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Miguel Carreras

ABSTRACT

One of the most significant developments in Latin American democracies since the beginning of the Third Wave of democratization is the rise to power of political outsiders. However, the study of the political consequences of this phenomenon has been neglected. This article begins to fill that gap by examining whether the rise of outsiders in the region increases the level of executive-legislative confrontation. Using an original database of political outsiders in Latin America, it reports a series of logistic regressions showing that the risk of executive-legislative conflict significantly increases when the president is an outsider. The likelihood of institutional paralysis increases when an independent gets elected, due to the legislative body's lack of support for the president and the outsider's lack of political skills. The risk of an executive's attempted dissolution of Congress is also much higher when the president is an outsider.

In June 1990, the presidential elections in Peru produced a shocking result. Alberto Fujimori, a university professor who was virtually unknown by the broader public six months before the election, was elected president. He had no previous experience in politics, and he ran with a new party that was little more than an electoral vehicle for his presidential bid. This unexpected electoral result led to a minority president who did not have enough support in the legislature to implement his policy agenda. In April 1992, Fujimori argued that emergency measures were needed to combat terrorism and to restructure the state and the economy. In order to overcome the gridlock created by the opposition in the legislative body, Fujimori decided to shut down Congress (Kenney 2004). This example shows that executive-legislative relations may become strained when the executive power is held by a political outsider. Outsider presidents are more likely to face situations of institutional paralysis, and in some extreme cases, this situation may result in the dissolution of the legislative body by the executive branch.

The rise of outsiders and executive-legislative conflict are two of the "perils of presidentialism" identified by Linz (1990, 1994). According to this scholar, there is a dual democratic legitimacy in presidential systems. Both the president and the congress have a popular legitimacy, since they are elected in democratic elections. It follows that "a conflict is always latent and sometimes likely to erupt dramatically; there is no democratic principle to resolve it" (Linz 1994, 7). The risk of executive-

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legislative confrontation may be more acute when the president is an outsider who has no support in Congress.

The link between outsider presidents and executive-legislative conflict has never received an empirical confirmation. In fact, the literature has neglected the comparative study of political outsiders.¹ One recent contribution started to fill this gap by focusing on the causes of the rise of independent candidates in presidential elections (Corrales 2008). The present study is the first that seeks to assess the political consequences of the election of outsider politicians. It will do so by studying the impact of outsider presidents on executive-legislative relations.

The lack of empirical studies about political outsiders is largely due to the lack of a clear definition and operationalization of the concept. The first section of this article offers a precise definition of the term. Then it will review the relevant literature that has addressed issues related to executive-legislative conflict. From this discussion, it will derive a couple of hypotheses that it will empirically test, using data from an original database of political outsiders. The study will conclude by presenting the implications of the findings and suggesting avenues for further research.

POLITICAL OUTSIDERS: A DEFINITION

The concept “outsider” seems commonsensical, but the literature on Latin American presidentialism has not converged on a single and consensual definition of the term. In fact, scholars interested in the rise of political independents have tended to study this issue under the theoretical framework of populism or neopopulism (Freidenberg 2007; Hawkins 2010; Roberts 1995; Weyland 1999).

Given this conceptual confusion, it is essential to propose a clear definition of the concept “political outsider” that will guide the empirical analysis that follows. Two main “outsidership” dimensions have been identified in previous works. The first is related to the characteristics of the candidate’s party. Barr defines an outsider as “someone who gains political prominence not through or in association with an established, competitive party, but as a political independent or in association with new or newly competitive parties” (Barr 2009, 33). Similarly, Kenney uses “the term ‘outsider’ to refer to politicians who have become politically prominent from outside of the national party system, and the term ‘insider’ to refer to politicians who rise to political prominence from within the party system” (1998, 59). A recent working paper of the Inter-American Development Bank also looks at the party system origins of the candidates when categorizing presidential candidates as either outsiders or insiders (Miller 2011).² In a similar vein, Seawright (2011) points out that the main characteristic of outsider candidates is that they do not belong to their country’s traditional parties.³

The second outsidership dimension focuses on the previous political career of presidents and prime ministers. Scholars often describe presidential candidates with no previous experience in politics as outsiders. In one of the rare large-N studies of the causes of outsider emergence in Latin America, Corrales (2008, 5) defines outsiders (or “newcomers”) as “those who run for president with no prior electoral experience

(running for political office) and no major public administration experience.” In a recent contribution, Samuels and Shugart (2010) also focus on the previous political career of presidents and prime ministers. They consider politicians with limited previous political experience (in the party, the cabinet, or the legislature) as outsiders.

This study defines outsiders in a Sartorian fashion and considers both constitutive dimensions as necessary for a candidate to be considered a political outsider.⁴ The reason for rejecting a radial conceptualization is mainly theoretical.⁵ In fact, Goertz (2006, 5) recommends the identification of “ontological attributes that play a key role in causal hypotheses, explanations, and mechanisms.” Since the main theoretical goal of this article is to analyze the consequences for executive-legislative relations of the election of outsiders, it is important to exclude experienced politicians who run with a new party or inexperienced politicians who run with an established party. These types of candidate often claim to be real outsiders and tend to run antiestablishment campaigns, but they still benefit from their political experience and partisan resources when they come to power. In that sense, they have more in common with insiders than with outsiders.

POLITICAL OUTSIDERS: OPERATIONALIZATION

The first constitutive dimension of outsidership is political inexperience. Political experience can be acquired through different political positions or roles. The most common form of gaining political experience is by being elected a legislator in a national legislative body, such as the lower house or the senate. Party leaders of nationally competitive established parties also accumulate significant political experience over the years.⁶ Political experience can also be acquired through executive positions at the regional or national level. In sum, presidents fulfill the first constitutive dimension of political outsidership (political inexperience) if they have not occupied any of these three political positions before running in the presidential elections.

At this point, an important caveat is necessary. Some presidents who had a very brief political experience before running for office will still be considered political outsiders in this study. It would be problematic to exclude some relevant cases because they had a very limited political experience before the campaign that brought them to power. Hence, in this work, a president is considered a political outsider when he or she has less than two years of political experience before arriving in power, combining executive, legislative, and party leadership. The two-year rule is somewhat arbitrary but reasonable. The objective is not to consider as “insiders” presidents who did not have a political career before coming to office but occupied a political position for a limited time immediately before the elections that took them to power, often as a building block to be able to run successful outsider campaigns in national elections.⁷

The second constitutive dimension of outsidership is the rise to political prominence outside of the national party system. There are three empirical indicators that satisfy this second dimension: running with a new party, running with an ad hoc electoral movement, and running as an independent. This study follows previous

Table 1. Elected Outsider Presidents in Latin America, 1980–2010

Ecuador	2003–2005 2006–	Lucio Gutiérrez (PSP) Rafael Correa (Alianza País)
Nicaragua	1990–1996	Violeta Chamorro (UNO)
Paraguay	2008–2012	Fernando Lugo (APC)
Peru	1990–2001 2001–2006	Alberto Fujimori (Cambio 90) Alejandro Toledo (Perú Posible)
Venezuela	1998–2013	Hugo Chávez (MVR)

ones and defines new parties as parties that are on the ballot for the first time in any given election (Harmel and Robertson 1985; Hug 2001). In this analysis, parties are considered new the first two times they appear on the ballot. A new party is one that either results from a split from an existing party or is genuinely new; i.e., it emerges without any help from career politicians from existing parties (Hug 2001, 79–80; Tavits 2006, 106).

However, mergers and electoral alliances between already existing parties are not considered new parties in this work, even if they use a “party label” that is on the ballot for the first time (Hug 2001). As indicated above, running with a new party is not the only way a candidate can fit into this second constitutive dimension of outsidership. Many Latin American presidential candidates in the last 20 years have run with “electoral movements” that are empty shells, whose only objective is to facilitate the election of certain individuals to positions of political authority at the local and national level. Electoral movements are defined as “personal vehicles for promoting or maintaining an individual candidate or leader” (Levitt 2012, 92). Furthermore, some electoral systems allow independent candidates not affiliated with any political party or electoral movement to run for top executive positions. In line with our definition, politically inexperienced independent candidates will also be considered political outsiders.

Following the proposed definition and operationalization, this study identified seven cases of Latin American presidents who arrived in power as political outsiders, considering all democratic elections in the period 1980–2010 (see table 1). This sample of cases will be used as independent variables in the empirical analysis.

OUTSIDERS AND EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE CONFRONTATION

The increased risk of executive-legislative conflict has been presented as one of the disadvantages of presidentialism. According to Lijphart (1992, 15), the problem of executive-legislative conflict “is the inevitable result of the coexistence of the two independent organs that presidential government creates and that may be in disagreement.” In fact, unlike the mechanism of legislative no confidence in parliamentary systems, there is no institutional means of resolving a confrontation between

the executive and the legislative branches of government, a situation that may lead to deadlock and paralysis. The problem of executive-legislative conflict is aggravated by the temporal rigidity of presidential systems. The president's fixed term in office and the fixed duration of the legislative period do not leave room for the readjustments that political events may require (Linz 1990).

The main argument of this study is that the problem of presidential systems is exacerbated when a political outsider is in power. It contends that the rise of outsiders has deleterious consequences for executive-legislative relations. The rise of political outsiders has also been identified as one of the perils of presidentialism (Linz 1994).

The election of independent candidates may increase the level of executive-legislative confrontation for three main reasons. First, the rise of outsiders increases the likelihood of a minority president; i.e., a president supported only by a minority of the legislators in Congress. In fact, outsiders may gain office through a new party that is often nothing more than the electoral vehicle they used. Once in power, however, outsiders have to face the opposition of the established parties in the legislature. The lack of presidential majorities imperils government stability and significantly increases the likelihood of executive-legislative gridlock (Linz 1990, 1994).

More recent studies have shown that interbranch cooperation is not automatically impaired when the president is in a minority situation. Using data from all presidential regimes between 1946 and 1996, Cheibub (2002) convincingly demonstrates that minority governments do not make executive-legislative deadlock more likely. The greatest potential for executive-legislative conflict exists when the president's party is unable to sustain a veto, and when no cabinet coalition holding a majority of seats in the legislature is formed (Negretto 2006). Outsider presidents often find themselves in this exact situation, as Negretto shows (Negretto 2006, table 1). Two outsider presidents included in his analysis (Fujimori and Chávez) lacked the support of both the median and the veto legislator (see also Colomer and Negretto 2005).

Table 2 shows the percentage of seats in the lower chamber of Congress held by the president's party when the president is an outsider (compared to the average percentage in the period 1980–2010 in each country). As the table illustrates, outsider presidents have considerably smaller legislative contingents than insider presidents. Some outsider parties are little more than an empty shell serving as an electoral vehicle for an independent candidate. Hence, some outsiders, such as Gutiérrez, Correa, Fujimori, and Chávez, clearly fall into the worst case scenario identified by Negretto.

A second reason for the increase in executive-legislative confrontation is that outsiders tend to lack a political and democratic socialization that would lead them to reach out to other political forces and seek compromises. In fact, political parties play a key role in the recruitment and socialization of democratic political elites. In the words of Levitsky and Cameron (2003, 4), political parties "provide the foundation for a democratic political class." Even if they have experienced serious political conflicts during their career, experienced party politicians tend to be imbued

Table 2. Percentage of Seats of Outsiders' Parties in the Legislature

Outsider Presidents	President's Party (First Year in Office)	Average Percentage of the President's Parties in the Legislature (1980–2010)
Lucio Gutiérrez (Ecuador, 2003–2005)	2	22
Rafael Correa (Ecuador, 2007–)	1	22
Violeta Chamorro (Nicaragua, 1990–1996)	55.4	48.9
Fernando Lugo (Paraguay, 2008–2012)	36.3	47.8
Alberto Fujimori (Peru, 1990–2001)	17.8	44.5
Alejandro Toledo (Peru, 2001–2006)	37.5	44.5
Hugo Chávez (Venezuela, 1998–2013)	22.2	45

Source: Pérez-Liñán et al. 2011

with a sense of democratic culture. They are aware that political decisions often involve negotiations and compromises, both within and between parties.

This give-and-take nature of political decisionmaking is often negatively perceived by pundits and public opinion alike, but it is essential to the good functioning of a democratic polity. Party politicians become socialized with a series of implicit rules that govern the democratic game. They accept that elections can be lost and that policy proposals can be defeated if the majority so decides. In fact, losers' consent is often mentioned as one of the key dimensions of democracy (Anderson et al. 2005). Outsiders are political amateurs who lack this democratic socialization in established political parties and, in some cases, do not have a commitment to democratic institutions. Levitsky and Cameron (2003, 5) point out that outsiders are less likely than insiders "to have experience with (and be oriented toward) democratic practices such as negotiation, compromise, and coalition building." Outsiders do not necessarily see this as a problem. In fact, political outsiders tend to have a technocratic approach to politics that emphasizes fast results and derides the long and painstaking negotiations in Congress as a "waste of time."⁸

The third source of conflict is that outsider presidents may lack the political skills and the connections necessary to build stable support for their policies in the legislature. Outsider presidents are likely to lack ties with traditional parties. As a consequence, their cabinets tend to be constituted by members of their personal networks of support (cronies) with very limited previous experience in public administration. In the words of Shugart and Carey (1992, 33), "political outsiders are likely to be less disposed than 'insiders' to coalition building."

Using a database on political coalitions created by David Altman (Altman 2000; Altman and Castiglioni 2008), we can evaluate the composition of the first cabinets of three outsiders (Alberto Fujimori, Hugo Chávez, and Lucio Gutiérrez) who were in a clear minority situation.⁹ Although Fujimori would have benefited from a stable multiparty coalition because his party (Cambio 90) had only 18 percent of the seats in the legislature, only 3 of 14 ministers in the first Fujimori cabinet were partisans. Moreover, Fujimori failed to negotiate a political deal with opposition parties, so these 3 ministers were recruited only individually, and Fujimori did not obtain the support of their parties in return for the appointments (Pease 2012).

In a similar vein, Chávez's first cabinet had a considerable number of independent ministers (6 out of 19). More important, the "partisan" ministers belonged to the party of the president (Movimiento Quinta República) or to parties that were allied to Chávez (Patria Para Todos and the Communist Party). But these parties combined held only 24 percent of the seats in the legislature. The Venezuelan outsider was not willing or able to reach out to other parties in the opposition with a greater legislative contingent. Gutiérrez, for his part, had a majority of partisan ministers (11 out of 15), but the three forces represented in the cabinet (Partido Sociedad Patriótica 21 de Enero, Movimiento Pachakutik, and Movimiento Popular Democrático) amounted to only 20 percent of the seats in the legislature. This imbalance shows his inability to negotiate a deal with the major opposition parties.

Given that appointing cabinet members from the most represented parties in the legislature is essential to establishing stable legislative coalitions when the president's party is in the minority (Amorim Neto 2002; Deheza 1998), this inability of the presidents to form broad-based coalitions might be detrimental to executive-legislative relations. To compensate for this weakness, outsiders tend to engage more often in patronage and "pork" in order to build temporary legislative coalitions (Siavelis and Morgenstern 2008). But these coalitions are much more volatile and are less successful at preventing repeated episodes of executive-legislative confrontation. These arguments yield the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Executive-legislative confrontation is more likely when the president is an outsider.

Alternative Explanations of Executive-Legislative Conflicts

The analysis will also include a number of covariates that the legislative literature describes as exerting influence on the likelihood of executive-legislative conflict. In a seminal piece, Mainwaring (1993) argues that presidential systems and multipartism are a "difficult combination" that is inimical to stable democratic governance for three main reasons. First, the risk of executive-legislative deadlock is more acute because the president is likely to lack stable support in the legislature in a fragmented system with many relevant parties. Second, in multiparty systems, competition tends to be centrifugal, which makes compromise and cooperation between the different parties (and between the different branches of government) more dif-

difficult to achieve. Third, the formation of interparty coalitions to deal with these problems is difficult in presidential systems. On the one hand, the commitment of individual legislators to support an agreement negotiated by the party leadership is not assured. On the other hand, in multiparty presidential systems, party leaders have incentives to distance themselves from the president when elections approach, which increases the likelihood of executive-legislative deadlock.

A split in the president's party may also increase the level of confrontation between the executive and legislative branches of government. When the presidential party is divided, the different factions have conflicting incentives. While they may want to cooperate on certain issues, they also have incentives to attack the other factions in order to attract voters to their own faction (Katz 1986; Morgenstern 2001). This is especially true when elections approach if the electoral system allows or encourages different factions to participate in the race, as happened in Uruguay or Colombia until recent electoral reforms. Moreover, intraparty rivalries often result from ideological differences. According to Morgenstern (2001, 243), "the factions are ideologically disposed to competition." Therefore, when the president's party is divided into factions, the administration is less likely to obtain support from its own party for key bills, increasing the likelihood of interbranch conflict.

In his book on presidential crises—which he defines as "extreme instances of executive-legislative conflict" (2007, 7)—Pérez-Liñán identifies two other factors that may produce confrontation between the two branches of government: political scandals and popular protests. He discusses the role of the media in communicating scandals that increase popular dissatisfaction with democratic presidents (2007, chap. 4). The liberalization that followed the Third Wave of democratization increased the freedom of the press and permitted the creation of a propitious environment for the politics of scandal. Political scandals often produce popular protests that lead to an increase in executive-legislative confrontation. Deep public dissatisfaction may result in popular uprisings against the president.

Analyzing elected presidents in Latin America between 1978 and 2003, Hochstetler (2006) argues that street protests are the main determinant of presidential failures, which is a partner phenomenon to the executive-legislative confrontation analyzed here. Media scandals and popular protests have an impact on executive-legislative relations most notably because they lead to a decrease in presidential approval (Pérez-Liñán 2007, 114–24). Scholars of U.S. politics have shown that declines in the level of presidential approval may create hurdles in executive-legislative relations. Presidential popularity influences the success of presidential policy initiatives (Rivers and Rose 1985). Congress tends to be more reluctant to support bills proposed by an unpopular president. In fact, legislators may be concerned about re-election and decide whether they support the president based on the latter's approval ratings (Edwards 1976; Neustadt 1964).

Executive-legislative relations may also be more conflictive when the rule of law is weak. One of the key dimensions of the rule of law is the establishment of "networks of responsibility and accountability which entail that all public and private agents, including the highest state officials, are subject to appropriate, legally estab-

lished controls on the lawfulness of their acts” (O’Donnell 2004, 36). In countries where the rule of law is weak and the judiciary is not an effective umpire, political players (in both the executive and the legislature) are more likely to commit abuses and unlawful acts because they know that they are less likely to be held accountable. These excesses, in turn, make executive-legislative confrontation more likely. Unfortunately, it is not possible to control for this alternative explanation in the quantitative analysis. The existing databases of judicial independence cover only some of the countries included in this analysis (e.g., La Porta et al. 2004) or a limited time period (e.g., Howard and Carey 2004), so including this variable in the analysis would do more harm than good. However, it is important to keep this explanation in mind when we analyze the results.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The data on executive-legislative confrontation come from a database on political processes in Latin America compiled by a team of researchers of the University of Pittsburgh (Pérez-Liñán et al. 2008). The unit of analysis in the database is the administration-year. This database was created using the *Latin American Weekly Report* (LAWR) as the source of information on political scandals, popular protests, and institutional conflicts in the region. LAWR presents itself as a “timely and concise risk-oriented briefing.” Hence, LAWR is attentive to interbranch conflicts that can be politically destabilizing. However, because of its weekly format, LAWR reports only the most important events. Since this paper is interested in serious and politically destabilizing executive-legislative conflicts (and not in the disagreements over bills between the incumbent government and the opposition that constitute the normal political process), this bias toward more dramatic events is, in fact, an advantage (Hochstetler 2006).

Variables

The dependent variable in this study is based on one of the variables in this database, coded 1 if there was a visible episode of executive-legislative confrontation during the year and 0 otherwise. An executive-legislative confrontation includes different types of episodes, such as a conflict related to the approval of bills, a confrontation in which the congress or the president questions the other’s authority or ability to legislate, and a conflict related to the impeachment of ministers.

The main independent variable in this study comes from an original database on political outsiders. In line with the operationalization discussed above, an outsider is coded as any president who has no previous political experience and comes from outside of the established party system.¹⁰ To create the database, information was collected from many online sources. To gather information on Latin American presidents, the main source was the online collection of political biographies provided by the CIDOB (Centro de Investigación de Relaciones Internacionales y Desarrollo).

A measure of the effective number of seat-winning parties in the legislature in a given year is used to test Mainwaring's (1993) argument on the link between multipartism and executive-legislative deadlock. The information on the effective number of seat-winning parties in the legislature was obtained from the Electoral System Design Project database (Carey and Hix 2008).

Two variables from the political processes database are used to assess whether political scandals and popular protests have an impact on the risk of executive-legislative relations (Pérez-Liñán et al. 2008). The first variable measures whether the administration was involved in a corruption scandal in a given year. The variable takes a value of 0 if the administration was not involved in a corruption scandal, a value of 1 if there was one corruption scandal, and a value of 2 if more than one corruption scandal erupted. The second variable is a dummy measuring whether the administration was affected by social protests during the year.

Another variable from the political processes database (Pérez-Liñán et al. 2008) allows for controlling for the possible effect of factionalism in the president's party on the level of confrontation between the executive and the legislative power. A dummy variable from the database is coded 1 if LAWR describes the president's party as being divided into factions in a given year, and 0 if the president's party is not divided into factions.

To control for the effect of economic crisis on executive-legislative relations, a variable measuring per capita GDP growth comes from the Penn World Table (Heston et al. 2009). The analysis also controls for inflation, which may have an independent impact on executive-legislative relations regardless of economic growth. The inflation data come from CEPALSTAT, the online database of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, a UN institution. The variations in the consumer price index (annual average) were used as the measure of inflation.

Model Estimation

Given that the dependent variable in the analysis is binary, logistic regression is the most suitable statistical method of analysis. The first model in table 3 is a standard logistic regression. However, the empirical analysis is conducted with cross-sectional time series data. Therefore, I estimated a random effects logistic regression to test for temporal sensitivity. This estimator is appropriate in this case because it takes the unique structure of the data into account. First, the error term in the model is partitioned into error across time within countries, errors across countries, and random error. Second, the standard errors of the estimates are corrected to take into account repeated observations for each country (Pendergast et al. 1996). As a final step, I performed a modified Wald test for groupwise heteroskedasticity, which produced a significant test statistic ($\text{prob} > \chi^2 = 0.00$) suggesting that there is heteroskedasticity across units (countries) (Greene 2008). Then, as a robustness check, I ran the standard logistic regression with country-clustered standard errors.

Table 3. Logistic Regressions: Determinants of Executive-Legislative Conflict in Latin America (1980–2007)

Variables	Logistic		
	Regression (1)	Random Effects Logistic Regression (2)	Regression with Country-clustered SE (3)
Outsider	1.211*** (.462)	1.124** (.513)	1.211*** (.219)
Effective Number of Parties	.225*** (.085)	.236** (.104)	.225*** (.080)
Corruption Scandal	.526*** (.186)	.492** (.199)	.526*** (.192)
Social Protests	.724** (.331)	.677* (.352)	.689** (.509)
Factionalism	.917** (.435)	.715 (.477)	0.917** (.422)
Per Capita GDP Growth	.008 (.036)	.013 (.037)	.008 (.048)
Inflation	.507** (.227)	.506** (.236)	.507* (.286)
Constant	-3.259*** (.497)	-3.270*** (.573)	-3.259*** (.601)
Observations	281	281	281
Number of countries	17	17	17

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

RESULTS

I estimated the impact of outsider presidents and other institutional and contextual variables on the likelihood of executive-legislative confrontation with a series of logistic regressions including data from an original dataset on political outsiders in Latin America. Table 3 presents the results of these models.

The results provide support for my hypothesis. The likelihood of executive-legislative confrontation significantly increases when the president is an outsider. In fact, the coefficient for the variable “outsider” is positive and statistically significant in the three logistic regressions presented in table 3.

As for the other independent variables in the model, the results validate again the seminal Mainwaring (1993) contribution on the impact of multipartism on executive-legislative deadlock. The results suggest that the level of confrontation between the president and the congress increases as the number of parties that hold

seats in the legislature increases. In the same vein, the results show that executive-legislative conflicts are more likely when the party of the president is divided into factions. Factions of the president's party may prefer not to collaborate with the president for strategic reasons, especially when elections approach. The impact of factionalism on Latin American politics is understudied, so this result warrants further investigation.

The results also show that scandals and popular protests influence executive-legislative relations in Latin America. Both variables, corruption scandals and popular protests, are positive and statistically significant in the three models, which suggests that unpopular presidents whose authority is contested by social protests are more likely to be challenged by the legislature, thereby increasing the probability of executive-legislative confrontation.

Furthermore, the model shows that economic growth does not have a direct influence on executive-legislative relations. The variable measuring GDP per capita growth does not reach statistical significance in any of the models in table 3. However, the variable measuring inflation is positive and statistically significant in all the models. This finding again suggests that presidential popularity has an impact on executive-legislative relations.¹¹

The results suggest that outsider presidents pose a serious threat to governability in Latin America. However, it is not possible to evaluate how serious this threat is just by looking at the results presented in table 3. Indeed, the coefficients of logistic regression cannot be straightforwardly interpreted to gauge substantive significance. In order to estimate precisely what impact the outsider presidents have on the probability of executive-legislative conflict in a given administration-year, predicted probabilities have to be estimated. I calculated predicted probabilities from the random effects logistic regression, which is the most appropriate model in this case, given the cross-sectional time series nature of the data.¹²

Table 4 presents the predicted probabilities of executive-legislative relations at different values of the independent variables.¹³ The results presented in the table show that executive-legislative confrontation is much more likely when the executive power is held by a political outsider. When the president is not an outsider and all the other variables are at their means, the probability of executive-legislative confrontation is only 25.7 percent. When the president is an outsider and all the other variables are at their means, the probability of executive-legislative confrontation is 53.4 percent. The impact of outsider presidents on the likelihood of confrontation between the two branches of government is very high. When compared to the effect of the other variables in the model, the variable measuring whether the president is an outsider appears to be the strongest predictor of executive-legislative confrontation.

So far, this study has presented executive-legislative conflict as a binary variable. The political processes database, however, distinguishes between different types of conflict events, as can be observed in table 5.

It is unsurprising that the most common type of executive-legislative confrontation is conflict over the approval of bills (although it has to be a serious conflict over a critical bill to be covered by the LAWR). Other less common forms of interbranch

Table 4. Predicted Probabilities of Executive-Legislative Confrontation in Latin America (1980–2007)

Value on the Independent Variables	Predicted Probability of Executive-Legislative Confrontation (%)
All variables at their means	27.7
Non-outsider president	25.7
Outsider president	53.4
Low effective number of parties	21.1
High effective number of parties	35.3
No corruption scandal	22.0
More than one corruption scandal	44.7
No social protests	19.8
Social protests	33.4
No factions in the president's party	25.9
Factions in the president's party	47.1
Low inflation	21.9
High inflation	34.7

confrontation include conflict events in which the president challenges the ability of the congress to legislate and conflict events in which the congress questions the president's authority to legislate. As the table shows, the latter type of conflict is far more common than the former. The final type of conflict codified in the political processes database is confrontation related to the impeachment of ministers.

Taking advantage of these distinctions, I ran a multinomial logit model to find out whether the negative impact of outsiders on executive-legislative relations is concentrated in one type of conflict or equally distributed among the different types mentioned above. Multinomial logit models are used to predict the probabilities of the different possible outcomes of a categorically distributed dependent variable, given a set of independent variables. I recoded the dependent variable (type of conflict) in three categories: no conflict, "normal conflict" (conflicts involving the approval of bills), and "serious conflict" (conflict in which one of the branches challenges the authority of the other branch to legislate).¹⁴

Since multinomial logit regressions cannot be straightforwardly interpreted, table 6 presents instead the predicted probabilities of the different types of executive-legislative conflict when the president is (and is not) an outsider.¹⁵ These predicted probabilities again confirm that the likelihood of executive-legislative confrontation is much higher when the president is an outsider. However, the most important information to be derived from these results is that this difference does not come from an increase in the level of "normal" confrontation between the exec-

Table 5. Types of Executive-Legislative Conflict

Type of Conflict	Number of Cases
Conflict just related to approval of bills	74
Conflict related to impeachment of ministers	6
Congress questioned the right/authority/ability of the president to rule	22
President questioned the right/authority/ability of Congress to legislate	7
Congress and president mutually questioned their right/authority/ability to legislate	2

utive and the legislative branches of government (i.e., conflicts over the approval of bills). The predicted probabilities suggest that insider presidents are slightly more likely than outsiders to enter into conflict with the legislature, but the difference is not statistically significant in the multinomial logit regression. On the contrary, outsider presidents are much more likely to engage in “serious” confrontation with the legislature in which one of the two branches challenges the authority of the other branch to legislate, and the difference is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. The predicted probability of serious executive-legislative confrontation in a given administration-year is 25.3 percent, whereas this probability declines to 3.8 percent when the president is an insider.

In sum, the observed difference in executive-legislative confrontation between the executive and the legislature when the president is an outsider owes much to the higher likelihood of “serious” interbranch conflicts in which one of the two branches challenges the constitutionally guaranteed right of the other branch to legislate. This leads to the question of whether outsider presidents also challenge democratic institutions by illegally attempting to dissolve Congress.

OUTSIDER PRESIDENTS AND THE RISK OF CONGRESSIONAL DISSOLUTION

The election of outsider presidents in Latin America may have deleterious consequences for democratic stability above and beyond executive-legislative conflict. As mentioned above, Fujimori carried out a self-coup and shut down Congress in April 1992 to overcome a situation of institutional deadlock created by the lack of support of traditional parties in the legislature for his neoliberal policies. More recently, outsider presidents like Chávez in Venezuela or Correa in Ecuador adopted a similar—although less radical—strategy. Both presidents called early elections to form a Constitutional Assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution. This Constitutional Assembly eventually closed the congress where the president lacked a majority (Stoyan 2010).

These cases suggest that outsider presidents may increase the risk of institutional instability in Latin America. I contend that attempts to dissolve Congress increase when the president is an outsider. These attempts do not always succeed;

Table 6. Predicted Probability of Conflict Event
(Derived from a Multinomial Logistic Regression)

	Predicted Probability of Conflict Event (%)
No Conflict	
Outsider president	54.2***
Insider president	76.6
“Normal” Conflict	
Outsider president	17.9
Insider president	19.2
“Serious” Conflict	
Outsider president	25.3***
Insider president	3.8

*** p<0.01

but even when they fail, they weaken the authority, legitimacy, and effectiveness of the institution under attack.

Many of the same reasons that explain why outsiders tend to confront Congress more often also explain why outsiders are more likely to attempt to dissolve the legislative body. Outsiders are more likely than non-outsider presidents to lack a majority in the legislature. More important, outsiders do not have the experience, the contacts, and the skills required to deal effectively with this situation by forming stable coalitions with members of other parties.

In addition to these factors, there is another reason, linked to outsiders' political ambition. When traditional parties are in power, they are concerned about the future. A dissolution attempt may negatively affect the party's reputation for a long time. A traditional party that tries to dissolve Congress may be harshly sanctioned by voters. Moreover, the other established parties may prefer not to ally with a party that takes advantage of its power to attempt an illegal dissolution of the legislative body. Therefore, it may be a bad strategy for an established party in power to dissolve Congress, even when it is temporarily unable to govern because it lacks support in the legislature.

The calculus for an outsider president is completely different. If they are not able to govern effectively the first time they are in office, there may be no political future at all. Since the parties that take outsiders to power are often nothing more than empty shells, these parties have much less to lose when the president attempts such an audacious move. In sum, political outsiders in office may be more prone to take risks because their political future is inextricably linked to the success they have in office. When outsiders lack support in Congress, they are then much more likely than non-outsider presidents to engage in a dissolution attempt. The second hypothesis of this article follows from this argument.

Table 7. Frequency of Dissolution Attempts in Latin America (1980–2007)

	Frequency	Percentage
Dissolution attempt	10	3.44
No dissolution attempt	281	96.56

Hypothesis 2. Congress dissolution attempts are more likely when the president is an outsider.

In order to test this second hypothesis, I ran the same model but used a different variable from the political processes database (Pérez-Liñán et al. 2008) as the dependent variable. I used a variable measuring whether there was any threat of dissolving the legislative assembly during a given year. The variable was coded as 1 if the president attempted to close the congress and 0 if there was no threat of dissolution. A congress dissolution attempt is a rare event in Latin America, as can be seen in table 7.

This table shows that in only 3.5 percent of the administration-years in the sample was there an attempt to dissolve the congress. Standard logistic regressions are not appropriate when the outcome to be predicted is a rare event because they systematically underestimate the probability of the event. I estimated the impact of outsider presidents on dissolution attempts using a Stata routine (ReLogit), which develops corrections for the biases in logistic regression that occur when predicting or explaining rare outcomes (King and Zeng 2001). I also performed a modified Wald test for groupwise heteroskedasticity, which produced a significant test statistic ($\text{prob} > \chi^2 = 0.00$), suggesting that there is heteroskedasticity across units (countries). So I ran the relogit model with country-clustered standard errors as a robustness check. Table 8 presents the results of these two rare events logistic regressions.

These two models provide support for the second hypothesis. The sign for the “outsider” variable is positive and statistically significant at the 1 percent level in both models, suggesting that the risk of a congress dissolution attempt is higher when the president is an outsider. What is surprising is that most of the other variables in the model are not good predictors of a dissolution attempt. Political scandals and popular protests help to explain executive-legislative confrontation, but they appear to be unrelated to dissolution attempts. The number of parties is also a poor predictor of congress dissolution attempts by elected presidents. The economic context, by contrast, appears to be linked to congress dissolution attempts. The model suggests that attempts to dissolve the legislative body are less likely when the economy is growing.

In order to estimate the substantive impact of outsider presidents on the likelihood of congress dissolution attempts, I calculated the predicted probabilities of dissolution attempts in the rare events logistic regression.¹⁶ Again, the variable measuring whether the president was a political outsider was the best predictor of congress dissolution attempts. The impact of outsidership is much higher than that of the

Table 8. Rare Events Logistic Regressions: Determinants of Congress Dissolution Attempts in Latin America (1980–2007)

Variables	Rare Events Logistic Regression (1)	Rare Events Logistic Regression with Country Clustered SE (2)
Outsider	2.521*** (.771)	2.521*** (.656)
Effective Number of Parties	.189 (.124)	.189 (.158)
Corruption Scandals	.191 (.471)	.191 (.403)
Social Protests	-.295 (.825)	-.295 (.563)
Factionalism	1.255 (.858)	1.255 (.978)
Per Capita GDP Growth	-.171** (.073)	-.171** (.080)
Inflation	-.254 (.531)	-.254 (.429)
Constant	-4.083*** (.719)	-4.083*** (.890)
Observations	281	281
Number of Countries	17	17

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

two other variables that appear significant in one of the rare events models. In any given administration-year in which the president is not an outsider (holding all the other variables at their means), the predicted probability of congress dissolution attempt is 1.9 percent. When the president is an outsider, the likelihood of a dissolution attempt is 19.6 percent (table 9).

This finding shows that outsider presidents do not only imperil governability, they also represent a serious threat to democratic quality by undermining the authority and the legitimacy of the legislative body that is supposed to hold the executive power accountable for its actions. Outsider presidents campaign using an antipolitics discourse and promising radical changes to a disenchanted electorate (Hawkins 2010). Moreover, they tend to come to office with no support in Congress. In many cases, this leads to repeated attempts or threats to dissolve the legislative body, taking advantage of their high approval rating and the legislature's lack of popular support. The rise of an outsider to the presidency can go hand in hand with

Table 9. Predicted Probabilities of Congress Dissolution Attempts in Latin America (1980–2007)

Value on the Independent Variables	Predicted Probability of Executive-Legislative Confrontation (%)
All variables at their means	2.4
Non-outsider president	1.9
Outsider president	19.6
Negative economic growth	5.1
Positive economic growth	1.2

a democratic breakdown if this dissolution attempt succeeds, as happened in Peru in the early 1990s (Kenney 2004). But even when this strategy fails, the threat to dissolve Congress weakens the authority and the legitimacy of one of the key democratic institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

In an often cited and very influential article (1990), Linz argues that the rise of outsiders is one of the main perils of presidentialism. This article is agnostic on the issue of whether presidentialism causes the rise of outsiders. However, the present study shows that the conjunction of presidentialism and outsiders is noxious for institutional performance and democratic governability.

This work provides evidence that the level of executive-legislative conflict increases when an independent politician holds the presidency. On the one hand, governability is undermined when an outsider is in power. Outsider presidents lack support in the legislative body and also lack the connections and experience necessary to compensate for this situation by building stable coalitions in the legislature. Thus, the day-to-day relations between the two branches of government are negatively affected. Specifically, cooperation between the president and Congress on specific bills becomes rare, and the president is more likely to engage in executive excesses, which further increases the confrontation between the executive and legislative branches.

On the other hand, the rise of outsiders has deleterious consequences for democratic stability. The results of the rare events logistic regressions presented above show that the risk of congress dissolution attempts is much more likely when the president is an outsider. This is also linked to the situation of institutional paralysis that results from the lack of support for outsiders in the legislature. Furthermore, this result reflects the calculus made by political outsiders who absolutely need to deliver on some of their campaign promises to survive politically. When their policy agenda is blocked by the opposition in Congress, outsiders are much more likely to attempt to dissolve Congress.

Given the large substantive impact of the rise of outsiders on executive-legislative confrontation, this finding invites more research on the political consequences of the election of independent candidates. Three avenues for further research can be suggested. First, it would be interesting to know the policy consequences of the outsiders' rise to power. In particular, it is worth investigating if outsiders are more likely to adopt heterodox economic policies to satisfy the disenchanted voters who brought them to power. Second, given the finding that outsiders are more likely to dissolve Congress, it is important to analyze whether independent presidents are more prone to commit excesses against other democratic institutions (free press, judicial power, electoral court). One more possible avenue for further research is to study the composition of the cabinets formed by outsider presidents.

NOTES

1. Numerous case studies of different political outsiders in Latin America exist, but there is no general theory explaining the emergence of outsiders or the consequences of their rise to power in the region.

2. Miller (2011, 2) defines an outsider as "a candidate who is not part of the traditional party system in the country."

3. Although Seawright (2011, 2) argues that outsiders "typically have little governing experience," political inexperience is not a defining characteristic of outsidership in his analysis.

4. Sartori (1970, 1984) holds a "necessary and sufficient" view of concepts, according to which all the constitutive dimensions are necessary and they are jointly sufficient for something to fit into the category.

5. As Collier and Mahon (1993, 848) point out, "with radial categories it is possible that two members of the category will not share all of what may be seen as the defining attributes."

6. Nationally competitive parties are parties that "have been at least competitive in national contests for executive office over several election cycles" (Lupu 2011, 4). No politician who was a leader of one of these established parties in his or her previous career can be considered a real outsider (or appear as such in the eyes of the electorate).

7. The best example is Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Correa was an economist with no political experience when he briefly joined the cabinet as minister of finance in 2005. After less than a year in the cabinet, he broke with the government and positioned himself as one of the main contenders in the 2006 presidential elections. The political experience of this president is too limited to consider him a political insider.

8. The best example of this pattern is undoubtedly Fujimori in Peru. President Fujimori advocated a problem-solving administration unencumbered by politicians and bureaucrats, whom he portrayed as self-serving, corrupt, and inefficient. *Fujimorismo* had a clear disdain for deliberation and consensus building in political institutions (Conaghan 2005).

9. I thank David Altman for generously sharing this database.

10. A list of all the outsider presidential candidates who obtained more than 5 percent of the votes in presidential elections in Latin America in the period 1980–2010 is presented in the appendix on the author's website, www.miguelcarreras.com/documents/online_app_LAPS_Carreras.pdf

11. Previous research has shown that in Latin America, high inflation leads to a decline in presidential approval (Weyland 2002).

12. King et al. (2000) developed a Stata routine (Clarify) that estimates predicted probabilities in logistic regressions.

13. I calculated predicted probabilities only for the independent variables that were statistically significant in at least one of the models in table 3. For the dummy variables, I calculated the predicted probabilities when the variable was at 0 and when the variable was at 1. For the trichotomous variables, I calculated the predicted probabilities when the variable was at 0 and when the variable was at 2. For the continuous variables, I calculated predicted probabilities when the value of the variable was one standard deviation below the mean and when it was one standard deviation above the mean.

14. The last three categories in table 5 were combined in a “serious conflict” category because they all signal a deep institutional crisis between the president and the congress, and because the last two categories did not have enough observations to be included in the multinomial logit regression by themselves. The category “conflict related to the impeachment of ministers” was dropped because the number of cases was too low to be included in the statistical analysis.

15. The multinomial logit regression is available in the online appendix.

16. I used the statistical program *Zelig* (Kosuke et al. 2008) to estimate the predicted probabilities in the relogit model. I followed the same steps used to calculate the predicted probabilities in the previous model. Only the predicted probabilities for the variables that were statistically significant in one of the rare events logistic regressions were calculated.

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