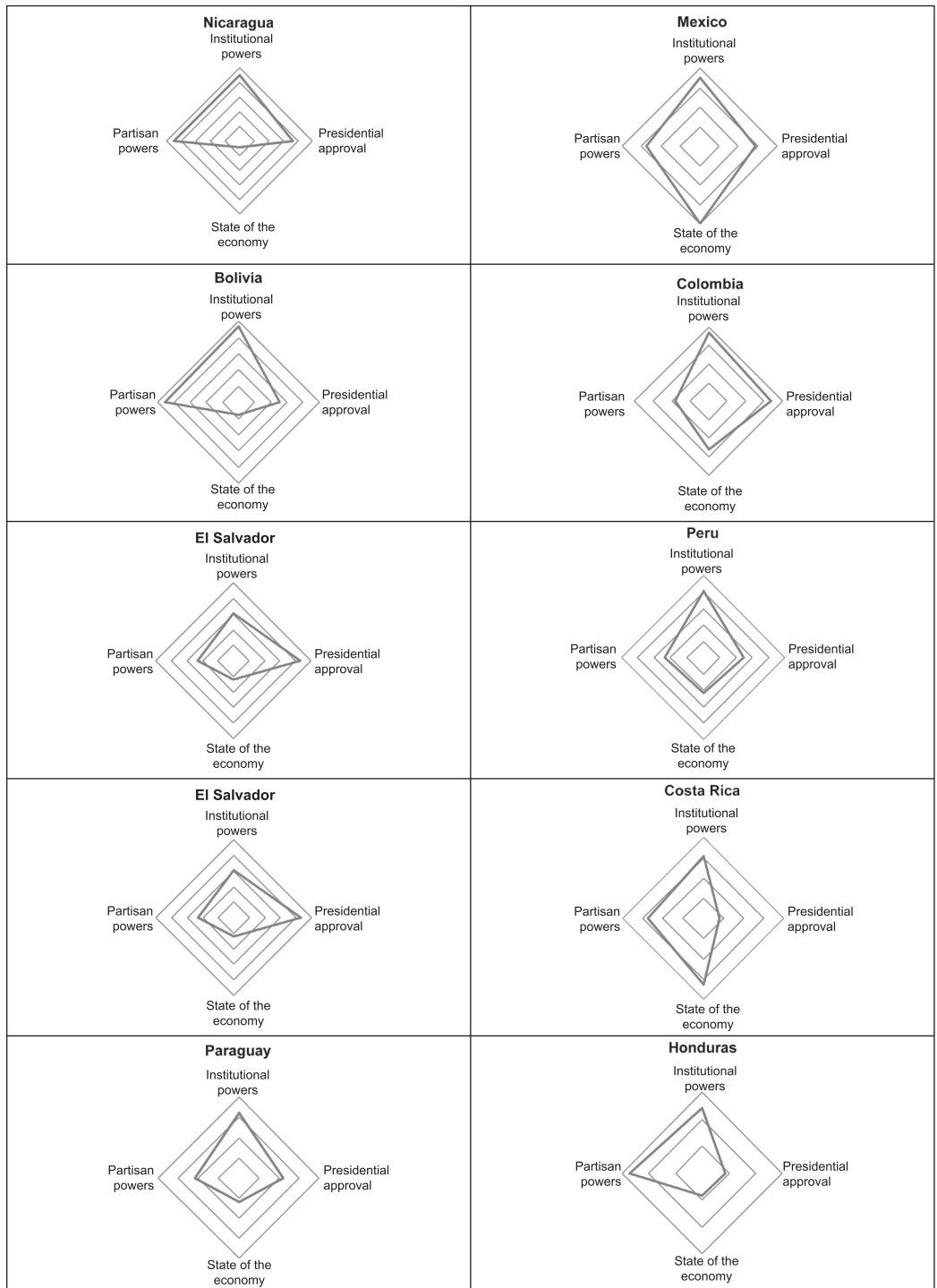
APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president* (continuation)

Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
		Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
	Legislation exclusively initiated by the president	Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	2
		Approval with possibility of rejection by the Assembly	1
		Without the capacity to enact legislation exclusively initiated by the president	0
		Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
	Development of annual budget	Assembly can reduce the budget for a sector without possibility of redistributing it to another sector	3
		Assembly can reduce the budget for a sector with the possibility of redistributing it to another sector	2
		Assembly can increase the budget if it establishes new sources of financing	1
		Approval with the possibility of modification without restrictions (increase or decrease) by the Assembly	0
	Appointing ministerial cabinet	President designates ministers without the prior approval of the Assembly	3
		President nominates ministers and Assembly confirms them	2
		President proposes names of candidates for ministries and Assembly appoints them	1
		President does not nominate or appoint ministers	0
<i>Non-legislative capacities</i>	Censure of ministerial cabinet	Assembly cannot censure or remove ministers	2
		Assembly can censure but not remove ministers	1
		Assembly can censure and remove ministers	0
		President can dissolve the Assembly without any precondition and remain in office	3
Dissolving the Assembly		President can dissolve the Assembly under certain conditions and remain in office	2
		President can dissolve the Assembly but with new presidential election called	1
		President cannot dissolve the Assembly	0
		President designates Comptroller	4
<i>Capacity to appoint high-level officials</i>	Comptroller	President nominates Comptroller and Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Comptroller and the President designates appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or appoint the Comptroller	0
		President appoints the Attorney General	4
Attorney General* [Procurador]		President nominates the Attorney General and the Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly (or another body) nominates the Attorney General and the President appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or designate the Attorney General	0
		...	

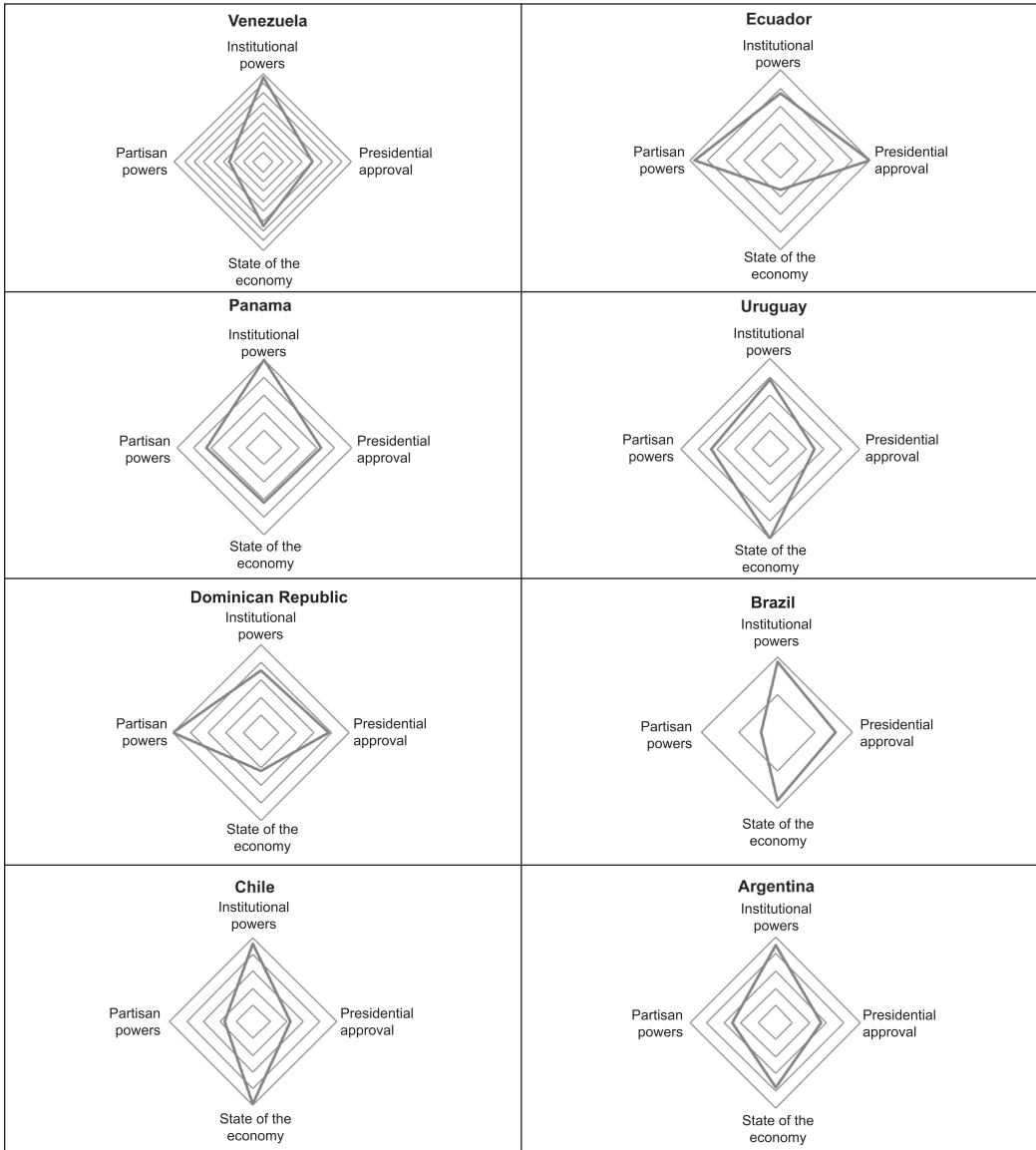
APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president (continuation)*

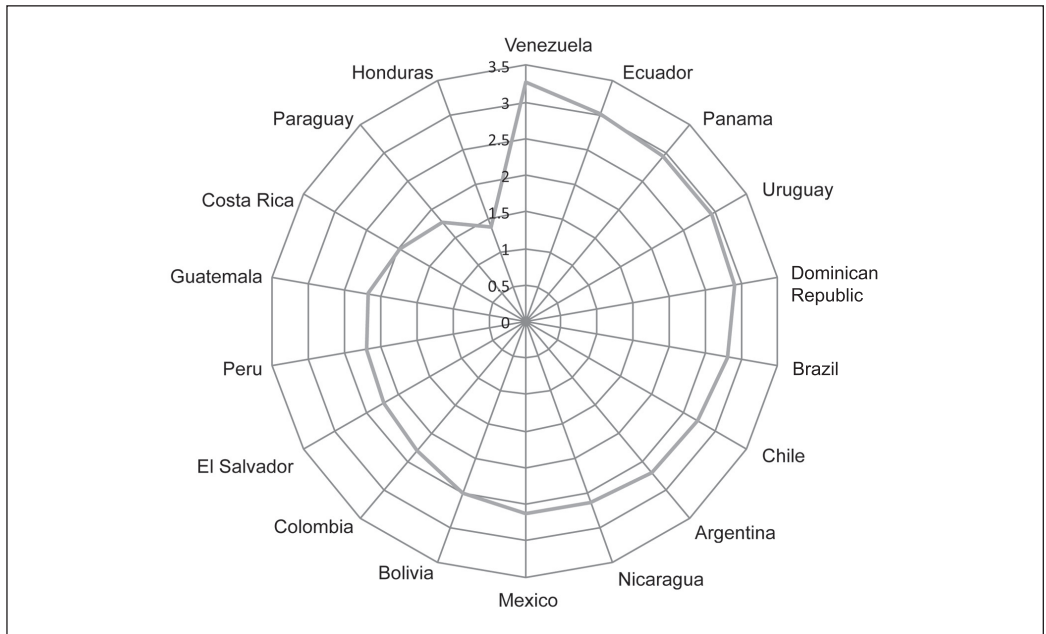
Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
<i>Capacity to make judicial appointments</i>	Ombudsman	President appoints the Ombudsman	4
		President nominates the Ombudsman and the Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Ombudsman and the President appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or appoint the Ombudsman	0
	Central bank	Central Bank is not independent of the president	1
		Central Bank is independent of the president	0
	Supreme Court	President appoints judges (all or some)	4
		President nominates judges (all or some) and the Assembly appoints them	2
		Assembly nominates judges and the president appoints them	1
		President does not directly nominate or appoint judges	0
	Attorney General* [Fiscal]	President designates the Attorney General	4
		President nominates the Attorney General and the Assembly designates him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Attorney General and the president designates him/her	1
		President does not nominate or delegate the Attorney General	0
	Electoral body	President designates the president or members of the electoral body	3
		President nominates members of the electoral body and the Assembly (or another organ) appoints them	2
		President does not nominate or appoint members of the electoral body	0
	Indefinite re-election	Indefinite re-election	4
		Immediate re-election one time; after a period can be elected again.	3
		Re-election only one time	2
Re-election only one time after an interval		1	
	No re-election	0	

APPENDIX 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America broken down by variables, 2012*



APPENDIX 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America broken down by variables, 2012 (continuation)*



APPENDIX 3. *Strength of presidentialism in Latin America, 2012*

Las distintas caras del presidencialismo: debate conceptual y evidencia empírica en dieciocho países de América Latina

The Different Faces of Presidentialism: Conceptual Debate and Empirical Findings in Eighteen Latin American Countries

Santiago Basabe-Serrano

Palabras clave

- América Latina
- Constitucionalismo
- Control político
- Poder ejecutivo
- Presidencialismo
- Sistema político
- Situación económica

Key words

- Latin America
- Constitutionalism
- Political Control
- Executive Power
- Presidentialism
- Political System
- Economic Situation

Resumen

Este artículo propone una nueva tipología sobre el presidencialismo en la que la interacción de las dimensiones política (poderes institucionales y partidistas del presidente) y contextual (estado de la economía del país y aprobación ciudadana al presidente) da cuenta tanto de la intensidad con la que se presenta dicha forma de gobierno como del tipo de relaciones políticas y sociales que de allí se derivan. Tomando como referentes empíricos a dieciocho países de América Latina, el artículo plantea cuatro tipos ideales de presidencialismo: imperial, condicionado, mínimo y de transición. Venezuela y Ecuador aparecen como los referentes de presidencialismo imperial mientras que Honduras y Paraguay se encuentran en el límite entre el presidencialismo condicionado y el presidencialismo mínimo.

Abstract

This article offers a new typology for examining presidentialism, in which the interaction between the political dimension (institutional and partisan presidential powers) and contextual dimension (the state of the economy and presidential approval) determine both the intensity of presidentialism and the type of political and social relationships derived from it. Looking at empirical evidence from eighteen Latin American countries, the article identifies four ideal types of presidentialism: imperial, conditioned, minimal, and transitional. Venezuela and Ecuador are empirical cases of imperial presidentialism while Honduras and Paraguay are on the threshold between conditioned presidentialism, and minimal presidentialism.

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Luego de la discusión respecto a las bondades del parlamentarismo o del presidencialismo de cara a incrementar la estabilidad de la democracia (Cheibub, 2007; Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002; Linz, 1990), el debate académico en América Latina se centró en la medición de cuán fuertes eran los presidentes de la región (Mustapic, 2002; Cox y Morgenstern, 2001; Baldez y Carey, 1999; Shugart y Carey, 1992; Nino, 1992)¹. Aunque la investigación tendió a disminuir a fines del siglo pasado, el surgimiento de gobiernos — como los de Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia o Ecuador — calificados intuitivamente como «hiper presidencialistas» vuelve a colocar este tema sobre la agenda de debate (Penfold, 2010; Pérez-Liñán, 2003: 151). No obstante, la mayoría de los análisis continúa concentrando su atención en las facultades constitucionales de los presidentes respecto a los otros Poderes del Estado².

Aunque dicho enfoque es esencial, este artículo plantea un marco teórico en el que a las variables institucionales tradicionalmente utilizadas para observar cuán presidencialista es un país se agregan otras de carácter contextual, como el estado de la economía y la popularidad del Jefe de Estado. De esta forma se vinculan al análisis no solo aspectos normativos sino también aquellos que hacen parte de la praxis diaria de la política y que guardan relación tanto con la provisión de recursos materiales para la gestión gubernamental y el bienestar general de la po-

blación como con la capacidad del presidente para interpelar y generar confianza entre la ciudadanía. A partir de dicha construcción teórica, posteriormente se propone una medición empírica en la que se incluyen dieciocho países de América Latina. De esta forma este artículo ofrece una panorámica del estado general del presidencialismo en la región.

El artículo se compone de cuatro partes. En la primera parte se ofrece una revisión de la literatura desarrollada sobre el tema, focalizando en los vacíos hallados tanto en la definición de presidencialismo como en las estrategias metodológicas utilizadas para su medición. En la segunda parte se ofrece un marco teórico que permite no solo capturar los principales rasgos que connotan los diferentes tipos de presidencialismo sino que agrega variables clave del entorno económico y social. La tercera parte plantea las estrategias metodológicas utilizadas para la verificación empírica y discute además los principales hallazgos observados en los dieciocho países considerados para el análisis. La cuarta parte presenta algunas conclusiones.

PRESIDENCIALISMO: CONCEPTOS Y MEDICIÓN EN LA LITERATURA ESPECIALIZADA

Mainwaring y Shugart (2002) definen al presidencialismo como una forma de gobierno en la que el presidente es siempre jefe del ejecutivo, se le elige de forma popular directa o indirectamente y tanto su período como el de la legislatura es fijo. Sartori (1994: 84) agrega a esta definición la idea de que una forma de gobierno presidencialista se caracteriza por la imposibilidad de destituir al jefe del ejecutivo a través del voto parlamentario. A la idea del mandato fijo ya citada por estos autores, Linz (1994: 6) añade la legitimidad de la que goza el presidente elegido de forma directa. No obstante, el elemento citado

¹ Un debate similar al aquí mencionado es el desarrollado por Elgie (2011) cuando analiza cuán favorables son los distintos tipos de semipresidencialismo al mejor desempeño de la democracia. Una de sus conclusiones más fuertes es que el subtipo «presidente-parlamentarizado» es más probable que derive en democracias débiles y que, por otro lado, el subtipo «premier-presidencialista» es el que más favorece los desempeños de dicho régimen político.

² Una notable excepción es el reciente trabajo de Doyle y Elgie (2014).

por Linz más que un rasgo definitorio del concepto presidencialismo parecería ser un efecto de esta forma de gobierno. Mainwaring y Shugart (2002) indican también que en un presidencialismo puro los presidentes tienen derecho a retener sus ministros a su elección, independientemente de la composición del Congreso.

En la misma línea de definir el presidencialismo puro, Shugart y Carey (1992: 19) señalan que dicho concepto está dado por la elección popular del jefe del Ejecutivo, los períodos fijos de presidente y legislatura —y la ausencia de votos de mutua confianza entre sí— y la libertad del presidente para designar los principales funcionarios de su gabinete de gobierno. En esencia, el concepto de presidencialismo se fundamenta tanto en el origen separado del Ejecutivo —dado por su elección popular directa o indirecta— como en la supervivencia autónoma del presidente y del Legislativo, dado que ninguno de los dos poderes puede acortar el período del otro (Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002)³.

De los conceptos expuestos se desprende que las definiciones de presidencialismo se encuentran dadas por oposición a lo que sería la forma de gobierno parlamentaria y también a los distintos tipos de semipresidencialismo (Sedelius y Mashtaler, 2013; Elgie, 1999)⁴. Así, mientras en el presidencialismo el jefe del Ejecutivo es elegido popularmente, en el parlamentarismo dicha designación es el resultado de la voluntad de la legislatura. Por otro lado, mientras en el presidencialismo los mandatos son fijos, en el parlamentarismo a través del voto de con-

fianza se puede dar por terminado anticipadamente el período tanto del primer ministro como de su gabinete. No obstante, aunque dichos conceptos son válidos para los estudios comparados entre presidencialismo y parlamentarismo, resultan insuficientes cuando se trata de analizar las variaciones en el grado de presidencialismo entre países que comparten dicha forma de gobierno⁵.

Al respecto, la mayoría de la literatura que analiza la intensidad de los presidencialismos en América Latina parte de la idea de que las variaciones entre los distintos países está dada por la estructura de mutuos controles —*check and balance*— entre Ejecutivo, Legislativo y Judicial. Lo dicho implica asumir que, a medida que los presidentes gozan de mayores facultades formales respecto a sus contrapartes legislativa y judicial, la intensidad del presidencialismo va en aumento. De allí se concluye que existe un presidencialismo más intenso en aquellos contextos en los que los jefes del Ejecutivo han ampliado de forma considerable su esfera de influencia política formal respecto a los otros poderes del Estado (Nino, 1992; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010). En el plano de la valoración empírica, los poderes legislativos del Ejecutivo, los poderes ejecutivos de la legislatura, el control sobre el gabinete o la influencia en la designación de funcionarios públicos son algunos de los principales referentes empíricos utilizados por la literatura especializada⁶.

³ No obstante, existen países con formas de gobierno presidenciales en los que es posible que el Ejecutivo o el Legislativo puedan, bajo determinadas condicionantes, dar por terminado el mandato del otro poder del Estado. El caso ecuatoriano a partir de la Constitución de 2008 es uno de ellos.

⁴ Lo que en este artículo se conceptualiza como formas de gobierno presidencialistas y parlamentarias tiene su similitud en lo que Mainwaring y Shugart (2002) definen como democracias presidencialistas y parlamentarias.

⁵ Desde la perspectiva de análisis propuesta por Tsebelis (2002), la distinción entre forma de gobierno presidencial y parlamentaria desaparece para dar paso a la idea de jugadores de veto y su posicionamiento espacial.

⁶ Una arista poco estudiada del presidencialismo en América Latina es la que se refiere al papel que cumplen determinadas instituciones y funcionarios que sin ser parte del gabinete ministerial tienen capacidad de decisión en el interior del Ejecutivo. Uno de los trabajos seminales sobre este tema, al que se ha denominado el estudio de la «oficina de la presidencia», es el de Inácio y Llanos (2015), en el que comparan las presidencias de Brasil y Argentina.

Junto a los poderes institucionales ya mencionados, Mainwaring y Shugart (2002) han evidenciado la importancia que tiene para los presidentes, y para valorar cuán presidencialista es un país, el contar con apoyo legislativo relevante. Al hablar sobre poderes partidistas, tales autores apuntan que la fuerza de la bancada oficialista en la legislatura influye decisivamente para incrementar la capacidad del Ejecutivo para aprobar las políticas públicas incluidas en su agenda de gobierno (Negretto, 2011; Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002: 47). Aunque algunos autores han definido a este conjunto de factores como *poderes informales* (Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002: 47) y otros los conceptualizan como *poderes asociados* (Morgenstern *et al.*, 2013)⁷, en ambos casos se trata de dimensiones fácticas que, junto a las de naturaleza institucional, dan cuenta del grado de presidencialismo de los países. Dicho razonamiento se hace explícito en los diferentes trabajos sobre presidencialismo en América Latina (Ackerman-Ross, 2011; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010; Casar, 1999; Nino, 1992).

La vinculación de factores institucionales y de contexto como dimensiones que dan cuenta del grado de presidencialismo de un país se encuentra también presente en las investigaciones realizadas para los Estados Unidos aunque a partir de diferentes referentes empíricos (Payne *et al.*, 2007; Howell, 2003; Cox y Morgenstern, 2001; Shugart y Carey, 1992; Schelinger, 1974). En efecto, la literatura que estudia el presidencialismo en ese país ha identificado dentro de las dimensiones fácticas o contextuales que dan cuenta del grado de presidencialismo a la habilidad del presidente para movilizar la opinión pública, su estilo de liderazgo y la utilización de los medios de comunicación para alcan-

zar la aprobación de una propuesta legislativa (Bond *et al.*, 2003; Canes-Wrone y De Marchi, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager y Sullivan, 1994). Tan importante es este conjunto de variables que Morgenstern *et al.* (2013) han evidenciado que presidentes con débiles poderes institucionales pueden reforzar sus habilidades para imponer su agenda de gobierno en la medida en que mantengan control sobre la burocracia o la opinión pública.

En definitiva, lo que se desprende de la investigación científica desarrollada hasta el momento es que para valorar el grado de presidencialismo de un país no es suficiente con el análisis de los poderes formales hallados a nivel constitucional sino que se requiere incluir otras dimensiones contextuales o fácticas (Doyle y Elgie, 2014). Aunque existen trabajos que se han encaminado en este sentido, algunos no terminan de dejar de lado el sesgo hacia lo institucional (Doyle y Elgie, 2014; Morgenstern *et al.*, 2013), mientras que otros consideran entre las variables contextuales solamente a las de naturaleza política (Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002). Ante dicha deficiencia, en el siguiente apartado propongo un marco teórico que captura no solamente las variables institucionales y partidistas identificadas por la literatura especializada sino también otras relacionadas con el contexto económico y social y que en conjunto dan cuenta de cuatro tipos de presidencialismo.

PODERES POLÍTICOS Y PODERES CONTEXTUALES: UNA TIPOLOGÍA DEL PRESIDENCIALISMO

La idea central que sostengo en este apartado es que la forma de gobierno presidencialista varía en intensidad en función del comportamiento de variables institucionales, partidistas y aquellas propias del contexto económico y social en el que los jefes de Estado deben tomar decisiones. Por tanto,

⁷ Para Morgenstern *et al.* (2013) los poderes asociados incluyen mecanismos constitucionales indirectos que refuerzan de forma directa la legislación formal o el poder de agenda.

para construir una tipología de los distintos tipos de presidencialismo planteo dos dimensiones de análisis. La primera es de naturaleza política y engloba tanto a los poderes institucionales del presidente como al tamaño de su bancada legislativa (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Bonvecchi y Zelaznick, 2012; Amorim Neto, 2012; Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002). La segunda dimensión es de naturaleza contextual y comprende tanto el desempeño de la economía del país como la aprobación ciudadana a la gestión del presidente. Como la literatura ha mencionado, mientras la primera dimensión incide sobre la capacidad del Ejecutivo para llevar a cabo su agenda política, la segunda influye en el grado de control del presidente sobre actores e instituciones que no se encuentran alineados con su proyecto político (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Cheibub *et al.*, 2011; Mainwaring y Shugart, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager y Sullivan, 1994). El gráfico 1 presenta la tipología

que resulta de la interacción de las dimensiones política y contextual del presidencialismo.

En primer lugar, cuando la intensidad tanto de los poderes políticos como de los poderes contextuales es alta, lo que resulta es un país en el que el presidente puede llevar a cabo su propia agenda sin mayores obstáculos o contratiempos. A la par, la bonanza económica y la alta popularidad del jefe de Estado incrementan las probabilidades de que las acciones de bloqueo provenientes de actores e instituciones no alineadas con el gobierno se vean reducidas a su mínima expresión. Esta es la situación ideal de lo que se conocería como *presidencialismo imperial*. En escenarios de este tipo la orientación ideológica que imprime el presidente sobre sus políticas no requiere de acuerdos con otras fuerzas legislativas, pues al mantener una amplia bancada oficialista, la necesi-

GRÁFICO 1. *Tipología del presidencialismo: poderes políticos y poderes contextuales*

+	Poderes políticos	Presidencialismo condicionado	Presidencialismo imperial
-	Poderes políticos	Presidencialismo mínimo	Presidencialismo de transición
		-	+
		Poderes contextuales	

dad de negociar y llegar a acuerdos se reduce considerablemente⁸.

Adicionalmente, la prosperidad económica por la que atraviesa el país, sumada a la alta aceptación del presidente entre la ciudadanía, le permiten al Ejecutivo omitir las peticiones o demandas que se podrían generar desde actores políticos y sociales críticos con su gestión. De hecho, se podrían dar casos en los que desde el gobierno se intente perseguir o limitar la voz de quienes no sean parte del proyecto oficialista. Cámaras de empresarios, sindicatos, organizaciones sociales y medios de comunicación serían flanco de este tipo de ataques. A pesar de que el presidente goza de amplios poderes políticos y contextuales — recursos y popularidad — la necesidad de ampliar aún más los espacios de poder podría llevarlo a tensionar las relaciones con cualquier opinión opositora hasta el extremo en el que la tolerancia política desaparezca.

El otro caso extremo lo constituyen los escenarios en los que los presidentes gobiernan con diseños institucionales que les ofrecen pocas herramientas para su gestión y además gozan de una limitada representación legislativa. En estos países la agenda política que se aprueba es mínima, pues el presidente requiere propiciar intensas negociaciones e intercambios de cara a mantener las coaliciones de gobierno. Como consecuencia, la impronta del presidente sobre las políticas públicas aprobadas es casi inexistente. De hecho, la producción legislativa que se genera proviene básicamente de proyectos de ley de la oposición. Por otro lado, dado el nivel de intercambio y concesiones que el presidente requiere hacer frente a sus contrapartes legislativas, el gabinete presidencial debe ser compartido con fuerzas opositoras. Así, la labor del presidente depende esencialmente

de la coyuntura política del momento, propiciándose inestabilidad de las políticas públicas y resultados incoherentes entre las decisiones provenientes del Ejecutivo y aquellas finalmente asumidas en la legislatura.

Al escenario descrito hay que agregar que la situación económica con la que debe gobernar el presidente es crítica y su popularidad frente a la población baja. Este contexto de conflictividad lleva al incremento de sectores políticos y sociales que presionan por determinadas demandas, esencialmente redistributivas. La incapacidad del presidente para resolver estas situaciones de tensión económica y social, sumadas al limitado respaldo popular, llevan a que desde el Ejecutivo se genere una lógica de entrega de espacios de poder sin discriminación alguna. Las prácticas corporativas que aquí se verifican no hacen sino reflejar las dificultades para gobernar que presentan estos países. El escenario relatado da cuenta de lo que en la tipología expuesta se denomina un caso de *presidencialismo mínimo*. Dadas las características de este escenario, aquí se incrementan las probabilidades de salidas anticipadas de los presidentes.

En el tercer escenario, aunque los diseños institucionales ofrecen herramientas de gobierno al presidente y existe una bancada oficialista de apoyo, el país afronta problemas económicos y la aceptación popular del jefe de Estado es baja. En otras palabras, si bien los poderes políticos del presidente son considerables, los de naturaleza contextual no ofrecen un ambiente propicio para que la agenda del Ejecutivo se apruebe sin considerar las limitaciones económicas o sociales impuestas. La ausencia relativa de recursos económicos y la baja aceptación ciudadana del presidente incrementan la conflictividad social al punto que el país pierde en gobernabilidad e incluso en estabilidad política. Estos son casos de *presidencialismo condicionado*.

El último escenario que resulta de la tipología planteada es el de presidentes con po-

⁸ Chile es un caso de excepción, pues a pesar de la existencia de una bancada oficialista mayoritaria en la legislatura, los acuerdos y negociaciones con otros sectores políticos se mantienen. Al respecto se puede acudir a Siavelis (2006).

deres institucionales limitados y poca representación oficialista en la legislatura. En el plano contextual, la economía de estos países presenta buenos rendimientos y los presidentes gozan de respaldo popular. En esta descripción tipológica, a la que defino como *presidencialismo de transición*, los jefes del Ejecutivo no pueden viabilizar su agenda de gobierno pues tienen restricciones severas en la legislatura. Al mismo tiempo la estabilidad económica y el apoyo popular del presidente le permiten considerar estos poderes contextuales como un punto de apoyo para propiciar cambios en la arena política. La tensión que surge entre la aceptación del presidente y las fuerzas opositoras en la legislatura constituye el escenario propicio para modificaciones estructurales que podrían devenir en reformas constitucionales agresivas o abiertamente en la convocatoria a Asambleas Constituyentes.

Una vez que se han descrito los distintos escenarios en los que el presidencialismo puede presentarse así como el tipo de interacción política y social que de cada uno de ellos resulta, en el siguiente apartado verifico empíricamente la tipología expuesta. Para ello, recurro al análisis de dieciocho países de América Latina, una de las regiones del mundo en las que si bien la forma de gobierno presidencialista puede presentar variaciones en cuanto a intensidad, estructuralmente no tiene mayores diferencias. Aunque en un momento histórico países como Bolivia se ordenaron políticamente a partir de diseños institucionales híbridos, en la actualidad el presidencialismo se ha consolidado como la forma de gobierno imperante en América Latina⁹.

⁹ Diferentes definiciones surgieron al analizar la forma de gobierno en Bolivia. Algunas de las más citadas fueron: semipresidencialismo (Verdesoto, 2005), presidencialismo parlamentarizado (García Montero, 2003; Mayorga, 2001), presidencialismo atenuado (Mayorga, 1992) y presidencialismo híbrido (Gamarra, 1992). Una discusión más amplia sobre el caso boliviano y su forma de gobierno previa a la Constitución de 2009 se puede encontrar en Pachano (2006).

TESTEANDO EL PRESIDENCIALISMO EN AMÉRICA LATINA: METODOLOGÍA Y DATOS

Para la valoración empírica de la tipología que propongo se consideraron dieciocho países de América Latina. La observación es sincrónica y, por tanto, captura datos para las dos dimensiones analizadas durante el año 2012. Dentro de la dimensión política, la variable «poderes institucionales del presidente» se evaluó a partir de los siguientes criterios: capacidades legislativas del presidente, capacidades no legislativas del presidente, capacidad del presidente de designar funcionarios de control, capacidad del presidente de designar funcionarios judiciales y si la reelección presidencial es posible y bajo qué condiciones. Posteriormente se identificaron los escenarios institucionales que se pueden presentar dentro de cada criterio, asignando un valor específico a cada uno de ellos en función de cuán poderoso resulta el presidente. La puntuación asignada a cada escenario institucional se estructuró en una escala que va, en general, de «4» a «0»¹⁰. Los detalles de la codificación se describen en el anexo 1. De su lado, para capturar la variable «poderes partidistas del presidente», se tomó el porcentaje de asientos legislativos del partido de gobierno, recurriendo para ello a información oficial de las legislaturas nacionales.

En la dimensión contextual, para la variable «aprobación presidencial» se tomaron datos promedio provenientes de la firma

¹⁰ A manera de ejemplo, si la legislatura requiere una mayoría de las dos terceras partes de los diputados para imponerse a un veto parcial, se entiende que el presidente goza de mayores poderes y se le asigna una puntuación mayor. El caso contrario se verifica cuando la legislatura requiere solamente una mayoría simple de los presentes a la sesión para imponerse al veto parcial. En la esfera presupuestaria, si el presidente tiene más discrecionalidad para elaborar el presupuesto nacional se le asigna una puntuación mayor al caso en el que la legislatura tiene mayor margen para modificar la propuesta presupuestaria proveniente del Ejecutivo.

TABLA 1. *Presidencialismo en América Latina (poderes políticos y poderes contextuales)*

Países	Poderes políticos		Poderes contextuales		Índice
	Institucionales	Partidistas	Aceptación presidencial	Estado de la economía	
Venezuela	0,87	0,77	0,80	0,83	3,27
Ecuador	0,74	0,94	1,00	0,33	3,02
Panamá	1,00	0,66	0,65	0,63	2,94
Uruguay	0,77	0,66	0,50	1,00	2,94
Dominicana	0,71	1,00	0,76	0,44	2,91
Brasil	0,94	0,21	0,78	0,90	2,82
Chile	0,94	0,35	0,45	0,99	2,72
Argentina	0,90	0,50	0,54	0,76	2,70
Nicaragua	0,90	0,90	0,74	0,09	2,63
México	0,71	0,55	0,58	0,80	2,63
Bolivia	0,94	0,91	0,51	0,15	2,51
Colombia	0,74	0,36	0,68	0,52	2,30
El Salvador	0,55	0,48	0,90	0,31	2,23
Perú	0,81	0,47	0,50	0,43	2,21
Guatemala	0,61	0,47	0,86	0,24	2,18
Costa Rica	0,61	0,55	0,16	0,65	1,97
Paraguay	0,65	0,44	0,45	0,24	1,77
Honduras	0,48	0,55	0,18	0,17	1,37

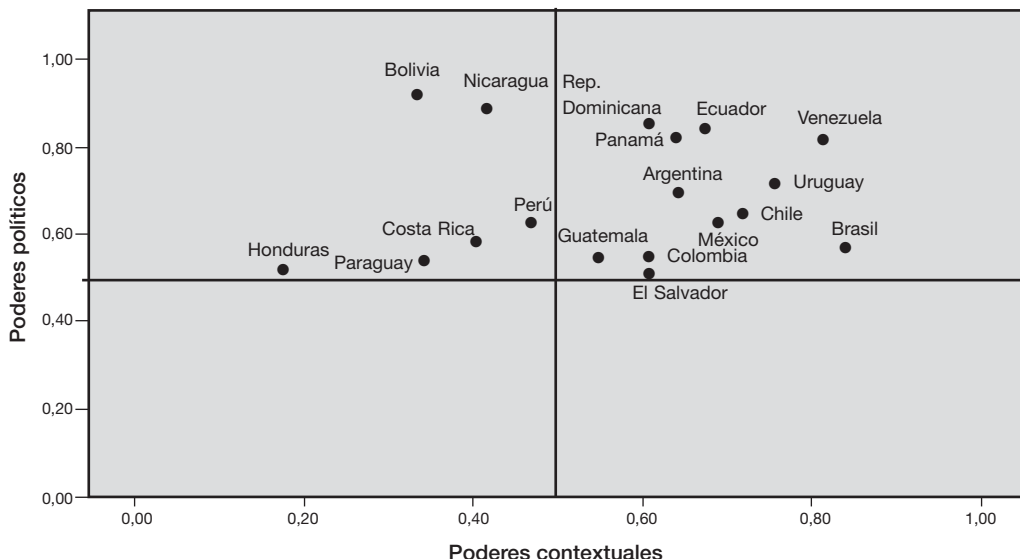
Fuente: Constituciones nacionales, archivos de legislaturas, Consultora Mitofsky y Reporte de Competitividad Global 2012.

Mitofsky, que elabora un *ranking* periódico de la popularidad de los presidentes en toda la región. Para la variable relacionada con el «estado de la economía» de los países se tomó como *proxy* el ingreso per cápita a partir de la información otorgada por el informe global de competitividad 2012, realizado por el Foro Económico. Una eventual crítica a la idea de construir la dimensión contextual a partir de las variables citadas es que el nivel de correlación de ambas podría ser tal que plantear mediciones autónomas llevaría a problemas de sesgo¹¹. No obstante, existen

trabajos de investigación que han constatado que los bajos rendimientos económicos de un país no siguen necesariamente a un descenso en la aceptación ciudadana al presidente sino que, por el contrario, en ocasiones tienden a ser el punto de partida para el incremento del apoyo popular a los jefes de Estado. Hallazgos empíricos que dan cuenta de lo expuesto los encontramos en Chile durante el primer Gobierno de Bachelet (Aplaza y Jiménez, 2009) o en Venezuela en los primeros años del presidente Chávez (Mero-lla y Zechmeister, 2010).

¹¹ En términos estadísticos se trataría del sesgo de colinealidad, por el que los valores de una variable pueden ser fácilmente inferidos de otra. La presencia de

este sesgo puede llevar a posteriores problemas de sobre o subvaloración de los coeficientes estadísticos.

GRÁFICO 2. *Presidencialismo en América Latina, 2012*

Puesto que la medición de cada una de las variables responde a escalas diferentes, para permitir la comparación se homogeneizaron todos los valores tipificándolos por el máximo. De esta forma, al país que alcanzó el puntaje más alto en cada una de las cuatro variables se le asignó el valor de «1». A partir de dicho referente se obtuvo la valoración del resto de países, por lo que cada variable responde a una escala que va de «1» a «0». Siguiendo la misma lógica, para la variable «poderes institucionales del presidente» se sumaron los puntajes asignados a los países en cada uno de los escenarios institucionales para posteriormente otorgar el valor de «1» al que obtuvo la mayor puntuación, en este caso Panamá. La tabla 1 refleja los resultados de la medición planteada luego de la estandarización de los datos¹².

Posteriormente se obtuvo una media de los valores asignados a cada una de las va-

riables que conforman tanto la dimensión «poderes políticos» como la dimensión «poderes contextuales». De la interacción de ambas dimensiones se obtuvo la ubicación de cada país en alguno de los cuadrantes referidos en la tipología que se propone en este artículo. El gráfico 2 da cuenta del ejercicio metodológico descrito. Como se observa, a pesar de que buena parte de los países analizados se encuentra dentro del cuadrante correspondiente al presidencialismo imperial, existen claras diferencias entre unos y otros. De un lado, Venezuela y Ecuador aparecen como los países con rasgos más intensos de presidencialismo imperialista. De otro lado, El Salvador se encuentra muy cerca del presidencialismo de transición mientras que Guatemala se aproxima al presidencialismo condicionado. El hecho de que la tendencia mayoritaria de los países se encuentre en diferentes puntos del cuadrante correspondiente al presidencialismo imperial es coherente con hallazgos empíricos previos que señalan que en América Latina la tendencia mayoritaria es hacia el otorgamiento de fuertes atribuciones constitucionales a los presidentes (Negretto, 2011, 2010). De hecho, si

¹² Las cuatro variables analizadas recibieron el mismo tratamiento metodológico, por lo que se les asignó igual peso en la valoración tanto de la intensidad como del tipo de presidencialismo.

se considera solamente la variable poderes institucionales, ubicada en la primera columna de la izquierda de la tabla 1, se puede observar la poca variabilidad que al respecto se registra en la región.

Por otra parte, Bolivia y Nicaragua aparecen como los países en los que de mejor forma se puede ver reflejado el presidencialismo condicionado. En ambos casos existen diseños institucionales que favorecen la actividad del presidente respecto a los otros Poderes del Estado y bancadas legislativas oficialistas robustas. No obstante, el apoyo ciudadano a la gestión del presidente y/o el estado de la economía no son del todo beneficiosas para el jefe de Estado. De su lado, Perú y, sobre todo, Costa Rica tienen una posición más moderada dentro de este cuadrante mientras que Honduras y Paraguay se encuentran al borde de pasar al presidencialismo mínimo. En el caso paraguayo, la crisis que derivó en la salida del presidente Lugo en 2012 podría ser entendida como el resultado de la conjunción de la debilidad del jefe de Estado tanto en la dimensión de los poderes políticos como contextuales (Marsteintredet *et al.*, 2013).

En cuanto a los cuadrantes correspondientes a los presidencialismos de transición y mínimo, la medición planteada no encuentra ningún referente empírico. No obstante, esto da cuenta solamente del escenario actual de América Latina, mas no de la inexistencia de casos que se pueden ubicar a lo largo del tiempo en dichos cuadrantes. Las características del gobierno de Jamil Mahuad en Ecuador (1998-2000) se inscriben perfectamente en el presidencialismo mínimo: poderes institucionales moderados, baja representación oficialista en la legislatura, reducido apoyo popular y crisis económica. Por otro lado, el gobierno del presidente Chávez en Venezuela antes de la vigencia de la Constitución de 1999 se enmarcaría en el tipo de presidencialismo descrito como de transición. Ambos ejemplos no solo sirven para ilustrar intuitivamente los cuadrantes vacíos de la tipología, sino también para dar

cuenta de la capacidad de dicha herramienta para observar los cambios que pueden darse tanto en el tipo de presidencialismo como en las dinámicas políticas y sociales que de allí se derivan.

Independientemente de la capacidad heurística de la tipología ya discutida, a partir de la adición de las cuatro variables incluidas en las dimensiones política y contextual se obtuvo un índice que valora el grado de intensidad con el que se presenta el presidencialismo en América Latina. Conforme consta en la columna del extremo derecho de la tabla 1, dicho índice está construido a partir de una escala que va de «0» a «4» y en la que «0» corresponde a un país en el que la forma de gobierno presidencialista es absolutamente marginal, mientras que «4» da cuenta de un presidente que gobierna con amplísimos poderes tanto políticos como contextuales. El anexo 3 presenta de forma más intuitiva la medición antes descrita. Allí se observa claramente cómo Venezuela y Ecuador son los países más presidencialistas de los dieciocho analizados mientras que Honduras y Paraguay se encuentran en la parte más baja del índice.

Finalmente, en el anexo 2 se representa la valoración obtenida individualmente por los países para cada una de las cuatro variables incluidas en las dos dimensiones de análisis propuestas y que constan en la tabla 1. En la punta de cada arista se ubica el máximo valor posible para cada dimensión («1»). Al comparar el comportamiento de las distintas variables se observa que los principales puntos de cambio se encuentran tanto en la aceptación ciudadana de los presidentes como en el estado de la economía de los países. De toda la muestra obtenida, Uruguay y México aparecen como los presidencialismos más equilibrados tanto en la dimensión de poderes políticos como en la relacionada a poderes contextuales. De otro lado, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay y Honduras son los países con mayores desequilibrios, sobre todo en la variable económica.

CONCLUSIONES

Este artículo toma las principales ideas que ha planteado la literatura sobre presidencialismo para unificarlas alrededor de dos dimensiones de análisis. En la primera dimensión, denominada «política», se incluyen tanto los poderes institucionales otorgados a los presidentes como la fuerza del partido oficialista en la legislatura. En la segunda dimensión, a la que definí como «contextual», se agruparon dos elementos clave para la gobernabilidad y que Maquiavelo las identificó de forma brillante en *El Príncipe*: el estado de la economía del país y la aprobación ciudadana del presidente. Así, mientras la dimensión política influye sobre el éxito presidencial en la aprobación de la agenda de gobierno, la dimensión contextual incide sobre la forma de relacionamiento del Ejecutivo con los actores sociales y políticos en oposición. De la interacción de las dos dimensiones surge una tipología que constituye una herramienta heurística y dinámica que permite observar no solo cuán presidencialista es un país sino también la naturaleza de las interacciones políticas y sociales que resultan de cada uno de los cuatro tipos ideales.

En el plano empírico, y recurriendo a medidas objetivas para cada una de las cuatro variables constitutivas de las dos dimensiones anotadas, el artículo ofrece una descripción de cuán presidencialistas son los países de América Latina. Los principales hallazgos obtenidos colocan a Venezuela y Ecuador como los países de la región en los que la forma de gobierno presidencialista se presenta de forma más intensa. Acorde a la tipología que se sugirió, ambos países podrían ser considerados como dos casos referenciales de presidencialismo imperial. Dicho tipo ideal guarda cercanía con el concepto de hiperpresidencialismo utilizado por Penfold (2010) para referirse a los gobiernos del presidente Chávez o el de Granda (2012) para describir a las administraciones del presidente Correa. No obstante, si

se valora que los poderes contextuales de los jefes de Estado de Venezuela y Ecuador han tendido a decrecer en 2015 y 2016, seguramente la intensidad con la que se presenta el presidencialismo imperial en ambos casos también habrá sufrido modificaciones. Precisamente, en la capacidad de adaptarse a cambios de corto plazo, y a pesar de ello mantener su capacidad explicativa, radica la utilidad de la tipología que este artículo ofrece.

En cuanto a la utilidad del índice de presidencialismo que aquí planteo, sus potencialidades van más allá de la descripción del poder político que poseen los Ejecutivos. Por un lado, el análisis de la categoría relacionada con los poderes institucionales permite a los tomadores de decisiones valorar los efectos directos e indirectos que, en conjunto con otras variables políticas, sociales y económicas, produce un diseño constitucional en el que se otorgan demasiadas atribuciones a los presidentes. Venezuela y Ecuador son dos casos en los que la promulgación de constituciones en las que se minimiza el campo de acción de la legislatura y el judicial ha contribuido a la ola de atropellos a las libertades individuales que viven esos países. Por otro lado, la categoría relacionada con el tamaño de la bancada legislativa del presidente somete a discusión los límites del apoyo electoral a los partidos oficialistas. Aunque es esencial que los presidentes tengan cooperación en la legislatura, cuando el tamaño de sus bancadas es extremadamente mayoritario, como sucede en Ecuador y fue el caso de Venezuela hasta hace poco, la posibilidad de la fiscalización al gobierno desciende drásticamente.

Adicionalmente, el índice de presidencialismo ofrecido, y específicamente la dimensión de poderes contextuales, es útil en cuanto permite establecer escenarios políticos en función de cuán importante es para la estabilidad democrática y la gestión de la agenda de gobierno el estado de la economía y la aceptación ciudadana de los presi-

dentos. El juicio político iniciado en contra de la presidenta Rousseff en Brasil da cuenta de cómo el deterioro de la economía, sumado a un descenso de la popularidad del jefe de Estado, pueden llevar a que el régimen democrático quede en entredicho. Como bien lo representaba Maquiavelo, virtud y fortuna son dos elementos esenciales no solo para mantener una equilibrada relación entre electores y gobernantes sino también para garantizar niveles mínimos de gobernabilidad.

Finalmente, tanto la propuesta teórica como los hallazgos empíricos que este artículo presenta invitan a mantener y profundizar el estudio del presidencialismo y de sus variantes como uno de los temas de investigación en América Latina y en otras regiones del mundo en las que prima dicha forma de gobierno. Si bien en la medición se han incluido varios rasgos institucionales del presidencialismo que no habían sido tomados en cuenta previamente y además se consideraron aspectos contextuales clave, hay otras categorías analíticas, como el papel de los medios de comunicación frente a los gobiernos, que podrían enriquecer aún más el debate. Adicionalmente, el estudio de varios países a lo largo del tiempo permitiría no solo tener una visión más amplia de la evolución del presidencialismo sino también verificar o falsar la utilidad de la tipología que aquí se ofrece. Como mencioné al inicio del artículo, el retorno de presidentes considerados intuitivamente como hiperpresidencialistas, independientemente de su orientación ideológica, vuelve a poner sobre la mesa de discusión un tema clásico de la ciencia política que había sido relativizado en las agendas de investigación.

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ANEXOS

ANEXO 1. *Poderes institucionales del presidente*

Tipo de capacidad del presidente	Criterios	Escenarios institucionales	Puntuación
<i>Capacidades legislativas</i>	Veto total	Sin posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse inmediatamente	5
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con 2/3 del total de asambleístas (mayoría absoluta)	4
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con 2/3 del total de asambleístas presentes en sesión	3
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con mayoría simple o relativa (mitad más uno) del total de asambleístas	2
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con mayoría simple o relativa (mitad más uno) del total de asambleístas presentes en sesión	1
		Sin capacidad de veto total	0
	Veto parcial	Sin posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse	5
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con 2/3 del total de asambleístas (mayoría absoluta)	4
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con 2/3 del total de asambleístas presentes en sesión	3
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con mayoría simple o relativa (mitad más uno) del total de asambleístas	2
		Con posibilidad de que la Asamblea pueda imponerse con mayoría simple o relativa (mitad más uno) del total de asambleístas presentes en sesión	1
		Sin capacidad de veto parcial	0
	Decretos de excepción	Sin control político ni de constitucionalidad	4
		Con control político de la Asamblea o de constitucionalidad de Corte/Tribunal Constitucional	2
		Con control político de la Asamblea y de constitucionalidad de Corte/Tribunal Constitucional	1
Sin capacidad de decretos de excepción		0	
Proyectos de ley de urgencia económica	Aprobación sin posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea	4	
	Aprobación con posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea después de vigencia	2	
	Aprobación con posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea antes vigencia	1	
	Sin capacidad de dictar proyectos de ley de urgencia económica	0	

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ANEXO 1. *Poderes institucionales del presidente* (continuación)

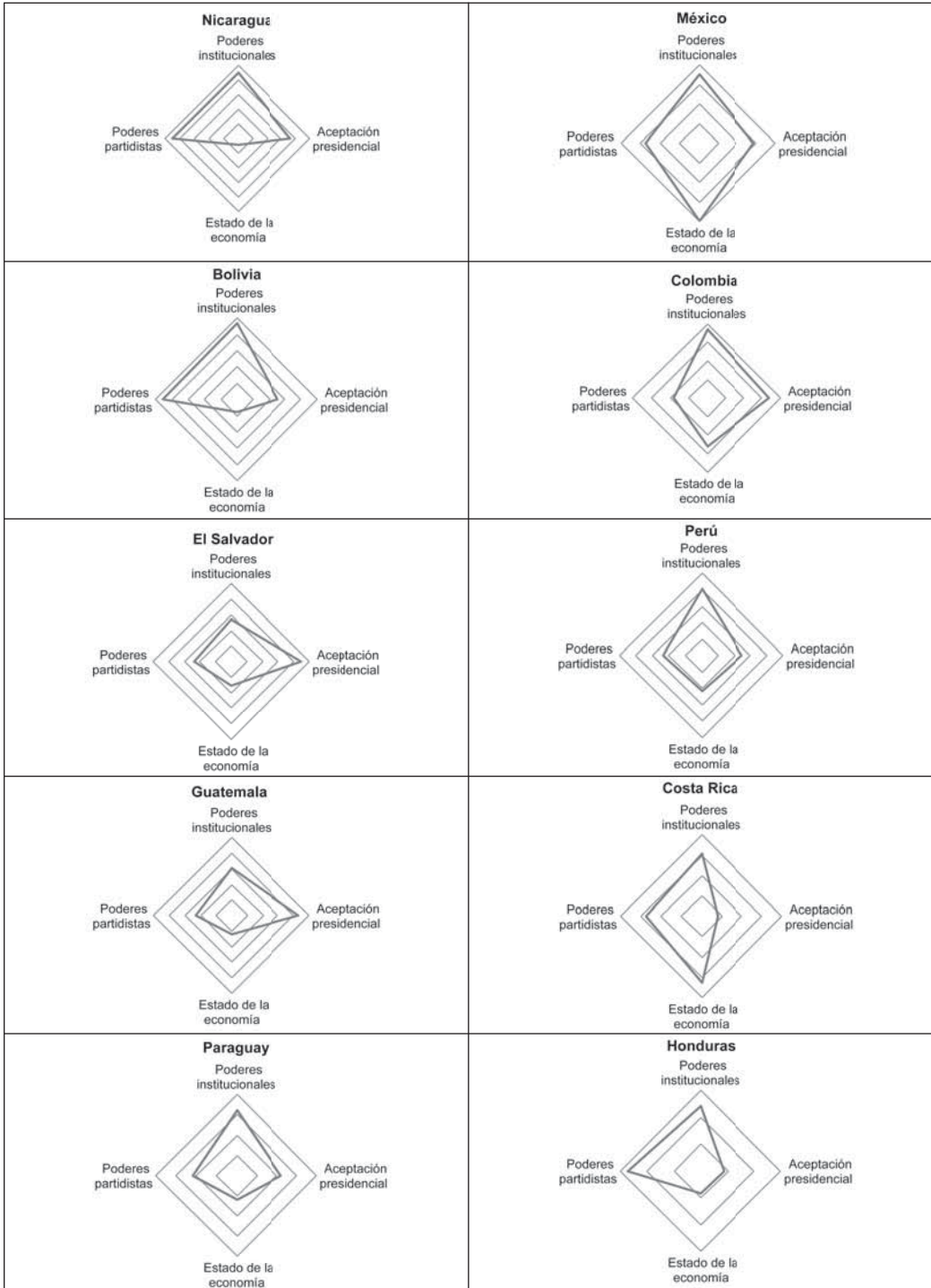
Tipo de capacidad del presidente	Criterios	Escenarios institucionales	Puntuación	
<i>Capacidades no legislativas</i>	Proyectos de ley de iniciativa exclusiva del presidente	Aprobación sin posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea	4	
		Aprobación con posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea	2	
		Aprobación con posibilidad de negación de la Asamblea	1	
		Sin capacidad de dictar proyectos de ley de iniciativa exclusiva del presidente	0	
	Elaboración del presupuesto anual	Aprobación sin posibilidad de modificación o negación de la Asamblea	4	
		La Asamblea puede reducir presupuesto de un sector sin posibilidad de redistribuirlo a otro	3	
		La Asamblea puede reducir presupuesto de un sector con posibilidad de redistribuirlo a otro	2	
		La Asamblea puede aumentar el presupuesto si establece nuevas fuentes de financiamiento	1	
	Designación del gabinete ministerial	Aprobación con posibilidad de modificación sin restricciones (aumentar o disminuir) de la Asamblea	0	
		El presidente designa ministros sin aprobación previa de la Asamblea	3	
		El presidente nombra ministros y la Asamblea confirma	2	
		El presidente propone nombre de candidatos a ministros y la Asamblea designa	1	
		El presidente no nombra ni designa ministros	0	
		Censura del gabinete ministerial	La Asamblea no puede censurar ni destituir ministros	2
			La Asamblea puede censurar pero no destituir ministros	1
			La Asamblea puede censurar y destituir ministros	0
Disolución de la Asamblea	El presidente puede disolver la Asamblea sin ningún requisito previo y mantenerse en el cargo	3		
	El presidente puede disolver la Asamblea, bajo ciertos presupuestos, y mantenerse en el cargo	2		
	El presidente puede disolver la Asamblea pero se convoca a nueva elección presidencial	1		
	El presidente no puede disolver la Asamblea	0		
<i>Capacidad de designación de funcionarios de control</i>	Contralor	El presidente designa al contralor	4	
		El presidente nombra al contralor y la Asamblea (u otro órgano) lo designa	2	
		La Asamblea nombra al contralor y el presidente lo designa	1	
		El presidente no nombra ni designa al contralor	0	
	Procurador	El presidente designa al procurador	4	
		El presidente nombra al procurador y la Asamblea (u otro órgano) lo designa	2	
		La Asamblea (u otro órgano) nombra al procurador y el presidente lo designa	1	
		El presidente no nombra ni designa al procurador	0	

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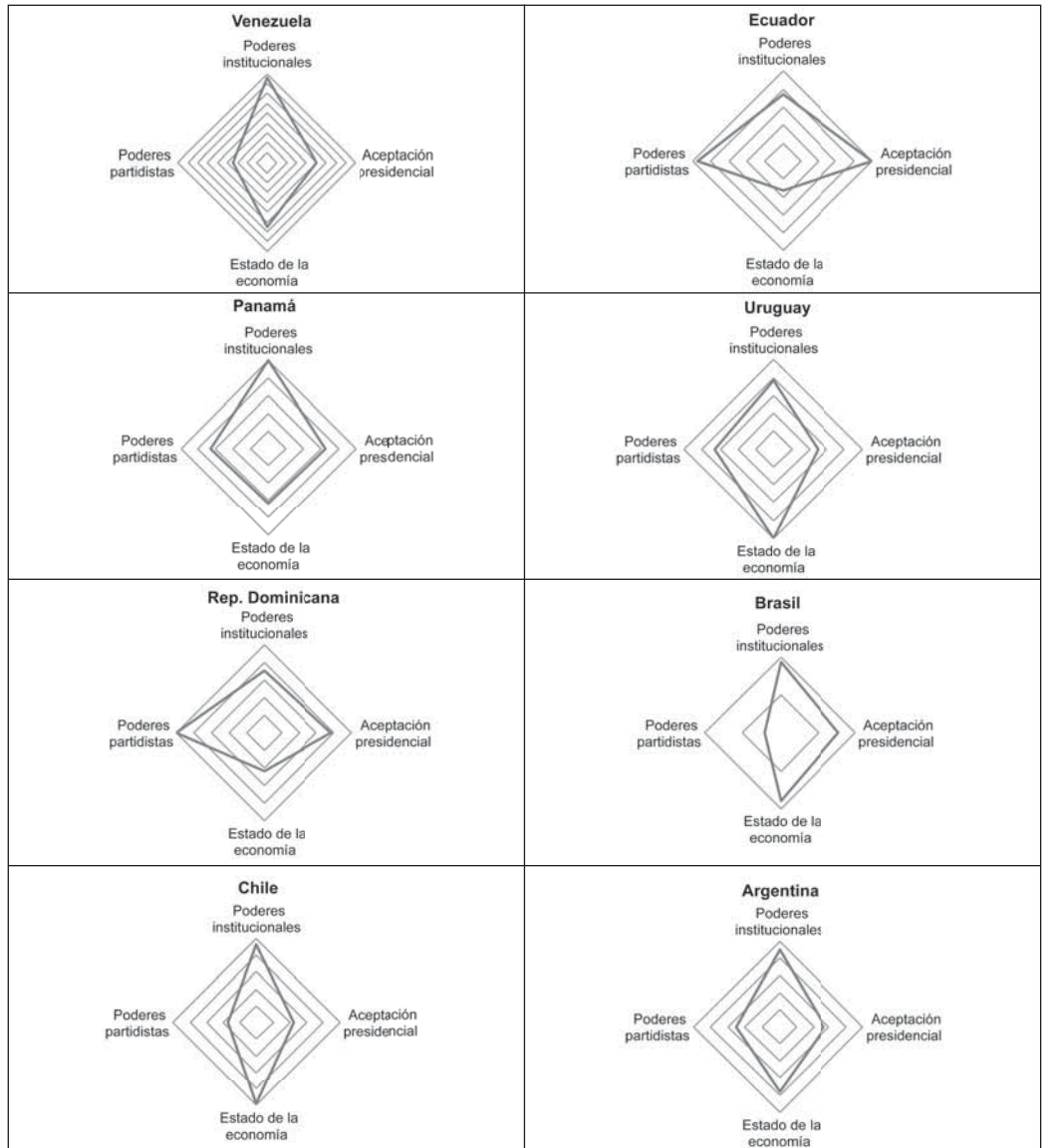
ANEXO 1. *Poderes institucionales del presidente (continuación)*

Tipo de capacidad del presidente	Criterios	Escenarios institucionales	Puntuación
<i>Capacidad de designación de funcionarios judiciales</i>	Defensor del Pueblo	El presidente designa al Defensor del Pueblo	4
		El presidente nombra al Defensor del Pueblo y la Asamblea (u otro órgano) lo designa	2
		La Asamblea nombra al Defensor del Pueblo y el presidente lo designa	1
		El presidente no nombra ni designa al Defensor del Pueblo	0
	Banco Central	El Banco Central no es autónomo del presidente	1
		El Banco Central es autónomo del presidente	0
	Corte Suprema	El presidente designa a jueces (todos o algunos)	4
		El presidente nombra a jueces (todos o algunos) y la Asamblea los designa	2
		La Asamblea nombra a jueces y el presidente los designa	1
		El presidente no nombra ni designa de forma directa	0
	Fiscal	El presidente designa al fiscal	4
		El presidente nombra al fiscal y la Asamblea (u otro órgano) lo designa	2
		La Asamblea nombra al fiscal y el presidente lo designa	1
		El presidente no nombra ni designa al fiscal	0
	Órgano electoral	El presidente designa al presidente o miembros del órgano electoral	3
		El presidente nombra a miembros del órgano electoral y la Asamblea (u otro órgano) los designa	2
		El presidente no nombra ni designa a miembros del órgano electoral	0
	Reelección indefinida	Reelección indefinida	4
		Reelección inmediata por una ocasión, luego de un período se podría volver	3
		Reelección inmediata por una sola ocasión	2
Reelección por una sola ocasión mediando un período de intervalo		1	
No hay reelección		0	

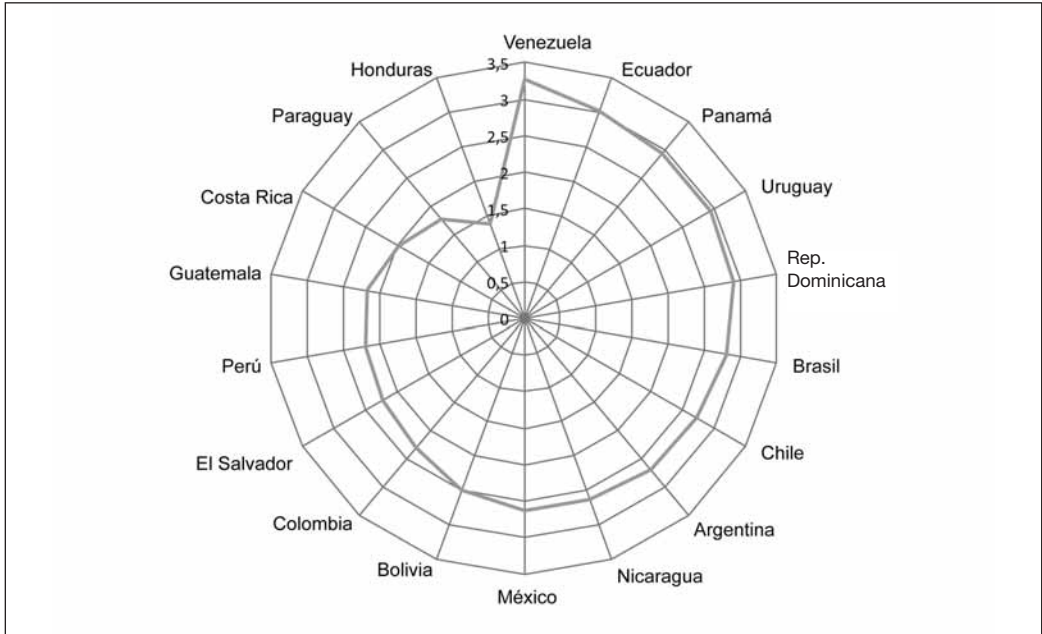
ANEXO 2. *Presidencialismo en América Latina por variables, 2012*



ANEXO 2. *Presidencialismo en América Latina por variables, 2012 (continuación)*



ANEXO 3. *Intensidad del presidencialismo en América Latina, 2012*



The Different Faces of Presidentialism: Conceptual Debate and Empirical Findings in Eighteen Latin American Countries

Las distintas caras del presidencialismo: debate conceptual y evidencia empírica en dieciocho países de América Latina

Santiago Basabe-Serrano

Key words

- Latin America
- Constitutionalism
 - Political Control
 - Executive Power
 - Presidentialism
 - Political System
 - Economic Situation

Palabras clave

- América Latina
- Constitucionalismo
 - Control político
 - Poder ejecutivo
 - Presidencialismo
 - Sistema político
 - Situación económica

Abstract

This article offers a new typology for examining presidentialism, in which the interaction between the political dimension (institutional and partisan presidential powers) and contextual dimension (the state of the economy and presidential approval) determine both the intensity of presidentialism and the type of political and social relationships derived from it. Looking at empirical evidence from eighteen Latin American countries, the article identifies four ideal types of presidentialism: imperial, conditioned, minimal, and transitional. Venezuela and Ecuador are empirical cases of imperial presidentialism while Honduras and Paraguay are on the threshold between conditioned presidentialism, and minimal presidentialism.

Resumen

Este artículo propone una nueva tipología sobre el presidencialismo en la que la interacción de las dimensiones política (poderes institucionales y partidistas del presidente) y contextual (estado de la economía del país y aprobación ciudadana al presidente) da cuenta tanto de la intensidad con la que se presenta dicha forma de gobierno como del tipo de relaciones políticas y sociales que de allí se derivan. Tomando como referentes empíricos a dieciocho países de América Latina, el artículo plantea cuatro tipos ideales de presidencialismo: imperial, condicionado, mínimo y de transición. Venezuela y Ecuador aparecen como los referentes de presidencialismo imperial mientras que Honduras y Paraguay se encuentran en el límite entre el presidencialismo condicionado y el presidencialismo mínimo.

Citation

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INTRODUCTION

Following debates over the benefits of parliamentarism versus presidentialism to strengthen the stability of democracy (Cheibub, 2007; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002; Linz, 1990), academic discussion in Latin America focused on measuring how strong the presidents of the region were (Mustapic, 2002; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Baldez and Carey, 1999; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Nino, 1992)¹. Although research on this issue decreased at the end of the 20th century, the emergence of governments such as those of Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador –intuitively described as “hyper-presidential”– has revived interest in this subject (Penfold, 2010; Pérez-Liñan, 2003: 151). However, most analyses continue to concentrate on the constitutional powers of presidents in relation to other state actors².

Although such a focus is essential, this article proposes a theoretical framework in which the traditional institutional factors used to measure how *presidential* a country is are aggregated with other contextual factors, such as the state of the economy and the popularity of the head of state. In this way, not only are normative factors considered, but also those that form part of the daily praxis of politics and that are related to both the provision of material resources necessary for government administration and the general welfare of the population, as well as to the ability of the president to *represent* and build trust among the public. Based on this theoretical construct, an empirical mea-

sure of levels of presidentialism in eighteen Latin American countries is then proposed. Thus, this article provides an overview of the general state of presidentialism in the region.

This article is in four parts. First, there is a review of the literature on the subject, which focuses on gaps found in the definition of presidentialism and in the methodological strategies used for its measurement. In the second part, a theoretical framework is presented that captures the main features of different types of presidentialism and also aggregates key factors of the economic and social context. The third part presents the methodological strategies used for empirical measurement, and the main findings for the eighteen countries considered in the analysis are discussed. Finally, the fourth part offers some conclusions.

PRESIDENTIALISM: CONCEPTS AND MEASUREMENT IN THE LITERATURE

Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) defined presidentialism as a form of government in which the president is always the chief executive, is elected by popular vote either directly or indirectly, and both presidential and legislature terms are fixed. Sartori (1994: 84) added the idea that a presidential form of government is characterized by the impossibility of removing the chief executive through a parliamentary vote. Besides the idea of the fixed mandate already cited, Linz (1994: 6) added the legitimacy enjoyed by presidents that are directly elected. However, the element cited by Linz seems to be an effect of this form of government more than a defining feature of presidentialism. Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) also noted that in a pure presidentialism, presidents have the right to choose their own ministers, regardless of the composition of the Congress.

Along similar lines, in defining a pure presidentialism, Shugart and Carey (1992: 19) define this concept by the popular elec-

¹ A similar discussion is developed by Elgie (2011) when analyzing the impact of the different types of semi-presidentialism on the performance of democracy. One of his strongest conclusions was that the sub type of a “parliamentarized president” is the most likely to result in weak democracies and that the “premier-presidentialism” sub type is the most favorable for the performance of these political regimes.

² A notable exception is the recent work of Doyle and Elgie (2014).

tion of the chief executive, the fixed terms of the president and the legislature —and the absence of mutual votes of confidence between them— and the freedom of the president to designate the main members of his/her cabinet. In essence, the concept of presidentialism is based on both the separate origin of the executive —by popular direct or indirect election— and on the autonomous mandate of the president and the legislature, as neither of the two powers can shorten the period of the other (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002)³.

From the concepts presented, we see that presidentialism is in opposition to a parliamentary form of government as well as different types of semi-presidentialism (Sedelius and Mashtaler, 2013; Elgie, 1999)⁴. Thus, in presidentialism the chief executive is elected by popular vote, while under parliamentarism he or she is chosen by the will of the legislature. In addition, while terms are fixed under a presidentialist regime, in parliamentarism the term of the chief executive and his/her cabinet can be ended through a vote of no confidence. However, although these concepts are valid for comparative studies between presidentialism and parliamentarism, they are not adequate for the task of examining variations in the degree of presidentialism among countries that share that form of government⁵.

In this regard, most of the literature analysing the intensity of presidentialism in Latin

America starts from the idea that variations between countries are a result of the structure of mutual controls —*checks and balances*— between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. The assumption is that the greater the formal powers of the president with respect to his/her legislative and judicial counterparts, the greater is the intensity of presidentialism. Hence, it is concluded that there is a more intense presidentialism in those contexts in which chief executives have considerably extended spheres of formal political influence in comparison to other state powers (Nino, 1992; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010). At the level of empirical evaluation, the legislative powers of the executive, the executive powers of the legislature, control over the cabinet and influence in designating public servants are some of main empirical factors considered in the literature⁶.

In addition to the already mentioned institutional powers, Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) have shown the importance of legislative support for presidents and for assessing how presidentialist a country is. Regarding partisan powers, these authors note that the strength of the ruling bloc in the legislature is decisive in increasing the capacity of the executive to enact the public policies included in his/her governing agenda (Negretto, 2011; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002: 47). Although some authors have defined this set of factors as *informal powers* (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002: 47), and others conceptualize them as *associated powers* (Morgenstern, *et al.* 2013)⁷, in both cases they represent objec-

³ However, there are countries with presidentialist forms of government in which it is possible for the executive or legislature, under specific conditions, to end the mandate of the other. Ecuador, after the adoption of the 2008 Constitution, is one of these.

⁴ What is conceptualized as forms of presidentialist and parliamentary government in this article has its counterpart in what Mainwaring and Shugart (2002) defined as presidential and parliamentary democracies.

⁵ From the analytical perspective proposed by Tsebelis (2002), the distinction between presidential and parliamentary forms of government disappears, giving way to the idea of veto players and their spatial positioning.

⁶ An understudied aspect of presidentialism in Latin America is the role of certain institutions and officials, who although not a part of the cabinet, have decision-making power within the Executive. One of the seminal works on this subject, the study of “office of the presidency”, is by Inácio and Llanos (2015) and compares the presidencies of Brazil and Argentina.

⁷ For Morgenstern *et al.* (2013), associative powers include indirect constitutional mechanisms that directly strengthen formal legislation or the power of agenda.

tive dimensions that, along with those of an institutional nature, reveal the degree of presidentialism in a country. This perspective is explicitly found in different studies on presidentialism in Latin America (Ackerman-Ross, 2011; Penfold, 2010; Negretto, 2009, 2010; Casar, 1999; Nino, 1992).

The connection between institutional and contextual dimensions in determining the degree of presidentialism in a country has also been considered in studies carried out regarding the United States, although based on different empirical factors (Payne *et al.*, 2007; Howell, 2003; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Schelinger, 1974). Indeed, the literature studying presidentialism in the US has identified the ability of the president to mobilize public opinion, style of leadership and the use of the media to gain approval for legislation as part of the contextual dimension reflecting the degree of presidentialism, (Bond *et al.*, 2003; Canes-Wrone and De Marchi, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager and Sullivan, 1994). So important are these factors that Morgenstern *et al.* (2013) have shown that presidents with weak institutional powers can reinforce their capacity to impose their governmental agenda to the extent that they are able to maintain control of the bureaucracy and public opinion.

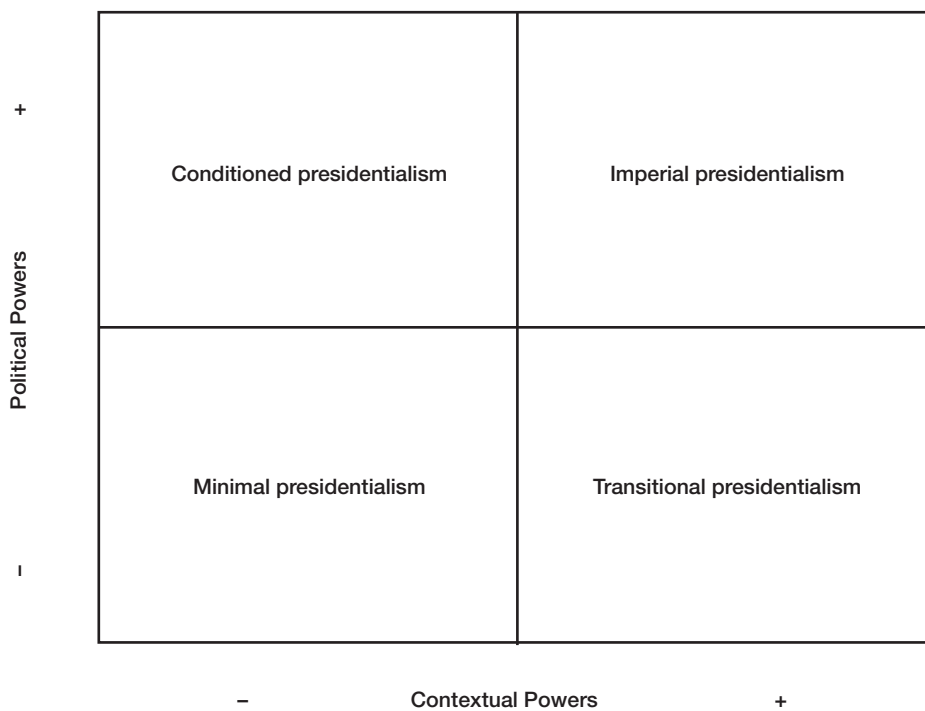
In short, what emerges from the scientific research conducted so far is that to assess the degree of presidentialism in a country it is not enough to consider the formal powers found at the constitutional level, but other contextual dimensions must also be included (Doyle and Elgie, 2014). Although there are studies that have done this, many continue to have a bias toward institutional factors (Doyle and Elgie, 2014; Morgenstern *et al.*, 2013), while others include among the contextual factors only those that are of a political nature (Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002). In response to this, in the following section I propose a theoretical framework that includes the different variables identified in the

literature but that permits a more profound and dynamic explanation of both different types of presidentialism and the nature of the political and social interactions that are derived from each type.

POLITICAL POWERS AND CONTEXTUAL POWERS: A TYPOLOGY OF PRESIDENTIALISM

The central idea in this section is that a presidentialist form of government varies in intensity based on the behaviour of institutional and partisan variables and those related to the economic and social context in which heads of state must make decisions. Therefore, to construct a typology of different types of presidentialism I propose two analytical dimensions. The first is political in nature and encompasses the constitutional powers of the president as well as the size of his/her legislative bloc (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Bonvecchi and Zelaznick, 2012; Amorim Neto, 2012; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002). The second dimension is contextual in nature and includes the performance of the economy as well as the public approval rating of the president. As mentioned in the literature, the first dimension affects the ability of the executive branch to carry out its political agenda, while the second influences the degree of control the president has over actors and institutions that are not aligned with his/her political project (Lanzaro, 2012, 2001; Cheibub, *et al.*, 2011; Mainwaring and Shugart, 2002; Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hager and Sullivan, 1994). Graph 1 presents the typology that results from the interaction of the political and contextual dimensions of presidentialism.

First of all, when the intensity of both political and contextual powers is high, what results is a country in which the president can carry out his or her own agenda without major obstacles or setbacks. Together, economic boom and the high popularity of a

GRAPH 1. *Typology of presidentialism: political powers and contextual powers*

head of state will increase the likelihood that actions to block the presidential agenda by actors and institutions not aligned with the government will be reduced to a minimum. This is the ideal situation for what is known as *imperial presidentialism*. In scenarios of this type, the president is able to enact policies based on his/her ideological orientation without needing the agreement of other legislative forces, as by having a broad legislative bloc within the legislative branch, the need to negotiate and reach agreements is considerably reduced⁸.

In addition, in a context of economic prosperity, combined with a high presidential

approval rating, the executive is in a position to ignore the petitions or demands that may come from political and social actors critical of his or her administration. In fact, there could be cases in which the government tries to persecute or limit the voice of those who are not part of the official project. Chambers of commerce, trade unions, social organizations and the media could be subjects of such attacks. Although a president may enjoy broad political and contextual powers (resources and popularity), the need to extend the spaces of power even more could lead to tensions in relations with any opposing forces to such an extreme that political tolerance disappears.

The other extreme case is represented by scenarios in which presidents govern with institutional designs that offer limited powers to their administration, and in addition, they have limited legislative represen-

⁸ Chile is an exceptional case because despite the existence of a majority ruling bloc in the legislature, agreements and negotiations with other political sectors remain. In this regard see Siavelis (2006).

tation. In these countries, the political agenda that is approved is minimal, as the president must carry out intense negotiations and exchanges in order to maintain government coalitions. As a result, the president's imprint on public policy is almost non-existent. In fact, the legislation that is generated comes primarily from the opposition and, in addition, given the level of exchange and concessions required of the president to deal with his or her legislative opposition, the presidential cabinet must include the opposition. Thus, the work of the president essentially depends on the political juncture, which leads to instability in public policy and incoherency between the actions of the executive and the legislation passed by the legislature.

In this scenario, the economic situation in which the president has to govern is critical and his or her popularity among the population low. This context of conflict leads to growth in pressure from political and social sectors for specific, essentially redistributive demands. The inability of the president to resolve these situations of economic and social tension, coupled with his/her limited popular support, leads to an executive branch that hands over spaces of power indiscriminately. The corporative practices followed in this context are a reflection of the difficulties governing in these countries. This scenario results in what is called in the typology, a case of *minimal presidentialism*.

In the third scenario, although institutional designs offer tools for a president to govern and there is an official bloc of support in the legislature, the country faces economic problems and popular support for the chief of state is low. In other words, although the political powers of the president are considerable, the contextual situation does not offer a favourable environment for the agenda of the executive to be approved without the imposition of economic or social constraints. The relative absence of economic resources and the president's low approval rating in-

crease social conflict to the point that there is a loss of governability and even political stability in the country. These are cases of *conditioned presidentialism*.

The last scenario in this typology is that of presidents with limited institutional powers and little representation in the legislature. On the contextual level, the economy of these countries performs well and the presidents enjoy popular support. In this presidentialist type, defined as *transitional presidentialism*, chief executives cannot carry out their governing agenda due to severe restrictions in the legislature. At the same time, economic stability and popular support for the president allow him or her to use these contextual factors to push for changes in the political arena. The tension that arises between support for the president and the opposition in the legislature constitutes a scenario that could foster structural modifications, which could result in aggressive constitutional reforms or in an open call for Constituent Assemblies.

Having described the different scenarios in which presidentialism can appear, as well as the type of political and social interactions that result from each type, in the following section I will establish the empirical existence of the typology that has been presented. To do so, I will analyse eighteen countries in Latin America, one of the regions in the world where the presidentialist form of government may present variations in intensity, but without major structural differences. Although at one point in time countries such as Bolivia were organized politically based on hybrid institutional designs, today presidentialism has been consolidated as the prevailing form of government in the region⁹.

⁹ Different definitions emerged in analysing the form of government in Bolivia. Some of the most cited have been: semi-presidentialism (Verdesoto, 2005), parliamentary presidentialism (García Montero, 2003; Mayorga, 2001), attenuated presidentialism (Mayorga, 1992) and hybrid presidentialism (Gamarra, 1992). A broader dis-

TESTING PRESIDENTIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

To empirically evaluate the proposed typology I have analysed eighteen Latin American countries. Observation is synchronous and based on data from 2012 for the two dimensions analysed. Within the political dimension, the variable, “institutional powers of the president”, was evaluated using the following criteria: the president’s legislative capacities, the president’s non-legislative capacities, the capacity of the president to designate high-level authorities, the president’s ability to appoint judicial officials, and if presidential re-election is possible and under what conditions. Next, the institutional scenarios that each criteria could present were identified, assigning a specific value to each of them based on how powerful the president is. The score assigned to each institutional scenario is structured, in general, on a scale of “4” to “0”¹⁰. Details of the coding can be found in Appendix 1. To capture the variable, “partisan powers of the president”, the percentage of legislative seats held by the ruling party was used based on official information from the national legislatures.

In the contextual dimension, for the variable, “presidential approval”, survey data provided by the research firm *Mitofsky*, which provides a periodic ranking of the popularity of presidents in all of the region, was used. For the variable related to the “state of the

economy”, income per capita was used as a *proxy* based on information from the Global Competitiveness Report 2012 of the World Economic Forum. A possible criticism of the idea of constructing the contextual dimension from the aforementioned variables is that the level of correlation of both could be such that independent measurements would raise problems of bias¹¹. However, there are studies that have shown that low economic performance in a country is not necessarily followed by a decrease in support for the president, but on the contrary, tends on occasion to be the starting point for an increase in support for the head of state. Empirical findings reveal this was the case in Chile during the first Bachelet government (Apablaza and Jiménez, 2009) and in Venezuela in the first years of President Chavez’s government (Merolla and Zechmeister, 2010).

Given that the measurement for each of the variables is based on a different scale, to permit comparison all of the values were homogenized, typifying them to a maximum. Thus, the country with the highest score on each of the four variables was assigned a value of “1”. From that reference point, the assessment of the other countries was obtained so that each variable responds to a scale ranging from “1” to “0”. Following the same logic, for the variable, “institutional powers of the president”, the scores assigned to the countries in each of the institutional scenarios were added up to then assign a “1” to the country that obtained the highest score, in this case Panama. Table 1 shows the results of the measurement proposed after the standardization of the data¹².

cussion on the Bolivian case and its form of government prior to the passage of the 2009 Constitution can be found in Pachano (20056).

¹⁰ As an example, if the legislature requires a majority of two thirds of the deputies to impose a partial veto, it is understood that the president enjoys greater powers and is assigned a higher score. The opposite occurs when the legislature requires only a simple majority of those present at the session to impose a partial veto. In the budgetary sphere, if the president has more discretion to develop the national budget he/she is assigned a higher score than in the case in which the legislature has greater scope to modify a budget proposal from the Executive.

¹¹ In statistical terms this would be collinearity bias, in which the values of one variable can be easily inferred from another. The presence of this bias can lead to later problems of over- or under-evaluating statistical coefficients.

¹² The four variables analyzed received the same methodological treatment so that they have been assigned the same weight in the assessment of the intensity and the type of presidentialism.

TABLE 1. *Presidentialism in Latin America (political and contextual powers)*

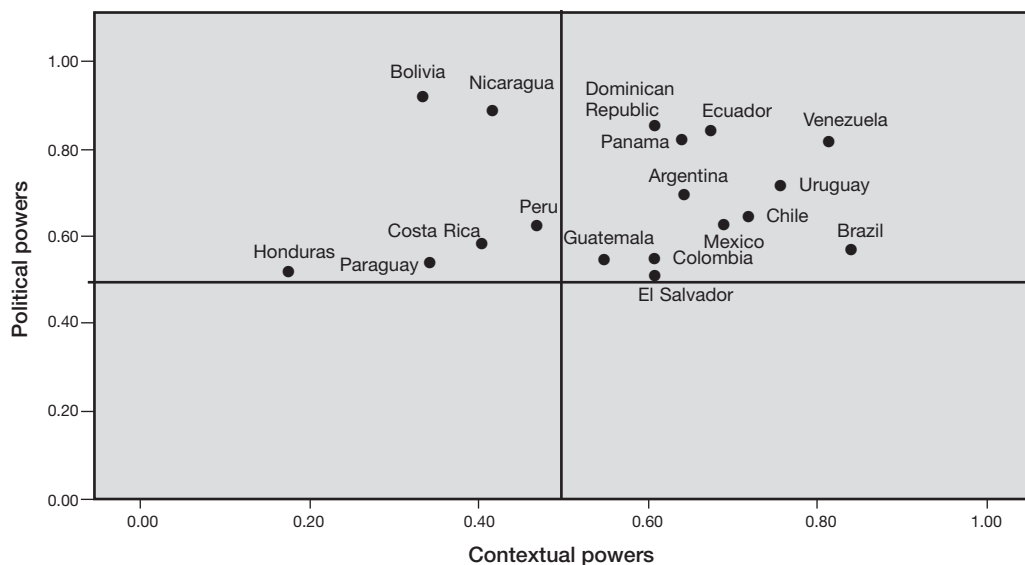
Countries	Political powers		Contextual powers		Index
	Institutional	Partisan	Presidential approval	State of the economy	
Venezuela	0.87	0.77	0.80	0.83	3.27
Ecuador	0.74	0.94	1.00	0.33	3.02
Panama	1.00	0.66	0.65	0.63	2.94
Uruguay	0.77	0.66	0.50	1.00	2.94
Dominican Republic	0.71	1.00	0.76	0.44	2.91
Brazil	0.94	0.21	0.78	0.90	2.82
Chile	0.94	0.35	0.45	0.99	2.72
Argentina	0.90	0.50	0.54	0.76	2.70
Nicaragua	0.90	0.90	0.74	0.09	2.63
Mexico	0.71	0.55	0.58	0.80	2.63
Bolivia	0.94	0.91	0.51	0.15	2.51
Colombia	0.74	0.36	0.68	0.52	2.30
El Salvador	0.55	0.48	0.90	0.31	2.23
Peru	0.81	0.47	0.50	0.43	2.21
Guatemala	0.61	0.47	0.86	0.24	2.18
Costa Rica	0.61	0.55	0.16	0.65	1.97
Paraguay	0.65	0.44	0.45	0.24	1.77
Honduras	0.48	0.55	0.18	0.17	1.37

Source: National constitutions, legislative archives, Mitofsky Consulting Firm and Global Competitiveness Report 2012.

Following, an average for the values assigned to each of the variables that make up both the “political powers” and “contextual powers” dimensions was obtained. From the interaction of both dimensions, the placement of each country in one of the quadrants referred to in the typology was obtained. Graph 2 shows the methodological exercise described. As can be seen, despite the fact that a large number of the countries analysed fall within the quadrant corresponding to imperial presidentialism, there are clear differences between them. On one side, Venezuela and Ecuador appear to be the countries with the strongest features of imperial presidentialism. On the other side, El Salvador is very close to the presidentialism of transition, while Guatemala is closer to conditioned

presidentialism. The fact that the main trend in the countries is found in different points of the quadrant corresponding to imperial presidentialism is consistent with previous empirical findings that reveal that the majority tendency in Latin America is towards granting strong constitutional powers to presidents (Negretto, 2011, 2010). Indeed, if only the institutional powers variable, located in the first column on the left in table 1, is considered, we can see the limited variation in this regard in the region.

In addition, we see that in Bolivia and Nicaragua the form of government is best reflected in conditioned presidentialism. In both countries, institutional designs favour presidential action over other state powers and

GRAPH 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America, 2012*

strong legislative ruling blocs. However, public support for the president and/or the state of the economy are not entirely beneficial for the head of state. Peru and especially Costa Rica have a more moderate position within the quadrant, while Honduras and Paraguay are on the verge of passing to a minimal presidentialism. In the case of Paraguay, the crisis that led to the departure of President Lugo in 2012 could be understood as the result of the weakness of the head of state, both in terms of political powers and the broader contextual dimension (Marsteintredet *et al.*, 2013).

Regarding the quadrants corresponding to transitional and minimal presidentialism, the analysis finds no countries currently fit these types. However, this only reflects the current scenario in Latin America, as there may be previous cases of transitional and minimal presidentialism. The characteristics of the government of Jamil Mahuad in Ecuador (1998-2000) fall perfectly within a minimal presidentialism: moderate institutional powers, low representation in the legislature, limited popular support and economic crisis. In addition, the government of President

Chavez in Venezuela before the adoption of the 1999 Constitution, would fit within the framework of a transitional presidentialism. Both examples not only illustrate intuitively the empty quadrants of the typology, but also reveal the capacity of this tool for observing changes that can occur both in the type of presidentialism and in the political and social dynamics that influence it.

Independent of the the heuristic capacity of the typology, we obtain an index that evaluates the degree of intensity of presidentialism in Latin America from the addition of the four variables included in the political and contextual dimensions. As shown in the rightmost column of Table 1, the index is constructed on a scale from "0" to "4", where "0" corresponds to a country in which the form of presidential government is absolutely marginal, while "4" reflects a president who governs with very broad political and contextual powers. Appendix 3 presents in a more intuitive manner the scores for each country on this index, where it can be clearly seen that Venezuela and Ecuador are the most presidentialist countries of the eighteen ana-

lysed, while Honduras and Paraguay score lowest on the index.

Finally, Appendix 2 shows graphically the scores obtained by the individual countries for each of the four variables included in the two dimensions of analysis proposed and found in Table 1. The four points of each graph show the maximum possible value for each dimension ("1"). By comparing the behaviour of the different variables, we can see that the main points of change are found in both the public acceptance of the president and the economic state of the countries. Of the entire sample, Uruguay and Mexico appear to have the most balanced presidentialism in terms of both political and contextual powers. In contrast, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Paraguay and Honduras are the countries with the greatest imbalances, especially in terms of the economic variable.

CONCLUSIONS

This article takes the main ideas raised in the literature on presidentialism and unifies them around two analytical dimensions. The first dimension, the "political", includes both the institutional powers granted to presidents and the strength of the ruling party in the legislature. The second dimension, defined as "contextual", includes two factors key to governance, and which Machiavelli brilliantly identified in "The Prince": the state of the economy of the country and public approval of the president. Thus, the first dimension influences a president's success in getting approval for his/her governing agenda, while the contextual dimension impacts on the form of relationship between the executive and opposition social and political actors. The interaction of the two dimensions is the basis for a typology that represents a heuristic and dynamic tool that allows us to observe not only how presidential a country is but also the nature of the political and social interactions that result from each of the four ideal types.

Empirically, and using objective measures for each of the four variables that constitute the two dimensions, this article provides a description of how presidential the countries of Latin America are. The main findings show that Venezuela and Ecuador are the countries in the region where the presidential form of government is the strongest. According to the typology put forward, both countries could be considered reference cases for imperial presidentialism. This ideal type is close to the concept of hyper-presidentialism used by Penfold (2010) to refer to the governments of President Chavez and to that of de Granda (2012) to describe the administrations of President Correa. However, if we also consider that the contextual powers of the heads of state of Venezuela and Ecuador have tended to decrease in 2015 and 2016, surely the strength of imperial presidentialism in both cases will have suffered modifications. Indeed, the usefulness of the typology that this article provides lies in its ability to adapt to short-term changes and maintain its explanatory power.

Regarding the usefulness of the index of presidentialism presented in this article, its potential goes beyond describing the political power of executives. On the one hand, the analysis of institutional powers allows decision makers to evaluate the direct and indirect effects, in combination with other political, social and economic variables, produced by a constitutional design in which too many powers are granted to presidents. In the case of Venezuela and Ecuador, the adoption of constitutions in which the legislative and judicial spheres of action are limited has been crucial to the wave of assaults on individual freedoms in those countries. On the other hand, the category related to the size of the president's legislative bloc raises the question of limits to the electoral support for governing parties. Although it is essential that presidents have cooperation from the legislature, when they hold an overwhelming majority in the legislative branch, as is the

case of Ecuador and as was the case in Venezuela until recently, the possibility of oversight of the government drops dramatically.

In addition, the index, and specifically regarding the dimension of contextual powers, is useful because it allows us to establish political scenarios based on how important the state of the economy and the approval rating of the executive are for democratic stability and carrying out the president's legislative agenda. The impeachment process initiated against President Rousseff in Brazil reveals how the deterioration of the economy coupled with a decline in the popularity of the head of state may lead to a democratic regime being called into question. As clearly represented in Machiavelli, virtue and fortune are two essential elements not only for maintaining a balanced relationship between voters and rulers, but also for guaranteeing a minimal level of governance.

Finally, both the theoretical proposal and the empirical findings presented in this article call for us to continue the study of presidentialism and its variations as one of the topics of research in Latin America and in other regions of the world where this form of government is prevalent. Although we have included several institutional characteristics of presidentialism that had not been taken into account before, and key contextual factors as well, there are other analytical categories, such as the role of the media in relation to government, that could enrich the analysis even more. In addition, the study of various countries over time would allow us not only to have a broader overview of the evolution of presidentialism, but also to verify or reject the use of the typology presented here. As I mentioned at the beginning of the article, the return of presidents intuitively considered hyper-presidential, regardless of their ideological orientation, brings to the table once again a classic theme of political science that has been of limited importance in research agendas.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president*

Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
<i>Legislative capacities</i>	Total veto	Without the possibility of immediately being overridden by the Assembly	5
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 majority (absolute majority)	4
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 majority of those present in the session	3
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of the total of Assembly members	2
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of those present in the session	1
		Without the capacity for a total veto	0
	Partial veto	Without the possibility of Assembly overriding	5
		With the possibility of Assembly overriding with 2/3 of total of Assembly members (absolute majority)	4
		With the possibility of the Assembly overriding with 2/3 of those present in the session	3
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of the total of Assembly members	2
		Possibility of Assembly overriding with a simple or relative majority (half plus one) of those present in the Assembly session	1
		Without the capacity for a partial veto	0
	Emergency decrees	Without political or constitutional control	4
		With political control of the Assembly or constitutionality determined by the Courts/Constitutional Court	2
		With political control of the Assembly and constitutionality determined by the Courts/Constitutional Court	1
		Without capacity to make emergency decrees	0
	Legislation in case of economic emergency	Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
		Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly after it becomes effective	2
Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection of the Assembly before it becomes effective		1	
Without the capacity to enact legislation in case of economic emergency		0	

...

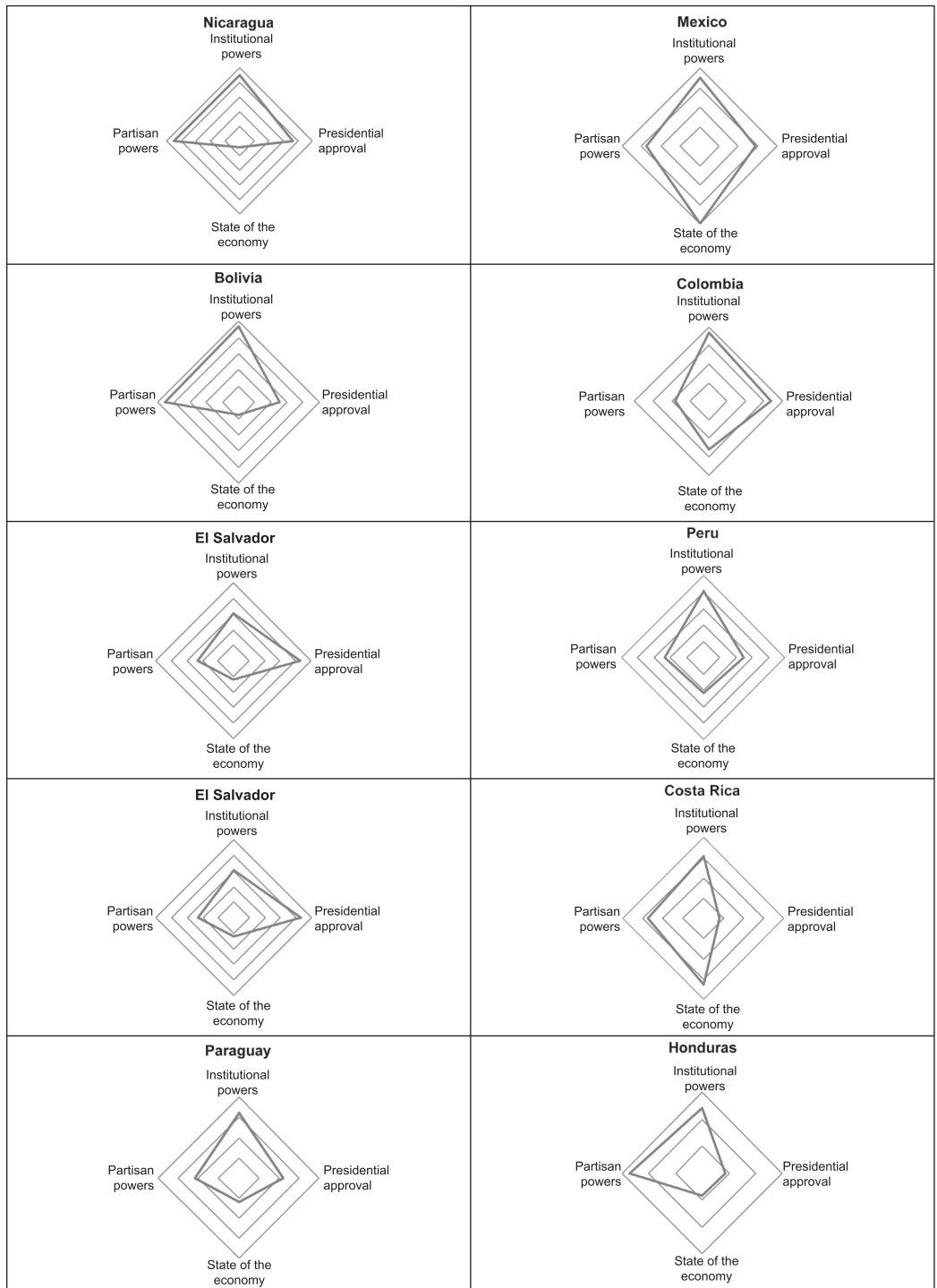
APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president (continuation)*

Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
		Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
	Legislation exclusively initiated by the president	Approval with the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	2
		Approval with possibility of rejection by the Assembly	1
		Without the capacity to enact legislation exclusively initiated by the president	0
		Approval without the possibility of modification or rejection by the Assembly	4
	Development of annual budget	Assembly can reduce the budget for a sector without possibility of redistributing it to another sector	3
		Assembly can reduce the budget for a sector with the possibility of redistributing it to another sector	2
		Assembly can increase the budget if it establishes new sources of financing	1
		Approval with the possibility of modification without restrictions (increase or decrease) by the Assembly	0
	Appointing ministerial cabinet	President designates ministers without the prior approval of the Assembly	3
		President nominates ministers and Assembly confirms them	2
		President proposes names of candidates for ministries and Assembly appoints them	1
		President does not nominate or appoint ministers	0
<i>Non-legislative capacities</i>	Censure of ministerial cabinet	Assembly cannot censure or remove ministers	2
		Assembly can censure but not remove ministers	1
		Assembly can censure and remove ministers	0
		President can dissolve the Assembly without any precondition and remain in office	3
Dissolving the Assembly		President can dissolve the Assembly under certain conditions and remain in office	2
		President can dissolve the Assembly but with new presidential election called	1
		President cannot dissolve the Assembly	0
		President designates Comptroller	4
<i>Capacity to appoint high-level officials</i>	Comptroller	President nominates Comptroller and Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Comptroller and the President designates appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or appoint the Comptroller	0
		President appoints the Attorney General	4
Attorney General* [Procurador]		President nominates the Attorney General and the Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly (or another body) nominates the Attorney General and the President appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or designate the Attorney General	0
		...	

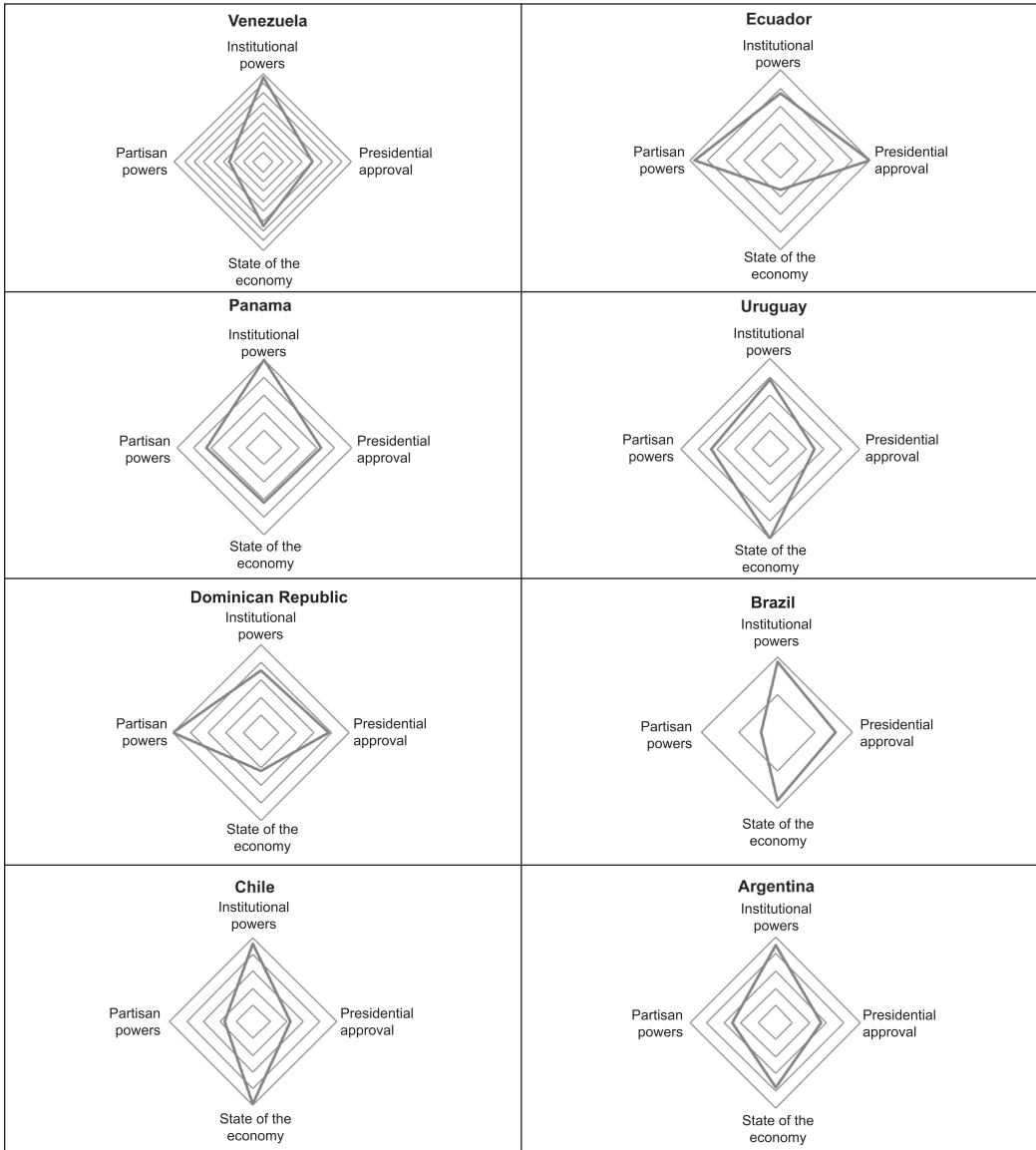
APPENDIX 1. *Institutional powers of the president (continuation)*

Capacities of the president	Criteria	Institutional scenarios	Scoring
<i>Capacity to make judicial appointments</i>	Ombudsman	President appoints the Ombudsman	4
		President nominates the Ombudsman and the Assembly (or another body) appoints him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Ombudsman and the President appoints him/her	1
		President does not nominate or appoint the Ombudsman	0
	Central bank	Central Bank is not independent of the president	1
		Central Bank is independent of the president	0
	Supreme Court	President appoints judges (all or some)	4
		President nominates judges (all or some) and the Assembly appoints them	2
		Assembly nominates judges and the president appoints them	1
		President does not directly nominate or appoint judges	0
	Attorney General* [Fiscal]	President designates the Attorney General	4
		President nominates the Attorney General and the Assembly designates him/her	2
		Assembly nominates the Attorney General and the president designates him/her	1
		President does not nominate or delegate the Attorney General	0
	Electoral body	President designates the president or members of the electoral body	3
		President nominates members of the electoral body and the Assembly (or another organ) appoints them	2
		President does not nominate or appoint members of the electoral body	0
	Indefinite re-election	Indefinite re-election	4
		Immediate re-election one time; after a period can be elected again.	3
		Re-election only one time	2
Re-election only one time after an interval		1	
	No re-election	0	

APPENDIX 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America broken down by variables, 2012*



APPENDIX 2. *Presidentialism in Latin America broken down by variables, 2012 (continuation)*



APPENDIX 3. *Strength of presidentialism in Latin America, 2012*

