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What We Know and What We Need to Know

Alejandro Bonvecchi
Carlos Scartascini

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Alejandro Bonvecchi*
Carlos Scartascini**

*Universidad Torcuato Di Tella
**Inter-American Development Bank



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Abstract*

The presidential politics literature depicts presidents either as all-powerful actors or figureheads and seeks to explain outcomes accordingly. The president and the executive branch are nonetheless usually treated as black boxes, particularly in developing countries, even though the presidency has evolved into an extremely complex branch of government. While these developments have been studied in the United States, far less is known in other countries, particularly in Latin America, where presidential systems have been considered the source of all goods and evils. To help close the knowledge gap and explore differences in policymaking characteristics not only between Latin America and the US but also across Latin American countries, this paper summarizes the vast literature on the organization and resources of the Executive Branch in the Americas and sets a research agenda for the study of Latin American presidencies.

JEL classifications: D78, D73, H00

Keywords: President, Executive branch, Policymaking process, Institutionalization, Cabinet, Civil service, Bargaining, Budget process, legislatures

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“The second office of the government is honorable and easy; the first is but a splendid misery.” -*Thomas Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, PA 1797.*¹

“In government, for one to be able to do 50% of what one wants, one must allow the others to do 50% of what they want. One has to have the skill so that the 50% one gets to do is what really matters. Those who always want to have their way end up not having it at all”. - *Juan Domingo Perón.*²

1. Introduction

Presidents and presidential systems have long been under scrutiny in the political science and political economy literatures. Presidents are often singled out and blamed or rewarded for the state of the economy and public affairs.³ This kind of accountability is useful to understand why presidents may have an incentive to keep government expenditures in check (Persson and Tabellini, 2000, 2003) and finances under control even in the context of discretion on the use of public monies (Alston et al. 2008, 2009), as well as why in the short run presidents may also exploit their powers to manipulate the economy before elections if left unchecked (Alesina, Roubini and Cohen, 1997). But these insights do not shed light on how the presidency is organized to operate under these incentives, or on what resources presidents may employ to take advantage of opportunities or adapt to change.

The presidential system of government, in turn, has also been singled out in the literature, mostly as the culprit behind the democratic instability experienced by Latin America throughout the twentieth century (Linz and Valenzuela 1994). While recent research on regime stability (Cheibub, 2002, 2007) and coalition politics (Zelaznik, 2001; Amorim Neto, 2006; Chasquetti, 2008) has seriously disputed the indictment against presidentialism, an analysis of how the organization and resources of the presidency shape public policies as well as presidential and regime survival is still pending.

¹ In Foley, editor (1900, p. 716).

² In Perón (1988).

³ Sometimes presidents are even perceived as the cause behind earthquakes:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/indonesia/6259005/Indonesians-blame-earthquake-on-unlucky-president.html>

Thus, despite the importance and recurrence of the debate about presidents and presidential systems, and regardless of the relevance of presidents in the policymaking process, the advancement of the literature has been uneven. The literature on presidential politics has typically dealt with four topics: the organization of the executive branch of government; the resources of the presidency; the coalitions supporting the presidents; and the specifics of decision-making in particular presidential administrations. Students of the United States presidency have generated a wealth of work on all these topics, but the development of research and knowledge on them for Latin America and other developing countries has not kept the same pace across some of the topics.⁴ While significant pieces have been produced on coalition-building and management as well as on economic and political decision-making in particular administrations, there has been remarkably little advance on the organization of the executive branch and the resources of the presidency. This paper intends to contribute to filling this gap by proposing a research agenda on the organization and resources of the presidency and their effects on policymaking processes. This way, this document may set the stage from where to build a profuse scholarship for Latin America.

Research on coalition politics in Latin America has established that coalition governments are frequent (Deheza, 1997; Amorim Neto, 1998, 2006; Zelaznik 2001; Martínez-Gallardo 2005, 2010a; Chasquetti, 2008); that they are more unstable than single-party governments but less unstable than minority single-party governments (Zelaznik, 2001; Amorim Neto, 2006; Martínez-Gallardo 2005); and that presidents structure their cabinets in order to maximize the chances of survival of their legislative coalitions (Amorim Neto, 1998, 2002, 2006; Zelaznik, 2001; Martínez-Gallardo 2005, 2010b). Studies have also shown that the office of the president is typically endowed with resources to help build and maintain cabinet and legislative coalitions (Pereira and Mueller, 2002; Pereira et al., 2006; Amorim Neto, 2006), and that presidents are generally effective in employing these resources for such purposes (Pereira and Mueller, 2002; Amorim Neto, 2006). These works have demonstrated that Latin America has mostly proactive presidents who are able, due to their constitutional and partisan powers, to

⁴ As an example, a major publication such as *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions* includes a chapter about the American Presidency but has not similar chapter either for presidents in general and even less so for presidents in developing countries. Despite its advancement, strong quantitative analysis is still lacking, and much work still ahead. As Howell points out “It remains to be seen whether scholars can build a vibrant and robust body of quantitative scholarship on the presidency” (Howell, 2006: p. 318)

impose themselves on assemblies that, precisely due to those institutional imbalances, are mostly reactive (Shugart and Carey, 1992; Carey and Shugart 1998; Cox and Morgenstern 2002).

Research on economic and political decision-making has established the existence of common trends in policy orientation and in decision-making sequences on economic adjustment (Haggard and Kaufman, 1992, 1995; Torre, 1998; Schamis, 1999, 2002), pension reform (Mesa-Lago and Muller, 2002; Weyland, 2005, 2007), and left-wing social and political turns (Levitsky and Roberts 2008; Weyland et al., 2010). Numerous studies have also shown the effects of diverse political variables on presidential decision-making, such as president-government party relations (Corrales 2000, 2002), the socioeconomic nature of reform coalitions (Schamis, 1999; Etchemendy, 2001), union political strategies (Murillo, 2001), political party types (Levitsky, 2003), legislative career patterns (Ames, 2001; Samuels, 2003), constitutional powers (Negretto, 2006), public opinion standing (Stokes, 2001; Echegaray, 2005), and presidential leadership (Novaro and Palermo 1996; Whitehead, 2010). These works have demonstrated that while presidential administrations in Latin America differ in their outcomes, their stability and even their survival (Pérez-Liñán, 2007), these differences are underpinned by common variables and processes.

However, no equivalent knowledge exists on the organization of the executive branch and the resources of the presidency. This gap, somewhat surprising considering the importance that the aforementioned literature itself concedes to the office of the president, rests on two main shortcomings: the lack of a theoretical and methodological agenda; and the lack of information with which to feed the development of empirical research. This paper intends to contribute to the solution of the first of those shortcomings. To this end, it purports to develop a research agenda on the organization of the executive branch, the resources of the presidency and their effects on policymaking by resorting to what constitutes the undisputed benchmark for such a feat: the literature on the US presidency. Taking stock of the approaches and the knowledge produced on those topics by students of the US presidency, this paper identifies a set of relevant pending questions on Latin American presidencies as well as research strategies for their investigation.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section deals with the literature on the organization of the executive branch. The second section takes up contributions on the resources of the presidency. The third section reviews the literature on the effects of executive branch organization and presidential resources on policymaking processes and outcomes. Each section

begins by taking stock of the literature on the US presidency, subsequently reviews in comparative perspective the works about Latin America, and ends by proposing a set of research questions still pending for the study of Latin American presidencies. The concluding section sums up these research questions and suggests how to move forward in addressing them.

2. The Organization of the Executive Branch

One of the main contributions of the literature on the US presidency to the study of the executive branch in presidential systems of government has been insights on its internal organization. This literature has produced descriptive findings and explanatory accounts of that organization. Descriptive research has established that the executive branch is a complex, differentiated organization typically made up of three components: the presidential center, the cabinet, and a series of advisory networks in which cabinet members and presidential advisers interact alongside bureaucratic officials and even non-governmental counselors. Explanatory research has argued that this organizational structure can be explained by either informational needs or institutional incentives of the president. Studies have also attempted to show connections between the organization of the presidential staff and presidential management styles. This section reviews the research on each of these components and outlines a series of questions that still need to be addressed in the study of Latin American presidential politics. Consistent with the literature's main foci of interest, this review will be primarily concerned with the nature of each component of the executive branch, its relation to the president, its stability throughout the president's term, and its participation in decision-making.

2.1. The Presidential Center

In presidential systems, constitutions and/or special legislation typically outline the executive branch of government as headed by a president assisted by cabinet departments, or ministries, functionally differentiated by policy area and charged with advising the president on their specific turf. But apart from cabinets, presidents are also assisted by a closer group of advisers with no departmental responsibilities who work under their most direct supervision. These advisers constitute the office of the president, or presidential center.

The presidential center has been a relatively recent development within the organization of the executive branch. Presidents have always had confidants and close advisers, but the

institutionalization of their role did not come about in the United States until the late 1930s, when the Executive Office of the President (EOP) was created under the auspices of the Roosevelt Administration. The rationale for the establishment of the EOP appears to have been the strengthening of the president's ability to coordinate the work of cabinet departments and other executive agencies which, due to their own organizational interests such as budgetary or power maximization and service delivery to constituents and interest groups, typically have "little incentive to subjugate their departmental needs to the president's broader bargaining interests" (Dickinson, 1997: p. 46). This rationale points to a bi-dimensional explanation of the emergence of the presidential center: on the one hand, as a device to solve informational asymmetries within the executive branch that might hurt the president's decision-making ability, and on the other hand, as an artifact to secure the political leadership of the president.

The *informational explanation* of the presidential center stems from the bargaining paradigm of presidential politics espoused by the definitive work e classic on the US presidency, Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (Neustadt, 1990). According to this paradigm, in a political system of separated institutions sharing power (Jones, 1994) presidents are forced to bargain with other actors—Congress, the bureaucracy, interest groups, and the media—in order to influence government outcomes. To bargain effectively, presidents' primary need is information. More specifically, they need information that enables them to retain or augment their influence on the other actors with which they have to bargain—i.e., contrasting information, from multiple sources, so that presidents can weigh the biases and interests of those sources and come up with their own assessment and decisions (Neustadt, 1990; Rudalevige, 2002). The presidential center allows presidents to do exactly that: multiply information sources by charging close advisers with duplicating, supervising or monitoring the task of cabinet ministers (Ponder, 2000) and contrast policy ideas and political assessments by inciting dissent between ministers and advisers (Neustadt, 1990; Dickinson, 1997). The presidential center helps presidents to retain bargaining power by enabling them to escape the informational asymmetries to which they are inevitably prey: that of ministries concerned primarily with their own turf; that of bureaucrats concerned primarily with technical criteria and interest group satisfaction; and that of political advisers concerned primarily with the electoral consequences or public opinion payoffs of decisions.

The *leadership explanation* of the presidential center stems from the unilateral paradigm of presidential politics espoused by the leading rational-choice scholar on the US presidency, Terry Moe. According to this paradigm, presidents have strong incentives to enhance the autonomy of their office: they are elected by a national constituency that “leads them to think in grander terms about social problems and the public interest”; they are held responsible for “virtually every aspect of national performance”; and they are beset by powerful players—namely Congress and the bureaucracy—with opposing incentives and enough institutional resources to impose them. To assert their leadership over these players, presidents seek to design and run “a unified, coordinated, centrally directed bureaucratic system” (Moe and Wilson, 1994: p. 11) through which they can develop their own policy ideas and use their own unilateral institutional powers to implement them. The presidential center allows presidents to do exactly that: centralize decision-making by placing trusted advisers to supervise or simply lead cabinet ministries from above and control the bureaucracy by imposing a hierarchical decision-making process through which not only policy alternatives but also information diffusion and political message are decided at the top (Moe, 1993; Moe and Howell, 1999). The presidential center helps presidents to lead the government and the policy process by enabling them to escape the institutional constraints to which they are inevitably prey in a separation-of-powers system, and to attune their decisions to the general mood of public opinion over the particularistic interests of legislators, ministers, and bureaucrats.

Regardless of the weight that each explanation may actually have, the emergence of the presidential center has been linked to the centralization of the policymaking process by the executive branch in general, and particularly to the hierarchization of that process under the presidency.⁵ The increasing political and administrative relevance of the presidential center has consequently induced scholars to focus on its composition, its relation to presidents, the stability of its membership and functions, and its participation in decision-making.

⁵ However, there is little consensus among scholars as to the extent, the consistency, and the effects of this centralization of policymaking. See Section 3 for further discussion.

2.1.1 Composition and Characteristics

The composition of the presidential center has been investigated with particular emphasis on two dimensions: the types of staff constituting it, and the size of that staff. The premise of this line of research has been that the kinds of persons recruited to the presidential staff and the ways its operations are organized are the critical conduits through which presidents can influence the performance and outcomes of their government (Burke, 2000: p. 25). Presidents may surround themselves only with cronies and clerks, or with political and policy advisers with independent standing; advisers may be pundits or seasoned political operatives, learned students of policy or experienced policymakers, political system insiders or novice outsiders (*ibid.*). Presidents may organize their staff in a hierarchical, competitive or collegial way (Johnson, 1974); they may develop staff structures congruent to the challenges of their decision settings (Walcott and Hult, 1995); or may suspend centralization altogether contingent to critical variables in their political and bureaucratic environment (Rudalevige, 2002).

The types of staff recruited to the presidential center in the United States have evolved from an exclusively organizational capacity to a complex network of personal assistants, policy advisers, political strategists, communication personnel, and legal counselors (Arnold, 1998; Lewis, 2008). When the EOP was created in 1939, it comprised five agencies with distinct types of staff and functions: the White House Office, where the president's personal assistants (e.g., secretaries, chauffeurs) and closest political advisers served; the Bureau of the Budget, a highly institutionalized executive agency (Stewart, 1989) charged with elaborating the yearly budget and reviewing legislative proposals from cabinet departments; the National Resources Planning Board, a New Deal agency specialized in long-term policy planning; the Liaison Office for Personnel Management, which served as a link to the independent Civil Service Commission; and the Office of Government Reports, which pulled together several information-producing agencies (Dickinson, 1997). But since the Cold War the scope of EOP functions and staff types has significantly increased, with the establishment of the Council of Economic Advisers (1946), the National Security Council (1947), the Office of the US Trade Representative (1963), the Council on Environmental Quality (1969), the Office of Policy Development (1970), the Office of the Vicepresident (1972), the Office of Science and Technology Policy (1976), the Office of Administration (1977), the Office of National Drug Control Policy (1988), and, in 2001, the Homeland Security Staff (Dickinson, 2005). In addition to this, the White House Office

experienced its own internal differentiation: among personal assistants to the president, communications officers, political advisers, and legal counselors (Sullivan, 2004).

The expanded scope of direct presidential jurisdiction has been explained as the joint outcome of environmental pressures for increasing government activity, congressional action in response to those pressures, and particular presidential initiatives to seize control over specific policymaking areas (Ragsdale and Theis, 1997). But such increasing complexity within the presidential center also appears to have pressured presidents into concentrating the control of decision-making in their own office in detriment of the very agencies established within the EOP. This dynamics has generated what has been labeled the paradox of politicization: the recruitment of politically loyal but administratively inexperienced aids into the EOP has increased presidential control over decisions but diminished the technical ability of EOP agencies to advise the president on policy matters (Dickinson, 2005). Environmental pressures and politicization may have thus driven the growth of the presidential staff (Lewis, 2008) but not necessarily that of its technical capacity.

The staff in the presidential center of the United States does not seem to enjoy much stability. Four not necessarily exclusive explanations have been advanced for this pattern. One is partisan turnover: when the governing party is ousted, most of the presidential staff is also changed. Another is the duration of organizational units within the presidency—which, though increasing since the 1950s, has varied considerably from one year to another, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1970s (Ragsdale and Theis 1997). A third explanation is administrative overhaul, which has been frequent in the twentieth century (Arnold, 1998). A fourth explanation is the changing nature of presidential campaigns—which which has forced prospective presidents to invest more on specialized campaign staff rather than policy or administrative experts, and has thus led to increased turnover rates after the campaign-turned-governing staff proves inadequate for their new function (Dickinson and Dunn Tenpas, 2002). High turnover rates help foster centralization of decision-making in the president but, at the same time, increase the leverage of career bureaucrats over the policymaking process.

The tradeoffs between centralization and isolation before bureaucracy, between politicization of the administration and technical expertise, suggest that the staff in the presidential center must perform several functions within decision-making processes. Research has defined these functions according to the specialization of staff types (Walcott and Hult,

1995), or to forms of staff involvement in the policy process (Ponder, 2000). The staff specialization perspective, stemming from organization theory, argues that the president's staff participates in decision-making in one of three capacities: outreach, policy processing, or coordination and supervision. Outreach tasks include liaison with Congress, press relations and publicity, contacts with interest groups, executive branch staffing operations, and presidency-executive branch relation management. Policy processing, in turn, encompasses information gathering, analysis and proposals in domestic, economic, and national security policy—as well as specific inter-branch policy structures such as task forces or commissions. Finally, coordination and supervision include speechwriting, managing the president's schedule, and governing the presidential center itself (Walcott and Hult, 1995). Each of these tasks falls to different offices within the White House, and each office is staffed either by specialists whose specialization is based upon previous government experience, or by novices who owe their jobs to their campaign work, their party connections, or their personal relation to the president (Lewis, 2008).

The staff involvement perspective, privy to information theory, argues that the president's staff has three ways of participating in decision-making: as director, facilitator, or monitor (Ponder, 2000). The staff as director centralizes policymaking tasks and reports only to the president. The staff as facilitator brokers agreements among policy jurisdictions under the president's supervision. The staff as monitor delegates policy to other agents within the executive branch but “keeps a watchful eye on the progress and substance of policy development” (ibid: 14). These forms of involvement in the policy process need not be exclusive of any particular staff member or structure; in fact, according to Ponder, presidents practice “staff shift”—the movement of staff members and structures from one function to another—in tune with the issue at hand and the availability of technical expertise and political capacity to control the substance of policy outcomes (Rudalevige, 2002).

2.1.2 Relationship

This organizational complexity transforms the relationship between presidents and their staff into a critical issue. To work with their staff, presidents have developed different managerial styles. Drawing from management theory, Johnson (1974) identified three: a competitive style, in which the president stands at the center of decisions by fostering the overlapping of jurisdictions, the

duplication of assignments, and the development of rivalries; a formalistic or hierarchical style, in which the president delegates authority on top advisers who run a hierarchical organization with clearly specified, differentiated functions, and who filter the information and policy alternatives that reach the presidential desk; and a collegial style, in which the president operates as the hub of a wheel the spokes of which are a group of advisers who discuss and propose collectively to their boss. As Johnson argued, each style has its own strengths and weaknesses: the competitive style maximizes presidential control and considerations of bureaucratic feasibility and political viability in decision-making, but demands an enormous investment of time from the president to manage and solve staff tensions; the formalistic style maximizes diversity in information gathering and advice, but may generate upwards distortions and slowness in crisis situations; the collegial style maximizes technical optimality and bureaucratic feasibility, but requires skilled presidential management to maintain a working group dynamics (Burke, 2009).

Inspired by organizational theory, Walcott and Hult (1995: p. 20) argued that managerial styles are a function of staff structures, and that presidents develop staff structures that are “roughly congruent with the prevailing decision setting.” Thus, if presidents are confronting decision settings plagued with uncertainty, they should build staff structures that foster the search for alternative sources of information and advice, such as competitive or collegial arrangements. If presidents face decision settings marred by controversy, they should design structures that find and articulate the contending parties and viewpoints, such as adversarial multiparty advocacy or adjudicative arrangements in which the president decides after thorough debate. If presidents encounter decision settings marked by certainty, they should develop staff structures oriented to enhance control over decision-making, such as hierarchical or collegial-consensual arrangements (ibid: pp. 21-23).

Combining the above perspectives with transaction-cost theory, Rudalevige (2002) contended that presidential centralization of the policy process was contingent upon the costs of acquiring information, and those costs were, in turn, dependent on a number of political variables such as divided government, size of presidential legislative contingent, presidential public opinion approval rates, ideological distance between the president and the legislature, policy area, issue complexity, crisis situation, and length of the presidential term. Presidents would only centralize decision-making in their office when they can acquire information to do so at the least

possible cost—i.e., when policy proposals cross-cut jurisdictions, the presidential center has stronger policymaking resources, policy approaches are new, and speed is of the essence (ibid: p. 39). Consequently, managerial styles should change according to the conditions that determine information costs, and staff structures within the presidential center should be prepared to deal with all possible contingencies.

2.1.3 Evidence in LAC

Research on presidential centers in Latin America is practically non-existent. Bonvecchi and Palermo (2000) compared the staff types within the presidential inner-circles of Menem and de la Rúa in Argentina, as did Siavelis (2010) for the Concertación governments in Chile, but their evidence is more impressionistic than systematic. Aninat and Rivera (2009) described the functions of the presidential center in the latter administrations, but with a normative orientation towards proposing a reorganization of the executive branch. Bonvecchi and Zelaznik (2010) reviewed the Argentine Executive's governing tools but left out the organizational resources.

A significant field of research is thus open. What countries have and do not have a presidential center? What are the conditions for the emergence of presidential centers in Latin America? How are presidential centers structured? What types of staff are presidential centers made of? How is the staff managed by the president: competitively, hierarchically, or collegially? How stable are staff structures, staff types and presidential managerial styles in presidential centers? What accounts for (potential) variations? To answer these questions at least two types of information must be collected. On the one hand, legal and administrative information about the structure of presidential centers, its evolution through time, formal powers attached to each component of the presidential center, and the types of staff recruited. On the other hand, qualitative and quantitative information on the relation between presidents and their presidential center: frequency and nature of interaction between presidents and the different types of staff; forms of staff involvement in decision-making processes; staff turnover rates, etc. To process this information, at least two research strategies would be profitable. One is quantitative statistical analysis of the interaction between the aforementioned dimensions of the presidential center as dependent variables, and a series of independent variables of standard use in studies of the institutionalization of the presidency: legislative strength of the president's party; formal powers of the president; presidential popularity; length of presidential term;

economic context; growth of government size; growth of government structural complexity; etc. Another research strategy is social network analysis of the relationship between presidents and their staff, in which the frequency, nature, and volume of interactions among presidents and different types of staff indicate the importance of each staff type in decision-making processes, and enable the reconstruction of presidential managerial styles and their application to specific policymaking processes or decisions.

Understanding the functioning, characteristics and capabilities of the inner circle that surrounds the president is very relevant as it would shed light first on the incentives that presidents face. Presidents who have incentives for the generation of long-term policies would tend to surround themselves with a different inner circle than those who are more interested in short term political survival. Similarly, presidents who come from strong partisan structures would tend to have a different inner circle than those with no party ties. Second, such an understanding would also provide insights on the type of policies and the type of bargaining the president may be able to engage in. Presidents with a small but necessarily thematically broader inner circle may be able to engage in different negotiations than those with broader but more specialized groups.

Table 1 summarizes the findings of the US literature, the evidence available for Latin America, and the research questions emerging from the knowledge gap.

Table 1. State of the Art and Research Agenda on the Presidential Center

Topic	United States	Latin America	Research Agenda
Emergence	Bargaining Paradigm: reduction of information asymmetries to protect bargaining power Leadership Paradigm: centralization of decision-making	No data	Countries with presidential centers Conditions for presidential center emergence
Composition	Types of staff: increasing complexity in response to increasing scope of government activity Staff sizes: unstable due to partisan turnover, organizational instability, administrative overhaul, and changing specialization	Staff types in Argentina and Chile Staff structures in Chile	Staff types Staff structures Cross-country and cross-presidency variations
Relationship to President	Contingent on leadership styles: competitive, hierarchical, collegial Contingent on staff specialization: outreach, policy processing, coordination and supervision Contingent on staff involvement: director, facilitator, monitor	Leadership style in Argentina Staff specialization and staff involvement in Chile	Leadership styles Forms of staff involvement Staff specialization Cross-country and cross-presidency variations

2.2. The Cabinet

2.2.1 Overview

The role of the cabinet within the executive branch in presidential systems of government has experienced a paradoxical development: while on the one hand the number, size, and policy responsibilities of cabinet ministries have grown over the past decades, on the other hand their participation in decision-making processes has been increasingly contested by the presidential center and by presidents themselves. These tendencies, empirically substantiated for the United States but hardly at all for Latin America, have been explained by the combination of governmental responses to environmental demands and the informational and political incentives of presidents to enhance control over decision-making.

The composition of the US cabinet has gained complexity at the levels of structure and staff types. As noted by Campbell (2005: p. 254), the cabinet evolved from three departments in

1789 (State, Treasury and War), to nine by 1903 (adding Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Interior, Navy, and Justice), and 15 by 2002 (substituting Defense for War and Navy, and adding Education, Energy, Health, Homeland Security, Housing, Transportation, and Veteran Affairs). The creation of new departments was overwhelmingly due to Democratic presidents—who also created the largest number of inter-departmental councils, boards, and task forces (Ragsdale and Theis, 1997: pp. 1292-1295)—although the latter two departments mentioned above were created during Republican administrations. Thus, the structure of the cabinet has been taken to reflect both environmental pressures and ideological preferences for increased governmental activity (*ibid.*). Based on the recent assignment of some policymaking responsibilities to the vice presidency, some authors also include this office as part of the cabinet structure (Baumgartner and Evans, 2009), although the actual participation of vice presidents in decision-making has experienced significant variations across and even within each presidency.

This evolution has increased the complexity of the cabinet as a set of organizations within the executive. The reason for this, as scholars have noted, is that not all cabinet departments are created equal (Rudalevige, 2002: p. 93). Research has distinguished between inner and outer departments (Cronin 1975; Cohen, 1988). The former—i.e., State, Treasury, Defense, and Justice—tend to have broad and expanding missions and work closer to presidents than do outer departments; their performance is generally considered critical to the assessment of any presidency. The latter—i.e., the remaining departments—usually have more specialized missions and work closer to interest groups and constituencies than to presidents; their performance is only assessed as relevant contingent to the weight each president’s program gives each policy area. Functional differentiation and political differentiation thus intersect in determining the nature of the United States cabinet.

This combination of functional and political criteria in the development of the cabinet has also shaped the types of staff that make up departmental leadership and ranks. On the one hand, inner and outer cabinet members have been found to possess different profiles: while the former tend to be specialists or personal confidants of presidents (Riddlesperger and King, 1986), the latter are usually either party activists or individuals with backgrounds in related interest groups (Cohen, 1988). On the other hand, the politicization of cabinet departments has reached not only the chief executive officer level but also the policy and support layers—to the point that “one has

to bore down four levels below the secretary before reaching strata populated almost entirely by career officials” (Campbell, 2005: p. 258).

These patterns have been explained, just like the composition of the presidential center, as outcomes of presidential attempts to cope with information asymmetries and enhance control over policymaking. Information asymmetries arise from the inevitable fact of functional differentiation between the presidency and the cabinet departments, and from the position of departments as agents with multiple principals—namely the president, Congress, and interest groups. As Weingast (2005: p. 313) has commented on the bureaucracy, cabinet departments are also “in the middle”: they are located under presidential authority in the executive branch, but have been created by and receive their funding and mandates from Congress; they serve at the pleasure of the president to implement government policy but frame policy alternatives in such a way that they preserve their own turf by pleasing related interest groups. Consequently, presidents cannot ignore the perils of departmental capture by the particularistic interests of bureaucrats and socioeconomic constituencies, nor can they risk letting cabinet secretaries freely propose legislation to Congress, where they can collude with specialized committees also potentially captured by particularistic interests (Light, 1999: p. 223). The appointment of political allies and confidants to cabinet positions and the politicization of increasingly deeper layers of departmental ranks help presidents reduce information asymmetries and assert control over decision-making processes.

Presidential concerns with information asymmetries and control over policymaking thus also seem to have affected the stability of cabinet members and the role of departments in decision-making. As for stability, while only slightly over 50 percent of cabinet secretaries in the United States completed a full presidential term or more between 1789 and 1989 (Nicholls, 1991), this percentage rose significantly in the 1990s (81.3 percent and 66.7 percent in each Clinton term) and 2000s (87.5 percent and 65.2 percent in each of G.W. Bush’s terms) which would reflect the upside of politicizing the cabinet and controlling policymaking from the presidency (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2010). However, the increasing use since the 1960s of inter-departmental bodies as forums to develop and discuss policy alternatives has in effect limited the ability of cabinet secretaries to influence decision-making (Hult, 1993). Councils, task forces and presidential commissions have effectively undermined the authority of cabinet secretaries by carving departmental subunits for specific purposes, pitting them against

presidential center and extra-governmental advisers, and shifting their staff from one function to another within policymaking processes (ibid; also Ponder, 2000). Therefore, as scholars have consensually concluded, there is no such thing as cabinet government in the United States.

2.2.2 Evidence in LAC

Research on presidential cabinets in Latin America has grown considerably in recent years, but this growth has been uneven and accumulated knowledge is still incipient. Studies have focused mostly on the composition and stability of cabinets. In contrast, little research exists on the relation between presidents and cabinets, or on the participation of cabinet ministers in decision-making processes.

The composition of presidential cabinets has been studied on three dimensions: their partisan makeup; the types of staff recruited; and their structure. The bulk of this research is concentrated on partisan makeup. Scholars have established that coalitions are the most frequent form of cabinet composition in Latin America. In comparative work on Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, Amorim Neto (2006) showed that 76 percent of cabinets between 1978 and 2004 were either majority or minority coalition cabinets. Working from practically the same list (merely replacing Panama with Paraguay), Martínez-Gallardo (2005, 2010a) showed that coalition cabinets were in place 52 percent of the time between 1982 and 2003, while Chasquetti (2008) finds coalition cabinets in 41 percent of all governments in the sample between 1978 and 2006. All cabinets in the present democratic periods of Brazil and Chile have been coalition cabinets; in Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay this has been the case between 80 and 91 percent of the time (ibid.). Majority coalition cabinets have been more frequent in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay (Amorim Neto, 2006) while single-party majority cabinets are the least frequent form, prevalent only in Mexico (ibid.). These patterns have been explained as the joint outcomes of the size of presidents' legislative contingents, the number of parties in the legislatures, and the formal lawmaking powers of presidents: coalition cabinets appear as more frequent when presidents have minority status, face a large number of legislative parties, and have strong lawmaking powers (Zelaznik, 2001; Amorim Neto, 2006; Martínez-Gallardo, 2005, 2010a).

The types of staff recruited for cabinet positions have been studied on three dimensions: their partisanship; their background; and their gender. On partisanship, Amorim Neto's (2006)

data showed an average of 78.2 percent of partisan ministers, with peaks of over 92 percent in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay, and lows of less than 60 percent in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. The share of partisan ministers appears to be correlated with the cabinet's coalescence rate—i.e., the extent to which the partisan makeup of the cabinet is consistent with the partisan distribution of seats in the legislature. Again according to Amorim Neto (2006), average coalescence rates—which vary from 0 (no coalescence) to 1 (perfect coalescence)—have been above 0.85 in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico, and below 0.60 in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. These patterns have been explained as outcomes of the “presidential calculus” (ibid.): presidential decisions on the partisan makeup of cabinets are contingent on the strength of executive lawmaking powers, the size of the president's legislative party, the president's party discipline, the ideological position of the president vis-à-vis legislators, the elapsed length of the term, and the economic conditions of the country. The share of partisan ministers and the cabinet coalescence rate should be higher when presidents' parties control the legislative majority, are only beginning their terms in office, and enjoy strong lawmaking powers.

On the background of cabinet ministers, comparative work on Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and the United States (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009, 2010) has shown that relevant education or work experience, political insider experience, and known links to ministry clients are the most important traits for ministerial recruitment. Relevant education or work experience oscillates between 89.6 percent of ministers in the US and 75.3 percent in Colombia; political insider experience weighs the most in Argentina (63.1 percent of ministers) and Costa Rica (58.1 percent) and the least in Chile (48.9 percent) and Colombia (42 percent); while links to ministry clients are more important in the US (48.1 percent) and Argentina (45.9 percent) and least in Chile, at 36.2 percent (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2010: p. 31). Most ministers have primary careers in government in Argentina (67.5 percent), Chile (68.1 percent) and the US (59.7 percent), while primary careers in business are more relevant in Costa Rica (43.7 percent), and friendship with the president is more relevant in Argentina (40 percent) than anywhere else (ibid). On gender, the same authors found the highest shares of female ministers in Chile (35.1 percent) and Costa Rica (24.7 percent), and the lowest in the United States (18.2 percent).

The structure of the cabinet is the least researched dimension of cabinet composition. The small amount of comparative data available (Martínez-Gallardo 2010a) shows significant variation in the number of portfolios across countries, from nine in Paraguay in 2008 to 27 in Venezuela during the same year. Within-country variation has also been established as large for Bolivia (IDB, 2006) and less so for Brazil (Inacio, 2006) but not for Argentina (Molinelli et al., 1998). Twelve Latin American countries have a ministerial position with cabinet coordination responsibility: in some countries it is defined constitutionally (Argentina, Peru) or legally (Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Venezuela); in others (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico) it is located within the presidential center; and yet in others (Guatemala, Nicaragua) it is assigned to the vice president. Complete data collection and explanation of these stylized facts are still pending.

Cabinet stability has been investigated considering the duration of both cabinets and ministers. Cabinet duration appears to be lower in Latin America than in the United States: Amorim Neto's (2006) data shows an average of 2.6 years for Latin American cabinets, compared to 4 years for US cabinets. Cabinets survive longer than average in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, and less in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru (ibid). These patterns have been explained as outcomes of the presidential party's legislative status, the share of partisan ministers and the cabinet's partisan makeup: cabinets last longer if the president holds a legislative majority, there is a high share of partisan ministers and a single-party makeup (Amorim Neto, 2006).

Ministerial duration varies considerably across Latin American countries. Measured in months by Martínez-Gallardo (2010c), ministers last an average 19.8 months, with Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay above average, and Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela below average. Measured in years by Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2010), ministers serve longer in the United States (3.6 years) than in Latin America (2.2 years). These patterns have been explained as joint outcomes of the occurrence of economic or political shocks, the president's popularity, the electoral cycle, and the president's reactive and proactive institutional powers (Martínez-Gallardo, 2010c); and as determined by the backgrounds of ministers (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2010). Thus, ministers have been found to serve longer if inflation and political conflict are low, economic growth, presidential popularity, and elections proximity are high, and institutional powers strong

(Martínez-Gallardo, 2010c); and if they are linked to ministry clients—whereas political, education or work experience do not increase tenure (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2010).

There is practically no research on the relationship between presidents and cabinet ministers in Latin America. There are some case studies of presidential administrations that contain accounts of conflicts between presidents and finance ministers and/or between finance ministers and the rest of the cabinet (Palermo and Novaro, 1996; Corrales, 2000, 2002; Altman, 2000; Mayorga, 2001; Novaro, 2001; Lanzaro, 2001), but no systematic dataset or account of presidential-ministerial interaction exists so far.

The role of the cabinet in decision-making processes is also understudied. Martínez-Gallardo (2010a: 121-122) claims that ministers have “a near-monopoly” in policy design, are charged with steering presidential bills through Congress, and enjoy a central position in the implementation stage. Ministers would dominate policy design due to the greater expertise at their disposal vis-à-vis legislators; they would actively push executive bills through the legislative process by defending them in committees and controlling amendments at both the committee and the floor stages; and they would lead implementation by heading their own agencies and exercising their rulemaking capacity—which is both inherent to their office and frequently aided by explicit congressional delegation (*ibid.*). However, no empirical evidence has been hitherto provided on any of these claims.

Consequently, important research questions remain unanswered. What is the nature of the portfolios included in Latin American cabinets? Under what conditions has each portfolio emerged or disappeared? How is the cabinet organized: in functionally differentiated portfolios, in inter-departmental councils, or both? How is authority distributed within cabinets: is it institutionally wielded by a coordination portfolio, concentrated in the president, or informally assigned by the president to one or more ministries? What are the formal and effective powers of ministers? In what ways are cabinet departments involved in policymaking? How do ministers relate to the presidential center and its staff? How do presidents manage relations between the presidential center and cabinet departments? What is the structure of decision-making within the cabinet and within the ministries? In what ways do presidents intervene in cabinet deliberations and internal ministerial decision processes? To answer these questions, as in the case of the presidential center, two types of information would be required and two different research

strategies would be adequate for treating that information. On the information side: a) legal and administrative instruments depicting the organization of cabinets and ministries and its evolution through time, the formal powers of ministries and their subordinates, the formal powers of presidents vis-à-vis ministers, and the scope of policy responsibilities of presidents, cabinet departments, and the presidential center; b) quantitative and qualitative information on the frequency and nature of interactions among presidents, ministers, and presidential center staff, forms of involvement of ministries in decision-making processes, turnover rates, etc. On the research strategy side: a) quantitative treatment of interactions between the aforementioned data and standard factors used as independent variables in coalition research—such as legislative strength of the president’s party, formal powers of the president, presidential popularity, length of presidential term, economic context; b) social network analysis of interaction among presidents, ministers, and presidential staff.

The relevance of studying cabinets and their role in the policymaking is almost straightforward to understand from the previous analysis. Cabinet ministers have under their control most policy initiatives and implementation and control the execution of a large part of public monies. As such, understanding who they are, how they relate among each other, with the president, and with the other political actors, and what their incentives are makes it possible to understand how policies tend to be decided, approved and implemented. Moreover, that understanding also posits the constraints that the political system may impose on the presidency. Necessarily by construction, large coalition governments would tend to have more restrictions than smaller and more cohesive cabinets. Finally, again, understanding the composition of the cabinet allows understanding better the incentives of the president. Who he chooses, how long he keeps them in their posts and how much power he gives them go a long way toward explaining what type of policies the president may be willing and able to pursue.

Table 2 summarizes the findings of the US literature, the evidence available for Latin America and the research questions emerging from the knowledge gap.

Table 2. State of the Art and Research Agenda on the Cabinet

Topic	United States	Latin America	Research Agenda
Composition	Evolution: functional and political differentiation Staff types: inner/outer members and politicization as attempts to overcome information asymmetries and enhance control	Partisan makeup: majority of coalition governments Staff types: majority of partisan ministers, but contingent to “presidential calculus”; majority of political insiders with government careers Structure: significant cross-country variation in number of portfolios; generalized presence of coordination ministry	Nature and evolution of portfolios Cabinet structure Ministerial authority
Stability	Increasing ministerial stability Increasing number of para-ministerial consultation bodies	Cabinet: lower duration than in US; contingent to legislative status of presidential party, share of partisan ministers, and coalition makeup Ministerial: significant cross-country variation contingent to shocks, presidential popularity, electoral cycle, and president’s institutional and partisan powers	
Participation in Decision-Making	Decreasing ministerial participation Increasing participation of task forces and special commissions	Relation to presidents: case studies of president-finance minister relations Domination in policy design and implementation, but empirically unsubstantiated	Forms of staff involvement Relation to presidential center Presidential management styles

2.3. Advisory Networks

2.3.1 Overview

Presidential advisory networks are groups of individuals, organizational units and subunits linked to presidents through the provision of advice for their decisions (Hult, 1993: p. 113). The study of advisory networks is premised on the idea that interaction among network members may affect “the nature and timing of the advice a president receives, the president’s views on the credibility and importance of that advice, and the impact of the advice on presidential decisions and decision outcomes” (ibid.). Research on presidential advisory networks in the United States

has focused on the composition of those networks, their operation, and their effects on presidential decision-making.

The composition of advisory networks has been studied on two dimensions: the nature of their members, and the stability of their membership. Approaches to network membership have been either organizational or interactional. Organizational approaches have focused on the specific organizational units and subunits involved in particular networks—stressing how their mandates, information, working routines, and linkages to other actors such as Congress and interest groups shape the advice they produce and their clout on presidential decisions. Stemming from Allison’s classic work on the Cuban missile crisis (Allison, 1971), this approach has been used primarily for the study of foreign policy decision-making, particularly in crisis situations (Janis, 1972, 1982; Kozak and Keagle, 1988; Burke and Greenstein, 1989; ‘t Hart, 1994; ‘t Hart, Stern and Sundelius, 1997; Preston, 2001). The main finding of these studies is that the composition of networks involves crucial tradeoffs for presidents to maintain control of decision-making. If networks are staffed solely with policy area specialists, presidents would most likely receive biased information designed to protect policy turfs and hide previous bad choices or least-preferred alternatives of departments and bureaucrats. If networks are staffed with units of various areas and different mandates, information and advice would be more diverse, but two opposite dynamics may complicate decision processes: either the pressure to produce decisions by consensus building may lead to “groupthink” and its pathologies of information filtering, misrepresentation, and denial of alternatives and potentially bad consequences or outcomes; or the competition between units for dominance over decision outcomes may force the president to invest excessive time and energy in the process (Rudalevige, 2005: p. 340). Presidential choices for advisory network membership are thus critical to networks’ influence on decision-making and outcomes.

Interactional approaches to network membership have defined individual advisers, rather than organizations, as their units of analysis, and have categorized them according to their level of access to the president. Based upon presidential schedules and diaries, scholars (Best, 1988a, 1988b; Thompson, 1992; Link, 2002) have established the volume of interactions between presidents and advisers and, on this basis, determined the existence of different adviser types according to the distance between their formal positions in government and their effective positions in presidential advisory networks. Link’s study of advisory networks in the Nixon and

Carter Administrations found three types of network members: inner-core advisers, with extraordinary—i.e., one standard deviation greater than the mean—access to the president’s time; outer-core advisers, with above-average but less than standard deviation access levels; and peripheral advisers, with below-average levels of access (Link, 2002: pp. 251-252). This categorization of advisers makes it possible to pinpoint the influence of particular individuals and organizations (as represented by individuals) on presidential decisions by weighing their frequency of interactions with the president, the length of their paths to the president’s attention, and the precise timing of their presence before the president for the presentation and discussion of specific information or alternatives, and the making of concrete decisions.

The stability of network membership has also been studied from the organizational and the interactional perspective. Organizational studies have concentrated on the survival of organizational units and on variations in presidents’ use of those units within decision-making processes (Porter, 1980; Burke and Greenstein, 1989; Ragsdale and Theis, 1997), whereas interactional analyses have stressed the turnover of each adviser type (Link, 2002). Network stability has been explained from the organizational perspective as the outcome of presidents’ managerial styles: turnover would be high under competitive styles (Dickinson, 1997) and less so under collegial styles—though staff shifting to different functions in the policy process may also yield high turnover in these cases (Ponder, 2000). From the interactional perspective, turnover rates seem to be determined by overload: since presidents are forced to deal with an increasingly growing number of problems throughout their term, their engagement in parallel processing of issues forces them to limit the number of advisers they contact, and to seek only those who can quickly provide information and solutions that are easy to understand and implement (Link, 2002: p. 253). High turnover rates of network members may therefore be construed as indications of greater adaptability of presidents to changing decision settings, or as signals of presidential difficulties in handling complex environments and simultaneous challenges.

The operation of presidential advisory networks has been studied on three dimensions: decision procedures; conflict among network members; and the effects of both on presidential decision-making. Decision procedures have been found to change according to context and issue. Routine decision contexts typically involve deliberation and decision-making by cabinet members and top-level bureaucrats which presidents subsequently sanction; whereas extraordinary contexts such as crises or unexpected events typically lead to direct presidential

involvement—either through hierarchical arrangements with heavy reliance on the presidential center, or adjudicative rules by which advisers provide competing advice and presidents decide (Hult, 1993; Walcott and Hult, 1995). Foreign policy issues are typically settled through competitive and collegial decision-making in which presidents encourage adversarial deliberation among agencies with subject matter expertise such as the National Security Council, State Department, Defense Department, and CIA. In contrast, domestic policy issues, particularly social policy, are generally discussed by inter-departmental councils and subjected to multiple advocacy procedures (George, 1972) whereby all concerned agencies and even outside parties such as interest groups voice their position—typically with some cabinet secretary or top presidential aide acting as an “honest broker” charged with laying down all the information and choices. These variations have been explained as outcomes of the diverse incentives of network members. Presidents must contend with various powerful actors in the course of governing, so they are chiefly motivated to do so effectively and to bequeath a legacy that secures their place in history (Moe, 1993). These incentives lead presidents to maximize the chances to push their agenda through, and since campaigning consumes most of their time and energies they typically have little in the way of ideas and resources to develop policy agendas upon inauguration. They must therefore eventually rely on the institutional sources available: cabinet departments, Congress, interest groups, think tanks (Light, 1999: p. 83). This opens a window of opportunity for policy entrepreneurship by career bureaucrats and cabinet secretaries, as well as for influential congressional leaders—all of whom compete for agenda setting and program jockeying, especially on domestic issues (Light, 1999: p. 158).

Conflict within advisory networks has been studied as a consequence of members’ incentives, problem overload, presidential inattention, and decision cycles. Presidential incentives to maximize control over decision-making clash with bureaucratic turf protection, Congressional interest on credit-claiming for politically promising issues, and departmental policy entrepreneurship (Volden, 2002; Epstein et al., 2008). Problem overload may lead to inefficient information processing and biased deliberation (Light, 1999), high network turnover rates (Link, 2002), and ultimately inadequate choices. Presidential inattention, either to specific issues or to tensions among network members, may lead to domination of decision processes by powerful actors or agencies, decision gridlock, and “traffic jams” in policy processing due to “underdirected participants” (Helmer, 1981, quoted in Hult, 1993). Finally, conflicts within

advisory networks tends to increase in the course of each term as presidents either become focused on their reelection campaign or lose power as lame ducks (Light, 1999).

2.3.2 Evidence in LAC

There is no comparable literature on presidential advisory networks in Latin America. A handful of studies have analyzed the role of economists in policymaking process—particularly during the structural reforms of the 1990s (Markoff and Montecinos, 1993; Centeno and Silva, 1998; the works recently compiled in Montecinos and Markoff, 2009) but mostly via case studies, without systematic datasets and unrelated to network analytic perspectives. An even smaller literature on the diffusion of policy ideas (Madrid 2003, 2005; Weyland, 2007) has developed comparative analyses of the role of policy networks in the spread of pension reforms throughout Latin America using network concepts, but these works generally do not deal with the interaction between presidents and advisory networks.

There is therefore a considerable research agenda still pending. To what extent do presidents in Latin America employ advisory networks? For what policy issues or areas do they employ those networks? What is the composition of presidential advisory networks? How stable is this composition, and if unstable, how does it vary? What explains the emergence, duration, and demise of advisory networks? How are authority and power distributed among network members? How does decision-making operate within advisory networks? How do presidents manage conflict among advisory network members? To answer these questions, legal and administrative information is needed on the level of institutionalization, formal powers, and evolution of presidential advisory networks and their members, and quantitative information on the frequency and nature of interactions and conflicts among network members is also required. The most adequate research strategy to treat this information would be social network analysis, focused on describing the structure and evolution of presidential advisory networks, the network structures and relational contents more conducive to conflict and cooperation, and the managerial strategies with which presidents deal with those networks.

Table 3 summarizes the findings of the US literature, the evidence available for Latin America, and the research questions emerging from the knowledge gap.

Table 3. State of the Art and Research Agenda on Presidential Advisory Networks

Topic	United States	Latin America	Research Agenda
Composition	Member types: policy specialists, political advisers, or mix; specialized area units or diverse units; inner/outer core advisers and peripheral advisers Stability: lower under competitive than collegial styles; contingent to overload	Case studies of participation of economists in government	Composition Stability Emergence, duration, demise Staff turnover
Operation	Decision procedures: contingent to context and issue area Conflict: presidential incentives to enhance control clash with bureaucratic turf protection, congressional credit-claiming, and departmental policy entrepreneurship	Case studies of participation of economists in government and comparative studies on diffusion of policy ideas	Decision procedures Frequency of employment Issue areas Presidential management
Effects of Presidential Decision-Making	Contingent on network composition and presidential managerial styles		Comparison of outcomes with work by ministries and presidential center

3. The Resources of the Presidency

The study of the resources of the presidency is another topic to which the literature on the US presidency has made significant contributions. These contributions are focused on specific organizational resources: the president's power to appoint officials to the bureaucracy; the presidency's capacity to supervise and clear the production of executive norms and legislative proposals prepared by cabinet departments and bureaucratic agencies; and the presidency's power to command and control the budgetary process. Some of the latter research has been replicated for Latin America, supplemented by studies on presidential control over intergovernmental transfers. The literature has accounted for these presidential resources as tools that facilitate the politicization of the bureaucracy and the centralization of decision-making processes in the presidency, and has generated important findings about the conditions under which these resources are typically used. This section reviews the research on each of these resources and highlights the questions pending for investigation in Latin American countries.

3.1. Appointment Power

3.1.1 Overview

In presidential systems of government the executive branch is typically endowed by the constitution or other organic legislation with the power to appoint the staff of cabinet departments and other executive agencies. Apart from certain positions that typically require legislative confirmation—such as cabinet secretaries in the United States, or ambassadors, military commanders, and chief officers of important executive agencies like central banks in most countries—presidents are free to exercise their appointment power elsewhere in the bureaucracy. The presidential appointment power has therefore been studied on two dimensions: its usages; and the determinants of those usages.

Studies on the uses of appointment power concur on the intensity with which presidents resort to it, but differ on the rationale, the extent, and the effects of its use. On the rationale underpinning the use of appointment powers, some scholars argue that presidents seek to increase the neutral competence of the bureaucracy—i.e., the provision of unbiased information and independent advice on policy choices (Hecl, 1975; Light, 1999), while others contend that appointment powers are used to generate a responsive bureaucracy—i.e., one politically aligned with presidents and ready to implement their programs and follow their lead (Moe, 1993; Moe and Wilson, 1994). According to the latter, in their search for responsiveness presidents use political appointees to either centralize policymaking in the presidency or politicize the bureaucracy: centralization would be the consequence of appointees at agency or departmental head levels deferring to presidential rather than departmental views; politicization would be the consequence of neutralizing the clout of career bureaucrats by positioning loyalists where information is produced and policy choices are framed (*ibid.*; also Dickinson, 2002: p. 251). These strategic rationales—centralization and politicization—can complement (Moe and Howell, 1999) or substitute for each other contingent on the legacy of centralization and politicization each president inherits: “if a function is satisfactorily centralized, politicizing its locus in the wider bureaucracy seems like a waste of resources; likewise, if a bureau is sufficiently politicized, it should carry out presidential preferences without the additional costs of centralizing the process” (Rudalevige, 2009: p. 17).

The extent to which appointment powers may politicize or centralize the bureaucracy has been studied in terms of both the growth of appointees and the specific appointment techniques

employed by presidents. Some scholars have substantiated the politicization of the bureaucracy by pointing to the overall growth of political appointees since the creation of the EOP (Pfiffner, 1987; Maranto 1993; Light, 1995; Durant and Warber, 2001; Dickinson, 2005): while employment in the federal bureaucracy may have decreased, the tendency towards EOP staff growth has been consistent since the 1940s—and as the EOP is the backbone of the presidential center, then EOP staff growth would signal an increase in political appointees and therefore an increase in politicization of the bureaucracy. Others scholars have shown that appointment techniques enable presidents to politicize not merely the managerial level, but also the policy development, implementation and support levels of agencies (Campbell, 2005; Lewis, 2005, 2008): presidents can replace top managers, create layers of politically appointed managers with authority over career managers, add appointed ministerial staff with no statutory authority but political influence over career managers, reorganize agencies to diminish the power of career bureaucrats, and/or impose reductions on the workforce which eliminate career posts and thus increase the power of appointees (Lewis 2008: pp. 32-39). The deeper the appointment techniques carve into the bureaucratic structures, the greater the extent to which presidents may politicize those structures.

The effects of appointment powers have been studied on two dimensions: the centralization of decision-making processes in the presidency, and their impact on the presidency's ability to adapt to changing situations. Appointments would centralize decision-making in the presidency not only by increasing the number of presidential loyalists within the bureaucracy but also by eliciting frequent turnover among appointees—which “brings energy to the job and rewards more supporters”—and by fostering confrontation between appointees and careerists—which presidents would deem necessary to “getting things done” (Durant and Warber, 2001: pp. 227-228). But the very centralization of decision-making would produce a “loss of political sensitivity” in the presidential center itself: the enlargement and functional differentiation of the EOP and the occupation of critical information production and policy development positions by presidential loyalists would displace departmental and bureaucratic information and advice, and thus incline presidents to rely on the input of a loyal staff that lacks adequate knowledge to counsel presidents on the consequences of policy decisions (Dickinson, 2005: p. 160). Still, presidents might be able to escape this tradeoff between increased control and decreased political sensitivity by imposing functional differentiation among their appointees:

some political appointments may seek only patronage objectives—i.e., satisfying specific constituency demands and maintaining linkages with the party and congressional leaders through which diverse information may flow towards the president—while others may seek only policy objectives—i.e., guaranteeing that agencies align their operations with the president’s ideological and policy agendas (Lewis, 2008).

The determinants of the political usage of presidential appointments have been studied both from the perspectives of the bargaining and the leadership paradigms of presidential politics. From the bargaining paradigm’s perspective, appointment powers are used to politicize the bureaucracy when the complexity of the president’s bargaining environment increases: when Congress passes legislation creating agencies independent from the executive or empowering pre-existing agencies in such way as to curtail presidential influence (Epstein and O’Halloran, 1999; Epstein et al., 2008); or when societal developments and/or interest group pressures increase expectations of presidential responsiveness (Dickinson, 2005). From the leadership paradigm’s perspective, presidents are more likely to use appointments to politicize the bureaucracy when a) their policy views differ from those typical within a given agency, b) agency competence is not (likely to be) affected by politicization, and c) their party controls the majority of Congress (Lewis, 2008: pp. 59-61). Utilizing data on political appointments across all levels of the bureaucracy, Lewis (2008) found that presidents increase the number of appointees when party control of the presidency shifts, rather than in second-term presidencies or within-party transitions; employ less political appointees or decrease their number in agencies that perform technically complex tasks; and increase politicization when they enjoy unified government. These patterns yield more or less constant growth in political appointments, as well as spikes in both policy and patronage appointments in liberal-leaning agencies during conservative administrations and in conservative-leaning agencies during liberal administrations (Lewis, 2008: pp. 139-140).

3.1.2 Evidence in LAC

There is no equivalent research on presidential appointment powers for Latin America. Consequently, a wide agenda is open on this topic. The first item in this agenda is the identification of political appointments: How can they be distinguished from career civil service appointments? What are the procedures for their appointment and placement within government?

The second item is their measurement: What is the ratio of political appointees to civil servants within the executive branch? In what capacities are political appointees incorporated into government: managerial, policy development, or support? Where in the executive's organizational structure are they located: the presidential center, the cabinet departments, or the executive agencies? Which policy jurisdictions are more likely to be staffed with high shares of appointees? How do the shares, positions, and location of political appointees change over time, both within and between presidencies? What are the backgrounds of appointees? Do backgrounds change according to the position within government to which they are assigned: policy or patronage? The third item in this research agenda would be the uses presidents make of appointees, i.e., in what ways are appointees involved in decision-making processes: as policy directors, facilitators, or monitors? What types of appointees, policy or patronage, are employed in what capacities within policymaking processes? To answer these questions, legal and administrative information such as civil service career rules and government employment data would be the main input, but qualitative and quantitative information on the forms of involvement of appointees in decision making would also be required. This information should be treated using the same strategies combined to study the presidential center and presidential advisory networks. On the one hand, quantitative statistical analysis is needed to look for appointment patterns and their determinants—using the size of the president's party, divided government, presidential popularity, and the evolution of government functions and structure as independent variables. On the other hand, social network analysis is necessary to establish the usages of appointees by determining their role in advisory networks and concrete decision-making processes.

3.2. Clearance Power

3.2.1 Overview

In presidential as in parliamentary systems of government, the bulk of the executive's policymaking activity is not produced by the chief executive but by the cabinet departments or other executive agencies. In presidential systems, to coordinate the production process of legislative proposals, decrees, executive orders, and regulatory directives by those departments and agencies, chief executives typically reserve for themselves the power to review these

products and decide which would be sent to Congress or implemented by the executive, and which would be discarded or reworked within the executive branch. This is clearance power.

Studies of this presidential resource in the United States have focused on its scope, its rationale, and its effectiveness. Clearance power was first established as budgetary clearance in the 1920s, but later evolved to encompass legislative clearance in the 1930s (Neustadt, 1954) and regulatory review in the 1980s (West, 2006). Budgetary and legislative clearance operate both before and after legislative proposals are dealt with in Congress: before, by evaluating whether the draft legislation and budget items proposed by cabinet departments and executive agencies are “consistent with” or “in accordance with” the president’s campaign commitments and stated legislative goals (Light, 1999: pp. 4-5); after, by assessing whether legislation approved by Congress is in tune with the president’s program or deserves a presidential veto (Neustadt, 1954: p. 641). Regulatory review, also known as administrative clearance, performs the same exercise on drafts for executive orders, regulatory agency directives, and presidential proclamations—only it adds cost-benefit analysis to the political criteria employed for legislative clearance (West, 2006: p. 441). Clearance power has always been located in the Executive Office of the President: in the Bureau of the Budget until 1972, and currently in its successor agency, the Office for Management and Budget (OMB), where the Office of Legislative Reference takes up legislative clearance and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) deals with administrative clearance.

The rationale of the clearance power has been to centralize control of decision-making in the presidency. Clearance criteria and procedures are “managerial rules that constrain agency behavior” (Moe, 1993: p. 371) by blocking cabinet departments and other agencies from independently advancing their own agendas in collaboration with congressional committees, and by imposing a political line upon executive units. Thus clearance power enables presidents to maintain administrative, policy and political consistency within their own branch: clearance criteria allow the presidential center to control the policy and political content of executive output, and clearance procedures centralize the information flow and decision-making processes in order to secure content control (Moe and Wilson, 1994; Kagan, 2001).

The effects of clearance power have been characterized differently according to the type of clearance. Legislative clearance has been deemed as effective for mediating and arbitrating conflict among departments and agencies over policy orientations and responsibilities (Neustadt,

1954; Gilmour, 1971), as well as for providing presidents with an institutional memory of executive policymaking—and hence with ideas and lessons for presidential decision processes (Light, 1999: p. 231). Its effectiveness for centralizing control over policy content and maximizing political alignment seems to have been more ambiguous: centralization of legislative formulation within the executive by the presidential center, measured as the percentage of legislative proposals led by the EOP or the president’s office, has been more or less constant since the late 1940s, but by no means dominant in executive policymaking (Rudalevige, 2002: pp. 82-84). Administrative clearance has also been assessed as effective for resolving conflicts among agencies and programs (West, 2006: p. 435), as well as for “delaying, stopping, modifying, or promoting particular regulations” (Durant and Resh, 2009: p. 584). However, its efficacy for top-down planning or consistency among policy areas and programs has been labeled as meager (*ibid*; West, 2006: pp. 448). All in all, then, the centralizing aims of clearance power appear to have been fulfilled more in their procedural than in their substantial dimension.

3.2.2 Evidence in LAC

There is no research available on the clearance power of the presidency in Latin America. Consequently, the space is open for investigation on all its dimensions. What Latin American executives have clearance power? Where within the executive branch is this power located: in the presidential center or in specific cabinet ministries, such as finance or coordination? What is the scope of clearance power: is it restricted to legislative/administrative clearance, or does it encompass both? What are the specific capacities involved in legislative clearance power: review of departmental legislative proposals, decree drafts and enacted legislation to prepare for vetoes, or interpretation of the meaning and scope of enacted legislation as well? What have been the conditions for the emergence of clearance power? What are the effects of clearance power upon decision-making processes? To answer these questions, legal and administrative information on clearance power is needed: specifically on its scope, location, capacities, and procedures. Quantitative and qualitative data on the uses of clearance power would also be required: specifically on the nature and frequency of changes introduced on legislative proposals, decree drafts, enacted legislation, and regulatory directives; the policy areas and issues on which clearance power is dominantly exercised; the political conditions under which the exercise of clearance power varies in frequency, scope, and issues. Statistical treatment of this information

would be an appropriate research strategy: using the nature, uses and outcomes of clearance power as dependent variables, and standard variables utilized in the analysis of budgetary politics—size of the president’s legislative contingent, divided government, partisan distribution of cabinet ministries, economic context—as independent variables.

3.3. Budgetary Power

3.3.1 Overview

Presidential budgetary power in the US seems to be the reverse of presidential budgetary power in most of Latin America. While in the United States the president has no complete control over any stage of the budgetary process, most Latin American presidents dominate the formulation, implementation, and control of the budget, and exert significant influence on its approval by Congress. The budgetary powers of Latin American presidents have been thoroughly described in both their nature and effects, although the use of specific budgetary procedures remains to be investigated.

The US president’s budgetary power is unequivocally low in both absolute and comparative terms. In absolute terms, the president is not a dominant actor at any stage of the budgetary process. Only in the formulation stage does the presidency exert some control over matters, albeit not dominance: the cabinet departments and executive agencies take the lead in proposing their own budgets, typically in close contact with the relevant congressional committees before which they will ultimately defend them, but the president is empowered to modify those preliminary proposals via the OMB, and thus to shape the budget bill eventually sent to Congress (Stewart, 1989; Schick, 2007). In the approval stage, the president has no formal power: presidents may informally bargain with congressional leaders (Beckmann, 2010), but their leverage in those negotiations is little insofar as Congress may unilaterally reject the president’s bill and amend its provisions almost at will (Howell, 2003). In the implementation stage, bureaucrats—i.e., department and agency heads—have the leading role, typically shielded from presidential influence by direct congressional delegations of power and protected by the congressional committees with jurisdiction over each agency (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991; Epstein and O’Halloran, 1999), although presidents may impound—i.e., decide not to spend—funds and have sometimes attempted to reinstate their own budget priorities through executive orders (Cooper, 2002). In the control stage, presidents may exert some influence through OMB’s

regulatory directives, but the main actors are the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office (Schick, 2007).

3.3.2 Evidence in LAC

Among Latin American presidents, only the president of Guatemala has as weak a budgetary power as the US president. In the formulation stage, all presidents except for those of Guatemala and Peru can limit the expenditures of line ministries; everywhere except Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, either the president or the finance minister has ultimate authority over the executive's budget proposal; and everywhere except Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua the budget's content is constrained by numerical rules such as expenditure, deficit, or debt limits (Filc and Scartascini, 2007: pp. 165, 170). In the approval stage, all congresses except those of Bolivia and Guatemala are restricted in their capacity to modify the executive's budget proposal (ibid: p. 169); in all countries except Brazil, Honduras and Mexico the executive has a fallback outcome in case of congressional deadlock that increases its budgetary power vis-à-vis Congress—such as execution of an actualized version of the previous budget in Argentina, Guatemala, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Uruguay and Venezuela; or the tacit approval of the executive's budget bill in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru (Payne et al., 2003). In the implementation stage, the executive is authorized to withhold the execution of budgetary funds in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Uruguay—or to do so when legal obligations to spend have already been contracted in El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (Filc and Scartascini 2007: p. 171); presidents can modify the allocation of funds approved by Congress with the sole restriction of not altering the budgetary outcome in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Peru—or do so abiding by constitutional restrictions in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela (Abuelafia et al., 2009; Alston et al., 2009; Cárdenas et al., 2009; Mejía Acosta et al., 2009; Molinas et al., 2009; Carranza et al., 2009; Moraes et al., 2009; Puente et al., 2009). In the control stage, presidents may dominate congressional oversight activities contingent to their partisan power over the legislature, which typically determines their ability to appoint members of oversight agencies, shape the oversight agenda, and control the imposition of penalties for budgetary deviations (Bonvecchi, 2008, 2009).

The effects of presidential budgetary power in the US and Latin America have proven to be contrasting. While in the United States the budgetary process has been characterized by recurrent conflict between the president and Congress and recurrent swings between surplus and deficit outcomes (Schick, 2007), in Latin America the trends seem to be the reverse: more hierarchical budgetary processes marked by strong presidential power tend to produce budget surpluses (Filc and Scartascini, 2007: 174). In addition, many works have shown the utility of budgetary power for coalition building and maintenance throughout the region (Pereira and Mueller, 2002; Amorim Neto and Borsani, 2004; Hallerberg and Marier, 2004; Amorim Neto, 2006; Rodríguez and Bonvecchi, 2006).

Still, some topics on the nature and use of presidential budgetary powers are still to be researched. Where within the executive branch are budgetary powers located: in the Finance Ministry, in the Coordination Ministry, or in the president's hands? How exactly have budgetary powers been used in legislative coalition-building: have they been employed to build support for any and all legislation, or only for specific pieces? What budgetary powers have been more utilized by presidents—the negative powers of withholding or impounding funds, or the positive powers of augmenting and allocating funds? Under what conditions have positive and negative budgetary powers been more used? To answer these questions, administrative information on the location of budgetary powers and the patterns of use of specific budgetary powers and allocation of budgetary funds would be required. This information should be treated using the standard quantitative analyses previously employed to study budgetary politics.

3.4. Intergovernmental Transfers

3.4.1 Overview

Intergovernmental transfers are not a presidential resource in the United States but they typically operate as such in many Latin American countries. The reasons behind this fundamental difference are rooted in the economic structure, the party system, and the balance of power among government branches. Unlike Latin American countries, the United States combines three traits that shape its transfer system into a congress-centered one: an uneven regional distribution of income that strengthens local governments and socioeconomic groups who press for a decentralized tax system with automatic intergovernmental transfers (Boix, 2003; Beramendi, 2005; Wibbels, 2005); a decentralized party system that locks in such fiscal arrangements by

setting a premium on the control of local over national office and thus discouraging career paths in the national executive (Díaz-Cayeros, 2006); and a constitutional system of checks and balances that creates separate institutions sharing powers (Jones, 1994) while simultaneously granting the legislature exclusive rights over the power of the purse. Under such conditions, intergovernmental transfers are not controlled by the president but established and governed by Congress; presidents may propose regional redistribution through their budget bills, but legislators typically allocate budgetary funds with universalistic criteria in order to maintain cooperation within the legislature (Shepsle and Weingast, 1981; Weingast and Marshall, 1988); and the literature on intergovernmental transfers thus focuses on pork-barreling (Weingast and Shepsle, 1981; Cain et al., 1984; Ferejohn and Krehbiel, 1987; Evans, 1994) or party-based models of transfer allocation (Cox and McCubbins, 1986; Dixit and Londregan, 1996). In contrast, Latin American party systems tend to be more centralized than the US system (Jones and Mainwaring, 2003; Jones, 2010), and the balance of power among government branches tends to favor the executive (García Montero, 2009)—particularly in the budgetary process. Under such conditions, given a sometimes even more uneven regional distribution of income, intergovernmental transfers are typically in the president's domain, and while legislatures may be able to constrain the executive's ability to reallocate funds among regions, presidents have power to shape that allocation.

3.4.2 Evidence in LAC

Presidential power over intergovernmental transfers has been studied along two dimensions: their use for payment of electoral and/or governing coalitions; and their institutional use-value. Research on transfers as resources for coalition-building and maintenance has found evidence of such use in Argentina (Remmer and Wibbels, 2000; Gibson and Calvo, 2001; Jones, 2001; Tommasi et al., 2001; Remmer and Gelineau, 2003; Bonvecchi and Lodola, 2010), Brazil (Ames, 2001; Pereira and Mueller, 2002; Arretche and Rodden, 2004), Colombia (Crisp and Ingall, 2002), Mexico (Flamand, 2006; Magaloni et al., 2007), and Peru (Schady, 2000). The findings in this literature suggest that transfer allocations vary with the most relevant factors in each political system: overrepresentation of poor districts and local electoral contests in Argentina, regional clout and legislative party size in Brazil, territorial distribution of partisan

support in Colombia and Peru, and territorial distribution of poverty and partisan support in Mexico.

Research on the institutional use-value of transfers, although more scarce, has shown that the political value of intergovernmental transfers for presidents depends on the level of discretionality they afford them. Bonvecchi and Lodola (2010: p. 8) argue that presidents “prefer to manage transfers discretionally rather than centralizing tax revenues due to the comparatively higher coalition-building potential of discretionary funds relative to both formulaic and equalization transfers,” and propose a taxonomy of intergovernmental transfers based upon their level of discretionality as measured on five dimensions that presidents may control: amount, timing, targeting, payment, and earmarking. Using their taxonomy to re-specify previous studies on transfer allocations in Argentina, these authors show that, unlike in extant analyses (Remmer and Gelineau, 2003), intergovernmental transfers with high level of presidential discretionality only boost the electoral chances of presidential co-partisans in provincial legislative elections—whereas only non-discretionary grants tend to favor co-partisans in national and gubernatorial elections (Bonvecchi and Lodola, 2010: pp. 20-22). These findings suggest that presidents may use different transfers for different political purposes.

However, a lot remains to be investigated on intergovernmental transfers as presidential resources. What are the levels of discretionality of intergovernmental transfers in the rest of Latin American countries? How do presidents use transfers of different levels of discretionality? In what ways, if any, does the use of different transfer types varies with electoral or legislative coalition-building purposes? Where within the executive branch is power over transfer distribution located? Under what conditions are intergovernmental transfers effective to entice legislative and/or electoral support for incumbent presidents? To answer these questions, legal and administrative information on intergovernmental transfers is required: legislation to learn the level of discretionality of each transfer for both presidents and subnational recipients; administrative data on the timing and recipients of transfer distribution, as well as on the institutional format—laws, decrees, administrative decisions—employed to effect transfer distribution. This information should be treated with the standard statistical techniques used to study the determinants of transfer distribution: taking allocation patterns as dependent variables, and transfer types, electoral outcomes, distribution of legislative seats and policy issues as independent variables.

Table 4 summarizes the findings of the US literature on the resources of the presidency, the evidence available for Latin America, and the research questions emerging from the knowledge gap.

Table 4. State of the Art and Research Agenda on the Resources of the Presidency

Resource	United States	Latin America	Research Agenda
Appointment Power	Use: intense; to increase neutral competence or responsiveness of bureaucracy; to centralize decision-making or politicize bureaucracy Effects: tradeoff between control and political sensitivity Determinants: environmental complexity, preference misalignment, technical feasibility, unified government		Identification of political appointees and appointment procedures Measurement of appointees' presence, location, capacities, and backgrounds Participation of appointees in decision-making Cross-country, cross-presidency and within-presidency variation
Clearance Power	Scope: budgetary, legislative, and administrative Rationale: centralization of decision-making through criteria and procedures Effects: centralization in procedures but not in policy substance		Existence, location, scope, capacities, and effects of clearance power Cross-country, cross-presidency and within-presidency variation
Budgetary Power	Not dominant at any stage Somewhat strong in formulation, weaker in approval, slightly stronger in implementation, weaker in control Effects: recurrent conflict with Congress and swings between deficit and surplus	Stronger than US in all stages throughout the region, except Guatemala Cross-country variations contingent to legislation and partisan power Effects: increasingly hierarchical processes and budget surpluses	Location within executive branch Uses in legislative and electoral coalition building
Intergovernmental Transfers	Congress-centered transfer system due to uneven regional income distribution, decentralized party system and strong checks and balances Transfers distributed by legislators to maintain legislative cooperation	Presidency-centered transfer system with varying levels of presidential discretionality over transfers Transfers distributed by presidents for coalition building	Level of discretionality of transfers across countries Uses of different discretionary transfers for legislative or electoral coalition building

4. The Impact of Executive Organization and Resources on Policymaking

The study of the effects of the executive branch organization and the resources of the presidency on policymaking is the least developed topic in both the US and the Latin American literature on presidential politics. In the United States, research has focused primarily on the effects of presidential advisory networks on foreign policymaking, and only secondarily on the consequences of presidential center organization, cabinet structure, and presidency resources on domestic policymaking, government strategies, and public policy outcomes. In Latin America, research is particularly scarce, and the little work available is concentrated on the role of executive organization in government formation and survival, or on the general impact of executive organization variables on the nature of policymaking processes and policy outcomes. This section reviews the relevant literature with emphasis on its three most recurrent topics: governing strategy choices, policymaking processes, and public policy outcomes.

4.1. Governing Strategy Choices

4.1.1 Overview

The impact of executive organization and presidency resources on the governing strategy choices of presidents has been investigated on two dimensions: the choice between unilateral and legislative governing strategies, and the choice of political moves within each governing strategy. The treatment of the executive's organization and resources varies in both topics: they are sometimes treated as independent variables, and other times as intervening variables.

The literature on strategy choices differs on the nature of the choices and on the rationale underpinning choice. The distinction between a unilateral and a legislative governing strategy appears to be determined by either the type of resources dominantly employed by presidents or the conditions under which strategy choices must be made. Scholars of the former persuasion argue that the use of unilateral institutional tools—such as executive orders, proclamations, regulatory directives, vetoes or decrees—rather than reliance on congressional bills and ordinary legislative processes (Mayer, 2001; Cooper, 2002; Howell, 2003; Amorim Neto, 2006; Howell and Kriner, 2008), or the appointment of non-partisan rather than partisan cabinets (Amorim Neto, 2006), indicate that presidents have chosen a unilateral governing strategy. Scholars of the latter persuasion contend there is no clear demarcation line between unilateral and legislative strategies: while it is certainly true that presidents sometimes act on their own against what the

majority of Congress wants, it is also oftentimes the case that presidents act alone executing the will of Congress, effectively making use of shared powers stemming from congressional delegation of authority (Bailey and Rottinghaus, 2010: pp. 2-3). Moreover, according to these scholars the use of unilateral tools may involve reliance not only on previous bargains with Congress, but also on bargains within the executive itself—so much so that the difference between unilateral and legislative strategies may not actually signify “a shift between a ‘unilateral’ and a ‘multilateral’ process,” but “a change in where, and with whom, bargaining takes place” (Dickinson, 2008: p. 296). Consequently, strategy choices would depend on the bargaining conditions: presidents would generally prefer a unilateral strategy that maximizes their discretion (Moe, 1993; Moe and Wilson, 1994), but the purely unilateral strategy of discretion maximization would only obtain under unified government and perfect alignment of preferences among president, legislators, and bureaucrats (Epstein and O’Halloran, 1999: pp. 313-314). Any other situation would require legislative governing strategies—either direct bargaining with Congress for policies and authority, or indirect bargaining through the bureaucracy intimately connected to the relevant congressional committees (ibid.).

Research on the rationale for choosing a governing strategy has viewed some presidential resources as independent variables and others as intervening variables. Unilateral institutional tools and the organizational capacities of the presidential center are typically conceived of as independent variables: their availability would induce presidents, *ceteris paribus*, to adopt a unilateral strategy (Moe, 1993; Amorim Neto, 2006). In contrast, the composition of cabinets and the operational structure of advisory networks are typically treated as intervening variables: non-partisan cabinets and hierarchical advisory networks would be more suitable for implementing unilateral governing strategies because they enhance presidential control over decision-making, whereas partisan cabinets and collegial advisory networks would be more fitting for legislative strategies insofar as they maximize openness and consultation in decision-making processes (ibid; Walcott and Hult, 1995). However, executive organization and presidency resources are never conceptualized as the sole determinants of governing strategy choices. For some scholars, these choices also depend on the distribution of preferences in the legislature and the courts, which determine the likelihood of repeal of presidential unilateral actions (Howell, 2003); for others, governing strategies are also chosen with an eye on economic

conditions, the time left in the presidential term, the number of parties in the legislature, and the size of the president's legislative contingent (Amorim Neto, 2006).

The literature on the political moves within each governing strategy, while consistently treating executive organization and presidency resources as independent variables, differs on the nature of their consequences for the implementation of each strategy. Research on unilateral strategies stresses the fragility of unilateral tools and the collective action problems within the executive branch that may weaken their efficacy. Decisions made by unilateral fiat may be overturned by unilateral fiat, which strengthens the power of individual presidents but weakens the power of the presidency to set a stable status quo (Howell and Kriner, 2008: p. 137)—unless the status quo itself becomes stable due to the distribution of preferences in Congress and the courts (Howell and Mayer, 2005). The implementation of unilateral strategies is typically more complicated the more organizationally complex is the presidential center: high internal differentiation of the presidential center increases transaction costs by increasing coordination problems between the president and loyal appointees who, combining political alignment with informational asymmetries, “accrue power independent of the president” (Krause, 2009: p. 77).

Research on legislative governing strategies underscores a series of tradeoffs between resources and conditions for their effectiveness which yield cycles of presidential efficacy. Presidents typically have more resources to design their program, set the legislative agenda, and influence outcomes at the beginning of their terms—i.e., when they possess more political capital, with more time and energy to attend to multiple fronts; but at the same time they have little expertise on how to articulate their program, devise the legislative agenda, and lobby the right congressional leaders and committees to get it passed (Light, 1999: pp. 18-19, 23, 33). Presidents generally acquire the required expertise with time, but as midterm and presidential elections go by they have less political capital to employ that expertise effectively—either because their party loses seats in the midterms or they become lame ducks after reelection (*ibid.*). These tradeoffs generate two cycles that constrain presidential legislative strategies: the cycle of decreasing influence, marked by the depletion of political capital; and the cycle of increasing effectiveness, marked by learning about how best to staff the executive organization and use the presidency's resources (*ibid.*: pp. 36-39).

4.1.2 Evidence in LAC

The investigation of governing strategies in Latin America has been circumscribed to the choice between unilateral and legislative strategies. The works previously cited by Zelaznik (2001) and Amorim Neto (2006) have shown that the condition for unilateral strategies to be effective is that unilateral presidential resources be combined with enough partisan resources to withstand legislative repeals of unilateral decisions. In contrast, Pereira et al.'s (2005) work on the use of decrees by Brazilian presidents argues that presidential popularity and economic conditions are the main explanatory variables of the use of unilateral governing strategies. Still, there is little research available on the political moves within each governing strategy. How does the organization of the executive branch affect the implementation of unilateral and legislative strategies? In what ways does staff in the presidential center, cabinet ministers, and advisory networks intervene in the processes of shaping unilateral and legislative moves? Which types of presidential resources are most employed in those moves? To what extent do Latin American presidents experience the cycles of decreasing influence and increasing effectiveness that seem to characterize US presidential politics? To answer these questions, the paper trail behind by legislative proposals, decrees, and other presidential directives must be reconstructed, so that the nature and frequency of each staff type's involvement can be assessed. The forms and frequency of staff involvement should be treated as dependent variables, and the staff types, presidency resources, and standard political and economic environmental factors should be used as independent variables in statistical analyses.

4.2.Policymaking Processes

4.2.1 Overview

The impact of executive organization and presidency resources on policymaking processes has been investigated on three dimensions: the type of policy aims and objectives; the source of policy ideas; and the structure of policymaking processes. The literature on the US presidency has made substantial contributions on all topics; the literature on Latin American presidencies has focused on the latter.

The type of policy aims that presidents pursue seem to be determined by the informational and political resources at their disposal. As for informational resources, presidents with highly skilled advisors, highly institutionalized bureaucracies and/or highly efficient

clearance agencies would typically pursue marginal or incremental policy objectives in technical or non-controversial areas (Larocca, 2006: p. 17). The rationale for this pattern is that those informational resources work on the basis of institutional memories and standard operating procedures, and therefore aim primarily at reproducing or amplifying the power of their own turf; consequently, presidents predominantly advised by such organizations are discouraged from pursuing new policies or setting bold aims for themselves. In contrast, presidents would pursue innovative policies only in policy arenas where some “exogenous shock” has destabilized the status quo (Miller, 1993: p. 303; Beckmann, 2010: p. 36). In such conditions, the ordinary advice is rendered unusable because departments and agencies typically lack capacities and incentives for adaptation, so as disorientation peaks presidents can afford to be selectively unresponsive to departmental and interest-group pressures (Moe, 1993: p. 364). As for political resources, presidents with more centralized control over policy formulation and more (cohesive) congressional support would generally embark in new, large-scale programs, whereas presidents with less control over policy formulation and less (cohesive) congressional support would most likely take up marginal improvements in old programs or small new initiatives (Light, 1999: p. 110; Rudalevige 2002).

The sources of policy ideas have been found to vary with the transaction costs of information and advice. Presidents must decide whether to “make or buy” information and policy ideas in the presidential center or at the cabinet departments by weighing the relative scope and quality of the product from each source against the challenges of maintaining control over policymaking (Rudalevige, 2002). Departments and other expert agencies would typically contribute “expert substantive knowledge usually unmatched in the White House staff” but little or no political sensibility, whereas presidential staffers would typically offer “political expertise and a single-minded devotion to the president’s interest” but no technical advice (ibid: p. 11). So ideas will be drawn from the presidential center when political dynamics demand quick responses and novel approaches, issues cut across departmental jurisdictions, and/or the matters at hand do not require technically sophisticated responses: under these conditions the benefits of maintaining control over policymaking outweigh the costs of lacking expert information or advice (ibid: p. 12). In contrast, ideas would be drawn from cabinet departments or independent agencies when issues are highly complex, presidential and bureaucratic preferences are aligned either substantively or through control of departments by political appointees, or the president’s

party has the legislative majority: in those conditions control over policymaking is of little concern because it is more likely guaranteed (ibid: p. 39; also Light 1999: pp. 87-89).

The structure of the policy process has been found to change with the level of institutionalization of the presidency, the nature of presidential staff arrangements, and their associated informational costs. Some scholars argue that the institutionalization of the presidency has increased: a) centralization of control over policymaking by the White House staff, b) centralization of such control in key aids within that staff, and c) the emergence within the presidential center of behaviors and routines typical of highly institutionalized organizations: turf wars, information withholding and manipulation, etc. (Burke, 2000: p. 35). Less institutionalized presidencies, in contrast, would be characterized by more decentralized policy processes led by cabinet members or agency heads, less political control by the presidential staff, and bureaucratic routines that place leadership of policy processes in the cabinet departments and line agencies rather than the presidential center (Durant and Resh, 2009). Other scholars contend that the institutionalization of the presidency has generated coordination problems within the presidential staff that hinder both the centralization of policymaking processes and their control by the president (Krause 2004, 2009). In highly institutionalized presidential centers, presidents face a tradeoff between staff loyalty and staff discretion: loyalty helps presidents maximize control, but discretionary power in the hands of staffers may conspire against centralization of policymaking (Krause, 2009: p. 83). Presidents may escape this tradeoff by maximizing staff loyalty and minimizing staff discretion, but only to encounter another tradeoff: that between control and information—in which maximizing control over policymaking may come at the expense of minimizing the chances for alternative information and advice to flow towards the president's desk (Neustadt, 1990).

Hierarchical staff structures typically help presidents centralize policymaking processes, but simultaneously discourage the consideration of alternative ideas and information, and make adaptability to changing decision settings more difficult—so they would generally be more useful when presidential agendas involve “policies that require consistency, standardization, and reliability” (Durant and Warber, 2001: p. 229). In contrast, collegial staff structures yield decentralized policy processes in which diverse information and ideas are considered, but simultaneously prevent top-down control of decision-making, and still make adaptability difficult (Hult 2000: p. 40; Walcott and Hult, 1995). Competitive staff structures, in turn, seem to

combine the best of both worlds: they maximize the flow of information and advice by encouraging competition and overlapping among aids; they maximize centralization and control of policymaking by placing presidents as ultimate deciders; and by combining maximum diversity in information and advice with maximum decision-making authority they also maximize adaptability to changing settings (Dickinson, 1997: pp. 224, 228). There is, however, the risk that competitive staff structures might turn into multiple advocacy arrangements—in which diversity of information and advice are also maximized (George, 1972) but the president's authority to settle disputes is weakened by legitimizing the voice of all advocates. Staff shift may counter this risk by combining hierarchy, which preserves presidential authority, with flexible assignments and collegial consultation, which preserve diversity of information and advice (Ponder, 2000: p. 193). The problem is presidents are typically not free to choose their staff structures but forced to shape them under the constraints inherent to agenda-setting in a system of separated institutions sharing powers: the cycle of decreasing influence encourages the adoption of hierarchical structures in order to maximize control and centralization of policymaking at the zenith of the president's agenda-setting power—i.e., the first year in office—but the cycle of increasing effectiveness encourages the adoption of collegial staff structures to compensate for the lack of expertise and ideas with which presidents generally enter office (Light, 1999: p. 60). The countervailing incentives of these cycles would suggest that competitive or staff shift arrangements are more suitable, but no comparative research is available to settle the argument.

The informational costs associated with reliance on centralized or decentralized staff structures lead presidents to make centralization a contingent rather than a permanent policymaking arrangement. The rationale for contingent centralization stems from the aggregate nature of presidential agendas: since the president's program is "an aggregation of individual proposals" (Rudalevige, 2002: p. 29) intended to deal with the country's problems as each president perceives them and as they come to demand presidential responses, then presidents should assign the locus and leadership of policy formulation to either cabinet departments, the presidential center or both, according to the type of advice required by each policy issue and decision situation (ibid: p. 26). Thus, a centralized policy process would be preferable when conditions require political rather than technical information and advice, such as crises that demand urgent responses, cross-cutting issues or technically simple matters; whereas a

decentralized policy process would be preferable when conditions require technical rather than political information and advice, such as technically complex issues or a decision setting marked by preference alignment among presidents, legislators, and bureaucrats (ibid: p. 39).

4.2.2 Evidence in LAC

Research on the effects of executive organization and presidency resources on policymaking processes in Latin America has focused on the structure of those processes. Both IDB (2006: 149) and Martínez-Gallardo (2010a: pp. 138-142) have found that cabinet stability is correlated to policy processes with high coordination, coherence, adaptability to changing environments, and stability of structural arrangements. In addition, Martínez-Gallardo (2010b: p. 27) has shown that the composition of cabinets is generally designed to boost presidential control of decision-making by adapting it to shocks—such as elections, crises, etc.—that alter the relative costs of unilateral or legislative governing strategies. However, no research exists either on the types of policy aims or the sources of policy ideas or on the factors underpinning variations in policymaking structures. What are the policy aims that Latin American presidents typically set themselves? Where do policy ideas come from? How do different staff arrangements, cabinet compositions, and advisory network memberships impact the policy aims and ideas that presidential administrations set? What accounts for variations in the ways policymaking processes are structured: issue areas, organizational structures, or political and economic environmental conditions? To answer these questions, certain administrative information apart from that on presidential centers, cabinets and advisory networks would have to be collected: presidential messages to Congress and the general public to identify policy aims; paper trail on the production of legislative proposals, decrees and other presidential directives to identify the sources of policy ideas, the types of staff involved, forms of staff involvement in decision-making and their frequency. A combination of statistical analyses and case studies should be devised in which executive branch organizational arrangements should be treated as independent variables, and types of ideas, sources of ideas, and forms of staff involvement in decision-making should be treated as dependent variables.

4.3. Public Policy Outcomes

4.3.1 Overview

The impact of executive organization and presidency resources on public policy outcomes is the least studied topic in the presidency literature. There are at least two reasons for this shortcoming. On the one hand, conceptual problems: lack of clarity about the nature of the dependent variable—i.e., the notion of “good” or “bad” public policy outcomes; and insufficient conceptualization of causation between independent and dependent variables. On the other hand, measurement problems: how to pinpoint empirically the linkage between executive organization or presidency resources and policy outcomes. The literature on the US presidency has attempted to overcome these problems by specifying policy types as dependent variables, and measuring the president’s success in eliciting each type of policy. The literature on policymaking in Latin America has specified features of the policy process as dependent variables, and explored correlations between those features and some executive organization factors. Still, both literatures seem far from having exhausted the topic because none appears to have developed consistently comparative measures of the connections between executive organization variables and public policy outcomes.

The evaluation of presidents’ public policy outcomes in the United States has revolved around three empirical referents: foreign policy processes; presidential success in Congress; and the effects of presidential politicization of the bureaucracy. The research on foreign policy processes, already cited in Section 1.3, dwells mostly on case studies and small-N comparisons crafted on such different theoretical frameworks that comparison of processes and outcomes becomes extremely difficult and the specific assessment of executive organization variables are typically subject to controversies of a normative, rather than empirical, nature.

The research on presidential success in Congress, in contrast, has developed comparable concepts and measures of both dependent and independent variables. On the dependent variable, policies have been categorized using various typologies: by objectives, as in Lowi’s (1972) famous typology of distributive, regulatory, redistributive, and constituent policies; by salience and complexity, as in Gormley’s (1986) typology of regulatory policies; by size and novelty, as in Peterson’s (1990) and Light’s (1999) typologies of new/old and large/small policies; by scope, and in Eshbaugh-Soha’s (2005, 2010) typology of major and minor policies. As independent variables, this literature has utilized not only institutional and partisan variables—such as

unilateral institutional powers, divided government, size of presidential legislative party, timing within the presidential term, and presidential popularity (Edwards, 1985; Bond and Fleischer 1990, 2008; Peterson 1990; Canes-Wrone and De Marchi, 2002; Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha, 2007; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2010); but also organizational variables—such as the source of policy formulation, the locus of leadership during policymaking processes, and the resources employed to influence legislative outcomes (Light, 1999; Rudalevige, 2002; Larocca, 2006). The relevant findings of this literature for the present discussion show a) that policies, particularly domestic policies, tend to be smaller and less novel because presidents lack organizational and informational resources to develop and promote other types of policies (Light, 1999; Krause, 2009) except in crisis situations (Dickinson, 1997), and b) that presidents are more successful in getting legislative approval for policies developed in a decentralized, rather than centralized, manner—as the former implies collaboration between the presidential center, cabinet departments and congressional committees both in policy design (Rudalevige, 2002: pp. 114, 149-150) and in shaping and pushing the agenda (Beckmann, 2010: 21, 126) more than the latter. The problem with this literature is that the linkage between executive organization variables and public policy outcomes is mediated by presidential success in Congress: only successful presidential initiatives enter the assessment. This begs at least two questions: on the one hand, what exactly would count as presidential policy success; on the other hand, how are executive organization variables related to unsuccessful presidential initiatives. The US literature has proposed several answers to the former question, but not to the latter: presidential success may be measured either as support for presidential initiatives in Congress (Edwards, 1985; Peterson, 1990; Bond and Fleischer, 1990, 2008) or as presidential ability to protect the substance of presidential legislative proposals (Rudalevige, 2002; Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha, 2007; Beckmann, 2010), but little is known about why or how executive organization variables influence unsuccessful initiatives beyond the fact that decentralized policy formulation processes fare better with legislators.

The research on presidential politicization of the bureaucracy has found that politicization yields worse outcomes than reliance on career bureaucrats or appointees with previous government experience. Based upon wide-coverage internal polls conducted within the federal bureaucracy during the G.W. Bush presidencies, Lewis (2008: p. 196) has shown that programs run by careerists or in-and-out appointees (i.e., appointees with previous government experience)

receive better assessments in terms of program effectiveness and managerial efficacy than programs run by short-term, high-turnover appointees. These findings, however, are not conceptually related to the usually employed typologies of public policies, and have not yet been investigated beyond the Bush presidencies.

4.3.2 Evidence in LAC

The research on the impact of executive organization variables on policy outcomes in Latin America is scant and beset by similar problems. On the one hand, the dependent variable is conceptualized not as the type of policies using any extant typology, or as the policy issue areas, but as the features of the policymaking process (stability, adaptability, coherence, coordination) and only marginally considering traits of policies themselves, such as public-regardedness and efficiency (IDB, 2006). On the other hand, the only comparative data available on executive organization variables concern cabinet composition and ministerial backgrounds. The main findings in this literature hold that ministers with career backgrounds in the civil service produce more stable policies (ibid: p. 149), but beyond that there are no comparatively established patterns on the connection between executive organization, presidency resources, and policy outcomes.

Consequently, a wide research agenda is open on this topic. Firstly, it is necessary to establish what the policy processes for specific policy areas are and in what ways they differ. Secondly, information about the legislative process of bills and decrees must be collected in order to assess presidential success in advancing policy agendas, protecting their proposals from legislative amendments, and securing consistent implementation within the executive branch. Finally, information of the staff types involved in the drafting, bargaining, legislative steering, and implementation of policies should be gathered in order to evaluate whether different staff types and/or staff arrangements impact presidential legislative success and the outcomes of public policies.

Table 5 summarizes the findings of the US literature on the effects of presidency resources, the evidence available for Latin America, and the research questions emerging from the knowledge gap.

Table 5. State of the Art and Research Agenda on the Effects of Presidency Resources

Effect on...	United States	Latin America	Research Agenda
Governing Strategy Choices	<p>Availability of unilateral resources, non-partisan cabinets and hierarchical networks matter for choice, but do not determine it</p> <p>Unilateral strategies yield more unstable outcomes than legislative strategies</p> <p>Legislative strategies are subject to cycles of decreasing influence and increasing effectiveness</p>	<p>Unilateral strategies require combination of unilateral resources and enough partisan powers to withstand legislative repeals</p> <p>Unilateral strategies only effective when presidential popularity and economic conditions are good</p>	<p>Effects of executive branch organization on governing strategies</p> <p>Participation of presidential center, cabinet and advisory networks in each strategy</p> <p>Types of resources employed per strategy</p> <p>Cycles of influence and effectiveness in Latin American presidencies</p>
Policymaking Processes	<p>Policy aims: marginal/incremental when good informational resources are available or political control is low; innovative in response to shocks or under centralized political control</p> <p>Policy sources and management: presidential center when situations require quick responses, cross-area issues and little technical expertise; cabinet or agencies otherwise</p> <p>Structure: centralized/decentralized when institutionalization of presidency is high/low; centralization contingent to informational costs</p> <p>Dynamics: leadership styles and forms of staff involvement generate tradeoffs among political control, information and adaptability</p>	<p>Cabinet stability correlated to policy processes with high coordination, coherence and adaptability</p> <p>Cabinet composition designed to boost presidential control over processes</p>	<p>Types of policy aims</p> <p>Sources of policy ideas</p> <p>Forms of staff involvement in policy processes</p> <p>Variations per issue areas, organizational structure, political and economic conditions</p>
Public Policy Outcomes	<p>Policies are only novel and large-scale in response to crises</p> <p>Presidential success on the substance of legislation is higher when policy processes are decentralized to cabinet or agencies</p> <p>Political appointees yield worse policy outcomes than career bureaucrats</p>	<p>Ministers with career backgrounds in the civil service produce more stable policies</p>	<p>Nature of policy process per issue area</p> <p>Forms of staff involvement in the production of specific types of policy outcomes</p> <p>Presidential success on the substance of legislation across countries and presidencies</p>

5. Concluding Thoughts

This paper has reviewed the literature on the organization of the executive branch and the presidential resources in the United States and Latin America. The review has shown that research on Latin American presidencies has produced strong, region-wide findings in some areas only, such as the composition of cabinets, the nature of budgetary powers, the choice of governing strategies, and the features of policymaking processes. In contrast, research is significantly lagging behind the benchmark set by the literature on the US presidency in regard to the presidential center, the presidential advisory networks, the appointment, clearance, and intergovernmental transfer powers of the presidency, and the effects of executive branch organization and presidential resources on policymaking processes and public policy outcomes.

The research strategy to pursue in order to fill in the research gap varies from topic to topic. Research on the presidential center, the powers of cabinet departments, and the presidential advisory networks should combine statistical analysis with social network analytic strategies: this combination would be most adequate to establish not only the determinants of different types of staff structures and arrangements but also the nature of staff involvement in policymaking and the frequency with which each form of involvement is mobilized by the president. Research on presidential resources should be chiefly addressed using statistical techniques to establish the nature, conditions of emergence, and frequency of use of each type of resource. Finally, research on the effects of executive organization and presidency resources on policymaking should combine statistical analysis with case studies in order to pinpoint the determinants of governing strategies, policy aims and ideas, policymaking structures, and policy outcomes, and trace the mechanisms by which the former variables affect the latter.

It might have been important to rank the topics that need to be addressed in order of importance as an additional tool for guiding researchers. Still, that would be a fruitless task for the region as a whole. Existing evidence and studies differ from country to country. The relevance of each topic for understanding the policymaking also differs from country to country. Consequently, those interested in broad regional studies may want to concentrate first on those areas of research that would have broad application. For example, studying cabinets may have to come before studying advisory networks. This may be particularly true for those studies that want to be quantitatively focused, as data on advisory networks may prove harder to come by. However, researchers that concentrate on a specific country may want to tackle head on the role

of advisory networks, particularly if they are shown to matter more. For example, recent US evidence tends to indicate that presidents have relied more upon their inner circle than the formal cabinet members. Similarly, may be happening in LAC countries. Without understanding who the president chooses for conducting the most serious discussions and on whom he relies at key junctures may otherwise provide a distorted picture.

The questions posed and the research strategies proposed on the basis of this literature review may of course be corrected and improved upon. But the fact will remain that advancing this research may greatly help to improve the understanding of the workings of the presidency and the causes of its weaknesses in some of the countries in the region. It may also contribute to understanding the ways the presidency affects policymaking and its outcomes. More importantly, it may help reformers to identify bottlenecks and weakest links where support may be more effective, as well as the types of reforms and strengthening programs that may be sustainable over time. Academically, the payoff of this research agenda can also be large. While the US-based literature has advanced at a faster pace, it is still in its infancy, particularly regarding the use of strong quantitative and comparative analysis. Researchers taking on Latin American executives may then be able to make a contribution that resonates beyond the Latin American-based research network of scholars.

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